

CHAPTER XV

THE ENVOY

IN the autumn of the following year, Joan was seated one day in the garden of her pretty suburban house at Denver. Not far away glittered a silvery lake; beyond a densely wooded plain rose the blue amphitheater of the Rocky Mountains; the distant clang of a gong told of street cars and the busy life of one of America's most thriving and picturesque cities.

She was somewhat more fragile than when she crossed the Pont Neuf on that fine morning in May eighteen months ago; but she looked and felt supremely happy, for Alec would soon be home from his office, where already he was proving that the qualities which made him a good King were now in a fair way toward establishing his position as a leading citizen of his native State. By her side in a dainty cot reposed another Alec, whose age might not yet be measured by many weeks, but whose size and lustiness proclaimed him—in his own special circle, at any rate—the most remarkable baby that ever “occurred” in Colorado.

Mrs. Talbot, Senior, tired of reading, was now doz-