

KULTUR IN CARTOONS

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Kultur in Cartoons by Louis Raemaekers

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LOUIS RAEMAEKERS

KULTUR IN CARTOONS

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BY
LOUIS RAEMAEKERS

WITH ACCOMPANYING NOTES BY
WELL-KNOWN ENGLISH WRITERS

*A Companion Volume to "Raemaekers' Cartoons"
Published 1916, and now issued by
The Century Co.*



NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1917

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Publishers' Announcement

Purchasers of "Kultur in Cartoons" may be interested to know that this present work is a companion volume to "Raemaekers' Cartoons," issued in 1916. "Raemaekers' Cartoons" includes many of the artist's earlier work, dealing particularly with the Belgian inferno. The two volumes are alike in size and form, and together constitute a thoroughly representative collection of Raemaekers' drawings.

THE CENTURY CO.

Foreword

BY

J. MURRAY ALLISON

A year has passed since the first volume of Raemaekers' work ("Raemaekers' Cartoons," Century Co.), was published in the United States.

At that time Raemaekers was practically unknown in this country, just as he was unknown in England and France until January, 1916, when his work was first exhibited in the British Capital.

The story of Raemaekers' reception in London and Paris has been written in the introduction to "Raemaekers' Cartoons."

When his cartoons began to reach America toward the end of 1916 this country was neutral. It is with peculiar satisfaction, therefore, that I base this brief foreword upon press extracts published prior to America's participation in the war.

If it were possible to discover to-day an individual who was entirely ignorant as to the causes and conduct of the war, he would, after an inspection of a hundred or more of these cartoons, probably utter his conviction somewhat as follows: "I do not believe that these drawings have the slightest relation to the truth; I do not believe that it is possible for such things to happen in the twentieth century." He would be quite justified, in his ignorance of what has happened in Europe, in expressing such an opinion, just as any of us, with the possible exception of the disciples of Bernhardi himself, would have been justified in expressing a similar view in July, 1914.

What is the view of all informed people to-day? "To Raemaekers the war is not a topic, or a subject for charity. It is a vivid heartrending reality," says the New York "Evening Post," "and you come away from the rooms where his cartoons now hang so aware of what war is that mental neutrality is for you a horror. If you have

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slackened in your determination to find out, these cartoons are a slap in the face. Raemaekers drives home a universal point that concerns not merely Germans, but every country where royal decrees have supreme power. Shall one man ever be given the power to seek his ends, using the people as his pawns? We cannot look at the cartoons and remain in ignorance of exactly what is the basis of truth on which they are built."

The "Philadelphia American" likens Raemaekers to a sensitized plate upon which the spirit which brought on the war has imprinted itself forever, and adds: "What he gives out on that subject is as pitilessly true as a photograph. They look down upon us in their naked truth, those pictures which are to be, before the judgment-seat of history, the last indictment of the German nation. Of all impressions, there is one which will hold you in its inexorable grip: it is that Louis Raemaekers has told you the truth."

This aspect of his appeal is insisted upon by "Vanity Fair," thus: "That each cartoon is a grim, merciless portrayal of the truth will be apparent to even the meanest intelligence." The same journal refers to the almost uncanny power of prophecy suggested by many of the pictures. "That they are conceived in a mighty brain and drawn by a skilled hand will be recognized by a sophisticated minority. But only those capable of deeper probing will see that each one is in itself an elemental drama of compelling significance and power, heightened in many cases by prophecy and suggestion."

The "Philadelphia Public Ledger" refers particularly to Raemaekers' prophetic instinct. "Here, indeed, is revealed the work not only of one who has the artistic imagination to pictorialize the savagery of the Kaiser and his obedient servants, and to caricature in a manner that leaves nothing unsaid in the way of sinister presentation of evil things, but the work of one who is distinctly a seer. Moreover, the cartoons have been verified by subsequent events, though they seemed to some at the time to be the bitter and ironical casual comment on things most believed could never happen to modern civilization, and have that insight that only a special inspiration and inner illumination could give."

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It is this obvious sincerity, this conviction on the part of the beholder that Raemaekers is telling the simple truth and telling it simply that gives his work its greatest value as a revelation of the German purpose, and as an indictment of German methods of warfare and the German practice of statecraft.

The "Louisville Herald" finds it "impossible to do justice to these remarkable drawings, this terrific gallery, impossible to estimate at this distance the power and pressure of the indictment," while the "Baltimore Sun" goes so far as to claim that "no orator in any tongue has so stirred the human soul to unspeakable pity and implacable wrath as this Dutch artist in the universal language which his pencil knows how to speak. Those who have forgotten the *Lusitania* and the innumerable tragedies in Belgium should avoid Raemaekers. They who look at his work can never forget, can never wholly forgive."

The "Washington Star" thinks that his cartoons should not be taken merely as dealing with events of the conflict, "but with principles." The writer proceeds: "To Germany and to Austria is upheld a mirror in which are reflected those crimes for which neither will be able to make full redress. There is no touch of vulgarity or hatred in his work, save that which comes from righteous indignation against foul crimes and the vulgarity of the thing itself."

In appraising the value of Raemaekers' cartoons purely as political documents, as historic records of crimes and barbarities which the civilized world must not be permitted to forget lest the horrors of the past three years descend upon us again, their purely artistic appeal is frequently ignored or forgotten, but not always. "Raemaekers is an artist," says the "Boston Globe." "He tells his story simply, eliminates all unnecessary detail, knows the dramatic value of light and shade, and draws a single figure cartoon with as much impressive suggestiveness as he does a crowd." The "Providence Journal" acclaims him as a great artist to whose hand has been given the touch of immortality. "Like many geniuses," continues the "Journal," "this Dutch artist awaited the occasion in human affairs to awaken the power which he may not even have been aware of