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Authors of a literature of protest
Portrayers of a crumbling age—Petronius and Fitzgerald

The Great Gatsby and Trimalchio

Paul L. MacKendrick

THE NEWS THAT SCOTT FITZGERALD at first intended to give the title *Trimalchio* to his novel *The Great Gatsby*, but was dissuaded on the ground that the name would be too hard for the public to spell and pronounce, will be treated by classicists with their customary stoicism. To *aficionados* of Scott Fitzgerald it will not be news. For they will remember that because of Daisy's dissatisfaction with one of Gatsby's fabulous parties "the lights in his house failed to go on one Saturday night—and, as obscurely as it had begun, his career as Trimalchio was over." And they will recall that in *This Side of Paradise* Amory Blaine, who is to Fitzgerald as Eugene Gant to Thomas Wolfe, "delved further into the misty side streets of literature: Huysmans, Walter Pater, Theophile Gautier, and the racier sections of Rabelais, Boccaccio, Petronius, and Suetonius."

Classicists will probably be disappointed, and others neither sad nor glad, that the delving resulted in no deadly parallels. There is not even direct evidence that Fitzgerald read Petronius in Latin; at least the *Satyricon* was not included in the syllabus of the two courses in Latin that Fitzgerald took at Princeton. And he wrote in an undated letter, "One time in sophomore year at Princeton, Dean West got up and rolled out the great lines of Horace:

> 'Integer vitae, scelerisque purus
> Non eget Mauris iaculis neque arcu'—

—And I knew in my heart that I had missed something by being a poor Latin scholar, like a blessed evening with a lovely girl. It was a great human experience I had rejected through laziness, through having sown no painful seed."

But shakiness in Latin had not barred Amory Blaine from reading the *Satyricon* because it was racy, and it did not keep the mature Fitzgerald from seeing in Trimalchio the symbol of a sick society. So the method

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Professor MacKendrick is editor of the comprehensive two-volume anthology of classical authors in new translations now under preparation by the University of Wisconsin Press. The direction of this volume has been closely related to Professor MacKendrick's experiences in the Integrated Liberal Studies Program at Wisconsin

(detailed reporting of décor and incident), the aim (social satire), and the experience (progressive disillusion) of Petronius and Fitzgerald are so similar that the parallel between the *nouveau riche* excesses of Long Island under Harding and of Capua—or was it Puteoli?—under Nero turns out to be striking, and that between the authors more striking still. To cast light, through the investigation of these more subtle parallels, upon the social, intellectual, and political attitudes common to both authors, and to suggest a new approach to Petronius through the understanding of Fitzgerald, is the purpose of this paper.

I

THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE between Gatsby and Trimalchio, so far as the fragmentary state of the *Satyricon* permits us to judge, is that Gatsby has a sentimental motive for his magnificence, Trimalchio none, beyond that of any Midas or Morgan or Maecenas. This is of course another way of saying that Fitzgerald sympathizes with his hero and despises "what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams"; Petronius despises the whole society that has made Trimalchio and most of his hangers-on. With these important reservations, Fitzgerald describes the "vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty "of West Egg—the music, the *objets d'art*, the people—in terms which Petronius would understand.

First of all, the music, part of the many-colored, many-keyed commotion of Gatsby's life. A whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos, and low and high drums, playing Vladimir Tostoff's *Jazz History of the World*, burying its rhythms obligingly for an exhibitionist dancer, supplying the accompaniment to a famous tenor who sings in Italian, and a notorious contralto who sings in jazz. A tall, red-haired young lady from a famous chorus weeps as she sings, and is invited to sing the notes which her mascara has made on her face.

This musical background is even more painfully obvious at Trimalchio's party—after all, his wife is an ex-chorus girl, and in her house everything is done to music. A uniformed trumpeter plays a fanfare as the guests enter the dining hall; a piccolo whispers private music in the master's ear as he is carried in his sedan chair; the slaves sing in chorus as they solicitously pare the guests' hangnails; Trimalchio is piped in to dinner, and himself grinds out in a most hideous voice a hit tune from a musical comedy. Music of popular airs accompanies acrobats as they climb ladders, hop through burning hoops, and pick up wine-jars with their teeth. The cook sings in an extremely ugly quavering voice as he serves the snails. After an outburst of maudlin weeping Trimalchio sings in his bath, and finally the party ends as it began, with trumpeters, this time rehearsing a funeral march so loud that the watch bursts in, thinking Trimalchio's thirty-room house is on fire.

