

THE MOTOR ADVENTURES OF LADY SIBYL

BEING AN IDYL OF SAINT SYROL'S DAY

By Zona Gale

LORD BURKELY CHEVELTON and his wife, Lady Mary, never knew all the story. And in Burkely Manor House, in Sussex, the portrait of Lady Sibyl, their eldest daughter, adorns a row of patrician ladies of Chevelton, to whom the affair would have been manifestly impossible. But the ladies of Chevelton were not so fortunate as to spend any autumn of their well-ordered lives in America on Long Island, in the neighborhood of Wolstanbury Hill.

Lady Sibyl was twenty-four when it happened, although she was only just at the end of her first London season; for a year of mourning for her brother and two years on the Continent in search of Lady Mary's health, and a year in India as the guest of the wife of the viceroy had fallen in admirably with a natural aversion to the occupation of a season in town.

"Not that Sibyl is not frivolous," Lord Burkely Chevelton was wont to muse defensively. "Sibyl is finely frivolous. But she dislikes frivolity as a profession. I'm afraid she will never marry."

The irrelevancy of his last clause bade fair to be both justified and discountenanced, however, when shortly after Lady Sibyl had been presented, the young Marquis of Winnesdale paid ardent court to her. The young marquis was penniless, none too settled in demeanor and an undoubted genius in oils, and the Cheveltons were in a panic—all but Lady Sibyl. She was amused and she was frankly kind to the marquis. She was not, however, so perfectly amused as to resent a suspi-

ciously timely invitation from her sister Pamela to spend that autumn with her in America. If she secretly smiled at Lady Mary's sudden certainty that Pamela needed her, she made no comment; indeed, since the runaway marriage of Pamela, Lord Chevelton's second daughter, with Harvey Queenborough, the young American millionaire whose sole disqualification was that he was the flower of no great family-tree, Lady Sibyl had been eager to visit her sister, so that the project was a welcome one.

Early, therefore, in a peculiarly amber-and-russet October, Lady Sibyl Chevelton set foot on American soil, and the day after her arrival she was deep in a bewildering survey of her sister's Long Island country place. She looked with frank amazement at the great stone palace, the bountiful acres, the woods, the rose gardens, the stables and kennels of the Queenborough domain, and she uttered her abiding decision.

"Pamela," she said gravely, "England is heaven, but this is Nirvana. Already I feel the fine independence of the dead."

Harvey Queenborough looked in duty bound to take offense.

"Don't bandy words," begged Lady Sibyl in her rich voice, half contralto, half accent; "I could have found it in my heart to die daily to find liberty. The only place that an unmarried Englishwoman can occupy without a chaperon is the grave. But here I find a premature independence in America. Rejoice with me!"

A week after her arrival Lady Sibyl

was walking one evening on the terrace, looking so like the conventional princess that Harvey Queenborough, as he joined her, pleasantly called her a cartoon. Her white frock was trailing; Rex, the longest and leanest of the greyhounds, was lounging beside her, and the peacocks were crying discordantly at her approach.

"No," replied Lady Sibyl, "I would not have been a terrace-and-turret kind of princess, with a white peacock in every room. I would have been a hunting princess, with doublet and hose and a green cloak."

"And what would you have hunted?" demanded Pamela, with a matronly hand on the skirts of two little Queenboroughs who balanced on the edge of the fountain. "A good golf course, to judge by your present tastes."

Little Mrs. Queenborough was twenty-two, and she deliciously embodied the superiority of all young wifehood, in proof of which she had developed a fascinating line between her eyes.

Lady Sibyl shook her head. "No," she said, "something—I don't know—something I've never had. There must be something in the world for women—our kind of women—that we never get. We all want it—it's the thing we dreamed about when we were eighteen. I can't remember what it was, and you can't. What was it?"

There was one guest at Queenborough Place that evening; he sat throwing sticks at the frogs in the fountain and listening with a little crooked smile that threw his features delightfully out of proportion. Mr. Headly Madder was above forty, without occupation, and he was a privileged person, which always means that people are privileged good-naturedly to browbeat one as much as they please. He looked up quietly now.

"I know," he said to Lady Sibyl.

"You know?" she repeated incredulously. "What I dreamed about when I was eighteen?"

"Headly has made everything a study," said Pamela. "He prescribes for Rex and recommends sunshades to me with the same unfailing instinct."

"You see," explained Mr. Madder imperturbably, "you constantly want something incongruous. Women love to breathe the atmosphere of another age. That's what makes them love romance—for romance is only an echo of King Arthur and mythology; in other words, a survival of what never was."

Queenborough laughed immoderately. "Bachelor," he commented, "oh, bachelor!"

"That is exactly why women like to be athletic," went on Mr. Madder. "The incongruity of a perfectly matter-of-fact woman getting out and grotesquely chasing a ball over a course or a net pleases their sense of the fantastic. And it isn't motoring that delights them—it is the spectacle of a big red car that Nero or Justinian might have ridden in, buzzing through crowds of lesser folk who are concerned with commonplace pursuits. Women of imagination are creatures of all time, Lady Sibyl, and, being fallen by accident upon the evil days of the twentieth century, their chief concern is to get away. So they spend life in pretending, and they dream or motor or lecture as their temperament demands."

