

**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
LOUVAIN AND  
ITS LIBRARY**

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The University of Louvain and its library by Theodore Wesley Koch

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**THEODORE WESLEY KOCH**

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UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN  
AND ITS LIBRARY

BY  
THEODORE WESLEY KOCH  
*Chief, Order Division, Library of Congress*

ISSUED BY  
THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED  
STATES FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN

1919

*Reprinted from*  
*"War Libraries and Allied Studies"*  
*by Theodore Wesley Koch*  
*(New York, G. E. Stechert & Co., 1918)*  
*with eleven additional illustrations.*



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## PREFACE

**T**HIS account of the University of Louvain and its Library was first published in a limited edition by J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1917. It was later reprinted by the British Government. Its inclusion in my "War Libraries and Allied Studies" enabled me to make some additions. The text, as here given, is reprinted from the plates of that book, and I am now able to add the illustrations from the English edition, which were chiefly from blocks loaned by the Belgian Commission of Inquiry, London. It was the finding of these blocks in the rooms occupied by the Commission that incited me to write this story. Professor Leo van der Essen of the Louvain faculty told me one day of the half-tone illustrations of Louvain which the Commission had recovered from the effects of a defunct Belgian newspaper in London. We opened up the parcel and I became quite enthusiastic over these pictures. They were the strongest testimony to the truth of the stories current about the complete ruin of the library. I offered then and there to write up the story of the University Library if I might borrow these illustrations. Consent was readily given.

The account of the destruction of the library has intentionally been made as brief as possible and reference to the mode and motives of the invaders minimized. My object has not been to add to the discussion centering around Louvain, but to attract attention to the opportunity for help. There has lately been formed a National Committee of the United States for the Restoration of the University of Louvain, which will work in conjunction with similar committees in Europe. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler is the chairman of the National Committee and Dr. Herbert Putnam, the Librarian of Congress, is chairman of the Library Committee.

The lasting gratitude of the Belgians for the relief extended them by the Americans is an additional reason for Belgian students wishing to know more about the history and institutions of the United States. A guarantee of this can be

had by seeing to it that in the new library of the revived university there shall be a good representation of our best historians, our best writers in both prose and poetry, and a collection of the chief American authorities in science, medicine and technology.

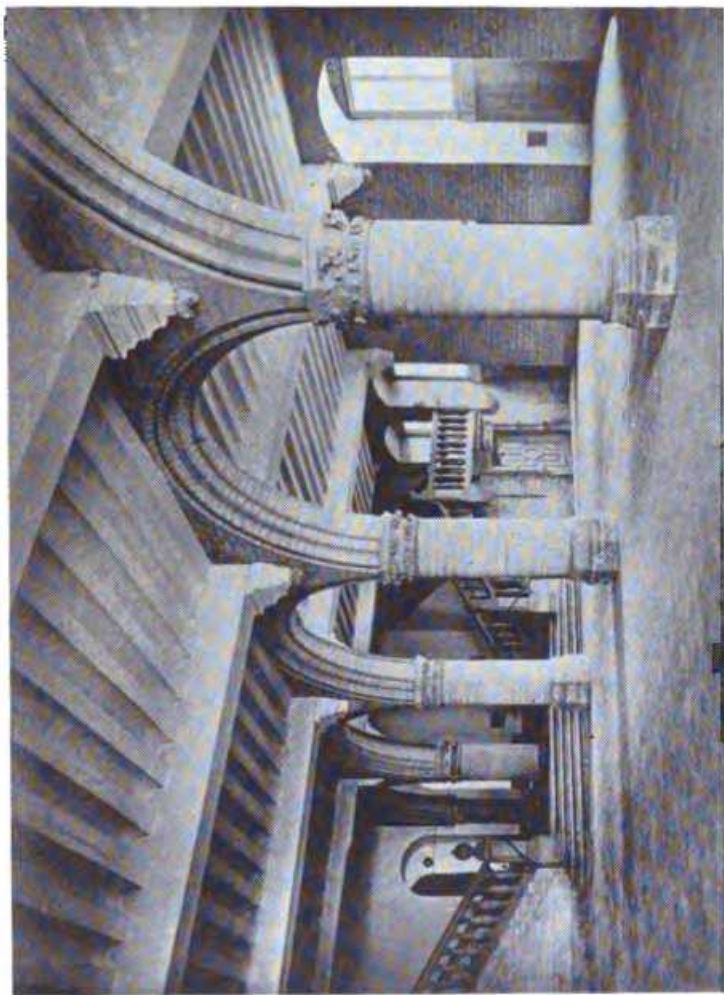
The reconstruction of the University of Louvain is assured. New halls will become the home of science, and knowledge will find an asylum there as of old. Over the main door of the destroyed "Halles" was the inscription:

*"Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum."*

Those familiar with the spirit of Louvain can see with the eye of faith a new and greater pile of buildings, over the portals of which can again be inscribed the words, "Wisdom has built herself a house." All scholars are invited to participate in equipping this new house with suitable books. American libraries have already contributed material aid by giving of their riches. Many precious items have been culled from the stock of duplicates of our older university and college libraries. Institutional and learned society publications are being offered, and we hope to interest private individuals in giving books of a scholarly nature that would be of value to the students of this famous old Belgian University.

T. W. K.





**GROUND FLOOR OF THE UNIVERSITY HALLS**  
With stairways leading to the Library overhead



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE LIBRARY

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