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Coeditors of the *Winchester College Pentagram*. From left: Edward Liddersfield, Lord Alfred Douglas, and Edmund B. Phipps, 1888
Lord Alfred Douglas and the Winchester College Pentagram

G. A. CEVASCO

Lord Alfred Douglas is probably best remembered as the close friend of Oscar Wilde responsible for his being placed in the dock, found guilty, and sentenced to two years at hard labor. The year was 1895. Wilde was at the height of his fame. Two of his brilliant plays, *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, were running simultaneously in London theatres. When he was convicted they were withdrawn. His books were removed from the booksellers' shelves. Wilde's disgrace had all the implications of a Greek tragedy, one in which he played fop, wit, victim, and martyr—and at which he looked on as a befuddled spectator.

Anyone who reads *De Profundis* is struck by the bitterness he felt for his former friend at the time. Not only did "Bosie," as Douglas was called affectionately by his family and friends, escape punishment, but it had been his father, the Eighth Marquis of Queensberry, who had initiated charges against Wilde in the first place. Then, too, during Wilde's notorious trials, one of Bosie's works, "Two Loves," was entered into evidence. Ending with the words "I am the love that dare not speak its name," the poem was used against Wilde by the prosecutor for the Crown.

Just how responsible Douglas was for Wilde's downfall is still matter for debate. In his poem "The Destroyer of a Soul," Lionel Johnson fixed more of the blame on Wilde with the memorable line: "I hate you with a necessary hate." In his cactaceous and apologetical autobiographical volumes, *Oscar Wilde and Myself* (1914), *The Autobiography of Lord Alfred Douglas* (1929), and *Without Apology* (1938), Douglas of course defends himself at Wilde's expense. Douglas, in fact, was always a self-defender, as the many enemies he made over the seventy-five years of his life can testify. He is a prime example of a man of letters who expended more time and energy
defending himself from attacks real and imaginary than he gave to literature.

Douglas, nonetheless, was a highly capable poet who wrote some works still worthy of consideration, especially those found in his

*City of the Soul* (1899) and *Sonnets* (1900). That his carefully crafted verse failed to attract the critical reception he thought it deserved troubled him deeply. The attention accorded Eliot, Pound, the Sitwells, and other so-called “moderns” in the decades between the Wars, he was certain, had been misdirected. The spotlight should have fallen on his *Complete Poems* (1928). Douglas never could admit to himself that he was essentially a nineties poet whose gifts did not survive into the twentieth century.

Patrick Braybrook's *Lord Alfred Douglas: His Life and Work* (1913) and William Freeman’s *The Life of Lord Alfred Douglas* (1948) are both well-written and quite readable biographies, but neither did much for Douglas’s reputation. Nor did Rupert Croft-Cooke’s *Bosie* (1963), a rather captious and belittling study, treat its subject as a creative artist. The definitive biography, consequently, remains to be written. Whoever undertakes the task will of course have to
Douglas and the Pentagram

deal with the many questions surrounding the Wilde-Douglas relationship. While it is true that in his monumental study *Oscar Wilde* (1988) Richard Ellman examined their relationship rather thoroughly, he did so mainly from Wilde’s perspective, not that of Douglas.

Lord Alfred Douglas at Oxford when he was twenty-three

Douglas’s next biographer will also have to focus on a printed rarity that has recently been added to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. That volume is the *Pentagram*, an undergraduate publication that Douglas and two friends produced during the summer of 1888, when they were students at Winchester College. The two friends were E. B. Phipps and E. W. Lidderdale.

In his *Autobiography* Douglas boasts that the *Pentagram* “had a tremendous success at the time, and the circulation . . . worked out a
good deal more than one copy a head for every boy in the school... and lots of old Wykehamists took it in.” The fact is that the Pentagram ran only ten numbers between May 29 and August 1, 1888.

Most copies of the Pentagram can no longer be traced. The ten issues that belonged to Sir Edmund Bamfylde Phipps are now in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Phipps, after completing his education at New College, Oxford, became a master at Temple Grove School, then an inspector of schools, rising to the position of Deputy Secretary, Board of Education, in 1926.

Phipps had his treasured copies of the Pentagram bound in a blue cover. On the first page, facing the inside front cover, he affixed his signature, E. B. Phipps. Phipps’s volume is especially valuable because it contains his personal annotations identifying the contributors, who did not sign their poems or prose pieces. They either remained anonymous or identified themselves with fanciful pseudonyms. In his annotations Phipps identifies himself as “The Pelican” and Douglas as “The Lost Chord.”

As for the genesis of the Pentagram, Douglas and Phipps note on their dedicatory page that the work was “generated” and “sustained” by the Reverend Mr. John Traut, who can be identified as a housemaster at Winchester. The Reverend Mr. Traut, it would seem, gave the editors of the Pentagram his warm and continual encouragement. The dedication also contains words of praise for “H.H.H.”, one of the periodical’s “most loyal and capable contributors.” “H.H.H.”, as Phipps’s attributions make clear, was E. W. Lidderdale.

An examination of the index for the ten numbers lists over two hundred entries under author, title, and subject. “Leading Articles” are of course duly listed. Under “Poems” can be found eleven titles. Seven listings refer to such incidental matters as the “Boat Club,” “Cricket,” and “Rifle Corps.” Letters from readers are also listed, as well as one obituary article. Several items pertain to Eton, and there is even one on “The Prince of Wales at Winchester.”
In his copy of the *Pentagram*, E. B. Phipps identifies the authorship of the articles. (Friends Endowed Fund)

Most of the material was written by "The Lost Chord," "The Pelican," and "H.H.H." The *Pentagram* was an excellent way for the three to try their literary wings. One might also speculate that
they had not been especially welcomed at The Wykehamist, Winchester's well-established and highly regarded literary journal. In the very first paragraph of the first issue of the Pentagram, Lidderdale quipped that he, Douglas, and Phipps “hoped to be able to live in the same field” as The Wykehamist, “a most respectable journal... whose slowness almost equals its respectability.”

That the editors of The Wykehamist preferred to ignore their competition is not surprising. To improve matters a bit, or possibly even to emphasize rivalry, the editors of the Pentagram invited Lionel Johnson, a former editor of The Wykehamist, to contribute a poem. In their final issue can be found Johnson’s “A Benediction.” Douglas labeled the work “a half-whimsical, half-pathetic poem.” Johnson thought enough of the poem, however, to enlarge it from five seven-line stanzas to seventy stanzas of the same length. He also changed the title from “A Benediction” to the more appropriate “Winchester” before he published it as the final poem in his collection of verse entitled Ireland, with Other Poems (1897).