Lady Sibyl leaned against a moon-dial set near the fountain so that its faint shadow should be cast on the starry water. About its edge grew a tangle of late blossoms; she held up one of the pallid flowers with wind-torn edges and fastened it in her hair.

"At this moment," she admitted, "I would like to be a mermaid, with a bonnet of water-flowers. What would you suggest?" She put it to Mr. Madder with sudden seriousness.

He shook his head, looking at Lady Sibyl in delight. She was like one of the lesser angels when she asked for advice.

"I don't know," he confessed ruefully, "but if I were a woman, I'd find a way."

"You disappoint me," pouted Lady Sibyl; "women are always being decorated with generalizations instead of fed with suggestions. Why don't you tell me to go and put bubbles in my

hair and dance in the south wood all night? You aren't practical."

Queenborough rose. "Pamela," he said, with mock severity, "who is this Lady Sibyl whom you are passing as your sister?—for anyone less like the accepted British maid I have never seen."

"I must be like her, though," said Lady Sibyl gloomily, "or I'd rebel. We're all alike. We've all forgotten what we used to dream at eighteen."

Pamela, idling toward the house with a sleepy little Queenborough on either side, smiled over her shoulder.

"Don't mind her, Headly," she said. "Sibyl is the most conventional creature alive, really. She never leaves an obligation to a bore unpaid."

"That is the kind," opined Mr. Madder shrewdly, "in whose hearts you'll find the biggest revolt going on. The women who concede the most to society are the ones who most long to 'get away.'"

"Then they are only rag-doll rebels," said Lady Sibyl, "or some time they would—'get away.'"

A little while later Queenborough, with an air of restrained triumph, walked into the drawing-room where they were assembled.

"The new car has come," he announced.

"Really, Harvey?" cried Pamela delightedly. "Are the cushions the right shade?"

Her husband's bright smile vanished. "After three years of matrimony," he said, "I have succeeded in inducing Pamela not to judge a horse by the jockey's shirt, or a golf-player by the cut of his knickerbockers. But her one idea of an auto is still the color of the cushions. Will you all come for a day's run tomorrow?" he finished. "I'll take a holiday. Pamela, we'll take the children. Headly, you know you will? And it shall be Lady Sibyl's party."

Mr. Madder shook his head.

"The Windemeres ride tomorrow," he said.

"I'd forgotten," said Queenborough. "The Bruce and Medora are still lame,

and Lady Sibyl's mare hasn't arrived yet. That's the greater reason for our drowning our sorrow in Westchester County, as a family."

"Oh, Harvey," mourned Pamela, "the Cross-country Needlework Guild meets here tomorrow, and I've got to give them luncheon. Wait till next day."

"Directors' meeting that day," said her husband. "No, it will have to be tomorrow. Lady Sibyl, will you go?"

Lady Sibyl did not at once answer. The evening papers lay in her lap, and her eye had been caught by a certain name in the passenger list of the *Ten-tonic*.

"Other arrivals," the paragraph ran, "were the members of the Forestry Commission and the Marquis of Winnesdale, whose pictures at the Academy," etc.

"Oh," said Lady Sibyl suddenly, "I'm so glad!"

"I thought you'd be," said Queenborough genially; and then, as she looked up startled, he added: "You shall run the car yourself, because you're company."

"Really!" cried Lady Sibyl, and her sudden animation was most gratifying to Queenborough.

"Poor Mr. Madder," said Pamela, noticing nothing, "that's what you get for being M.F.H., you see."

"You'll have a great day of it," consented Mr. Madder, his eyes following Lady Sibyl admiringly as she went to the piano.

Lady Sibyl struck the first wild, disjointed chord of "Peer Gynt" and wheeled suddenly on the stool. It was not so much, she should have admitted, that the Earl of Winnesdale had actually arrived as that his caring to come was somehow a new element in her new freedom.

"This isn't London, this isn't London," sang Lady Sibyl rejoicingly, like a child. "Oh, what a lot of the world there is that isn't London!"

When Queenborough came to his wife's sitting-room that night to share the little supper that was invariably

spread for them, Pamela confided an anxiety.

"Harvey," she said, "you know that legend in our family that one of its women disappears every generation?"

"Yes," said Queenborough, lighting the alcohol lamp, "and don't you attempt it."

"There was Lady Geraldine," went on Pamela, "who disappeared from the ball the night before Waterloo; and Lady Fens, who was never seen after somebody's coronation ball. Harvey, I sometimes think that Sibyl——"

"Nonsense," said Queenborough lightly.

"Well, you heard what she said about putting bubbles in her hair and dancing in the south wood," said Pamela.

"My dear Pamela," cried Queenborough, "you'd far better send that Cross-country Needlework Guild packing tomorrow, and come with us. You need a change!"

"I can perfectly imagine her doing it, anyway," said Pamela, with determination.

It was not yet ten o'clock when Lady Sibyl, clad in a long gray coat that might never disown its Parisian birth, stepped out on the terrace in answer to the splendid, throaty greeting of the new car. On her head she wore no cap at all, but a great white veil covered her face and hair and was tied in an enormous bow beneath her chin.

Queenborough raised his eyebrows. "Didn't Pamela's cap do?" he inquired tentatively.

"We don't wear them," disclaimed Lady Sibyl simply. "It's in the by-laws of our country club. Only veils—and you've no idea how much better it is, or you'd adopt it."

