

PREFACE.

THE late Major-General Sir John Hoad, K.C.M.G., had long been desirous that the great mass of statistics accumulated in the Defence Department relative to the Australian Military Contingents should be tabulated and arranged in a comprehensive yet compact and systematic shape. In this manner there would be an official record for preservation in our annals, as a memorial of the period when Australia poured forth her levies to do battle for the Empire—many of her sons doomed never to return, but fated to take their last rest beneath the veldt upon which they had fought. In the absence of such a memorial, it might be that in process of time little would be recalled of the stirring events of 1899-02 except the mere fact that there once was a war in South Africa in which the Colonies took some share.

The General was at length authorized to realize his wish; though he was not permitted to witness the completion thereof. It involved a task of no ordinary magnitude; comprising, as it did, firstly, the evolution of order from chaos; secondly, the partition of the materials; and, thirdly, a judicious selection of that which it was desirable to preserve, coupled with the rejection of matter which was superfluous or cumbersome. In some instances it was found impossible to complete certain minor particulars; lists having been mislaid, and State-District Staff officers not supplying the information.

It must be understood that this volume is not a history of the war. It is a statistical register and reference. The short narratives which accompany the records of Contingents are intended only as sketches or illustrations of each campaign. For certain portions of the outlines of service of some South Australian, Western Australian, and Tasmanian Contingents, the compiler has been indebted to a work entitled *Colonials in South Africa*, by John Stirling, which is based chiefly upon the despatches of the Commander-in-Chief at the seat of war.

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