In his Autobiography Douglas writes that he began to apply himself seriously to the writing of poetry in 1889, his first year at Oxford. He also adds that he first experimented with verse during his days at Winchester, but that most of his efforts were “chiefly humourous” and that none of it was “good enough to survive.” When he reminisced on his days as fledgling poet he undoubtedly had in mind his contributions to the Pentagram.

To claim that the Pentagram enhances the literary reputation of Lord Alfred Douglas would be to engage in hyperbole. That Douglas’s contributions to the journal are indicative of the promise that he was later to fulfill as a capable poet and incisive writer of prose comes closer to a reasonable judgment. That the Pentagram achieved its primary aim, as Douglas and Phipps wrote in their dedication—“to be a convenient missile... in the sincere hope that there will never be wanting... the cultivation of humour and a capacity for drivel”—can be accepted at face value.
Contributions to the *Pentagram*

**LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS**

*Written in Dejection in April*

Of old, when all the world was young,
   Painter and poet
Spring-time’s eternal praises sung,
   Their admiration broadcast flung;
   They liked to show it.

But nowadays the world’s grown old,
   The minstrels know it!
And stubborn people, who uphold
The theory that Spring’s not cold,
   Had better stow it.

Of olden time on First of May,
   If hist’ry lies not,
The people raised a May-pole gay:
The people of the present day
   Can’t find a dry spot.

And nowadays it’s plain to all,
   And needs no shewing,
The Maypole wouldn’t stand a squall,
And if it did, the fun would pall
   If it were snowing.

**THE LOST CHORD**

[May 29, 1888]

*Notes*

The “Pelican” has returned from abroad with his health completely shattered. We sincerely hope that he will not attempt to inflict upon his miserable readers any account of his sufferings and adventures.
The “Lost Chord” and the “Pelican” were making the best of their way up to house about 3.30 the other afternoon, when the idea simultaneously entered their manly bosoms to test their vital energy at the automatic “Try your strength” machine which stands in Hammond’s shop. The “Lost Chord” possessed a penny; the “Pelican” did not; and the failure of an attempt to extort this sum from two “younger boys,” coupled with the refusal of the Lost One to waive his claim, had very nearly brought them to blows when one of the crowd that was now fast collecting, suggested that they should “pull, pull together.” No sooner said than done. A moment more, and the Chord had taken up the customary position, with his feet firmly pressed against the supports provided for that purpose, his hands firmly grasping the handles. In an instant the Pelican had seized him round the waist, and on the fall of the coin they got off well together. On entering the ’teens they tired perceptibly, but struggling gamely on, had just reached 18, when the Lost Chord, whether overcome by the excitement of the moment, or distressed by the unwonted pressure from behind, suddenly loosed his hold! The sequel is too terrible for publication. There are many who will carry to the grave the memory of the heartrending scene, as the frenzied Fowl, maddened by remorse, bent o’er the prostrate victim of his unfortunate ambition. But enough! let us draw the veil.

The “Lost Chord” states that, on Tuesday morning last, at Winchester station, while waiting for his train, he was suddenly aware of a face which appeared not altogether unfamiliar to him; a closer inspection shewed the well-known features of Mr. Nutley—late Family Grocer and Italian Warehouseman, Kingsgate Street—who stated that he was bound for Bristol, from whence he would sail that night for America. The exile seemed in good spirits, and, in reply to enquiries, remarked that he confidently hoped to achieve in a foreign clime that success which had been denied him in England. The platform was thronged with his friends and well-wishers, who crowded round the carriage to shake his hand. As the train moved off amidst the cheers of the dense mob, the scene was affecting to
the last degree; and the rain having now come on, there was scarcely a dry eye among the company.

[May 29, 1888]

Triolets

I.
I'm up to books at nine o'clock:
I haven't done my out of School:
Five past! good heavens, what a shock,
I'm up to books at nine o'clock.
My "toys" are shut? We'll burst the lock.
Now my straw hat; "play up" you fool!
I'm up to books at nine o'clock,
I haven't done my out of School.

II.
You writing lines? Yes. So am I,
For shirking Chapel Sunday last.
Halloa! I hear another sigh:
You writing lines? Yes. So am I;
That's three of us; and here close by
Another scribbling very fast:
You writing lines? Yes. So am I,
For shirking Chapel Sunday last.

THE LOST CHORD
| June 6, 1888|

The Chord on Bull Fights

"It is not everyone who has seen a bull fight," said the Chord the other day, during one of those brief intervals of idleness which even in the W.C.P. [Winchester College Pentagram] office, occasionally
break in upon the long hours of toil. “I never said it was,” snappishly replied the Pelican, whose temper of late has begun to give way under the strain of editorial cares.

“All right, you needn’t flare up,” replied the Chord, somewhat irritated at this reception of his apparently harmless remark. “Who’s flaring up?” retorted the bird, “I simply said that I never said that it was not not everyone who had seen a bull—” “O, stow that,” here put in the H.H.H. [The Half-way House Hag]

“Well, it’s perfectly true anyhow, and there’s nothing to get ‘sick’ about,” replied the fowl. “I’m not sick—you are,” replied the Chord. “My good man!” replied the Pelican. “Fool!” contemptuously said the Chord. The Pelican was handing his coat to the office boy, and the Chord was all ready in the approved attitude, when the H.H.H. interfered, and succeeded in pacifying the belligerents.

“Well” said the Pelican amiably, when they had resumed their respective seats (the Pelican on the only chair, the H.H.H. on a hat box, and the Chord on the hot water pipes), “you were talking about bull fights; have you seen one?” “Well not exactly,” replied the Chord modestly, “but I’ve seen a cow fight at Pau, which is much the same sort of thing; in fact it’s more dangerous!” (noticing a contemptuous smile on the face of the H.H.H.) “I’ll tell you about it if you like.” “What’s the time?” enquired the Pelican nervously, drawing from his pocket the pawn ticket of his watch and quickly replacing it,— “I ought to be doing my verses.” “O all right of course if you don’t want to hear it; I’m sure I don’t want to tell you, I thought it would amuse you.” “My dear chap, I should be delighted to hear it, I find it’s still quite early,” said the Pelican hurriedly, fearing another storm. “Well of course there’s a large arena with seats all round,” began the Chord (plunging at once in medias res for the fear the Pelican should change his mind).