"But you'll have to go the whole length of Fifth avenue and the Park," suggested Pamela doubtfully.

"Delightful!" replied Lady Sibyl evenly as Queenborough handed her in.

The new car was a signal success. The run to Long Island City in the fresh autumn morning, with Lady

Sibyl guiding the machine, was accomplished gratifyingly clear of the old record, and they dashed on the ferry as the bell sounded, and sat with tingling cheeks over which the full-scented fall winds had been rushing. On the New York side, at his station by the cross-town car terminals, stood Queenborough's office-boy, morning mail in hand, patiently waiting, as usual, to take the car to the garage while Queenborough went downtown on the Elevated.

Tibby, the boy, was that type of metropolitan, Bowery-born and office-bred, who has become man-about-town and citizen of the world, and who knows his New York as he knows his ball-score, while curiously retaining a certain childlikeness of manner and an unmistakable Bowery accent. But Tibby, besides all this, was a delicate little lad, with great eyes, who was given to hanging out the window by the water-cooler when his colleagues were betting pennies at the ticker. Lady Sibyl watched him compassionately as, in response to Queenborough's nod, he clambered into the tonneau and waited, his big eyes patiently fixed on the Elevated track. Queenborough recalled her by a sudden exclamation.

"By Jove," he said, "this is too bad. Special meeting of the board at noon today—and I can't get out of going. Why the deuce didn't they wire me?" he asked irritably.

"Did, sir," said Tibby briefly; "hour ago."

Queenborough thought a moment, looking perplexedly at Lady Sibyl, hatless, with her great veil.

"You can't go home by train alone in those togs," he said decidedly. "Look here, you shall not lose your run, Lady Sibyl, that's all there is about it. I'll telephone my chauffeur. Tibby, you may run the car up to the stable as usual, and Charles will take it on up the country and then back home. No use to wait for me—I can't tell when I shall be free. Do you mind, Lady Sibyl?"

Suspicion of a faint sparkle lighted Lady Sibyl's eyes as she threw deep

regret into her reply that she did not mind.

"May I keep the boy with me, too?" she asked on a sudden impulse.

"Why, if you would feel safer," assented Queenborough.

Lady Sibyl noted the fire of hope and gratitude in the lad's eyes.

So it was arranged. Queenborough took the Elevated, with a regretful backward look at his new toy, and Lady Sibyl set off on her journey with Tibby at the helm. Just before they reached Fifth avenue they passed a fruit-stand, and at her command the lad willingly got down and returned with both hands laden.

"Now," commanded Lady Sibyl quietly, "you may sit in the tonneau; I shall run the machine the rest of the way."

Tibby regarded her for a moment with uncertain eyes. But as the great machine obeyed her hand and rounded the corner, and threaded its unwavering way up the crowded Avenue, he doubted no longer, and his respect for Lady Sibyl became monumental. After all, he reflected, it was only a few blocks up to the garage, in Forty-third street, where Queenborough's chauffeur would await them.

The slim gray figure, with its distinctive head-covering, attracted considerable attention as the car puffed up the Avenue. No one recognized the new motor as Queenborough's; few had seen Lady Sibyl before. By the time Lady Sibyl and her one little passenger reached Forty-third street a trail of conjecture, of which she was supremely unconscious, was drifting behind her.

"Nex' corner to de left is de stable," volunteered Tibby.

Lady Sibyl, with her eye undeviatingly on the course, spoke in an even voice.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you," she said, "that I don't intend going to the stable at all. I wish to make the run alone. I shall go up the Avenue and through the Park, and after that you will direct the course, please, to some inn where we can lunch."

Tibby stared uncomprehendingly at the erect, girlish figure that had already sped the car well beyond the street of the stables.

"But Mr. Queenborough, ma'am—" began Tibby, aghast.

"Mr Queenborough would wish you to do as I say, Tibby," Lady Sibyl reminded him pleasantly.

A slow grin overspread the boy's face, and he said something under his breath which the car drowned.

Into the golden wilderness of the Park they plunged presently, and then Lady Sibyl drew breath. She was now fairly embarked upon her enterprise, and the long day stretched invitingly before her. It was not yet noon, this whole alien world of which she had suddenly become a part was smiling and singing about her, the hoarse call of every passing motor was like a greeting and a challenge, and here was she, Sibyl Chevelton, roving at large in America, accompanied only by a smiling boy bribed to doubtful acquiescence by chestnuts and apples. Besides, though the item was not given official recognition in her mind, there was undoubtedly the pleasantly exciting memory of the *Teutonic's* passenger list.

"Hully gee!" said Tibby ecstatically, "don't it smell good?"

And "Oh, this," thought Lady Sibyl a little wistfully, "is almost like what I used to dream about when I was eighteen. Perhaps, if I go far enough, I shall meet my dream!"

II

THE open road which, after half an hour's progress, Tibby indicated, showed a bewildering length of colored branches and fair shadows. Some laborers in a field were whistling briskly, a thin cloud or two was driven lightly abroad by the crisp wind that broke over Lady Sibyl's face, bringing scent of unseen presses and far bonfires.

