

THE LONG ROAD TO BAGHDAD

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

My story of the long road to Baghdad covers three laps of the Mesopotamian campaign. It begins with the advance of the Relieving Force from Ali Gharbi; the first milestone is the fall of Kut; the second, the capture of Samarra; the third, the armistice and the surrender of the Turkish Army at Qalah Shergat. To the soldier our entry into Baghdad was a mere incident in the advance. Logically, and from a military point of view, a history of the expedition up to the fall of the city must include the operations by which we secured and consolidated our hold on it, the defeat of the enemy's two Corps on the Shatt-el-Adhaim and the Tigris, and the capture of his railhead at Samarra. Some of the stiffest fighting in the campaign was ahead of our troops when they entered Baghdad on March 11th. The story of our advance on the city and the later operations will be told in the second volume. The first volume ends with the hot weather after the fall of Kut. It covers the tragic part of the history and the long period of preparation before our troops were in a position to make good.

The policy of penetrating Mesopotamia, in the first place, beyond the Shatt-el-Arab and Karun was of doubt-