



George Wesley Bellows

Title

"Pizarro" Reviews His Army

Medium

Crayon, pencil, and charcoal on paper

Date

1922

Dimensions

28 x 22 in. (71.1 x 55.9 cm)

Accession number

85.7

Credit Line

Purchased with Museum funds, 1985

Web Description

Known for his socially-conscious paintings and illustrations of urban life, George Bellows's liberal personal politics ran toward socialism. He served on the editorial board of the socialist journal *The Masses* and was a member of "The Lyrical Left," a radical artistic group with anarchist tendencies. It was, perhaps, his liberal beliefs that interested Bellows in illustrating science-fiction author H.G. Wells's serialized novel about a futuristic utopian society, *Men Like Gods*. In the story, which begins in 1921, a group of Earthlings are mysteriously transported three thousand years into the future to a parallel universe called Utopia. In this advanced society, inhabitants peacefully co-exist free from any sort of formal government or religion. One of the characters—Rupert Catskill, said to have been modeled on Winston Churchill—plots to overtake Utopian society after learning that the citizens lack immune systems and are thus susceptible to basic human illnesses. In trying to convince the others to go along with his plan, Catskill compares the Earthlings to the Spanish conquistadors and their invasion of the Incan Empire in Peru. Catskill imagines himself as a new Pizarro, conquering Utopian civilization with a small force of men and creating his own new world empire.