Presently the road dipped past a high orchard wall, and from a gate in

the wall, set just opposite an alluring branch road of haze and red leaves, there suddenly emerged a grotesque little figure which the car, though dexterously avoiding, evidently threw into a panic. She was a plump little old lady, with ruddy face and bobbing curls and a pudgy reticule, and she shrank aside in such helpless terror that Lady Sibyl impulsively brought the car to a stop and looked back. She saw the little old lady sitting weakly by the roadside, mechanically straightening her bonnet. Instantly Lady Sibyl sprang to the ground and, followed closely by Tibby, hurried back to her. To their surprise, upon their approach and before they could speak, the old lady looked up gravely and addressed them.

"Do you happen to know," she said, with some severity, "whether there is a wood near here where one could get lost?"

One advantage in being the daughter of a hundred earls is that one is natively able to meet them all, walking ghostly with their coffin shoes in their hands, and betray no great surprise. Perhaps, too, it was that the wine of the morning was running in Lady Sibyl's veins so that, as it always is with a happy few, nothing delightful seemed unreal.

Lady Sibyl looked about her. "A wood to get lost in!" she repeated musingly.

"Yes, indeed. What else?" demanded the old lady crossly. "Our Lady knows that this is the first holiday I have had in twenty years, and I mean to get lost as far as ever I can. I've cakes enough with me."

Lady Sibyl considered, frowning regretfully at her helplessness. It was a part of her code to give assistance without question of values; she would no more have questioned the old lady's reasons for getting lost than have inquired the errand itself of a more commonplace seeker.

"I'm afraid I *don't* know," she said at last apologetically, and then she remembered Tibby, who stood by, staring.

"Tibby," she said briskly, "you know the road. Can you suggest a wood where this lady can get lost?"

A long and checkered office career had made of Tibby as stern a thoroughbred as could any ancestry. Like a cab-driver and a man of the world, Tibby seldom showed amazement. His defection at the moment of Lady Sibyl's capture of the car was long a source of mortal chagrin.

"Sure," he recommended briefly. "Lady Birch Grove. Two mile up. Solid woods from dere to Medford."

"For the love of heaven!" exclaimed the old lady irritably. "Two miles! I can't go so far. A body can't even get lost nowadays without money to travel."

"Oh," cried Lady Sibyl, brightening, "we'll take you. Will you come with us? We'll take you to the grove, if you like."

The old lady looked doubtfully at the car.

"I don't know but I might as well," she said musingly. "The Lord'll probably come in a bigger, noisier chariot than that. Our Lady knows I live to be prepared."

Lady Sibyl and Tibby helped the little creature to rise, settled her comfortably in the tonneau, and the journey was resumed. At once their passenger gave a brief account of herself.

"I've lived here," she said angrily, untying the ribbons of her reticule, "for forty years. Where else, I'd like to know? And in all that time they have never given me a holiday—not one. They thought I wouldn't notice, but I did. I kept count. And I remembered every day the way the woods smelled, and when it came bonfire time I wonder I didn't go crazy. And at last, this morning, when I found the mallowberries ripe, I took some cakes and went through the orchard. I want to be lost. It is never a real holiday until you're lost. Do you travel far?"

"We don't know," answered Lady Sibyl truthfully. "Some distance, probably. The truth is," she added mis-

chievously, "we're looking for a dream—the sort of dream we used to have."

Lady Sibyl glanced merrily at Tibby. To her delight his face was one substantial wreath of smiles, not derisive nor abashed, as a boy's smiles are wont to be, but plainly sympathetic. As for the little old lady, she nodded as simply as if Lady Sibyl had announced herself to be upon an expedition to purchase late pippins.

"Aye," she said comprehendingly, "but they're hard to find—the dreams we used to have."

Far from being alarmed by the swift flight of the car, the old lady was apparently soothed and so successfully that when Lady Sibyl next addressed her she was perplexed to find her fast asleep. So occupied was Lady Sibyl in wondering what to do when the Grove of the Lady Birches should at last be reached that she did not notice, until she was almost upon him, a man who advanced toward them, waving his cap to attract attention. Lady Sibyl touched the brake, and the car rolled to a standstill before him. He was a well-knit, square-shouldered, youngish man, whose face was boyish in spite of the tinge of gray at the temples, and the charm of his deference was very great.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "have you an extra tire-valve?" He indicated his own car in dry-dock under a linden just ahead.

Lady Sibyl appealed to Tibby with a glance.

"Search me, sir," said Tibby to the man; "we ain't been out wid dis car before. Wait awhile."

He climbed over the back of the seat, not to disturb the still slumbering guest, rummaged among the tools and emerged red-faced, while the man waited patiently and Lady Sibyl gazed tranquilly over the salt marshes.

"Nope," announced Tibby comprehensively. "Gimme a look at de wheel," he added, with importance.

Lady Sibyl glanced with some annoyance at the boy, but the gratitude of the stranger was evident, and when Tibby regretfully announced his ina-

bility to be of use without a new valve, the man bowed cheerfully to them both.

"I thought so," he said serenely. "I am greatly obliged."

Whereupon, with a reticently bestowed coin to Tibby and another charmingly impersonal bow to Lady Sibyl, he leaped into the shady tonneau of his own machine, took a book from his pocket and composedly opened it. Lady Sibyl, her hand on the lever, hesitated.

"What will he do?" she asked of Tibby in a low tone.

"Set still, I reckon," hazarded Tibby.

Lady Sibyl glanced at their sleeping guest, at the empty seat beside her and then at the young man, already absorbed in his book under the linden.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said impulsively; "we would be very glad to set you down at the next village, where you can get help."

