At nine o’clock, one morning late in July Gatsby’s gorgeous car lurched up the rocky drive to my door and gave out a burst of melody from its three noted horn. It was the first time he had called on me though I had gone to two of

his parties, mounted in his hydroplane, and, at his urgent invitation, made frequent use of his beach.

‘Good morning, old sport. You’re having lunch with me today and I thought we’d ride up together.’

He was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American—that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work or rigid sitting in youth and, even more, with the

formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand.

He saw me looking with admiration at his car.

‘It’s pretty, isn’t it, old sport.’ He jumped off to give me a better view. ‘Haven’t you ever seen it before?’

I’d seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hatboxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of windshields

that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory we started to town.

I had talked with him perhaps half a dozen times in the past month and found, to my disappointment, that he had little to say. So my first impression, that he was a person of some undefined consequence, had gradually faded and he had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate roadhouse next door.

And then came that disconcerting ride. We hadn’t reached West Egg village before Gatsby began leaving his elegant sentences unfinished and slapping himself indecisively on the knee of his caramel-colored suit.

‘Look here, old sport,’ he broke out surprisingly. ‘What’s your opinion of me, anyhow?’

A little overwhelmed, I began the generalized evasions which that question deserves.

‘Well, I’m going to tell you something about my life,’ he interrupted. ‘I don’t want you to get a wrong idea of me from all these stories you hear.’

So he was aware of the bizarre accusations that flavored conversation in his halls.

‘I’ll tell you God’s truth.’ His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. ‘I am the son of some wealthy people in the middle-west—all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition.’

He looked at me sideways—and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying. He hurried the phrase ‘educated at Oxford,’ or swallowed it or choked on it as though it had bothered him before. And with this doubt his whole statement

fell to pieces and I wondered if there wasn’t something a little sinister about him after all.

‘What part of the middle-west?’ I inquired casually.

‘San Francisco.’