

TORTURED, THAT WOMEN MAY SMILE.

(By HENRY J. CAREY, in *Nature Magazine*.)

Ralson's prolonged absence from camp caused no alarm at first. Trappers in the Canadian wilderness are used to such unexpected events. True, Ralson was but a boy—a green hand just over from England—and Hudson's Bay Company bear-traps are difficult and dangerous even for an experienced woodsman to set. But the lad, though he had been in some scrapes, had in general shown considerable quickness in acquiring the various skills of the Northern *voyageur*. After all, he had been away from headquarters only forty hours. As time wore on, however, a terrible suspicion wormed its way into the minds of his two companions. Not caring to voice their thoughts, they hurried off to the nearest bear-trap, which was about a mile up the creek. When they came to a soft place on the trail and saw only footprints of a man going and none returning, their presentiments seemed confirmed. Now they almost ran along the dim trail. In their haste it seemed to them that the trees and bushes caught at their clothing and tried to hold them back. At last they broke into a small open space. There was the bear-pen in which the trap had been set. Near it lay a pocket knife, with broken blade. Some one had evidently thrown the useless thing there. Just in front of the pen some creature had been digging desperately in the sand. Had Ralson, crazy with thirst, been delving with the knife for a few precious drops of water? As they looked in at the door of the pen their most hideous fears were realised. There on its back, smeared with blood and sand, swollen almost beyond recognition by mosquito poison, and absolutely motionless, lay what remained of the boy Ralson! The remorseless steel teeth of the 60-pound bear-trap, biting into the bone, held one leg above the ankle. A cloud of buzzing, shiny-blue meat-flies rose, protesting, from the body as the trappers leaned over it. In another hour perhaps the crows and ravens would have been at it. They saw how he had hacked at the strong birch drag to which the trap chain was fastened, until his knife had snapped. Then evidently he had given up in despair.

Luckily his companions were men trained to quick thought and quick action. Upon examining their youthful pal, they found evidence that a spark of life still remained in the unconscious, pitiful wreck. Working together they quickly removed the heavy mass of metal from the tortured leg. One ran to the stream for cold water, while the other twisted birch-bark into a funnel, through which they allowed the water to trickle very gently into the parched throat. Next they bathed and washed his face and