

**TO RUHLEBEN AND BACK,  
A GREAT ADVENTURE IN  
THREE PHASES**

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To Ruhleben and back, a great adventure in three phases by Geoffrey Pyke

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**GEOFFREY PYKE**

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TO RUHLIBEN—AND BACK



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CHILEMEN, BRITISH CIVILIAN PRISONERS AND THEIR QUARTERS

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# TO RUHLEBEN —AND BACK

A GREAT ADVENTURE IN THREE PHASES

BY  
GEOFFREY PYKE

THIRD IMPRESSION

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**FRATERNALLY**  
TO  
**EVELYN**  
AND  
**RICHARD LIONEL PYKE**

"I wasn't afraid of something happening. I was afraid of nothing ever happening—nothing ever happening for all God's eternity."

He drained his glass and called for more whisky. He drank it, and went on :

"And then something did happen. Buck, it's the solemn truth, that nothing has ever happened to you in your life. Nothing had ever happened to me in my life."

"Nothing has ever happened ! " said Buck, staring. "What do you mean ? "

"Nothing has ever happened," repeated Barker, with morbid obstinacy. "You don't know what a thing happening means ! You sit in your office expecting customers, and customers come ; you walk in the street expecting friends, and friends meet you ; you want a drink, and get it. You feel inclined for a bet, and make it. You expect either to win or to lose, and you do either one or the other. But things happening ! " and he shuddered un governably.

"Go on," said Buck shortly. "Get on."

"As we walked wearily round the corners, something happened. When something happens, it happens first, and you see it afterwards. It happens of itself and you have nothing to do with it. It proves a dreadful thing—that there are other things besides oneself. I can only put it in this way. We went round one turning, two turnings, three turnings, four turnings, five. Then I lifted myself slowly up from the gutter where I had been shot half senseless, and was beaten down again by living men crashing on top of me, and the world was full of roaring, and big men rolling about like ninepins."

G. K. CHESTERTON, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill.*

## PREFACE

IN September of 1914, two months after war had started between Germany and England, I set out to reach Berlin in order, it is hardly necessary to add unknown to the German authorities, to act as a correspondent on behalf of the *Daily Chronicle* of London. I had also been asked to write letters for the *Cambridge Magazine*. Ruhleben was not then in existence as a prison camp, and I should certainly have had no intention of going there even if it had been. My object was to go to Berlin and see what there was of interest going on there, and then to travel across to the Rhine and the industrial districts of the West and South. I reckoned a couple of months would see the whole thing done, and that if I felt matters were becoming hot and unpleasant I would bolt as quickly as possible. It must be remembered that the desire to know the truth of what was going on at that time in the interior of Germany was intense. At the words *Krieg, Mobil*, the floodgates of news had clanged to, and not a word that could be prevented, or had not a purpose in it, was leaving Germany. At home masses of information were being produced in newspapers of all complexions,