

him, he thought he screamed it;—but he spoke quite softly.

"Payzant's Island!" he said.

He had nothing on him worth having, when they had caught him outside Lunenburg an hour ago. In another hour they would kill him unless he could lead them to better prey; already they had tortured him. And on Payzant's Island to-night, the trader, his wife and children were alone in their strong newly-finished log-house. Payzant was rich; the night was quiet; and death—the man's teeth chattered—came to all. His knees gave under him as he watched Indian after Indian spring into his canoe, and vanish without even a ripple the more on the water. Sweet life awoke in him; he forgot the withes on his wrists; they were going—going!

Two Indians caught him up, head and heels, and swung him into their canoe. They were going indeed, but he was with them—sobbing, writhing, despairing, in the bottom of the last canoe; a new Judas in the New World.

There was no light in Payzant's house. In front of a dying fire, he and his wife sat talking; in a corner the children were asleep, and the warmth gradually made their mother drowse as she watched them.

Payzant looked at her from half-shut, contented eyes; looked at his new log walls, his sturdy doors. He raised his head sharply, and listened. There was not a sound; yet he had heard one! He went to the barred window, and put his ear against the heavy wooden shutters. He had wealth in his home for those times, and the German settlers at Lunenburg wished him no good. He took his gun from the wall, and began to undo the door.

His wife sprang up, wide-awake.

"What are you doing?" she demanded.

"Would you open the door so late?"

Payzant shrugged his shoulders. For months past they had lived in a hut with no door to open! He stooped again to unbar it.

"I will give them a fright. It is some of those Germans, come over to steal!"

"Oh, Payzant! I heard nothing. Do not venture out. What if it were Indians?"

"Indians! Why runneth thy mind on them?" said the man, with bitterness.

"When to us the whole province is but a horde of enemies. German hogs settled at our doors, with Cornwallis's men quartered on them to keep them from rooting up the whole township! Popish French rising in Acadia, and all agag in Quebec, sending their spies and their hired Indian devils even to Halifax,—it seems to me that in all the earth the

least to be feared by a Huguenot is the Indians!"

His wife sighed.

"Yet I fear them," she said.

"It is not from them that I have sought refuge on this island," he repeated obstinately, moving to the door.

"Wait! you know not who is there." And she took him by the shoulder to delay him.

"I heard the swearing of a white man!" he returned drily, not knowing that an unwilling guide had tripped, and, falling, shrieked out an oath. He opened the door, and from where he stood on the threshold, fired into the darkness; the shot had scarcely sounded, before the blaze of twenty muskets lit the heavy air. Against the open doorway, and the glow of his own fire, Payzant's figure had been clearly visible. He dropped his gun, staggering, recovered and stood erect, staring into the darkness with eyes which could not pierce it.

But his wife in that momentary flash of muskets, had seen shadows squatting under the bushes; brown, keen-eyed shadows, waiting to see how many men garrisoned the house. Oh! For five, for two, for one man!

"Come in!" she cried. "Payzant, come in."

He fell, outwards on the grass.

"The Indians," he muttered, as she seized him frantically. "The children—go in!"

The children! He was her husband, her best beloved. How heavy he was as she dragged him nearer, nearer yet to the open door behind her, never taking her eyes the while from those lurking shadows.

Payzant groaned heavily, and she felt his shudder.

"My heart—grows cold," he said, "Get in!" He slipped through her straining arms to the ground.

From the house came a child's voice shrill with terror, but its cry was drowned in a dog-like whoop from the near bushes. Mrs. Payzant leapt from where her dead lay on the ground; the living called her, and they had none but —.

She barred the door, twisting the heavy beam home, just before the rush of the Indians broke against it. It quivered but it did not give.

The children screamed afresh.

"Be quiet!" the mother ordered harshly. "Come and help me."

The boxes of merchandise, which had brought the Indians on them, must help to keep them out, if only she could lift them from the inner room where the serving woman lay sick, with her child beside her.

Thank God, there were barrels in plenty! And she rolled them against the door, till she could do no more.

She ground her teeth as she sat among her children, the two younger boys and the girl clutching her round the neck, by the skirts; the eldest standing tearless and defiant as his mother herself, but with rage shaking him like a fit.

"I will kill them!" he repeated, stamping his bare foot.

"Hush!" Mrs. Payzant gathered the children closer, and listened. "Hush!"

The boy stood quiet, a rigid little figure in the gloom.

There was a scraping sound as of twigs against the door, a fall of heavier wood.

"They are going to burn us!" he cried. "Mother, the house won't catch, will it? Mother?"

"I know not," she answered. Burn, —she would burn a thousand times so that the Miemcas should go empty as they came,—but the children! She tightened her clasp of them, sat rocking them. Outside a spark leapt, crackled! Brush-wood was tinder at this time of year. As the flame sprang out, it sent a fitful light through a chink in the logs; a chink to fire a gun through; and their only gun lay outside on the grass. She sat quite still, watching the growing fire-light, hearing the wood catch as new was thrown on; in the light from the loop-hole she saw smoke oozing into the room in little impalpable film. Suddenly there entered a great whirl of it. Where?

She rushed to feel the opposite wall of the house, and sprang back with a blistered hand. The smoke poured in till the room was choking, the children sobbed and gasped. From the inner room the sick serving woman called where she lay helpless and forgotten, "Mr. Payzant!" Payzant's wife shuddered. She could not let children and a sick woman burn! Death was shut in with them and death waited without; one she must choose. Wild with doubt she pressed her hands to her eyes to stop the intolerable smart of the wood-smoke. Suddenly over the faint wailing of the panting children, over the steady hiss of the fire, came a voice. A white man's voice. A voice of warning, of reassurance.

She could not know that for him it was speak, or burn on the slow fire of the burning house. With a cry of thanksgiving she opened the door. There swept in a reek of smoke; a breath of night-air,—cool, heavenly; a yelling mob. The woman quailed. For behind

All back numbers of "Canada" may still be obtained from the Publisher at 10 cents each. Only a few left.