



Ms. File

### Lionel Johnson Collection

Lionel Johnson was born in Broadstairs, Kent on March 15, 1867. He was educated at Winchester (1880-86) and New College, Oxford (1886-90), and then moved to London to write poetry while contributing essays and reviews to various periodicals. He joined the Roman Catholic Church in 1891 and his first volume of poems, published in 1895, gave expression to his "catholic puritanism." His other interests revolved Irish politics and literature. He visited Ireland often and published *Ireland and Other Poems* in 1897. Other books include: *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894), *Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers* (posthumous, 1911) and other volumes of poetry. Alcohol abuse and illness contributed to his death at the age of thirty-five on October 4, 1902.

A holograph letter, note, and poem by Johnson have been acquired by the McCormick Library. While compiling research for a projected biography of Johnson, John Gere contacted several authors who knew him, and he received replies in 1942 from Lord Alfred Douglas (1870-1945), Campbell Dodgson (1867-1948), John Hallward, and William Busby. There is also a photograph of Johnson. This correspondence was purchased by the McCormick Library in 1998.

Photograph of Lionel Johnson.

Autographed note [fragment?] originally laid into Johnson's *Poems* (London, 1895)

Lionel Johnson to Frank [?], 20 Fitzroy Street [London], 16 June 1893; 1p. Johnson apologizes for missing appointment due to sudden illness.

Lionel Johnson [ms. poem/note with no recipient indicated], Clifford's Inn, Fleet Street, London, England; February 1902; 1p. re: friendship.

W[illiam] Busby to John Gere; Welborne Rectory, Dereham, Norfolk, August 16, 1942; [2]pp. "I was. . . friendly with Johnson in College, but he had no close friends at Winchester. He always kept himself aloof. . . It was a love for literature that drew us together. . ."

Campbell Dodgson to John Gere; 22 Montagu Square, w. 1 [London], August 22, 1942; [4]pp. Re: friendship with Johnson at Winchester and Johnson's interests in literature, religion, etc.

Alfred Douglas to John Gere; 1 St. Ann's Court, Nizells Avenue, Hove 2, Sussex, August 7, 1942; [6]pp., with envelope. "I knew Lionel very well & indeed he was one of my greatest friends at Oxford & later in London. . ."

Alfred Douglas to John Gere; 1 St. Ann's Court, Nizells Avenue, Hove 2, Sussex, August 31, 1942; [2]pp., with envelope. ". . . I know nothing about the state of

Lionel's soul by the time he died."  
John Hallward to John Gere; House of the Resurrection, Mirfield, Yorks, August 10,  
1942; [4]pp. Re: Johnson's reputation, especially at Oxford and in London,  
including rumours ". . .of religious eccentricities. . .of ways of living equally  
eccentric, of night turned into day, of alcohol, of unintelligible poetry