

**THE HISTORY OF RUHLEBEN:
A RECORD OF BRITISH
ORGANISATION IN A
PRISON CAMP IN GERMANY**

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The History of Ruhleben: A Record of British Organisation in a Prison Camp in Germany by
Joseph Powell & Francis Gribble

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JOSEPH POWELL & FRANCIS GRIBBLE

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THE HISTORY OF RUHLBEN

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by JOSEPH POWELL [*Captain of the Camp*]
and FRANCIS GRIBBLE

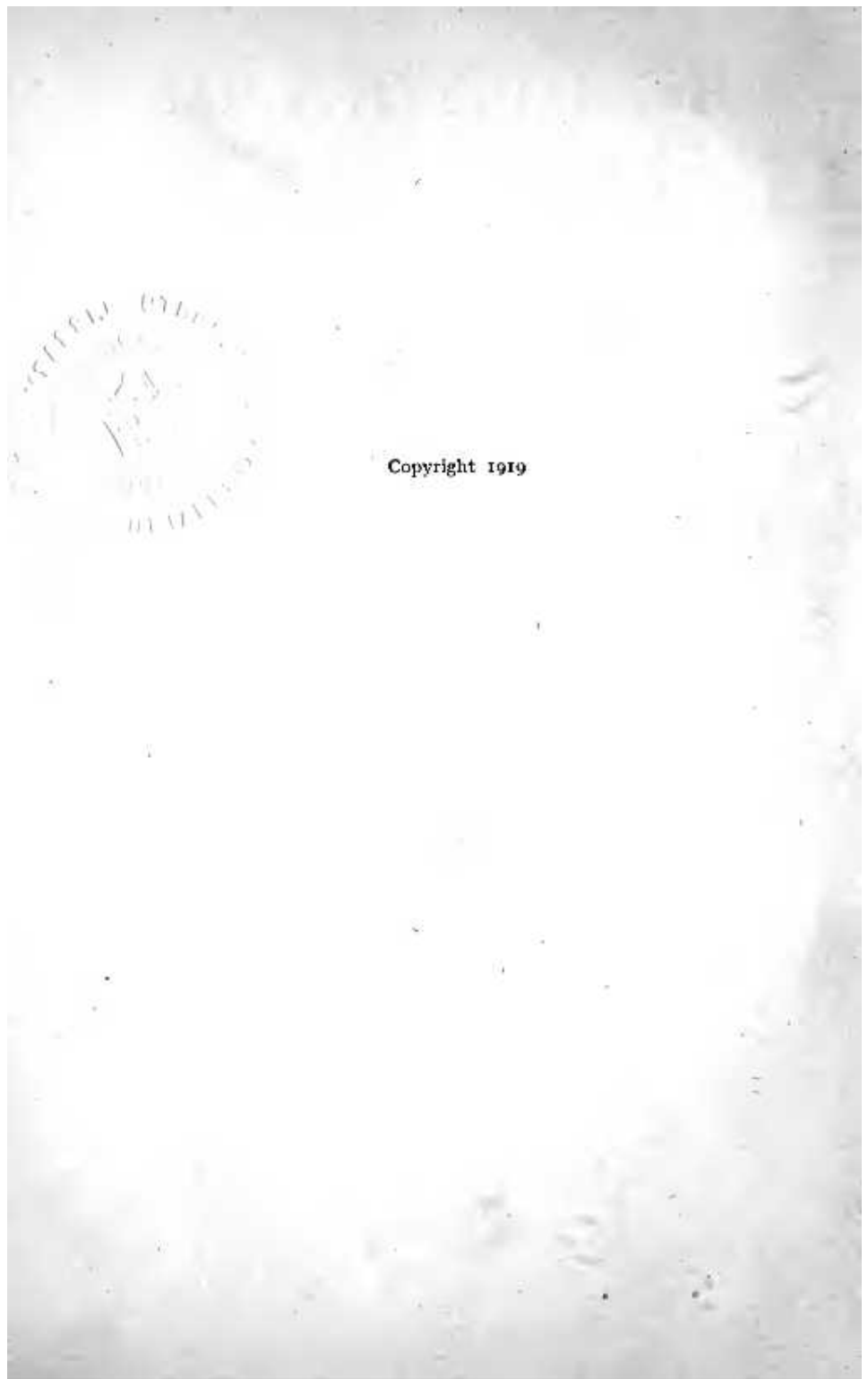


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PREFACE

'You mustn't suppose that the camp was always like this. When the men were first brought here, the place wasn't fit to keep pigs in. All that you have admired in the camp they have themselves created.'

That is what Count Schwerin, Commandant of Ruhleben, said, some time in the summer of 1916, to a distinguished American visitor who had called on him with an introduction from the American Embassy. It was the generous tribute of an enemy whom Ruhleben men had ceased to think of as an enemy before he died. This book is written to set forth, in detail, the facts on which it was based, and to show how a number of Englishmen, raked in from the German cities, dumped in a swamp, and housed in stables, set to work to found a British colony and build a British city within a few miles of the enemy's capital, and to place on record the hard work done by many men in many different departments of endeavour.

Mr Powell was pressed to write such a book at the time of the Ruhleben Exhibition. Mr Gribble was, at the same time, contemplating the publication of his personal recollections of the camp in the early days when the great colonising effort was still in its infancy. Each of the two had amassed a great deal of material which would have been very useful to the other.

PREFACE

Mr Powell's material consisted mainly of official records—the minutes of the meetings of the barrack captains, and various sub-committees charged with various branches of civil administration; Mr Gribble's mainly of descriptive notes made while his memory of the scenes and incidents to be described was still fresh. It was therefore suggested, and, after some discussion, arranged, that the two projected books, instead of competing with each other, should be fused in a single narrative, more complete than either author could have written separately.

The division of labour and responsibility will be found to be, in a general way, indicated in the course of the book. Mr Gribble has no first-hand knowledge of anything that happened in the camp after the autumn of 1915, when he was exchanged to England with other prisoners unfit for military service, or of the work of the civil administration, with which he was not connected. On these latter matters, therefore, it seemed better that Mr Powell should speak in the first person, taking the opportunity of stating facts which it was not practicable to state while the camp was still in being. The early descriptive matter, except where it is specifically attributed to Mr Powell, is mainly Mr Gribble's. The chapters on the medical history of Ruhleben are mainly based on his separate observations and inquiries; and it is he who speaks in the first person in the chapters on literature and journalism at Ruhleben.

It only remains for the authors to express their hearty