

Ruth, I know you are. I shall love you."

"Miss Stella, you've forgotten your prayers," said Ruth an hour later, when, having assisted her mistress to undress, she returned with Stella to her own room, which she found as dirty and untidy as the rest of the house.

"What should I say prayers for?" asked Stella contemptuously. "Are you one of what Dad calls 'the pious sort,' Ruth? If you are, you'd better keep it to yourself here. You'll have a fine life of it if Dad finds it out. Didn't you hear how he just took the man up by his belt who came here to preach, and pitched him into the pond? We've never had a man here to preach since. Mr. Denman, the new Vicar down at Bruntdale, came up here to call, and Dad went to the door to meet him with his hunting-crop in his hand, and he just flourished it round that poor man's head till he was glad to go, I can tell you. Dad didn't hit him, you know, he only frightened him; that was prime fun. It's what Dad calls 'baiting the parson.' You would have laughed if you'd seen him, Ruth."

"No, Miss, I should not," said Ruth stoutly; "and I don't think it was a nice thing for one gentleman to

do towards another. Perhaps Mr. Atherfield wouldn't have done such a thing to any one else. I think it is very cowardly to attack a clergyman, whose religion will not let him strike back again if he is hurt."

"My father isn't a coward," said Stella hotly, her black eyes flashing ominously; "no Atherfield is a coward. I don't like you, Ruth, if you say such things. I shall go to sleep, and leave you to your prayers."

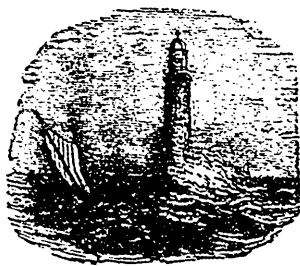
The last words were uttered with so much vehement contempt as to cause Ruth to start, but she knelt to her own prayers with a sad heart. She felt the utter contrast of the moral atmosphere which now surrounded her to that to which she had been before accustomed. Here, instead of support and help to herself, she saw that she must be the one to give counsel and guidance. The situation was so strange to her that at first she felt dazed and confused, her thoughts wandered, she could not shape her words in prayer; but with a strong effort she overcame this feeling, and earnestly laid her case before One who ever lends a listening ear. "Poor little girl," said Ruth, bending over the sleeping Stella, "God will help me to show you that there is good in prayer."

(To be continued.)

## RELIGION AND THE WORKING MAN.

BY THE REV. NEVISON LORAINE,

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MY friends and fellow-workers of the industrial classes, I propose for your careful consideration a subject of the most urgent

importance both in respect of your present welfare and future happiness. Among

the many questions that press themselves upon your attention in the present day, and that properly invite your consideration, none has so immediate and commanding a claim upon your careful thought as the religious question. I am well assured that I need only your open mind and honest judgment to bring home to your intelligent conviction the truth and justice of this contention.

Questions respecting religion are "in the air." Sometimes these questions take definite shape in spoken words, perhaps more often they only murmur