“And the cow has a long piece of string attached to one horn, and the other end of which is held by a man, as a slight check upon the
Contributions to the Pentagram

infuriated animal. Several gaudily dressed men enter the arena, and one of these standing in front of the cow waves a handkerchief and otherwise excites the cow, which charges furiously at the man. The man remains quite stationary until the cow, having approached within about a yard of him, lowers her head to toss him into the air; the man then either steps one step aside or leaps right over the advancing animal, or sometimes jumps over the cow with a pole. Another cow is then brought out, and the same manoeuvres are gone through again. The constant repetition of these feats soon becomes monotonous; but on the occasion of which I am now speaking, a thrilling variation was introduced. As I was watching rather wearily, a man stepped forward, incited the cow, and waited the charge of the infuriated animal. The cow charged, the man stepped aside a shade too late, and the cow, to borrow a metaphor from the cricket-field, secured him low down with one horn, and, tearing the rope from the hands of the man who held it, dashed round the arena, bearing her unfortunate victim with her; words cannot describe the scene that followed, I shall carry the picture of it to my grave: the shrieks of women rent the air, strong men wept like children, infants were carried out in fits [here the Pelican sneezed], and when the frenzied beast, casting her victim on the ground, proceeded to trample on him, the horror of the onlookers reached such a pitch that—"

"There’s a mouse in Hall," said the office boy quietly, putting his head in the door. "By Jove!" said the Pelican, "I must see this!" and he rushed from the room, upsetting the inkpot over the H.H.H., who had gone to sleep. "Holloa!" said that worthy, "you were saying that the Acropolis at—" "No, I wasn’t," said the Chord. The H.H.H. apologised, but the Chord hasn’t spoken to him since.

N.B.—The mouse got away.

THE LOST CHORD
[June 20, 1888]
Drivelle

The rain had fallen, so the Stoic arose,
And went from his class room into the street.
(A cold wind blew; it was latish in June.)
And in staves of bad oaths, he vented his heat.
And his boots, once brown, at a slovenly pace,
He planted: a yellow dog, cowed, dead-beat,
Here made the wild one curse, (which was wrong),
For it barked, as it rounded his feet.

THE LOST CHORD
[August 1, 1888]

The “Chord’s” Leave-Out Day
A True Story

Some time has passed since the events of which I am about to speak occurred, but never to my dying day shall I forget those events, nor ever shall the firm conviction leave my mind that on the day made famous by those events, either I myself or those with whom I came in contact was or were insane. It was on a leave-out day, the exact date is not known to me,—I have a bad memory for dates at the best of times, but were my memory in this respect equal to that of (I forget his name, but I know he had a good memory) the occurrences of that day would have been sufficient to crush all recollections of this nature from my mind—enough that the events themselves are and will for ever be indelibly stamped on my mind. It was I say on a leave-out in the winter months that I set forth on foot from the doors of my house on my way to the station. It was my intention to catch the 8.32 train, and accordingly, knowing that it required a good quarter of an hour to reach the station, I allowed myself seven minutes. At first sight this might seem a conclusive piece of evidence that I was not in my right mind, but those who have observed the ways of Winchester men on leave-out days will
recognize that this proceeding on my part was quite in accordance with the usual custom. On reaching Southgate Road, to my great joy I noticed a fly coming towards me, I hailed it; the driver pulled up abruptly, and waiting till I had entered the vehicle and shut the door, informed me that it was impossible for him to convey me to the station, as he was about to execute another job; with these words on his lips he sprang onto the box, and urged his wild career in the direction of the station. I was astonished at the apparent contradiction implied by this action, but held my peace. We had proceeded some 200 yards on our way at full gallop, when the fly stopped with a violent jerk, which flung me out of my seat with great force; the flyman descended, opened the door, said in a cheery voice, “All right sir, trust to me sir;” and, springing on to the box, drove off again. Concluding that these manoeuvres were merely the result of over-zeal on my behalf, and touched by the evidences of the kindly feeling which had prompted his impulsive action, I resumed my seat, rubbing my shins. As we turned into Jewry Street I suddenly recollected that I had nothing but gold in my pocket, and fearing that at the last moment I should be unable to procure any change, I asked the man through the window if he had any. He made no reply, but pulled up with a jerk which hurled me back into my seat, sprang from the box, and held out his hand. I handed him a sovereign; seizing it in his hands he hailed a man who was lounging in front of the public house, near which we had stopped, and whispering instructions in his ear handed him the coin; the man disappeared into the public, while the flyman remounted the box and sat in readiness; after the lapse of one or two minutes the man to whom the coin had been entrusted reappeared with a handful of change; glancing nervously round he hastily thrust it into my hand, crying “the money, the money,” he then turned and fled down the street; the flyman urging his horse into a gallop. Thinking that I had been robbed, I hastily counted the money, but, to my astonishment, found it was correct. Halfway up the station hill the fly again stopped, and the flyman opening the door, abruptly said, “I can go no further.” Concluding that the job of which he had spoken called
him away, I handed him his fare and dismounted. He bounded on to his box, waved his hand to me, and was gone like a flash of light. I have never seen him since. The eccentric behaviour of himself and his companion had not been without its due effect on me, my brain reeled, I felt dizzy; another effect was that I missed my train. For three-quarters of an hour I brooded over these events in the waiting room, but no explanation suggested itself to my mind; I remained with an awful conviction that I was rapidly going out of my mind; under these circumstances it caused me little or no surprise to find that I was already in the train, which was stopping at a small country station, and beyond a momentary start when I noticed that the station was the place of my destination, I betrayed no agitation whatsoever. Getting out of the train, and giving up my ticket (which, by the bye, I had no recollection of having purchased), I walked across the road to a little station inn.

