

## THE FORCE OF EVIL.

"Did ye ever hear, George, of greater rewards than money, and a greater happiness than being independent?" Roderick Ray, the Scottish Covenanter, asked gently, as he unbuckled his "beast" from the cart. Roderick Ray had a farm on Oak Creek, three miles east of the school-house. "Yon man is a Methodist, an' I'm na' sa fond o' them as o' some ithers, but I can see he has the root o' the matter in him for all; and I'm thinkin' that he has the smile o' his Lord and Master on him, an' that's better nor gold, nor siller, nor houses, nor lands, nor cattle on a thousand hills; for, after all, George, these things slip frae us easy and we slip away frae them easier still, an' it's then we'll hear the Good Man ask: "An' hoo did ye spend the years I gave ye? Did ye warn the sinner, teach the young, feed the hungry an' comfort the sad?" An' I'm thinkin', George, that to all this yon little man, Methoda body though he be, will be able to give a verra guid answer an' a very acceptable one."

Inside the building the women had already gathered. Mrs. Cavers and Libby Anne sat beside the window. Mrs. Cavers's eyes were on the group of men at the woodpile, for Bill, her husband, was among them, very much smartened up in his good clothes. She had had some difficulty in persuading him to come. He wanted to stay at home and sleep, he said. While the men talked beside the woodpile, Sandy Braden, the hotelkeeper, drove up with his pacing horse and rubber-tired buggy. He stopped to talk to the men. Sandy was a very genial fellow, and a general favorite.

Mrs. Cavers sat perfectly still; only the compression of her lips showed her agitation.

"Come on, Bill, and I'll give you a good swift ride," she heard him say.

Bill hesitated and looked around uneasily. Sandy gave him a significant wink and then he went without a word.

Inside, Mrs. Cavers gave a little smothered cry, which Libby Anne understood. She moved nearer to her mother in sympathy.

Mrs. Cavers leaned forward, straining her eyes after the cloud of dust that marked the pacing horse's progress, clasping and unclasping her hands in wordless misery. Bill was gone—she had lost him again. The wind drove ripples in the grain, the little white clouds hung motionless in the sky, but Bill was gone, and the sun, bright and pitiless, was shining over all. Then the other men came in and the service began.

The whole meeting was one of inspiration and power. The congregation sang with enthusiasm and the Rev. John Burrell spoke as a man who knew something of the sorrows of humanity and felt a deep compassion for the men and women before him.

At the close, Teddy Watson hitched up Mrs. Cavers's horse. There was still no sign of Bill, so she and Libby Anne drove sadly home.

Her aching heart told the poor woman only too plainly that her husband was lost again.

Little wonder that the cry went up, "Oh, God, why will professed Christian people license the stuff that robs us of our dear ones and drags them down to destruction!"