

Rube Wexford sat near the warm fire which was surrounded by a dozen men beside himself. He had been there for hours listening to anecdotes of hunters' lives, even adding to the general fund with some of his experiences, but though his companions coaxed and persuaded him, they could not prevail on him to taste liquor. This was something so entirely new that many a laugh and joke was had at his expense. He answered all persuasions to imbibe in the same way, saying only, "Not to-day boys, not to-day."

When sunset came he was still in his seat. He wanted to go home, he wanted to keep his promise, but he thought he would wait awhile, and start later so as it would not look to Kate too much as if he were giving in. So thinking he went to a quiet corner by himself, and had not been long there before he was asleep. It was eleven o'clock when he awoke with a start, and said hurriedly:

"What is it, Kate?"

A loud roar of laughter brought him to his senses, and a rough voice cried:

"Rube, guess you have been dreaming."

Yes," he replied foolishly; "I thought my wife was calling me.

He glanced at the clock and said:

"Boys, I must go."

"Have something before you leave," was the general cry.

"No, not to-night."

Then he was gone. His conscience smote him as he trudged through the snow. It would be after two o'clock when he reached home. One thing consoled him somewhat; he was sober. But would Kate be in the cabin when he returned? Of course, she must be. Nothing short of madness could tempt her to keep the rash vow she made in the morning. So thought Rube. This was because he was incapable of estimating the great suffering which he had caused his wife.

On he went until through the stillness of the night was borne to his ears the sound of falling waters. It proceeded from a spot which marked the half-way between Pineville and his own home and was caused by the river's tumbling down a steep descent of fifteen or twenty feet of rugged rocks. His road at this point lay close to the river bank, and soon he was in view of the cascade. As he passed it he noticed with a sort of shudder how cold and dark the water looked as it tumbled down. For thirty feet above the falls there was no ice. It broke off abruptly, and the current rushed from beneath with terrible velocity. Beyond in the moonlight glistened an unbroken surface of clear ice for fully half a mile before there was a bend in the river's bank. The sight was an old one to Rube, and he paid little heed to it, but stalked on silently, still thinking of Kate and wondering if the cabin would be tenantless. Suddenly he stood stock still and listened. Many an ear would have heard nothing but the sound of rushing waters. Rube's acute and practiced hearing detected something more, and he felt instinctively for his ammunition and looked to the priming of his rifle. Then from the distance the sound came again—a peculiar cry, followed by another and another, until they ended in a chorus of unearthly yells. Rube muttered to himself one word—wolves—and strained his eyes in the direction of the curve to the river's edge. The cry proceeded from that direction and grew louder every instant. Before he could decide on a plan of action there shot out from the bend in the river what looked to him like a woman carrying a bundle and skating for dear life. She strained every nerve but never

once cried cut. Next came a wolf, followed rapidly by others which swelled the pack to a dozen, all ravenous, yelping, snarling and gaining closely on their prey. Rube raised his rifle, fired and began to load as he had never loaded before. The cries came nearer and nearer. Great God! the wolves were upon the woman! It seemed as if no earthly hope could save her, when, quick as an arrow from a bow, she swerved to one side, the maddened brutes slid forward on their hind legs and she had gained a few steps. Again she flew onward, and again she tried the ruse of swerving aside, the man on the bank in the meantime firing rapidly, and picking off wolves after wolves. A fresh danger arose. The woman evidently did not see the abrupt break in the ice above the falls, and the dark, swift current which lay beyond. Perhaps she was too frightened to hear the rushing waters. On she went, making straight for the falls, the wolves almost on her heels, and the man's voice crying in terrified accents, as he dropped on his knees in the snow.

"Kate! Kate! My God save her?"

The woman was on the brink of the ice, when she made a sudden sweep to one side. Nearly the entire pack, unable to check their mad flight, plunged into the water, which carried them swiftly over the rocks, and Kate Wexford was flying toward the river bank, where she fell helpless in the snow, her baby in her arms, while Rube's rifle frightened the remainder of the pursuers away. It was some time before she could answer her husband's voice. When strength enabled her to do so she arose feebly in the snow, her resolution to go to her father, as strong as ever, but Rube took her hand, knelt down and said:

"Kate, bear with me for the last time. As God is my judge, I shall never again taste liquor. This night has taught me a lesson which I cannot forget."

Kate believed him and accepted his promise. Then they started to Pineville, Rube carrying the baby and more than half carrying his wife. When they arrived there Kate told her parents that she had been dying to show them the baby, and, taking advantage of the moonlight night, had made the journey on skates.

Rube kept his vow, the roses bloomed again on Kate's cheeks, and to day a happy family of boys and girls feel no touch of shame as they look up with pride to their father.

A Profession for Women.

Mr. Higginson has found one profession that is not overcrowded, and that is peculiarly adapted to women. It is that of nursing; and, after narrating the great difficulty experienced in getting assistance for the care of a sick person, he says, in the *Woman's Journal*: "Good nurses are well paid, easily earning from eight to fifteen dollars a week, besides their board. The good they do to their fellow-creatures is enough to satisfy the utmost longing of the conscience; and they often win an amount of gratitude that secures for them life-long friendship. Their position is not a menial one—a point on which the American mind is so sensitive; they usually rank as members of the family, and are very apt to rule the family. On the other hand, their work is arduous, exhausting, and often repulsive; but so is much work that men have to do, including the work of the physician himself. Why should not the Helen Harknesses of the world try their hands at nursing?"