

IRENE; OR, HOW CAN I HELP OTHERS?

CHAPTER I.

"Raise thy repining eyes, and take true measure
Of thine eternal treasure;
The Father of thy Lord can grudge thee nought,
The world for thee was bought,
And as this landscape broad—earth, sea, and sky,—
All centres in thine eye,
So all God does, if rightly understood,
Shall work thy final good."

Christian Year.

AEW, I think, who have ever visited Lucerne, can forget the loveliness of its scenery.

There is so much beauty everywhere in Switzerland, but at Lucerne both grandeur and beauty are combined. No one, I should think, could fail to be struck with the grand beauty of Mount Pilatus, rising above the lake of liquid blue, so clear but yet so deep.

To those happy people who are possessed with a poetical mind, the lake and Mount Pilatus might symbolize two characters that are sometimes met with in this world. Mount Pilatus might remind such of one who gloried in his strength, and yet gloried not too much; one who was ever ready to protect and help the weak in the great fight of life; one whose aim was ever to keep the "end in view," and therefore never stooped to waste his talents on the passing shadows, but ever grasped the substance. In the soft liquid blue of the lake one may think of a very different character, and yet not one to be despised, because so different; one whose "lines" are, indeed, laid in "pleasant places," scattering sweetness and love all around.

But now I must come to my story, the scene of which is laid in a little chalet that looks down on the Lake of Lucerne, a very quiet, picturesque chalet. I daresay many people who have visited Lucerne, have never even observed it, as it stands half-hidden by the trees. It is of the inhabitants of this house that I am going to tell you; very quiet, unpretending people they are; so if you want exciting stories I must refer you to novels. I want to try

and initiate you into one of those lives that are lived every day, that pass before our very eyes, and yet we discern not the beauty of those unobtrusive lives of unselfishness that some day we shall fully understand. The sun is casting its parting rays into the windows of this little chalet; let us also look in and see what can be seen.

A small room, plainly furnished; the first thing which strikes one is a sofa in the corner of the room, on which is lying a girl apparently of fifteen years of age. There is nothing striking in her appearance. A small pale face, calm grey eyes, and massive coils of dark brown hair, which was pushed back from her temples. She was lying there all alone; she seemed to be expecting some one, for every now and then she would raise herself slightly to look at the wooden clock on the chimney-piece. Soon after this, the door was opened, and a young man entered and quickly made his way to the sofa, to meet the joyous look of welcome that seemed to light up the pale face of the young girl.

"My Schwesterchen, how glad am I to see you again!"

"Ah, yes! and I to see you also, Cyril, dear. I want to hear your day's adventures, and how you found the old man; you are at liberty," she added wistfully.

"Yes, dear, I am at your service for the rest of the evening. I was so glad I went to see the old man, Irene; it seems a hard case. He is an Englishman, and had one little girl, who was so delicate the doctors ordered her abroad; he brought her here, but the journey was too much for her, and she died a few days ago, and now he is ill himself."

"Ah, Cyril, you always take comfort wherever you go! I do so wish I could do something to help others too, instead of lying here all day long doing nothing."

"Nothing," said Cyril, playfully, "what is this?" (touching a work-basket which was close by her side, and which he knew was full of work for the poor of his flock,