Lady Sibyl was abashed at her own audacity; yet it would have been both godly and modern for the Good Samaritan to have failed to distinguish in beneficiaries on the road to Jericho. The young man was on the ground in an instant, advancing to her side. He seemed, however, in no haste to avail himself of her suggestion.

"I don't know," he said doubtfully, scanning first the smiling sky, then the singing fields and then Lady Sibyl's pretty, grave face. "I really came out hoping for a break-down."

He was so engagingly grave that it was impossible to take him seriously.

"I wanted," he explained, "to enjoy the fields and the open road, and when I motor I see nothing but macadam and asphalt. I was really relieved at the accident. But I was obliged to satisfy my conscience by inquiring, once, for a tire-valve. That being denied me, I am now free to enjoy my book and the fields at will."

"Pray pardon me," said Lady Sibyl coldly, and was starting the car when the man raised his hand.

"Please," he said penitently, "forgive me. I really wish more than anything in the world to be taken to the

next village. You are exceedingly kind and I am very rude, though what I have told you is the truth." He hesitated a moment. "I beg your pardon," he added; "may I ask whether you intended lunching there—at the Sign of the Spotted Leopard?"

Lady Sibyl deferred to Tibby.

"—“Yep,” replied the lad briefly.

"Then," said the stranger modestly, "perhaps I may make a further suggestion. The Sign of the Spotted Leopard went, the day before yesterday, into a receiver's hands, and there isn't a sandwich fit to eat in the whole place."

Lady Sibyl frowned. "How annoying!" she said impulsively. "I'm very hungry."

The stranger bowed. "If you will allow me," he said, "my hampers. They are well filled. I would be happy if you would honor me. A short distance over the hill lies the Grove of the Lady Birches. We can, if you will, and if madam is willing"—with a glance at the sleeping passenger in the tonneau—"take a hasty luncheon there by Lady Birch spring."

He waited expectantly for her reply, with the little deferential stooping of the shoulders with which his words had been accompanied. Lady Sibyl hesitated. The road was empty, the road was long and lay white in the mild heat of high noon. She was very hungry. To lunch from strange hampers in the Grove of the Lady Birches by Lady Birch spring! It sounded very alluring. Besides, the little old lady was bound for the same grove, and it was, in a measure, necessary to see her through her adventure. A little dimple crept and lurked in Lady Sibyl's cheek and was banished, but her eyes unwillingly gave consent, even before her formal and hesitant words. It was the mad thing, the impossible thing, but it was Lady Sibyl's first day of freedom, and it tasted sweet and as if the wine of autumn were mingled in it. With Tibby's help the hampers were transferred from the stranger's car to her own, the stranger himself took his seat, and together the four adventurers moved forward, the plump

little old lady still drooping, undisturbed, in the tonneau.

Like a great, colored room, brown-mossed under foot, with a sky-blue curtain patterned in gorgeous lemon and white and opal overhead, stretched, silent and spicy-breathed and warm with noon, the Wood of the Silver Birches. It was a room upheld by silver columns down which the sun wantoned caressingly, painting this pale pillar a rich amber, touching that one with delicate traceries and arabesques of shadow and warm color. Into its pungent depth, when the little old lady had been effectually awakened, went the four strangely met companions. The stranger walked before, laden with a great wicker hamper that seemed bursting with delicate spoil. Lady Sibyl followed with the plump little old lady leaning on her arm, exclaiming delightedly at every step that this was a wood in which one might be lost and *never* have to be dressed for company. Tibby brought up the rear with a basket on one arm and a sealed tin of ice under the other. So they took their course over crackling fern for a quarter of a mile or more.

Lady Sibyl was exultant. The strangeness of the whole experience, its absolute impossibility when viewed from any standpoint of her life or her friends, the freedom and delicious irrationality of the unexpected occasion were like a song in her ears. Far down the road over which they had just come lay the discarded thought of the passenger list of the *Teutonic*.

At last, where the branches twisted most ravishingly overhead, their guide paused and set down his burden. Almost at Lady Sibyl's feet, from among gray-green rocks buried in brown fern, bubbled and sang a little spring that took its bright way through fallen leaves in a very riot of delight that it was not yet winter and that its own joy was as yet unconfined. Here the stranger gravely produced a card and offered it to Lady Sibyl. She read:

Mr. Philip Winchell Maverick
which, if denominative, was not explanatory.

"I am Sibyl Chevelton," she returned simply, and turned in some hesitation to the little old woman, who divined her difficulty.

"You may call me," said the little old woman, "Lady Imogen. It is not my name," she added truthfully, "but I have always thought it a very pretty name, and I don't know any better time to adopt it."

"One should certainly have a new name and a new age when one goes in the woods," assented Lady Sibyl. "And this is Tibby," she added.

Maverick gave Tibby a tablecloth.

"Quite right," he said. "Lady Imogen," he begged, "will you kindly select the spot where this is to be laid?"

"Lady Imogen" found an open, grassy place at a little distance, and there she spread the cloth and laid the serviettes while Lady Sibyl and Maverick unpacked the hampers.

"And I," said Maverick gravely, handing a brace of cold birds, "was mourning only this morning that I could not ride at adventure in the green wood, Miss Chevelton."

