

END — A SABBATH-DAY PARTY

I believe that I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited — they went there. Once there, they were introduced by somebody who knew the host, and after that, they conducted themselves according to the rules of behaviour associated with an amusement park.

I had been actually invited. A chauffeur in a uniform crossed my lawn early that Saturday morning with a note from his employer: the honour would be entirely his, it said, if I would attend his party that night.

Dressed up in white flannels, I went over to his lawn a little after seven, and wandered around rather ill at ease among swirls and eddies of people I didn't know — though here and there was a face I had noticed on the train. I was immediately struck by the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all talking in low voices to prosperous Americans. I was sure that they were selling something. They were at least agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key.

As soon as I arrived, I made an attempt to find my host, but the two or three people of whom I asked his whereabouts stared at me in such an amazed way, and denied so vehemently any knowledge of his movements, that I slunk off in the direction of the cocktail table — the only place in the garden where a single man could linger without looking purposeless and alone.

F. Scott Fitzgerald