Décor

IN BOTH HOUSES the objects of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous waste display a taste in keeping with the music. Gatsby's house was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, built in period style by a brewer who went into a decline because the tenants of the neighboring cottages refused to have their roofs thatched with straw. ("Americans, while willing, even eager, to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry.") Trimalchio would have approved, though Daisy did not, of Gatsby's two motor boats, his Rolls-Royce, his station-wagon, his own circus-wagon of a car ("a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat boxes and supper boxes and tool boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns"). Besides, there were his eight servants (seventy were born on Trimalchio's estates in a single day), his hydroplane, his library, triumphantly and thoroughly stocked with real books. ("Knew when to stop, too—didn't cut the pages.") Gatsby's shirts have "stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and

apple-green and lavender and faint orange, with monograms of Indian blue," and he wears suits of caramel color, or luminous pink, or white flannel, with a silver shirt and gold tie.

Trimalchio's house, like its master, *ex nihilo crevit*. It used to be a mere kiosk, now it's a regular temple: four dining rooms, twenty bed-rooms, two marble (veneer) colonnades, an *upstairs* wine-cellar, master bedroom, the viper's boudoir (Trimalchio so refers to his wife, the ex-chorus girl), a fine nook for the porter, and plenty of guest bedrooms. When the lamps multiply before Trimalchio's guests' eyes, the illumination is rather inward than outward, but these same lamps burn costly ointment, which is also used in the wine and as a foot-bath. Trimalchio has a passion for silver. Trimalchio's wines are older than Napoleon brandy ("I put on some second-rate stuff yesterday, and there was a much more distinguished guest-list"); he is saving several magnums, carefully sealed with gypsum, to decorate his enormous mausoleum. He despises learning no more than Gatsby; he has three libraries, one Greek and one Latin. (The discrepancy is in the manuscripts, and it should stand.) His porter wears green with a cerise belt, his wife cerise with a high yellow waist-band, and he himself plays tennis in a russet tunic and dress pumps.

People

THESE NABOBS, ancient and modern, have in common not only their music and their *objets d'art*, but their parasites, the types that prey upon them. At Gatsby's the guests conduct themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with an amusement park, and the reader is better acquainted with them than is the host, who says simply, "I keep it [his house] always full of interesting people night and day. People who do interesting things. Celebrated people." It is a precious lot. They sneer bitterly at Gatsby on the courage of Gatsby's liquor, and by accepting his hospitality become authorities on his past. There are the names of that menagerie listed in grim catalogue, full of Fitzgerald's obsession with the rawness, the *Weltschmerz*, the sudden deaths, and the neuroses of the 'twenties: "Doctor Webster Civet, who was drowned last summer up in Maine . . . Edgar Beaver, whose hair, they say, turned cotton-white one winter afternoon for no good reason at all . . . Snell was there three days before he went to the penitentiary, so drunk out on the gravel drive that the Ulysses Swett's automobile ran over his right hand. . . . G. Earl Muldoon, brother to that Muldoon who afterward strangled his wife . . . the young Quinns, divorced now, and Henry L. Palmetto, who killed himself by jumping in front of a subway train in Times Square . . . young Brewer, who had his nose shot off in the war . . . Miss Claudia Hip, with a man reputed to be her chauffeur." All these people—the world and his mistress—came to Gatsby's house in the summer.

Women

AS A FOIL TO THESE, Fitzgerald presents "the staid nobility of the countryside": rich, confused, simple-minded Tom Buchanan, the ex-Yale end, who had reached such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterward savored of anti-climax. He nibbles at the edge of stale ideas, believes in race supremacy, and—when he is not with his mistress—in family life and family institutions. "By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me." He is capable of instant transition from libertine to prig. Gatsby's five years' devotion to Daisy he dismisses as a "presumptuous little flirtation." It is his wife, Daisy, excitingly desirable, the silver idol, the "nice" girl (the quotation marks are Fitzgerald's), safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor, in her artificial world, redolent of orchids, and pleasant, cheerful snobbery, for whose sake Gatsby has reared the preposterous Petronian structure whose simplicity she fails to understand. She says, with "basic insincerity," that she has been everywhere and seen everything and done everything. Like Augustus' daughter

Julia she has contracted a *mariage de convenance*, and is therefore looking for romantic possibilities totally absent from her world. When she has killed her husband's mistress in an auto accident, she allows her lover Gatsby to take the blame and to be murdered for it, while she and her husband, having smashed up things and creatures carelessly, retreat back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it is that keeps them together, and let other people clean up the mess they have made.