Going up to the man, who appeared to be in charge, I asked if he could let me have a trap to take me to the country house, distant about four miles, whither I was bound. As he took no notice of my question, I repeated it in a louder voice; as he still ignored me, I wrote my request on a piece of paper; he read it slowly, and looking at me with some suspicion, said civilly enough, “certainly, sir, will you walk this way?” “All right,” said I; he looked at me with the utmost astonishment and began to laugh. Somewhat irritated I asked what he was laughing at, adding that I saw nothing to laugh at. “Beg pardon, sir;” he said, “but I thought you was dumb;” “And pray,” said I, angrily, “why should you have thought I was dumb; do I look dumb?” “Well, sir,” replied the man, “if a gent writes on a piece of paper, instead of speaking out plain—” “Ah!” interrupted I, a light breaking in upon me, “I see; but I wrote on the paper because I thought you were deaf;” “Indeed, sir,” said the man instantly becoming grave; “this way, sir;” so saying he showed me into a small sitting room, and running out of the room, locked the door on the outside. My first impression was that I had been decoyed into a madhouse. I rushed to the window and angrily demanded that I should be instantly released. “Ready directly, sir,” I
kicked the door, but getting no response I sat down fuming. After the lapse of about five minutes, during which time I played "the Last Rose of Summer," on a piano which I found in the room, by way of proving that I was in full possession of my faculties; I heard the sound of wheels, and the landlord flung open the door and announced that the trap was ready. I remonstrated with him for locking the door; he appeared amused, and wishing me good morning retired into an inner room. There being nothing more to do, I went round to the stable-yard where the trap, a dog-cart, was waiting. Finding that the driver took no notice of my oft-repeated request that he should give me the reins, I concluded that he was either deaf or mad, and put one foot on the step in order to get in. The man instantly gave the horse a severe cut over the head, and off we went at full gallop. After we had gone some distance I managed to clamber into the trap, having suffered no further damage than a torn pair of trousers. I made several remarks to the man, all of which were treated with silent contempt, and in this way I reached my destination. Once there, my troubles were at an end, and the remainder of the day was passed in uneventful apathy. I am firmly persuaded that if anything else at all out of the way had happened, my mind would have been unhinged. To explain these various phenomena is impossible; it is my part to relate as simply as possible the extraordinary occurrences of that day, it is yours to believe them. I have related this story at divers times and in divers places, but no one has ever believed it yet; I should therefore be greatly gratified if anyone who does believe it would write and tell me so. But before I lay down my pen, let me remind those who are inclined to be sceptical, that "truth is often stranger than fiction."

**The Lost Chord**

[June 6, 1888]
Poet to Teacher

*Thomas Merton’s Letters to Mark Van Doren*

PATRICK T. LAWLOR

In the winter of 1935, at the age of twenty, Thomas Merton began his studies at Columbia University. Already a seasoned traveler (born in France, raised in the United States, France, England, and Bermuda), Merton had just completed his first year of undergraduate studies at Clare College, Cambridge. Having lived the life of a wastrel while at Cambridge, and on the advice of his guardian, Tom Bennett, a London surgeon, Merton decided to complete his education in the United States. One of the first courses he took at Columbia was Mark Van Doren’s “English Literature from 1590 to 1797.” The following academic year Merton found himself by chance in Van Doren’s year-long class on Shakespeare. His experience of this class and his high regard for Van Doren are recorded by Merton in his famous autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*:

Mark’s balanced and sensitive and clear way of seeing things, at once simple and yet capable of subtlety, being fundamentally scholastic, through not necessarily and explicitly Christian, presented these things in ways that made them live within us, and with a life that was healthy and permanent and productive. [His class on Shakespeare]

was one of the few things that could persuade me to get on the train and go to Columbia at all.

One aspect of life at Columbia which united Merton and his friends (Robert Lax, Bob Gibney, Bob Gerdy, Seymour Freedgood, and Edward Rice) was their “common respect for [Van Doren’s] sanity and wisdom.” For his part, Van Doren was impressed by Merton’s literary and intellectual abilities. The two men became friends through their shared love of literature, as well as their integrity. In 1969 Van Doren presented his personal papers to the Rare Book
and Manuscript Library, including letters written to him by Merton from 1939 to 1968, the year of Merton's death. These letters afford a glimpse of some of the many aspects of this unique man and artist.

When the student Merton began his correspondence with Van Doren, he was very much the insecure, unpublished writer. His early letters are full of energy, wit, and expectations. Strongly influenced by James Joyce, Merton writes to Van Doren in 1939 (addressing him as Mr. Van Doren) informing him that he has just finished writing a dialogue—"this Joyceish thing"—dealing with myths and the difference between idolatry and art. Van Doren clearly enjoyed Merton's sense of humor, and wrote a reply in the style of *Finnegans Wake*. A delighted Merton responded in kind: "Surprised Mr. ffin Dornian, and daylighted for your brief lettuce right in these stole of James' Joys."

However, beneath the playful exterior which Merton tried to present there was a troubled young man and frustrated artist, deeply concerned with his writing and how to get it published. Although he enjoyed Merton's playful and inventive language, Van Doren discouraged its use in the novels Merton was writing for publication. In August of 1939 Merton tells Van Doren that he has just finished a novel, "...160,000 words. Weighs five and a half pounds." The novel was the product of work done while staying at the cottage in Olean, New York, where Merton, Robert Lax, and Edward Rice spent the summers of 1939 and 1940. As is usual with Merton's fiction, the novel was strongly autobiographical, covering the years 1929-1939. With a sense of expectation, Merton tells Van Doren that Farrar & Rinehart are considering it, and that he has taken his teacher's advice and stayed away from the "private language of Lax's and my Jester [the Columbia humor magazine which he and Lax edited in 1936]." Merton sent the manuscript to Farrar & Rinehart because he saw a photograph of Farrar and "he looked as if he had a sense of humor." Listing the rejections of that summer—*Harper's Bazaar*, James Laughlin, John Crowe Ransom—Merton adds in exasperation, "I think it's about time somebody took some-
thing of mine, & I hope it will be the novel!” However, the novel was rejected (in fact, Merton’s only published novel, *My Argument with the Gestapo*, written in 1941, was not published until after his death).

Merton was baptized into the Roman Catholic faith in 1938, and received the master’s degree from Columbia in June 1939. He planned to continue his studies for the Ph.D. in English; however, he found his interests wandering and his choice of life uncertain. In the spring of 1940 he traveled to Cuba. While there he wrote one of his finest early poems, “Song for Our Lady of Cobre.” Pleased with the poem, he immediately sent a copy to Van Doren from Santiago, “a fine place with a fine harbor... but very hot.” In the covering letter he tells Van Doren that he hopes to “go into a monastery to be a Franciscan (my novitiate begins in August),” and he coyly adds, “Back in Oct. & Nov. some angels told me it would be a good thing.” In August Van Doren heard from a somewhat despondent
Merton, rejected by the Franciscans, that he had to give up his "plans about the monastery: my mind was changed for me, not by me." At a loss as to what to do with his life, he tells Van Doren that he is now looking for a teaching job: "My instinct now is to be teaching all the guys at Notre Dame, and taking my chance with fellows who never heard of a book... than talk about Donne to people who had already gathered three opinions about him from the Sunday Book reviews." Uncertain as to where he will end up, Merton expresses confidence that some Catholic college will take him in. St. Bonaventure College in upstate New York offered him a position teaching English for the fall semester, and on February 19, 1941, he became Franciscan Tertiary (a member of a religious order who lives in the secular world and is not fully professed).
At the suggestion of his friend and former teacher Dan Walsh, Merton visited the Cistercian monastery of Gethsemani in rural Kentucky in the spring of 1941. This visit came as a revelation to Merton. He felt as if he had found the center of the universe in its quiet, medieval environment; it was so spiritually charged for Merton that he soon realized he had found a home. On Thursday, December 9, 1941, Merton sent his journals, poems, and the manuscript of his only novel, ‘Journal of My Escape from the Nazis,’ to Van Doren with a typed covering note: “I am sending these not only for you to look at when you feel like it, but principally for you to hold for me until you next hear from me, when I hope to explain more than I can now.” On December 10 he entered the Trappist monastery of Gethsemani. A few days later he sent Van Doren a poem, “Letter to My Friends,” expressing his joy in his new life and asking his friends to pray for him. He tells Van Doren that he has been tentatively accepted at the monastery and that he is assigning to him all rights to “Journal of My Escape from the Nazis” (later published as My Argument with the Gestapo).

