

The Girl Beyond the Trail

it is to relieve my own mind. There can be no hope that it will benefit my friend. And yet it cannot harm him. It seems very near to sacrilege to put into words what I am going to say about—his wife. Perhaps there were extenuating conditions for her. I have tried to convince myself of that, just as he tried to believe it. It may be that a man who is born into this age must consider himself a misfit unless he can tune himself in sympathy with its manner of life. He cannot be too critical, I guess. If he is to exist in a certain social order of our civilisation unburdened by great doubts and deep glooms, he must not shiver when his wife tinkles her champagne glass against another. He must learn to appreciate the sinuous beauties of the cabaret dancer, and must train himself to take no offence when he sees shimmering wines gushing down white throats. He must train himself to many things, just as he trains himself to classical music and grand opera. To do these things he must forget, as much as he can, the sweet melodies and the sweeter women who are sinking into oblivion together. He must accept life as a grand piano tuned by a new sort of tuning master, and unless he can dance to its music he is a misfit. That is what my friend said—to extenuate *her*. She fitted into life splendidly. He was in the other groove. She loved light, laughter, wine, song, excitement. He, the Misfit, loved his books, his work, and his home. His greatest joy would have been to go with her, hand in hand, through some wonderful cathedral pointing out its ancient glories and mysteries to her. He wanted aloneness—just they two. Such was his idea of love. And she—wanted the other things. You understand, father? The thing grew, and at last he saw that she