

TWILIGHT CIRCLE.

AN ANXIOUS DAUGHTER.—I can quite understand and sympathise with your difficulty. You are by no means the only Christian girl whose mind is perplexed by the seemingly consistent lives of those who make no outward profession of religion, or who even speak of it as a something that can be done without. Probably the surroundings of your friends have rendered it easy for them to live what you believe to be "pure and good lives." Their path may have been made very smooth for them, and great trouble or temptation may be unknown to them. Hence they will not have felt the same need of the Friend of friends. It seems comparatively easy to do without God in this world when all is bright and pleasant around us. Depend on it, dear, a time will come to each of those about whom you are so anxious, when nothing outside Christ's love will satisfy. It is common enough for those who do not believe in Him to call the religious profession of others mere "cant." It is better not to argue with such. Let your life speak for your sincerity; ask God to open the eyes of their understandings, and wait patiently for Him to do what you cannot for the friends you love.

A MEMBER OF THE "TWILIGHT CIRCLE" (Madras).—Thank you so much, dear, for having undertaken the correspondence. I echo your prayer that you may be the means of cheering and helping another girl. I greatly value your sweet message to myself. I often wish I could pass on more of my girls' letters for the benefit of all. I am so much interested in the account of your present work and surroundings, and especially touched by your submission to the wishes of those dearest to you, when the yielding was so contrary to your own inclination. You had asked God to guide those who had to decide for you; so, dear girl, I know you will cheerfully do the work you have taken in hand. Be sure that a blessing will follow, and that at some future time the information you are gaining, and the training which is at present irksome will prove of special value to you and others. Some day, I doubt not, you will thank God for the present trial. Write again.

SINNER writes begging for the prayers of all our Circle, because she thinks she needs them more than anybody. She writes, "I am so bad, yet capable of so much good. Pray that I may fight and conquer the evil in me, which is like a slow but spreading poison." This first message touched me deeply, and indeed I did ask God's help for you, though I could not at once pass on your request to other members of our Circle. Your second letter tells me that you are much happier, and that God has been very good to you, but you still ask for the prayers of other members. I pass on your message to A LOST ONE, which tells that you have taken her trouble with your own to the throne of grace, and you believe all will yet be well with both of you.

A BEGINNER.—You do belong to our Circle since you are an appreciative reader and find the replies helpful and comforting. You write, "I try to be useful and good, but sometimes it is very hard. I give way when anyone speaks crossly to me, and I answer back angrily; then I am sorry, yet something seems to say to me, 'She was rude first, so what does it matter?' In spite of my trying to silence these thoughts the habit continues. Please help me." Read our old Twilight Talk on "Besetting Sins," Chap. xiii. in the volume, or No. 931, p. 70 in "G. O. P." Many members have written to say how it has helped them. Ask God to make it of use to you. Read over daily some text, such as "A soft answer turneth away wrath," or, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty," "He that is slow to anger appeaseth strife," "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry," "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Say the special passage over to yourself now and then as a reminder, and ask God for strength to practise what you know. Perhaps you will say, "I know all these texts by heart." That may be, and your familiarity with them may hinder your giving them special thought. Remind yourself of them by reading them again and again, and saying to yourself, "These words are God's message to me." I shall hope, dear, for news of your self-conquest through God-given strength.

A. Z. T. (Haslemere).—Thank you so much for your sweet letter and the accompanying leaflets. I placed the latter in the hands of friends who thought, like myself, that the little Sunday West-end club for young servants would fill a great want, and would prove most useful, especially in such a locality. Most schemes of the kind seem to be for the benefit of dwellers in other districts. You write, "I am not a girl, but I always read 'In the Twilight Side by Side' with much pleasure." I rejoice to know that friends of all ages and nationalities claim to sit with us and take a lively interest in our Circle column also.

A. H. F.—I shall send on your letter as a message of cheer to my dear Canadian Correspondent. I have read it with pleasure and interest, and I thank you for it.

ELLIE.—I well remember your former letter, and the wish for a real mother like your unseen mother-friend. I am so thankful your sweet correspondent, herself a mother of girls, has been such a help and blessing to you. It is a great thing to be able to write as you do—"I am one of your working girls, and a very busy life is mine; but I am learning, though slowly, that I am in the very place God has chosen for me." I shall always remember you, dear, and I do sympathise with all your high aspirations and strivings after a life of holiness and usefulness, also with your recent sorrow. I rejoice, too, over your words, "My aim and purpose in life are to follow Christ and work for Him. Only God and myself know what a struggle I have against my besetting sins, but I am determined to fight and pray, and I know I shall yet be more than conqueror through Christ."

FIDELIA writes in terms of warm praise of the kindness of UNE DE VOS FILLES, and thinks hers must be a lovely character. She adds, "I am sure we must one and all thank her for her sweet thoughts and messages." Yes—some letters make me sorry, but they are few in comparison with those which bring great gladness. It is, for instance, a great joy to have such a message as yours, "I thank you for all your love and help, for, oh, it does help me to turn many a rough corner bravely!" The long delayed answers are unavoidable. The replies are written as rapidly as possible, but the whole contents of a periodical must be in the Editor's hands and arranged several weeks before it appears. I do not remember even the suggestion of a reproach in my last letter to you, dear girl-friend.