But of course the major interest of both novels centres in the development of the main characters. The fine sympathy with which Nick Carraway, Fitzgerald's intellectual *alter ego*, describes Gatsby is a foil for the subtle scorn with which he strips Daisy and her kind down to their basic insincerity. We see how James Gatz of North Dakota invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year old boy would be likely to invent, set him in a dream universe of ineffable gaudiness, such as one could concoct by skimming through a dozen magazines, and remained faithful to that conception to the end; how as a young officer by the colossal accident of the first world war, with no comfortable family behind him, he fell in love with Daisy, and was committed to the following of a grail. When she, wanting her life shaped by some force—of love, of money, of unquestioned practicality—that was close at hand, married Tom Buchanan while Gatsby was overseas, he devoted his whole corrupt life to the realizing of his uncorruptible dream—drifted cooly out of nowhere and bought a palace on Long Island Sound, in order to have the kind of friends whose lack had lost him Daisy. It had been a world complete in itself, second to nothing because it had no consciousness of being so, until he looked at it again through Daisy's eyes, and saw her "appalled by this unprecedented 'place' that Broadway had begotten upon a Long Island fishing village, by its raw vigor that chafed under the old euphemisms and by the too obtrusive fate that herded its inhabitants along a short-cut from nothing to nothing." She was appalled by it, so again he stood breathless and betrayed, having paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. The Gatzes of this world can never long possess the Daisy Fays: the distance from the clam flats of Lake Superior to ripe mystery, the gay and radiant activities of Daisy's father's house in Louisville, is too great to be bridged even by the colossal accidents of a war and a postwar. *Ex nihilo nil fit;* but Fitzgerald makes it clear that Lucretius' truism applies to Daisy as well as to Gatsby.

What of the menagerie that surrounds Trimalchio? Their names are all Greek: Hermeros, Dama, Seleucus, Phileros the barrister, Ganymede, Echion the rag man, Niceros, Plocamus, Habinnas the contractor; they are all *parvenus;* yesterday a garret, today a mansion. Like Gatsby and his gangster and café society friends, they are *in* but not *of* the society in which they live. They differ essentially from Gatsby's guests in that they all know their host, and admire him. With his estates so large he has never seen his boundaries, his slaves so numerous he does not know one in ten by name, his accounts so complicated they are always six months in arrears, his fortune so vast he cannot invest it, he represents all their little dreams magnified to infinity. But they, like Gatsby and the foul dust that floated in the wake of his dreams, are filled with a maudlin *mal de siècle*. Their satisfactions are material, subject to the destroying touch of death, or bankruptcy, or the sneers of the *dilettanti*.

Trimalchio's is the rare dinner party where the food has less savor than the conversation. Dama drinks double bumpers, and goes straight from bed to banquet. Seleucus mourns a friend who has fasted to death: "It was just the other day that he called me by name: I can see myself talking to him now. We walk about," he sighs, "like blown-up bladders; we are less than flies . . . no more than bubbles. . . . It was the doctors did him in, or rather bad luck, for a doctor is no more than a consolation of the mind. . . . He had a fine wake—he had freed a number of slaves—even if his wife's *were* crocodile tears." Phileros the barrister adds significant detail, full of all the solid bourgeois values:

"He started from scratch and made his pile, by being willing to pick up a farthing from a dunghill with his teeth. So he grew like a honeycomb, and left a clear hundred thousand, and all in hard cash. But his slaves eavesdropped, and did him in. It never pays to be too trusting, especially if you're a business man." The undertaker Proculus—"the decentest man in the party," Petronius calls him—cannot call his hair his own; like Gatsby, he has found that when "the company's pot goes off the boil, and things start slipping, your friends desert you." He used to dine like a king: pigs in blankets, *petits fours*, pheasant, more wine spilled under the table than many a man has in his cellar, but when bankruptcy strikes him he does not lose his *panache*. "For sale," he advertises, "superfluous goods."

And it is not only the rich whom the shoe pinches. Ganymede speaks for the common man, who suffers, while to upper-class jaws it's always Christmas. Nowadays, the politicians are in league with the bakers to keep dear bread bad and scarce. It gets worse, he sighs, by the minute. This town is growing backward, like the calf's tail.