For the next few years Merton was relatively isolated, as he prayed, studied, and worked in the fields of Gethsemani. He continued to write poems, although he felt some guilt about doing so. In 1944 Van Doren selected and edited thirty of these poems for New Directions. When Thirty Poems appeared, Merton was delighted with the results of Van Doren’s selecting and editing. He writes to Van Doren joyfully recalling many of the poems and their composition, and thanks him for assigning the copyright to the monastery. Although Merton has often been criticized for adopting too severe a tone of contempt for the secular world in these early poems, he writes in a letter to Van Doren in 1944: “I live like a man on top of a mountain & it is easy for me to get off rhetorical questions like ‘Why do people insist on fighting against God’ but then I remember where I used to stand in the valley of shadows & realize how hard it is to know who and what you are fighting & what is good & what is not, & what you seek and what you really fear & what hates you & what loves you.” Clearly, Merton empathized
with the situation of people living in the world. Discovering his ability to write, the monastery put Merton’s talents to use. He tells Van Doren that he is writing “a lot, all of it business for the monastery, lives of saints, etc.” Of his own projects he asks Van Doren what he thinks about an “anthology of things from the Liturgy (hymns, sequences etc.) Latin on one page & English on the other like Helen Wardell only better material” or a book “about the contemplative life, prayers, etc.”

As Merton progressed toward ordination and continued to write poetry, he confronted the dilemma of the incompatibility between
the contemplative life of prayer and the creative life of the writer, especially the poet. In his third volume of poetry, *Figures for an Apocalypse*, he includes an essay on the problem, “Poetry and the Contemplative Life,” in which he concludes that the contemplative and artistic lives are basically at odds and that the artist might well have to abandon his art in order to attain the contemplative goal. Merton could simply not stop writing. Therefore, he was forced to reconsider his conclusion, and as he informs Van Doren, dated August 30, 1948, “I am beginning to see everything in a strangely different light.” Unable to philosophically reconcile his dual vocation—that of artist and contemplative—Merton adopts an individualistic, empiric approach: “I—and every other person in the world—must say: I have my own special, peculiar testimony which no one else will ever have. There exists for me a particular goal, a fulfillment which must be all my own—nobody else’s—and it does not really identify that destiny to put it under some category—‘poet’—‘monk’—‘hermit!’” Merton revised his essay on the subject and published the “Reappraisal” in *Commonweal* and in his *Selected Poems*.

As his ordination day in 1949 approached, Merton wrote to Van Doren inviting him to attend the May 26 event. His excitement is evident as he tells Van Doren, “The whole business about Orders has been striking me as something much more important than religious vows. . . . I am about to exist. . . . everything else, so far, has been something of a disguise.” Ordination, however, did not bring Merton peace. A growing desire for solitude, to live an eremitic life, caused him much suffering throughout the 1950s. An important part of the Rule of Saint Benedict calls for the monk to remain stable in his vows; therefore, Merton’s desire to live in isolation was in conflict with his vows of stability and was, in fact, a crisis in his vocation. Although he played a very active role in the life of the monastery, appointed master of scholastics in 1951 and master of novices in 1955 (“giving me practically a small kingdom of my own”), Merton was restless with the cenobitic life. In December of 1955 he wrote to Van Doren, informing him of the crisis: “Again
Poet to Teacher

the old wrestling, more awful than before, about solitude. . . . I even got as far as Rome (I mean with pestering letters) and finally the highest Superiors under the Pope calmed me down and told me to stay here.” Merton’s abbot, Dom James Fox, was against Merton’s desire to transfer to another order such as the Carthusians or the Camaldolese, but he did recognize that Merton needed more time by himself. Therefore, he arranged for Merton to be appointed the monastery’s official fire warden so that he could use the fire tower as a type of hermitage. The crisis passed, but Merton was to retain his desire to live as a hermit.

As his fame grew, Merton was increasingly grateful for the plain acceptance he found at the monastery. After being treated as a celebrity in Van Doren’s company at a local club, he tells Van Doren, “. . . it is good to be received in all simplicity by a community of other monks, as a monk, no questions asked, no incitements to act famous.” In 1956 Merton traveled to Minnesota to attend “some lectures on psychiatry for priests” by Gregory Zilboorg. He tells Van Doren that he is learning how to help people in a way they need, with an emphasis on “human values.” With his growth as an artist and a broadening of his social vision, Merton began to look on some of his poems with a strongly critical eye. Realizing that he has a facility with language, he tells Van Doren, “I have always been too glib, in everything.”

In 1959, Mark Van Doren retired from Columbia and was presented with the Hamilton Medal. Merton sent a public letter of praise; however, he recorded his more personal statements in a letter to Van Doren on June 6: “You are certainly one of the most Christian people I have ever seen, for this is what it is to be a Christian: simply to be Christ and not to realize it.” When New Directions planned to publish his Selected Poems, Merton wrote to Van Doren—“the one who started the whole thing going”—requesting that he supply the introduction. Van Doren gladly accepted and drew on the letters from Merton to reveal something of the man and his poetry. Van Doren opens the introduction by quoting from a letter and poem which Merton sent him in 1953 detailing his reaction to
the burning down of the monastery barn: ‘All is real [in the poem]; nothing is made up; this, we instantly believe, is the true content of the subject, which like any other subject starts on earth and gets its own natural way to heaven.’

When Merton began to write on the subject of solitude, he came into conflict with the order’s censors. He persisted, though, in his statements on the subject, and in the essay ‘Notes for a Philosophy of Solitude’ (published in Disputed Questions) he gives his clearest statement on this troublesome issue. As he wryly remarks to Van Doren in a letter dated September 17, 1960, ‘The censors brought it about that I became even more explicit than I had been before. The beauties of censorship. This is often not realized outside the Church. Censors have, as one of their unintentional effects, the power to make one more ardent, more explicit, more indignant, more succinct and in the end they force one to come right out and say many things that would otherwise have remained hidden.’