JULIA MCC. (New Zealand).—Your touching letter fills me with sympathy for you and the many who suffer from a like infirmity. It shuts you out from so much that is enjoyable, and renders you lonely, though you may be in company with many others. Have you and others who suffer from the same trouble tried to study the lip-reading of which one hears so much? A correspondent of our Circle, whom I lately met, has been wonderfully successful in doing this, without the aid of a special teacher. She had been very persevering and not easily discouraged. The result has amply rewarded her, for, though shut out from general conversation, she understands what is said directly to her, if spoken deliberately. Such messages as yours make me glad and thankful. To have been a source of comfort to you "when life felt a terrible thing to endure," is indeed a great privilege. You write, "I am a struggling Christian full of doubts and fears, but trusting in the love of Jesus. My longing is to live a life of full consecration to His service, and to work for Him. My greatest foe is the self that wishes to be thought well of by the world, whilst my desire is to be satisfied with nothing less than my Lord's approval. I thank God for your gift of loving sympathy. What a bond of union there is between Christians!" With such longings as yours, I am sure you will become what you wish to be. Has not our Master said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled"? Your other query has been answered already.

ONE SEEKING TO BE A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CHRIST writes, "I thank you for help given in the dear Twilight Talks, and also in the Circle column. It cheers me so much in the battle of Christian life to read how each one finds hers, and to see so many sides of it. The sweet, simple testimony of some of these Christian girls is worth two or three sermons to me. I am so happy in having dedicated my life to Christ's service, and I pray daily that those who are passing through doubt and darkness, as regards their souls' relation to Him, may be enlightened by His Spirit to know the love of God, in that 'While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.'" I wish I could give the whole of your sweet letter, but I am sure the few words quoted will be valued by the members of our Circle. I quite agree with you that it is a great joy as well as a plain duty to dedicate our special gifts pre-eminently to His service, and for the help and comfort of all around us. Many say like you, "I find it hard to speak for Christ, and when I wish to do so the right words do not seem to come." Happily you can add, "I do try to remember always that I am a child of God, and that, though weak and erring, I still belong to Him." Loving thanks for your good wishes and the prayer, "May God bless and help you in your work."

PUZZLED Y. W.—Tell me your difficulty, and I will do all in my power to help you. It is a true pleasure to me to be of use to my girls.

YOUR LOVING LITTLE ONE.—I do understand all the conflict through which you must have passed. It would be untrue to say that I was not much distressed when I read your letter, but I thank God that strength was given you to conquer a greater temptation than that to which you had already yielded. I hope, nay, I believe that the memory of a past breach of faith, and the real contrition which followed it, will make you more watchful in the future. I freely forgive you, and ask that God will bless you and make you His true servant in Christ.

ABOUT THE DATURA.

NOT a few people know all that is to be known about the Datura. Yet a few particulars respecting it may induce some new lover of nature to try to cultivate it—a by no means difficult task. It was named and placed by Linnæus when he performed his splendid work of arranging the botanical kingdom. The name "Datura" is an alteration

of the Arabic name *tatorah*; and under it are now considered to belong all plants hitherto known as Brugmansia. Belonging as it does to the Nightshade family, it is not surprising that, although an ornamental genus, it and others of its kind possess deleterious qualities. Still, on the principle that "like cures like," its juice is used medically



THE DATURA.

especially in America in cases of epilepsy and mania without fever.

The "home" countries of the Datura are South America, Brazil, Mexico, tropical America, China, India, Abyssinia and Australia. No wonder, then, that it is as Dr. Lionel Beale says, "a hungry plant wanting abundance of water," which we take to mean that it is always thirsty. Though well settled in this country, none of its varieties are hardy, though, owing to the rapid growth, some succeed well if treated as half-hardy annuals. They like outdoor sheltered, sunny positions best; and carefully cultivated soon make large plants, handsome enough as central figures in large beds.

There are at least a dozen varieties of the Datura. The *D. ceratocaula* grows from two to three feet high. Its large, scented, trumpet-like, white flowers, tinged with violet purple, are often six inches in length and some four or five inches across. They expand in the afternoon and close the following morning. *D. cornifera*, or Brugmansia Knighti, has large double flowers which hang down like a handsome chandelier. Wright's Datura — the *D. meteloides* is another splendid variety, reaching three to four feet high, and blooming from July until cold sets in. Other beautiful varieties are those with abundance of blooms of choice colour — yellow tinted with green, white, yellow and double bloom—the *D. clorantha*, and several more.

The red spider is an arch-enemy. A plentiful supply of liquid manure not only keeps the Datura in vigorous life, but assists and prolongs its blooms.

Robinson says that the best way to grow the Datura is as standards, so that their long drooping flowers may be better seen. It needs a sheltered and sunny situation, and is best grown in large pots or tubs.