Echion the rag man doesn't think it's so bad. "Things are good in spots, as the farmer said when he lost the piebald pig." There are always *panis et circenses*. The intelligentsia may scoff, but the poor have their pleasures. Their sons learn Greek and the times-table, can get to be barbers, or auctioneers, or at least lawyers. Look at Phileros, for instance. Only yesterday he used to carry round his wares for sale on his back, and today he dares talk back in court to the best of them. "Yes, culture is a gold-mine, and a good practical education never dies." Who are the *literati* to sneer at these bourgeois values? Hermeros bought his freedom, he owes no one a sou, he has his bit of land and his bit of money—"I feed twenty bellies and a dog," he says proudly—his credit is better than riches; he has made the grade. "I never learned geometry and criticism and nonsense and nursery rhymes, but I can read large print and figure in pounds, shillings, and ounces." He has learned the value of property, circumspection, and respect. "I thank God," he says, "for my practical education: it has made me what I am today." Encolpius and Ascyltus, whose adventures give the *Satyricon* its precarious unity, are a pair in whose comparison Fitzgerald's inks are white. They have a better education than prospects, and better prospects than morals. Encolpius, particularly, the intellectual, is given to Proustain self-flagellation and introspection. "I care nothing for possessions," he says, "unless the common heard is jealous of them." After Trimalchio's banquet he takes a room in an out-of-the-way place right on the beach and haunts himself with the thought that he is deserted, despised, a cheat, a murderer, a beggar, and an exile. Like Fitzgerald, Encolpius is sensitive because he has never seen military action; he lies about his captain and his regiment until he is exposed because his shoes are out of uniform. He does not share the bourgeois view of the blessings of education. "College," he says, "makes complete fools of our young men, because they see and hear nothing of ordinary life there." Uprooted, unadjusted, unhappy in love, ill-at-ease in the social, intellectual, and political climate of a world he never made, he is, and he knows he is, a member of neither the first nor the last of the "lost generations," one of the "sad young men," blood brother to Jake in *The Sun Also Rises*, to Amory Blaine, Nich Carraway, and Dick Diver, to Eugene Gant and George Webber, to Stephen Daedalus and perhaps even to Studs Lonigan.

The tale of Trimalchio's motiveless extravagance begins and ends with a trumpet-call which is a *memento mori*. "I am bursting with happiness," he says between sobs. "I was once just what you are," he tells his guests, "but by my own merits I have come to this." "This" is a drunken quarrel with his wife before a houseful of tipsy guests. The road to "this" is marked by subservience, adultery, losses at sea, and the pawning of his wife's jewels, and the attainment of his goal is celebrated by a rehearsal of his funeral, with himself in the role of corpse. "So the world turns like a mill," he says in the midst of his ostentation, "and always brings some evil to

pass." When in 1922, the dramatic date of *The Great Gatsby*, T. S. Eliot published *The Waste Land*, he aptly chose a quotation from Trimalchio as its motto. When the boys asked the Sibyl, "Σίβυλλα, τί θέλεις;" she answered, "'Αποθανεῖν θέλω." Gatsby and the Buchanans, too, live on the edge of a Waste Land, the symbolic desert of ashes that lies between West Egg and New York. Is it not perhaps more than a mere cliché when Trimalchio's limping elegiacs bewail the unpredictability of Fortune and prescribe wine as opiate? With unconscious irony he quotes verses about pearls, emeralds, rubies, and fine linen, and how little they compensate the cuckolded husband. His gods are Gain, Luck, and Profit, and they have given him just that and nothing more. He has composed his own epitaph: "He started from a shoestring, left thirty million, and never went to college." He believes in werewolves, witches, and astrologers. A cock-crow makes him nervous, and he lives in deadly fear of informers. It is all as sinister as a Charles Addams cartoon. He cannot imagine a poor man, even as a hypothetical case. He is a Man of Property, and as such he shares the unhappiness, as he exceeds the bad taste, of Soames Forsyte, of Babbitt, and of Fitzgerald's "very rich, who are different from you and me." ("Yes," said Hemingway, "they have more money.")