With a parting shot at the more commercial aspects of life at Gethsemani, he concludes, ‘We are not cutting trees much anymore, everything is cheese. We are cursed with business even here. Sell cheese, buy wood. What kind of life is that? However, there it is.’

At the same time as he was becoming more involved in the social issues of his day—racial justice, nuclear disarmament, and human rights—Merton was striving to remove himself from the cenobitic life of the monastery. He writes to Van Doren in February of 1961 and includes a ‘dour meditation’ on nuclear destruction entitled ‘Original Child Bomb.’ Calling it a ‘simple chaining together of cliches that are frightening,’ Merton tells Van Doren that he ‘want[s] very much to say a loud ‘No’ to missiles and polaris submarines and everything which sneaks up on a city to destroy it.’ Merton sees the ‘just’ as ‘unjust’ in the sense that only mercy ‘received and given’ can result in true justice. ‘Not even Christ came to judge the world,’ he tells Van Doren, adding that ‘there is probably no pardon’ for those responsible for so much death and misery. On the brighter side he mentions to Van Doren that he is
being allowed to use a “little house” in the pine woods as a type of hermitage: “The most beautiful little house in the world, mostly for conversations with protestant ministers who come here to find a little peace and quiet and some agreement.”

At the Columbia commencement on June 6, 1961, Merton was awarded the University Medal for Excellence. Unable to leave Gethsemani, Merton had Van Doren accept the medal on his behalf. “If I went back to Columbia today the buildings would collapse,” he writes to Van Doren. “I have to sit here with my shoes off among the ants and rave at the world from a distance.” As the arms race heated up in the early sixties, Merton’s indignation at the misguided allocation of resources found vent in a powerful essay, “A Letter to Pablo Antonio Cuadra Concerning Giants.” He tells Van Doren that he wants the essay to be “true as well as indignant. Indignation is not enough. The world is full of people who use it to excuse everything, including the worst of actions.” When censored
on the subject of peace and disarmament, Merton’s anger found vent in a letter to Van Doren on August 9, 1962. Using the advertising image of the soft drink, Merton writes: “The book on peace, did I say it? Was finished and told to stop. Stop they said about this book on peace. It must not. It is opposite to the image. It says the soft drink is untruth, and that exploding moons [atomic bombs] is not the hopeful kind of sign we have pretended. Or claimed. But let the moons explode and be silent.” Telling Van Doren that he has “rebelled against the image,” Merton goes on to say that he can no longer live safely “because the safe I can no longer stomach.”

Merton’s love of nature grew as he was allowed to spend more time at his hermitage. However, he was also brought into direct contact with local hunters: “...quails live all around the hermitage and I rush out, in hunting season, and tell the men to get off this land, it is posted. Between myself and hunters there is no solidarity whatever.” Some of the hunters reacted to Merton’s protests by informing him that “they have been given permission [to hunt] by the parish priest of a nearby town.” Others would look at Merton as if “they would like nothing more than shooting a Popish priest.” Merton took an impish delight in the mysteries of Zen, and in a letter to Van Doren dated August 4, 1964, he shared a Zen poem he had been sent:

Presence with absolute absence
Absence with absolute presence
Presence with absence of being
That is absolute absence.

He then proceeds to “analyse” this effort, producing a typical Zen reductio: “I doubt very much if there is any Zen word for ‘Presence’ or ‘Absolute’ or ‘Absence’ or ‘Being’ and as everyone knows the very notion of ‘with’ would imply duality, so immediately the poem reduces itself to ‘That is’ and I think that is [my italics] two words too many.” Zen afforded Merton the freedom he needed to express concepts for which language is inadequate. Merton was fully at home with the paradox of language and of life.
In 1965, much to his delight, Merton was finally allowed to remove himself permanently to his hermitage. Apologizing for his "long silence," Merton informs Van Doren that "everything is so totally peaceful that I have little or nothing to say." His awareness of the rhythms and movements of the natural world is evident in the letter's closing: "Here the sun is silent, there is mist in the valley, a train whistles out there somewhere just like when the world first began." His busy publishing schedule was an aspect of life which he began to become concerned about. "I am still publishing far too much of everything," he tells Van Doren, adding that he hopes 1966 will be his last "three book" year. Nor was he happy with his worldly fame: "I have no ambition to be known any more in this society.

In the final year of his life, Merton edited a little magazine entitled *Monks Pond*. When Van Doren sent him a poem with Merton's name in the title, Merton gave a tongue-in-cheek reply: "Pride, pride, pride all is pride. My name in the title would be pride like this notepaper [with a large "MONKS POND" letterhead] etc." In addition to his new poetic efforts, his 1941 novel, "Journal of My Escape from the Nazis," was being published by Doubleday, and he had returned to his early studies: "I am working at guess who: Blake and Joyce again. Back in full circle to thirty years ago." In September of 1968 Merton left Gethsemani to attend a meeting of Benedictine abbots in Bangkok, Thailand. This trip to the east filled Merton with joy and expectation. On July 23 he wrote to Van Doren about the upcoming trip: "I fly to Asia. Really, that is the plan. All sorts of places I am supposed to go to if I don't faint from delight at the mere thought." His sense of humor shines through his letter: "(Think of all the cablegrams saying 'RETURN AT ONCE' being shot to Bali, Tibet, Kamchatka, Ceylon, the Maldives, the Endives, the Southern Chives, the Lesser Maundies, the Nether Freeways, the Outer Salvages.)" However, Merton was not to return from this trip. On December 10, 1968, twenty-seven years to the day after he had entered the monastery of Gethsemani, he was
Patrick T. Lawlor

electrocuted in his room in Bangkok when he touched a fan which had an exposed wire. "His death was more than a blow;" Van Doren writes in his obituary, "it was heartbreaking. . . . That he did not come back [from Asia] is more terrible than I can say. The character of this man—'but it is something very hard to put into words.'"
The Charles Saxon Collection

