

The Inglenook.

The Pink Stamp.

BY WILLIS BOYD ALLEN.

How it did snow! Karl, looking out of the window and holding a bear in his hand, said to himself that it was the greatest storm he had ever seen, as indeed it was. Karl was about thirteen years old, the son of a woodcutter in the Black Forest. You can guess by this that he did not think "snow", but "schnee". However, it was all the same to him and to his heavenly Father, who listens to all sorts of prayers every night—German, Russian and Chinese—and understands them all.

Karl had been a cripple for five years. He had been helping his father in the forest, one winter day, and in trying to get out of the way of a falling pine he had slipped and in another moment the tree was upon him. During the long dreary months that followed Karl had learned to carve little toys of wood for the dealers in a town not far away. He made very good toys indeed and was especially proud of his bears, which he made just fierce enough to be natural, and just good natured enough not to scare little children. But machinery crept into the business more and more, and Karl's careful workmanship no longer brought good prices, and his stock of bears and tiny chalets grew larger on his hands, while the little heap of pennies in the cracked china bowl dwindled.

"There's one good thing," said Karl's father, coming in from the storm and shaking off the snow; "we have plenty of wood to burn."

"Ah, but what shall we eat, Wilhelm?" sighed his wife.

"The good God will care for us," said the woodcutter, cheerily, as he threw another big log on the fire and sat down to draw off his heavy boots. "Come here, Irmgart, and have a ride on father's knee." For Karl had a little sister four years old. So on Irmgart's merry laugh was ringing out, and when the family gathered about the rude table for their poor meal, an hour later, they had forgotten their troubles and were rejoicing in the shelter of the little hut, against which the storm was beating heavily. They had had a merry Christmas, a few weeks before, in spite of their poverty. There had been a tree—set in the firelight, for want of candles—and a few simple gifts. The children had sung:

"O little fir, dear little fir,
How faithful are thy branches!"

"Trust in God," said Wilhelm, over and over, "and all will be well."

But it was hard work to trust on an empty stomach. The snow drifted deep round the little hut, and the woodcutter tramped even to a large town fifteen miles away to sell his wood and Karl's carvings; but he brought back only a few pence and a small bundle of food.

"I almost lose patience," said he that night, after the children had gone to bed, when I see what foolish things the rich buy. There was one shop window quite filled with old postage stamps, some of them marked as high as two marks."

"Now, why could not we sell some of ours?" asked his wife, with sudden hope. "We have always saved the letters from your

brother and from my home. Perhaps they will bring us a few pennings."

"We can but try," said Wilhelm; but he shook his head doubtfully. "Open the chest, dear, and we will see what we have."

There were not many, after all; only a dozen or so, for the poor cannot afford to write often. Wilhelm put the emptied envelopes in his pocket to take to town, another weary walk the next day.

"Ah, here is one from my father!" he said, taking out one more from a corner in which it had been crumpled. "It was sent from South America, when he was a sailor, forty years ago."

"Ah, what a pity it has not a fine bright stamp!" exclaimed his wife. "See, there is only that old thing of faded pink. It is not worth taking. The new stamp is so much prettier. This looks like one of Irmgart's drawings."

"Yet I will take it with the rest," said Wilhelm, removing with tender hand the worn and yellow letter. "In the morning early I will start."

Wilhelm was bitterly disappointed when he exhibited his treasures to the dealer the next day.

"They are all common—very common," said the man, roughly glancing over them. "I don't want them."

Wilhelm was about to leave, when a stranger in an elegant fur-lined coat entered the shop, and the dealer ran to wait on him.

The gentleman's eye fell upon the woodcutter's heap of soiled envelopes.

"What is this?" he exclaimed in very poor German, for he was an American. "Will you let me examine these?"

"Look! look! An 1850 British Guiana, pink, on the original envelope! Are these yours, sir?" addressing Wilhelm.

"I was about to sell them," stammered the woodcutter.

"The rest are worthless," said the stranger, pushing them back and taking out a well-filled purse. "For the British Guiana stamp I will give you this. It will be a good bargain for me, and you need not sell it unless you wish."

Wilhelm could hardly believe his eyes, but there was the money before him—two crisp bank notes of one thousand marks each. In all five hundred dollars of our money! For that little two-cent scrawl on pink paper was one of the rarest and most valuable stamps known to collectors.

"Trust in God," said the woodcutter, as he helped his wife and children to meat and bread and fresh milk that night, "and all will be well. Have I not always told you so?"—Morning Star.

One day a small boy marched up to the master's desk and inquired if he would like a bit of pork, as they were going to kill their pig." The schoolmaster replied in the affirmative. When several days had elapsed and nothing more had been heard about the pork, he called the boy up and inquired why he had not brought it. "Oh, please, sir," the boy replied, "the pig got better."

If you think you resemble a great man say nothing. The resemblance may cease the moment you open your mouth.

"This Means You."

We frequently see the sign, "no admittance except on business." But very often this is not enough to keep out the inquisitive and intruding visitor, so sometimes the brief phrase is added "this means you." It would seem as if every one who read the notice "no admittance" would understand that the rule applied to him. Why should he think that it did not? What reason had any for thinking that an exception was to be made in his case? Yet the fact remains, that it is often found necessary to add the special and particular words, "this means you."

Evidently it is a difficult matter to make people believe that what they do not like or approve, has any reference to themselves. How often the Christian minister would like to label his sermons, "this means you." It is a well known fact that rarely does a hearer take the sermon to himself. It sometimes seems as if the sermon specially intended for a certain hearer was the very one that he handed over to someone else. Philip Brooks has spoken of the difficulty of getting the right man to take the sermon which was intended for him. If he says, I preach on diligence in work, those who are already doing their whole duty will make extra efforts. While if I preach on restfulness and trust those who are doing nothing but rest and trust will become even more lazy and negligent.

Who can devise some plan by which the earnest worker can be made to take the sermon on rest and the idler appropriate the lesson of diligence? Nathan the prophet had an easier time than the ordinary preacher. He had only one person in his audience. The erring king could hardly escape the application of the prophet's parable. He certainly could not hand the sermon over to his neighbor. "Thou art the man" was the sentence which clinched the lesson, and brought home to him his sin and shame. Would that the preacher of to day could say as directly and successfully to the careless hearer, "this means you."

'It's Very Hard.'

"It's very hard to have nothing to eat but porridge when others have every sort of dainties," muttered Dick, as he sat with his wooden bowl before him. "It's very hard to have to get up so early on these bitter cold mornings and work all day, when others can enjoy themselves without an hour of work. It's very hard to have to trudge along through the snow while others roll about in their coaches."

"It's a great blessing," said his grandmother, as she sat at her knitting, "to have food when so many are hungry; it's a great blessing to have a roof over one's head when so many are homeless; it's a great blessing to have sight and hearing and strength for daily labor when so many are blind, deaf or suffering."

"Why, grandmother, you seem to think that nothing is hard," said the boy, still in a grumbling tone.

"No, Dick, there is one thing that I do think very hard."

"What is that?" cried Dick, who thought that at last his grandmother had found some cause for complaint.

"Why, boy, I think that heart is very hard that is not thankful for so many blessings."—Phrenological Journal.