II

In view of their unsparing and detailed analysis of the ills of their society, it is not surprising that Petronius and Fitzgerald are in equally bad odor with the mandarins of literary criticism. Says an English classicist of this century, "If we can suppose the author of this work [the *Satyricon*] to have been animated by any other motive than the desire to amuse himself, it might be that of convincing himself that the world in general was as bad as he was himself." Says an American, writing in 1929, "It is unfortunate . . . that writers whom we regard as realists should have felt themselves compelled to deal with the lower strata of society and with the unpleasant aspects of existence." So distinguished a literary figure as Mr. Westbrook Pegler had this to say of Fitzgerald's choice of characters, in a tasteful piece composed at the time of the author's death: "[It] recalls memories of a queer bunch of undisciplined and self-indulgent brats who were determined not to pull their weight in the boat and wanted the world to drop everything and sit down and bawl with them. A kick in the pants and a clout over the scalp were more like their needing."

In dealing with these gentry, the patience of Job, though more difficult to exercise than the acidity of a Housman, is perhaps more efficacious in the long run. For we have come to see that the artist is the product of his age and his own experience, and we know that neither Petronius' nor Fitzgerald's age or experience was calculated precisely to convince them that God was in his Heaven or that all was right with the world.

Merely Clever

For Gatsby is Fitzgerald, and the novel is a condition contrary to fact in past time. — Gatsby's story might have been Fitzgerald's if *This Side of Paradise* had not made the author enough money to marry Zelda Sayre. In that novel Mrs. Connage says to her daughter Rosalind, "I have your best interests at heart when I tell you not to take a step you'll spend your days regretting. . . . You'd be dependent absolutely on a dreamer, a nice, well-born boy, but a dreamer—merely *clever*." So Rosalind "presses the ring softly into Amory's hand" and makes him "sick of a system where the richest man gets the most beautiful girl if he wants her, where the artist without an income has to sell his talents to a button manufacturer." To turn from the fictional to the real situation, Fitzgerald himself wrote, in *The Crack-Up*, "It was one of those tragic loves doomed for lack of money, and one day the girl closed it out on the basis of common sense. During a long summer of despair I wrote a novel instead of letters, so it came out all right, but it came out all right for a different person. The man with the jingle of money in his pocket who married the

girl a year later would always cherish an abiding distrust, an animosity, toward the leisure class—not the conviction of a revolutionist but the smouldering hatred of a peasant. In the years since then I have never been able to stop wondering where my friends' money came from, nor to stop thinking that at one time a sort of *droit de seigneur* might have been exercised to give one of them my girl."

There might be some grounds for suspecting here the influence of Edmund Wilson, whom Fitzgerald referred to as for twenty years his intellectual conscience, and who probably figures as Tom d'Invilliers in *This Side of Paradise*. But the savage dissection of Tom and Daisy Buchanan in *Gatsby*, and of Nicole Diver and her family in *Tender is the Night*, are surely Fitzgerald's own. When John Dos Passos ranked *Gatsby* with *War and Peace* and *The Red and the Black*, we may be sure that it was not Fitzgerald's sympathy with the upper classes that prompted the choice. It was no mere playboy chronicler of a jazz age, nor even an "Orestes at the Ritz," who wrote of Nicole Diver: "For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California; chicle factories fumed and link-belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed toothpaste in vats and drew mouthwash out of copper hogsheads; girls canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve; half-breed Indians toiled on Brazilian coffee plantations and dreamers were muscled out of patent rights in new tractors." Fitzgerald had risen above the "illusions of a nation, the lies of generations of frontier mothers who had to croon falsely that there were no wolves outside the cabin door."

And what of Petronius? Fitzgerald's world had seemed to go to pieces overnight; Petronius' had been crumbling for two hundred years: first in the blood-bath of civil war, then in spendthrift hedonism and extravagant prodigality. When all due allowance is made for the rhetorical exaggeration which colors nearly all Latin literature, there remains a hard core of fact: there *was* a gross inequality in the distribution of wealth, and the rebels were aware of it. A century before the probable date of the *Satyricon*, Lucretius was analyzing the neurotic restlessness of the leisure class; Sallust, later, ascribes the conspiracy of Catiline in part to the loathing felt by the ordinary man for his own condition. By the time Livy was writing his famous preface, in the Golden Age of Augustus, the *auri sacra fames* had reached, he says, such a pitch that Rome could endure neither her vices nor their remedies. Horace in *Odes* and *Satires* show how the millionaire's fears and forebodings, like Trimalchio's, clamber up the same way as the millionaire himself. Rome has grown more corrupt generation by generation, and Horace sees no prospect of the precedent's being reversed. Poor and rich are equally restless. One poor man changes his garret, his bed, his bath, his barber; he hires a boat, and is as sick as the rich man in his three-banked yacht. Persius shares with Petronius a contempt for the sort of education which has helped to make this sick society what it is; Juvenal joins our author in an attack on legacy-hunting. Petronius says of Croton, but he means Rome: "In that city men are either the prey of legacy-hunting or are legacy-hunters themselves. . . . No one brings up children; that would mean no dinner or theatre invitations. So the town is a Waste Land [like Fitzgerald's desert of ashes in *Gatsby*], like a plague-stricken plain, where there is nothing but carcasses to be devoured, and crows to devour them."

