

shock, reviving sickly memories, abhorrent to sanity whether in body or mind. One should dwell on the glory of war, not cry over its death and wounds. My instinct was to correct those passages, to rewrite them in the healthy traditional vein. The only muse whom the self-respecting historian of war may invoke reigns in a sphere where mortality is held of no account. But the fighting in Mesopotamia from January to the end of April, 1916, was not like any other fighting British troops have had to undergo. What I saw was an army wasted in detail, expiating the folly of statesmen and generals in a struggle in which blunder piled upon blunder made it evident to the troops that their sacrifice was in vain. And not merely in vain, but, as it seemed at the time, thankless. For the force which fought to relieve Townshend, and suffered something like a complete reincarnation in the ordeal, were ill-fed, ill-equipped, and their sick, in many cases, untended. Looking back, I see that an elegiac, rather than a lyric strain, was natural in a non-combatant witness of a tragedy which has no parallel in our military history. So I have left the mournful passages uncorrected. There is more truth in them as they stand.

As regards strategy and tactics, I have never placed my uninstructed opinion before that of men whose profession is war. In every point I have consulted soldiers whose judgment I trust. But the practice of war is judged from more different angles than any other science. Not only is there a difference of opinion as to how a particular action ought to be fought; there is often complete disagreement as to how it was fought, and this among officers who took part in the engagement, as well as among Staff officers responsible for the operations. It is the lay historian's business to discover the least common