"Were you, really?" asked Lady Sibyl, laughing a little in sheer delight at what he had called her. "I lament it every day. But you made this adventure."

"No," said Maverick gravely, "this adventure is the gift of Saint Syrol."

"Saint Syrol?" repeated Lady Sibyl wonderingly. "That sounds like a prince, not like a saint."

"I will tell you who Saint Syrol is, since you don't know him," said Maverick. "Will you make the salad dressing, or shall I? You will? Thank you. Saint Syrol," he finished, dashing the tender heads of lettuce in the spring, "is the guardian angel of all who worship the Magic Adventures."

Lady Sibyl, pouring a velvet stream of oil on the crimson vinegar, looked up enchanted.

"The Magic Adventures?" she repeated lingeringly.

Maverick nodded, delighting in her delight.

"The Magic Adventures," he explained, "are the adventures that lie

close to everyday adventures—just as all magic lies close to everyday affairs. For example, it is not necessarily the man who climbs a mountain or shoots a tiger or gets lost in a jungle who has an adventure. It is the man who does those things, thinking meanwhile not so much about mountain-climbing and the habits of tigers and the vegetation of the jungles as of the magic of all three."

"Oh, I know, I know!" said Lady Sibyl. "And Saint Syrol?"

"Saint Syrol," went on Maverick, diving repeatedly into the deep hamper, "spent his life proving the converse of this proposition. That is, that it is not the people who stay at home and indulge in pastimes and know books who get the magic of life—but rather the people who see the adventure in everything. Consequently he spent his life in the four walls of his garden, and there had the most marvelous and delightful experiences—with shadows and little leaves and kinds of wind and flowers-in-the-dark, and buds that ring like bells in the moonlight, and a harp played in the dark of a garden, and fruit gathered with the dew on it and eaten with certain spices. And he anointed his eyes with secret herbs and simples, and he saw wonderful things. And before he died he wrote of all these in 'The Booke of Magic Adventures.'"

Lady Sibyl, with idle hands, sat listening.

"Oh," she cried, "how wonderful! How wonderful!"

Maverick smiled appreciatively. "Today is the good old man's birthday," said he, "and it is called Saint Syrol's day, though few celebrate it. But it falls out that on this day the hearts of all true believers, whether they know about the saint or not, are wonderfully stirred. And they are seized with a desire to go out and find magic."

Lady Sibyl looked away in the dim silver of the woods at her right, and though she would have spoken she fell silent, with the wonder of it all. Far down a white avenue she saw Tibby,

rapt, and, he thought, unobserved, stealing about from curly trunk to trunk, chewing strange spicy compounds whose properties did not concern him, his ink-stained hands filled with sweet-smelling stems, and she saw him suddenly lie at full length on the springing sod, kicking up his shabby heels luxuriously, hat off, head pressed deep in the rustling colored leaves.

She looked away to the open space where the white cloth glimmered ready for the feast, and she saw the little old lady, her shawl thrown aside, her bonnet slipped back, standing close to a great tree and looking up, up to the distracting depths of pure blue, the wind fanning her white curls, a half-eaten cake in her ungloved hand, a little smile on her lips. Nearby Maverick was distributing sandwiches, on wooden plates, and on a rock lay his book, green-covered, promisingly plump—"The Booke of Magic Adventures"! Why, these three, whom by all the canons of good sense and by all the code of her world she ought not to be with on these terms—these three were more perfectly of her world than—the rows of portrait ladies in Burkely Manor, or even than Pamela herself! The full tide of the joy of things, that inner joy that comes not in the doing, or the having, or even the knowing of anything in the world, but rather in the *being* of something akin to all gracious aspects, the full entering into and abiding among the homeliest beauty of outdoor living, suddenly possessed and mastered Lady Sibyl, and she burst into a glad little snatch of song for the pure bliss of the moment, for the pure gratitude of being one of those to whom the Hidden Magic has been revealed.

"Are we all ready?" cried Maverick.

In a few minutes luncheon was spread, and "Lady Imogen," throned at the table's head, laid aside her cake for more substantial delights.

"Oh," she cried suddenly, angry tears welling to her eyes, "think of me! Forty years without a holiday! I knew I should remember how the

woods smelled if I could find them. But am I really lost?" she inquired in sudden alarm.

"I am," said Lady Sibyl happily, "and so you must be."

"Hully gee," said Tibby, lingering—but not perceptibly—over a leg of cold squab. "De odder fellers'll never believe it!"

Lady Sibyl looked across at Maverick.

"'The Booke of Magic Adventures'!" she repeated. "I'm afraid I'll never believe it either, afterward."

"And I'm afraid," said Maverick slowly, "that I'll never forget it."

After luncheon the hampers were briskly repacked, and "Lady Imogen," laboring in the belief that she was vastly helpful, hurried about like a girl, scattering crumbs for the birds over every available rock.

"For runaway birds, you know," she explained mysteriously. "I'm sure they don't like taking medicine at home, either."

They trailed through the russet ways, back to the road, under chestnuts whose bursting burrs had showered brown fruit on the brown moss. Tibby waited to fill his pockets.

"Fill up de kids," he said sagaciously, "an' dey'll b'lieve anythin' I tell 'em to."