Such was the society in which Petronius lived and wrote. "There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired." Yet though Trimalchio, Encolpius and the rest are the living embodiments of the vices and the attitudes dealt with by the Roman satirists as abstractions, to most classical scholars Petronius' motive for writing remains a mystery. But the *Cena Trimalchionis* is an account of a *parvenu* banquet written for the entertainment of the court in the same sense as *Gulliver's Travels* is a tale for children, *The Rape of the Lock* the story of a hair cut, and *Moby Dick* about a whale. If we apply to

Petronius the method we have used with Scott Fitzgerald, it becomes at once apparent that the ancient no more than the modern author is a mere retailer of *chroniques scandaleuses*. Both contribute to the literature of protest evoked from sensitive spirits in every age in which ethics fails to control enonomics. Petronius has been called a jaded voluptuary, yet he cares passionately about the decline of education and the arts; he has been termed a cynical patrician, yet he can put into the mouth of Ganymede a complaint of the plight of the poor, caught between the upper and the nether millstone, which is unique in Latin literature; he passes for a half-amused contemplator of low-life, yet his *saeva indignatio* toward legacy-hunting is as biting as Juvenal's. *Difficile est saturam* non *scribere*. His colossally ignorant and ostentatious Trimalchio, confused and unhappy in the midst of his luxury, is described with the same repugnance which Fitzgerald lavishes upon Tom Buchanan. Even as a literary critic Petronius is not above the battle: when he rewrites Lucan's *Pharsalia*, it is to change the bias from the conservative Pompey to the liberal Caesar.

It has been brought against Petronius as a sort of acusation that none of his characters shows affection, conscience, honor, or goodness of heart. Well, the emperor's affection was not conspicuous when he had his mother murdered; the prime minister Seneca's conscience did not prevent him from amassing a fortune of three hundred million during four years of "standing well with truth and yet not ill with Nero"; Otho's honor did not stand in the way of his acting as pander between his wife and his sovereign; and Christian goodness of heart was rewarded by the cross and the arena.

It is perhaps not surprising that these qualities are absent from the fiction, as they are absent from the life, of the age of the Harding scandals, Teapot Dome, Fatty Arbuckle, and the Ku Klux Klan. Petronius' bourgeoisie, like Fitzgerald's, is neurotic, confused, dissatisfied; his intellectuals, like Fitzgerald's, are frustrated by their ability to diagnose the ailment without being able to effect a cure. Both authors see clearly the political corruption of their age. Oscar Wilde, who supplied a motto to *This Side of Paradise*, and under the name Sebastian Melmoth is suspected of having translated the *Satyricon*, may stand as a symbol. For Petronius is not the first, nor Fitzgerald the last, to be called monstrous by the critics for describing their age as they see it: socially, intellectually, politically corrupt. Perhaps not until authors and critics alike cease confusing what should be with what is, will what should be finally be brought to pass. Until then, we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

NEW CAMWS OFFICERS

AT THE FORTY-SIXTH annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South held early in April in Cleveland, Professor Clarence A. Forbes of the Ohio State University was elected president of the association for 1950–51, succeeding Miss Mary V. Braginton of Rockford College.

The 1951 meeting, it was announced, will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, March 29, 30, 31.

First Vice-President for 1950–51 will be Miss Esther Weightman of Madison, Wisconsin.

Professor William C. Korfmacher was reappointed Secretary-Treasurer to serve through 1950–51.

To serve as Editor-in-Chief and Business Manager of THE CLASSICAL JOURNAL, Professor Clyde Murley of Northwestern University was appointed to succeed Norman J. DeWitt of the University of Minnesota, who resigned after five years of service.

A distinctive feature of the meeting was the reading of "Ovationes" in Latin at the banquet session, as tributes to four members of the Association. Among those so honored were President-Emeritus Winfred G. Leutner of Western Reserve University, Professor-Emeritus Clarence P. Bill, also of Western Reserve University, and Dr. E. B. de Sauzé, who recently retired as Director of Foreign Language Study in the Cleveland public schools.