A Bequest

KENNETH A. LOHF

No reader of *The New Yorker* magazine over the past thirty-five years could have failed to be engaged and amused by the cartoons and covers drawn and painted so elegantly and evocatively by the late Charles Saxon. His first appearance in the magazine was in 1943 with a spot drawing of a tollgate; he became a full-time staff cartoonist in 1956 and soon began to draw and paint those covers in the style for which he became so recognizably well known and for which he is so admired today. An archive of more than nine hundred drawings and watercolors created over much of his career, many done for *The New Yorker*, has been received at the University by bequest from the artist and is now housed in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Shortly after graduation from Columbia College in 1940, while still in his teens, Charles Saxon joined the staff at Dell Publishing Company as an editor before becoming a pilot in the Army Air Corps. He continued his work at Dell after the war until he joined the staff of *The New Yorker*. His drawings were used in advertisements for an impressive array of corporations, among them American Airlines, Bankers Trust, Chivas Regal, I.B.M., Mobil Oil, United Airlines, and Xerox. Cartoons and illustrations by Charles Saxon appeared widely in such magazines as *Architectural Record, McCall's Magazine, Sports Illustrated, Newsweek, Town and Country, Woman's Day, and Gourmet Magazine*; in fact, a single issue of the *Wall Street Journal* several years ago featured advertisements by the artist for three different companies. Gaining in popularity and stature over the years, his work was collected in three volumes, *Oh, Happy Happy Happy!* (1960), *One Man's Fancy* (1970), and *Honesty Is One of the Better Policies* (1984). Examples of the artist's work relat-
"I assume we're all solvent here, so I'll speak freely": original drawing by Charles Saxon for cartoon published in *The New Yorker*, June 30, 1989 (© 1980 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.)
The Charles Saxon Collection

...ing to all of these publications are preserved in the Library’s collection and will be shown in a major exhibition opening next March at the Library.

Apparent in all of Saxon’s work is not only humor but also an underlying social commentary. The lifestyles of the presumably sophisticated—the smug corporate executives, the sheltered suburbanites, the self-satisfied from all walks of life—were his world. Critics of his cartoons have said they are in the classic tradition of social satire that reaches back to Daumier and Gavarni, and that together they form a unique social history of our time. Who could deny that they portray the humor and the bitterness of the human condition, whether it be among the affluent guests at a cocktail party, the mounted police in Central Park with their walkie talkies, or sheep being herded through Wall Street by night. These are the qualities in Charles Saxon’s imagination that generated his work as a master cartoonist. Students and researchers will now be able to study and to contemplate his achievements in the splendid collection he has left by bequest to alma mater.
Our Growing Collections

KENNETH A. LOHF

Anonymous gift. A late-eighteenth-century manuscript of considerable historical importance, President George Washington’s draft of his proposals for the new American army after the Revolution, has been presented by an anonymous donor. Written by Washington in 1798 or 1799, at the end of his presidency, the manuscript, a working draft with numerous revisions, is closely written on both sides of two integral folio leaves and has sections headed “Half-pay, & Pensionary establishment” and “Compleating the Regiments and altering the establishm. of them.”

Anshen gift. For addition to the collection of her papers Dr. Ruth Nanda Anshen has presented two letters written to her by the French philosopher Jacques Maritain. Written while he was living in New York, the letters, dated October 24 and November 4, 1944, relate with personal warmth his religious and philosophical reflections during the war period.

Brown gift. Several groups of important literary manuscripts, letters, and documents have been presented by Mr. James Oliver Brown for addition to the collection of his papers, including: typewritten and autograph manuscripts, all bearing corrections, of twelve stories, plays, and essays by Louis Auchincloss; the autograph and typewritten manuscript of Lonnie Coleman’s novel Beulah Land; the corrected typescripts of Herbert Gold’s “The Mystery of Personality in the Novel” and “The Trouble with Dreamgirls”; nine contracts, dated 1935 to 1948, signed by Eleanor Roosevelt for the publication of her various books, among them The Moral Basis of Democracy and This Is My Story; and two contracts, dated March 25, 1931, signed by Frank Lloyd Wright for the publication of his An Autobiography and From Generation to Generation. Mr. Brown also donated
nineteen hardback and paperback foreign editions of various novels and collections of stories by Erskine Caldwell.

Congdon gift. Mr. Don Congdon has donated, for addition to the collection of papers of his literary agency, approximately 4,500 letters and manuscripts dating from the mid-1980s, including extensive files of correspondence with Ray Bradbury, William Manchester, and William Styron.
“The Ringmaster”: pen and wash drawing by Jack B. Yeats, ca. 1912
(Halper gift)
Fuld gift. For addition to his papers, Judge Stanley Howells Fuld (LL.B., 1926) has presented a group of three hundred letters that he has received from prominent lawyers, judges, political figures, and friends, among which is correspondence with William J. Brennan, Warren Burger, Terence Cardinal Cooke, and John Hersey.


Halper gift. Mrs. Marjorie Windust Halper has presented two additional drawings by Jack B. Yeats: an impressionistic watercolor landscape, a scene in the western part of Ireland, measuring 10 by 14 inches, representing a late work of the artist; and a pen and wash drawing, entitled “The Ringmaster,” measuring 11 by 8 inches, related to the circus drawings published in 1912 in his book of paintings and drawings, Life in the West of Ireland.

Haverstick gift. Mrs. Iola Haverstick (A.B., 1946, B.; A.M., 1965) has presented two rare first editions for addition to the Edith Wharton Collection which she established a year ago: the Charles Scribner anthology, Stories of New York, 1893, with a frontispiece by Charles Dana Gibson; and The Valley of Decision, 1902, published in two volumes. Stories of New York includes Mrs. Wharton’s first published fiction, the short story “Mrs. Manstey’s View”; The Valley of Decision, a novel set in eighteenth-century Italy, was the writer’s first full-length novel to be published.

Henneman gift. Mr. John B. Henneman, Jr., has donated a collection of letters written by Professor William Peterfield Trent to his grandfather, John Bell Henneman (1864–1908), who served as professor of English at the University of the South and as editor of The Sewanee Review. The two correspondents met at the time that Pro-
Professor Trent also taught at the University of the South; the majority of the 111 letters date from 1900 to 1907, Professor Trent’s early years as a member of the faculty of Barnard College and of the Graduate Faculties of Columbia University. The long and detailed letters deal with their writings and publications, their research and teaching, various contributions to The Sewanee Review, and numerous other matters of interest at their respective institutions.

Herrick gift. Mrs. Casey Isaacs Herrick has presented a collection of papers of her father, the late Stanley M. Isaacs (A.B., 1903; A.M., 1904), who served as Manhattan Borough President, 1938–1941, and as a member of the New York City Council, 1941–1962. Included in the gift are files of correspondence and manuscripts,
biographical material, and awards, certificates, medals, and plaques. There are letters in the files from John Haynes Holmes, Fiorello LaGuardia, Edith Kermit Roosevelt, and Eleanor Roosevelt.