"Lady Imogen" made no objection to taking her place in the car. Her project of being "lost" was delightfully elastic in its application. It was a run of but a few miles to the village. There, almost the first building that they passed was the Sign of the Spotted Leopard, its shutters up and its door fast. A few streets on brought Maverick to a base of supplies and, armed with a pocketful of tire-valves, they took their way back, past the Wood of the Silver Birches, to the scene of the morning's adventure.

When Maverick stood by the roadside near his disabled machine, with his hampers beside him, Lady Sibyl put out her hand.

"I do thank you," she said simply.

Maverick bowed gravely. "It has been a Magic Adventure indeed for

me," he said. "I am sorry that it is ended."

Lady Sibyl looked down the road, hazy in the fire of autumn leaves.

"Saint Syrol has been very gracious," she said lightly. "May the good saint prosper!"

It was no wonder that, as she turned to Maverick shyly and nodded him farewell, he found her wholly beguiling. Perhaps it was this, perhaps it was the mere madness of Saint Syrol's day that slept in the soft air; high in the afternoon blue hung the white moon, yet untamed to the uses of the night's silver.

"Look," said Maverick, "Saint Syrol's moon is up! May it bring you dreams of Saint Syrol's day."

"Good-bye, good-bye!" called "Lady Imogen" peremptorily. "I shall never take any more medicine, but I really must get back to my afternoon nap!"

Maverick, standing bare-headed in the checkered road, looked after them for a long time. When the white veil had fluttered over the brow of a hill, he turned blankly to the empty meadows.

"Gad," he said between his teeth, "consider civilization! It is what is the matter with everything. When did Sir Galahad ever stand helpless while a mysterious damsel motored over a hill and vanished? Curses on the civilization and the dinner engagement that keep me from following her around the world!"

The fields were lying in warm light, haunted by long, slanting shadows. Lady Sibyl threw her veil from her face and sang little snatches of song as she spun along, the red leaves drifting about her. Tibby was silent with chestnuts, and "Lady Imogen" had at once fallen peacefully asleep.

As they approached the stone wall from whose gate "Lady Imogen" had mysteriously made her exit, Lady Sibyl saw a hatless young woman in black hurrying along the roadside. Lady Sibyl slowed the car opposite the gate, and glanced at her sleeping guest in some perplexity. The young woman uttered an exclamation and hastened forward.

"Mrs. Benson!" she cried sharply, and "Lady Imogen" opened her eyes.

"No more of the tablets!" cried "Lady Imogen" severely. "I'll take my powders, but as for the tablets, I'd as lief swallow my thimble."

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Benson!" cried the young woman soothingly. Then, as "Lady Imogen" rose, and Tibby lifted the seat and opened the door, the young woman turned to Lady Sibyl.

"I have to thank you," she said gratefully. "Mrs. Benson grows very lonely at times, and this morning while I was away——"

"It isn't that," interrupted "Lady Imogen" plaintively. "I like loneliness well enough, but I want woods to come with it. But all I get is loneliness, with all of you watching me. I wanted to get lost and find barberries, and drink out of a gourd—but it was time for my nap," she finished wearily, "and so I came back. Oh, I haven't the courage to go after my dreams, that's all!" wailed "Lady Imogen" suddenly.

Lady Sibyl sprang to the ground and caught "Lady Imogen's" hands, cold and trembling, in her own.

"Good-bye," she said, her eyes filling with swift tears. "But perhaps, if we just stay at home, the dreams will come to us!"

She left them waving farewells.

"Oh," she thought, "the world is all alike. Mad or sane, office-boy or Saint Syrol's prophet, or English-woman at large in America—we are all looking for dreams to come true, and longing to run away to find them. Perhaps that is why they don't come to us."

The shadows were lengthening and growing indistinct, and the sun hung low and red above the poplars at the edge of the far field. For the first time, as she looked, Lady Sibyl felt alarm, for the lowering sun takes confidence with him, a hostage. Then the spirit of the day danced back to her face. This was a day to remember, and therefore it was a day to live completely—the day of Magic Adventures. Tomorrow she would be laughing over it, safely

domesticated at Queenborough Place. Today she was tasting to the full her first hours of liberty.

Past little toy houses sunk in tulip trees they went, and past riots of flaming creeper over latticed windows, and past spicy sweet fields, ready for even-song. And at last, when the edge of the Park was reached, Lady Sibyl relinquished her seat, and Tibby ran the machine down the Avenue and on to the ferry without a second to spare. It was but a few minutes after six o'clock when they passed Queenborough Lodge.

"What about you?" asked Lady Sibyl suddenly of Tibby. "Won't they be anxious about you at home?"

"Who?" asked Tibby, staring. "Not me? Why, me, I don't live anywhere to speak of. No, ma'am. I ain't expected."

A moment afterward Tibby, taking the car to the stables, crushed ecstatically in his hand something that she had given him.

"Hully gee!" he reflected. "I'd 'a' went fer not'in'!"

Lady Sibyl gained her own rooms without encountering anyone but the butler, from whom she learned that Queenborough had returned two hours before. She sent word to Pamela that she had arrived, and then hurried away to dress. Half an hour later Pamela, very splendid in white velvet and opals, fluttered into her sitting-room.

"Sibyl, Sibyl," she exclaimed distractedly, "Harvey has been so worried. Where on earth——?"

"Oh," said Lady Sibyl, "it wasn't on this earth, Pamela. It was in an enchanted country, with silver birches and the smell of the woods—the woods—the woods! Pamela, have you taught the boys fairy stories?"

