

ELECTED SILENCE

*THOMAS
MERTON*

Preface by EVELYN WAUGH

PACIFIC

OF New Zealand-American parentage, born in the Pyrenees, educated in English and French schools, then at Clare, Cambridge, and Columbia University, Thomas Merton, with his cosmopolitan background and promise as a writer, soon attracted attention in the American world of letters and might seem to have had worldly success in his grasp. But he had grown increasingly critical of the conventional materialist outlook, and of the modern world in general. Betaking himself eventually to the famous Trappist monastery in Kentucky, he there received the habit in 1942, and has since been ordained priest.

If he had been outwardly the typical young American intellectual, he has since become almost a symbolic figure, associated with the great Cistercian revival in the States, and an articulate representative of so many of his contemporaries who, especially since the war, have also seen the Cistercian ideal as the answer to the futility and materialism of modern life.

This account of his own reaction to it, and of his spiritual progress from scepticism to faith, is certainly a remarkable book: in the opinion of *The Times Literary Supplement*, "perhaps a classic of its kind"; John Betjeman, in *The Daily Herald*, called it "one of the only books about the life of the spirit which is at once in modern slang and flattering to contemporary intelligence"; and Evelyn Waugh, "a book which may well prove to be of permanent interest in the history of religious experience".

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HOMAS
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ELECTED SILENCE

THE WATERS OF SILENCE
THE ASCENT TO TRUTH
THE SIGN OF JONAH
THE WATERS OF SILENCE
ELECTED POEMS

ELECTED

WATERS

THE WATERS OF SILENCE

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THE WATERS OF SILENCE

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SEEDS OF CONTEMPLATION

THE WATERS OF SILENCE
SELECTED POEMS

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
THOMAS MERTON

WITH A FOREWORD BY EVELYN WAUGH



ELECTED
SILENCE

*Elected silence sing to me
And beat upon my whorled ear,
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear*

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS



LONDON: HOLLIS & CARTER

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This edition, 1954*

ELECTED SILENCE

*Elects silence ring to me
And hark upon my whistled cue
Pipe me to business still and be
The more that I care to hear*
GERARD MANLEY JOPKIN

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CHRISTO
VERO
REGI

FIVE IN VOLUME

This very remarkable autobiography has, under the title of *The Story of My Mission*, enjoyed prodigious success in the U.S.A. The present text has been corrected and very slightly changed in order to adapt it to the European market. Nothing has been introduced, on certain passages, which seemed to be of purely local interest. It remains essentially American. Despite a translation sometimes called, "Thomas the monk" — Father Louis, as he is now named — is typical of what a priest and monk in his country, Colombia, not Cambridge, formed in literary style. His spirituality, though French in discipline, is a flower of the Catholic life of the New World. Americans no longer become impatient in their quest for full cultural development. They are learning to draw away from what is foreign in their own civilization while remaining in their own borders.

Here in brief, simple, colloquial American is the record of a soul experiencing, first, contact with the modern world, then Faith, then a clear reaction to the way in which Faith may be applied to the modern world. The word "prodigious" is used with full intent. It is a product of the new spirit of the New World that this book should have been read by hundreds of thousands. For several generations American Catholics have shuddered in works of corporate charity such as *Our Daily Bread*, where, and in recent years have produced such a flood of similar enterprises as *Friendship House* in Harlem and the *House of Hospitality* in West Street. The contemporary life has until very lately been almost in proportion to the numbers. Now Carmelite Convents can hardly cope with the press of postulants, and the Trappists are settling new houses in the deep South and to the hills of Utah. But the life of these communities is by its nature unostentatious, and *The Seven Years* did not make a startling revelation to many non-Catholic Americans, even were they unaware of the existence by their midst of institutions which seemed a denial of the American "way of life". The book suddenly woke a new people conscious of extreme poverty generated in their feelings of devotion. To one observer, at least it seems probable that this little book will shortly be the start of a quiet monastic revival. There is an urgent

