

Conceivably the fact that the book was noticed at all shows Carter's influence (of the twelve other novels listed on the dust-jacket for *The Fall of the Titan*, only five were given any notice in the *TLS*). In any case, whether or not Carter had anything to do with the review, the idea that the novel might be a parody is worth considering.

This idea would seem to be at odds with the dust-jacket recommendation that the book should be "put into the hands of thinking young people"—which implies that it should be taken at face value. On the other hand, of course, this blurb could be part of the parody. But if one wished to produce a parody of sentimental fiction with an anti-Labour slant, it would take a remarkable commitment to devote about 90,000 words to the cause. And it is not clear what would be accomplished. Parodying the literary conventions and moralistic tone of popular fiction would affect the expression of political views on both sides. It would not, in other words, be a way of directing the reader's sympathy to move from one side to the other—though possibly it could reveal shortcomings in the arguments on both sides. Or it could simply, through exaggeration, show the weaknesses of popular fiction. But it is not very effective as a parody, since it is tiresome rather than amusing. Viewing it as a parody, therefore, does not redeem it from being an unsatisfactory piece of writing, in contrast with everything known to be from Carter's pen.

The novel does contain a few elements that would be compatible with Carter's authorship, the first being its many classical references. Carter's devotion to the classics, nourished at Eton and King's Cambridge (where he took an honors degree in classics), was lifelong and was reflected in his collecting and editing of Catullus and his admiration for A. E. Housman. Although Catullus is not mentioned in the novel, there are references to Aristotle, Plutarch, Aristophanes, Tacitus, Cicero, Socrates, and Homer. There is even a conversation about remembering classical texts from one's college days (p. 132), and a Latin quotation from Augustine is the subject of another conversation (p. 33). Other literary allusions include Byron, Moliere, Lamartine, Clovis Hugues, and Shakespeare (one character uses the phrase "stale, flat, and unprofitable"). There are few bibliophilic touches, but a character introduced on the first page is "a lover of books" (p. 230), and another character visits a bookshop that had been Dodsley's in the eighteenth century (pp. 51-52). These references do not, however, furnish strong enough evidence to outweigh the overall style and tone, for they are not beyond the competence of many people with a literary education.

If Carter wrote the novel, it is not credible that he wrote it in the years just prior to its publication. Immediately after he came down from Cambridge in 1927, he was fully occupied with the book world, having been hired at once by Scribner's London office to supply rare books to the New York shop. And his letters to the *TLS* beginning early in 1931 show that he was already immersed in the study of publishers' bindings, Sir Thomas Browne, and the Wise-Forman forgeries—the subjects of his remarkable series of publications in 1932-34 (*Binding Variants in English Publishing* and an edition of Browne in 1932 and *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets* in 1934). Also in these years he contributed introductions to two Elkin Mathews catalogues, searched for books