"What do you mean?" cried Pamela. "No, of course not. I've had all I could do to have them taught what they ought to know. Sibyl, where have you been?"

Lady Sibyl laughed tantalizingly.

"I've spent Saint Syrol's day," she replied, "in the Wood of the Silver Birches, with 'Lady Imogen,' who

wanted to get lost. If you will have it, I had a run in Westchester County and back, discreetly piloted by your husband's office-boy. And shall I wear pearls or moonstones, Pamela?"

Mrs. Queenborough threw up her glittering hands.

"Perhaps you'll be interested to know," she said a little coldly, "that Harvey, who doesn't know anything about anything," she added significantly, "has brought the Marquis of Winnesdale out to dine. But I'm not going to let him take you in," she said, and swept from the room.

Lady Sibyl looked gravely in the mirror for a moment as her maid clasped her moonstones about her throat.

"The Marquis of Winnesdale," she thought suddenly. "Oh, his trim little landscapes in oil and his trim little family-tree!"

Lady Sibyl had never been so beautiful, the Marquis of Winnesdale thought, as when she came down to the drawing-room, her face still aglow with the joy of her day. The marquis would have been delightfully boyish and eager if he had not so long played at being bored with life—a dangerous toy in the hands of the children who invariably affect it.

"And what have you been doin' in America?" he asked Lady Sibyl, in his half-staccato, half-drawl. "Rusticatin', eh? Findin' out pretty, primeval secrets—eh?"

"I've done nothing worth while yet," returned Lady Sibyl serenely, "but I'm thinking very seriously, Lord Winnesdale, of letting down my hair and playing Indian girl all over the estate."

Mr. Headly Madder nodded and smiled quizzically.

"Exactly," he nodded. "Women love to breathe the atmosphere of another age, and, being fallen by accident upon the evil days of the twentieth century——"

Lady Sibyl turned a radiant face upon him.

"Ah, Mr. Madder," she cried softly, "today I can instruct you. I've been up in the woods of your Westchester

County, and I've found out what England and most of America do not know—that the twentieth-century woods have all the dead centuries in them, waiting to be re-lived."

Mr. Madder shrugged his shoulders. "Women of imagination—" he began to repeat.

"What an interestin' fancy, Lady Sibyl!" said the Marquis of Winnesdale.

When the last guest arrived, Lady Sibyl was looking over some music. Mrs. Queenborough, presenting him to her with a grave, modulated word or two to the effect that he was to take her sister down, went off on the arm of the marquis. And there before Lady Sibyl, quite without warning as is the coming of any god of the woods, stood Maverick.

She looked at him helplessly, her pretty greeting idle on her lips, but, in spite of her will, leaping to her eyes.

"Ah," said Maverick wistfully, "but is this only the dream that we wished each other?"

"I think," said Lady Sibyl wonderingly, "that this is more than dreams can do."

He turned to her radiantly, compelling her eyes.

"It is the Magic Adventure," he said softly.

She laid her hand on his arm, and

they went down the stairs. The soft speech and laughter of the others flowed about them as they took their places. Mr. Madder was telling how someone had come a nasty cropper at an old stile in the hunt that day, and the Marquis of Winnesdale was drawling musically through an incident of himself and the ferry ticket-taker.

"This," said Maverick happily, "is strange company for two spirits of Saint Syrol's day!"

The eyes of both wandered to the window, standing open to the white terrace, where lay the world of the woods—their world, with the high, trembling trees and the sleepy-sweet wind poured through the leaves by secret hands.

"But we have kept tryst," said Lady Sibyl. "Saint Syrol's moon is up!"

Afterward, in the sane and illumined days that followed the coming of her great love, Lady Sibyl, grown wise and tender and strong in the knowledge that life is far greater than dreams, would sometimes ask him if it could really have happened—that madcap Saint Syrol's day.

"Perhaps not," Maverick would answer lightly. "Perhaps it is only one of the things that might have happened. For we all dream of those!"



NOTHING MORE NEEDED

MRS. CLARKER—You will never admit that you have made a mistake.
CLARKER—I don't need to; that marriage certificate is evidence enough.



THE CEREMONY

"WHAT was the wedding like?"
"Beautiful. It beggared description and her father."

May 1905

DAFFODILS

THE silver snowdrop's tinkling bell
 Has ceased its early chime;
 The fragile crocus did but dwell
 A rainbow's short lifetime.

And now its Iris-beauty lies
 Against the cold, brown earth;
 A butterfly's torn wing that cries
 To March's wild, mad mirth.

But the yellow flare of daffodils
 Breaks like the sunshine's ray,
 Low-lying 'tween the distant hills
 At closing of the day.

And they wrap the earth in gladness bright,
 So that, when dusk has come,
 One thinks it cannot yet be night
 For the golden light therefrom.

NATHALIE BOULIGNY SMYTH.



POOR HUMAN NATURE

CRAWFORD—What object can people have in making trouble?

CRABSHAW—I guess it's a question of supply and demand. There are just as many other people looking for it.



AT THE WOMAN'S CLUB

“WHY was she blackballed?”
 “Why, because.”



ON THE OTHER SIDE

SENIOR—Well, my boy, have you been a credit to me at college?
 JUNIOR—No, dad, a debit.