

**THE ROMANCE OF A
CHRISTMAS CARD;
ILLUSTRATED BY
ALICE ERCLE HUNT**

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The Romance of a Christmas Card; Illustrated by Alice Ercole Hunt by Kate Douglas Wiggin & Alice Ercole Hunt

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KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN & ALICE ERCLE HUNT

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The Romance of a Christmas Card

I

It was Christmas Eve and a Saturday night when Mrs. Larrabee, the Beulah minister's wife, opened the door of the study where her husband was deep in the revision of his next day's sermon, and thrust in her comely head framed in a knitted rigolette.

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"Luther, I'm going to run down to Letty's. We think the twins are going to have measles; it's the only thing they have n't had, and Letty's spirits are not up to concert pitch. You look like a blessed old prophet to-night, my dear! What's the text?"

The minister pushed back his spectacles and ruffled his gray hair.

"Isaiah vi, 8: '*And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying whom shall I send? . . . Then said I, Here am I, send me!*'"

"It does n't sound a bit like Christmas, somehow."

"It has the spirit, if it has n't the sound," said the minister. "There is always so little spare money in the village that we get less and less accustomed to skaring what we have with others. I want to remind the people that there are

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different ways of giving, and that the bestowing of one's self in service and good deeds can be the best of all gifts. Letty Boynton won't need the sermon! — Don't be late, Reba."

"Of course not. When was I ever late? It has just struck seven and I'll be back by eight to choose the hymns. And oh! Luther, I have some fresh ideas for Christmas cards and I am going to try my luck with them in the marts of trade. There are hundreds of thousands of such things sold nowadays; and if the 'Boston Banner' likes my verses well enough to send me the paper regularly, why should n't the people who make cards like them too, especially when I can draw and paint my own pictures?"

"I've no doubt they'll like them; who would n't? If the parish knew what a

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ready pen you have, they'd suspect that you help me in my sermons! The question is, will the publishers send you a check, or only a copy of your card?"

"I should relish a check, I confess; but oh! I should like almost as well a beautifully colored card, Luther, with a picture of my own inventing on it, my own verse, and R. L. in tiny letters somewhere in the corner! It would make such a lovely Christmas present! And I should be so proud; inside of course, not outside! I would cover my halo with my hat so that nobody in the congregation would ever notice it!"

The minister laughed.

"Consult Letty, my dear. David used to be in some sort of picture business in Boston. She will know, perhaps, where to offer your card!"

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At the introduction of a new theme into the conversation Mrs. Larrabee slipped into a chair by the door, her lantern swinging in her hand.

"David can't be as near as Boston or we should hear of him sometimes. A pretty sort of brother to be meandering foot-loose over the earth, and Letty working her fingers to the bone to support his children — twins at that! It was just like David Gilman to have twins! Does n't it seem incredible that he can let Christmas go by without a message? I dare say he does n't even remember that his babies were born on Christmas eve. To be sure he is only Letty's half-brother, but after all they grew up together and are nearly the same age."

"You always judged David a little severely, Reba. Don't despair of reforming