

## III

IN Rome, Stella and Miss Innes met old friends and made new ones.

Amongst the latter was Lady Perkins and her daughter Felicia. Lady Perkins was very tall and had a beautiful skin. She was handsome and outspoken. In her youth she had been considered daring—even dangerous. The late Sir John capitulated at her first assault, bestowed on her one daughter, a small place in Surrey and a still smaller one in town. He then departed this life with that dignity so seldom found except in Englishmen of his own station and birth. For a few years Lady Perkins battled courageously against a steadily decreasing income. The place in London went at a sacrifice, then she migrated to Canada, and took up colonial life with a raised eyebrow and inward protest.

Colonialism had never appealed to Lady Perkins. Her insular mind pictured Canada a sparsely settled country, the bourne of English younger sons, where a scant population occupied a fleeting summer in frenzied preparation for the rigours of an appalling winter. She had sent bales of clothing to Canada, bales crammed with sweaters and rigid underwear, and ancient copies of the *Church Chimes* and the *Children's Friend*. She had visualised the opening of those bales by hardy woodsmen, who snatched a moment from the felling of gigantic pine trees which they thrust continuously into roaring furnaces.

But Lady Perkins had lived in Ferndale, a suburb