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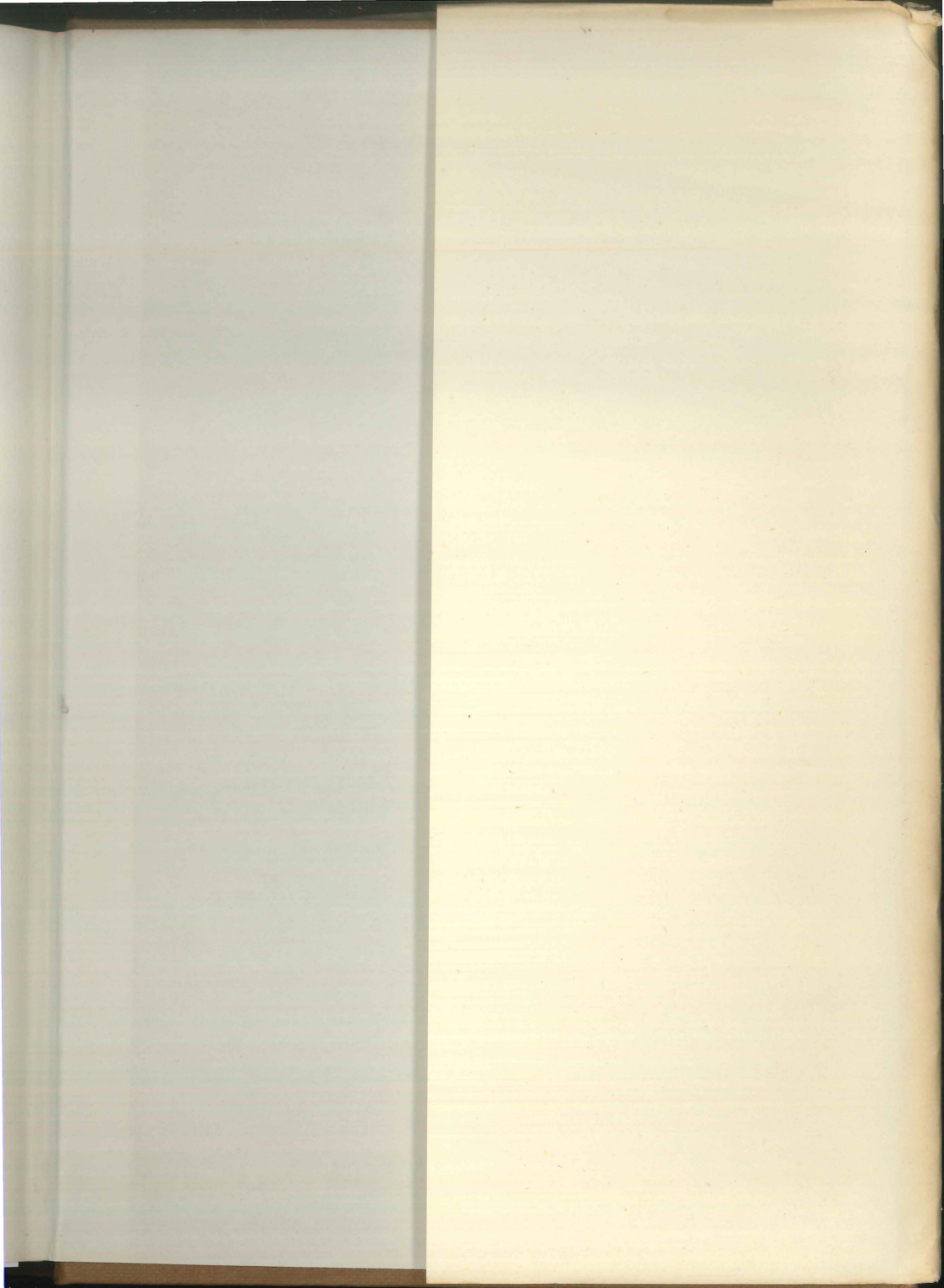
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Thomas Merton's books have sold over 900,000 copies
in the English language alone.

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