

## *The Envoy*

turned with a huge roll of canvas. "I unpacked it at the station," he said; "so it is ready for inspection," and he spread out on the table a replica of the famous Murillo. "There," he cried, "since Joan would not come to the Louvre, I am bringing the Louvre's chief treasure to her. As it is the last, so is it the best of my copies. My hand was losing its cunning, I felt myself growing old, so I prayed to that sweet Madonna to give me one last flicker of the immortal fire ere it left me a dry cinder. Well, she listened, I think. *Ave Maria!* the great Spaniard himself would rub his eyes if he could see this. Now, I shall go back contented, and dream of the days that are gone."

His voice broke. He was gazing at Joan, at the glory of maternity in her face.

"You are not going back, Felix," said Alec. "Kosnovia has now lost both its King and its Ambassador. You are here, and here you shall stay."

"Yes, dear Felix," whispered Joan, "we have found our Kingdom. Our court is small; but there is always room in it for you."

So Denver heard wild snatches of song, and listened, and marveled, and a baby cultivated a strange taste in lullabies, and Pallas Athene forgot that one of her chosen sons dwelt in Colorado, or, if she remembered, her heart was softened and she forbore.