*Koo and Tsien gift.* A bronze portrait bust by Jo Davidson of the distinguished diplomat V. K. Wellington Koo (A.B., 1908; A.M., 1909; Ph.D., 1912; L.L.D., 1917) was presented in a ceremony on April 18, 1989, by his widow, Mme. Juliana Koo, and his daughter and son-in-law, Patricia Koo and Kiachi Tsien. Sculpted by Davidson in 1920, the portrait bust is one of a number made by the artist of the delegates to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The bust, set on a marble base, was cast by the Valsuani Foundry in Paris. It is on view in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, where Dr. Koo’s papers are held.

*Lewinson gift.* Mrs. Jean Flexner Lewinson has donated two letters written to her late husband, Paul Lewinson (A.B., 1922), by the American historian Charles A. Beard concerning a session to be held at the American Historical Association annual meeting at Washington, D.C., in 1939, at which Beard was invited to speak. Mrs. Lewinson has also donated related correspondence and copies of her husband’s replies.

*Mackie gift.* Mr. Joshua Mackie has donated a group of manuscripts written by the noted nineteenth-century American journalist, author, and Civil War correspondent, Ben C. Truman (1835–1916), comprising the autograph manuscript drafts of his work on the American language, entitled “Our Own American Slang,”
totaling some 120 pages, and the autograph drafts of various articles and essays on food and gastronomy, written ca. 1910.

_McWilliams gift._ The library of the late Carey McWilliams, who served on the editorial staff of _The Nation_ from 1945 and as editor from 1955 until 1975, has been presented by his widow, Mrs. Iris McWilliams. Numbering some two thousand volumes, the library reflects Carey McWilliams's interest in the political and sociological issues of the period, such as racial minorities, urban development in California, prejudice, and congressional investigations, as well as in William Butler Yeats and Ambrose Bierce. There are thirty Yeats first editions in the McWilliams library, including _Words for Music_
Perhaps and Other Poems, Cuala Press, 1932; A Full Moon in March, 1935; In the Seven Woods, 1903; Estrangement, Cuala Press, 1926; The Death of Synge, Cuala Press, 1928; Stories of Michael Robartes and His Friends, Cuala Press, 1931; and Dramatis Personae, Cuala Press, 1935. Among the sixty-two first editions by and about Bierce, there are several early collections of his epigrams and stories, including Nuggets and Dust [1873], The Fiend's Delight [1873], Tales of Soldiers and Civilians, 1891, and Black Beetles in Amber, 1892. Mr. McWilliams's biography of Bierce, published in 1929, is also included in the collection.

Miller gift. Professor Edwin H. Miller has donated four letters written to him from 1967 to 1969 by the late Professor Lionel Trilling concerning Professor Trilling's participation in a Walt Whitman celebration held at New York University in April 1969. Accompanying the letters are carbon copies of Professor Miller's replies.

National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee gift. A major addition to the papers of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee has been received, comprising approximately 74,000 pieces of correspondence, manuscripts, documents, subject and case files, and printed materials, covering the period from the founding of the organization in 1951 through 1985. In addition to the records pertaining to the administration of the organization, there are extensive files of the Bill of Rights Journal and the related Bill of Rights Award, which in the past has been presented to Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein, Shirley Chisholm, and Benjamin Spock. The case files document various Vietnam antiwar lawsuits, the work of the House Un-American Activities Committee, and the actions of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission relating to the Indian Point reactor.

Parsons gift. In a recent gift Professor Coleman O. Parsons (A.B., 1928) has added to his collection several files of notes and drafts of his writings and researches on George Colman the elder and his son, and on Scottish poetry, folklore, and history. Of special interest in Professor Parsons's gift are eleven original letters and manuscripts by Thomas Campbell, George Colman the elder, Lord Francis Jef-
frey, Andrew Lang, James Montgomery, Robert Montgomery, and George Thomson. Also donated was a rare eighteenth-century book, *The Tryal and Condemnation of Arundel Coke alias Cooke Esq; and of John Woodburne Labourer, for Felony*, printed in London in 1722 for John Darby and Daniel Midwinter.

**Rothkopf gift.** Mrs. Carol Z. Rothkopf (A.M., 1952) has donated a series of 103 letters written in 1867 and 1868 by Gabriel Bernheimer and Thekla Trautmann, grandparents of Marguerite A. Cohn. Gabriel Bernheimer was a traveler in wines, spirits, and tobacco, and the letters between him and his wife, written in French, German, and English, reflect family concerns and the life on the road which included stops in Cincinnati, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, and numerous other towns in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Missouri.

**Sievan gift.** Mrs. Lee C. Sievan has donated fifty-three volumes, comprising first English and American editions of the writings of twentieth-century novelists and poets, including Lawrence Durrell, James Jones, Frank O’Hara, Archibald MacLeish, and Dorothy Parker, among others.

**Taylor gift.** Mrs. Davidson Taylor has presented thirty-four photographs of the novelist and short story writer Sophie Kerr for addition to the collection of her papers. They provide a pictorial record of Sophie Kerr’s life over more than sixty years. In addition, Mrs. Taylor has donated a letter written in 1961 by the poet John Hall Wheelock to her and her late husband, Davidson Taylor, with a holograph manuscript of a poem entitled “Song” on the attached leaf.
Activities of the Friends

Finances. General purpose contributions for the twelve-month period ended June 30, 1989, totaled $41,035, a rise of 26 percent over the previous year. Special purpose gifts, designated for book and manuscript purchases, for the establishment of new endowments, and for the increase of the principals of established endowments, amounted to $41,127. The appraised value of gifts in kind for the same period was $183,881. The total of all gifts and contributions since the establishment of the Friends in 1951 now stands at $7,570,074.

Fall reception. "Thomas Merton: The Poet and the Contemplative Life," an exhibition drawn from the Merton collection acquired by the Rare Book and Manuscript Library last year, will open with a reception in the Kempner Exhibition Room on Wednesday afternoon, December 6, from 5:00 to 7:00. On display will be the manuscript of The Seven Storey Mountain, Merton's correspondence with Mark Van Doren, drawings and paintings by Merton and his father, and holograph poetry manuscripts and inscribed first editions. An illustrated catalogue of the exhibition will be available.

New Council member. Mrs. Carol Z. Rothkopf has been elected to serve on the Council of the Friends as a member of the Class of '92.

Future meetings. A members preview reception in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library on Wednesday afternoon, March 7, 1990, from 5:00 to 7:00, will open the exhibition of drawings by the late Charles Saxon for cartoons and covers that appeared in The New Yorker and other magazines. The art work on exhibition will be drawn from the large collection received by the University by bequest of the artist. The annual Bancroft Awards Dinner will be held in the Rotunda of Low Memorial Library on Wednesday evening, April 4, 1990.
THE FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA LIBRARIES

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