

had sifted up from Texas way an' could paddle a mile in under her saddle-girths in some-thing like two minits. As I say, he sat watchin' that scene, kind o' quiet like, an' takin' in the fact that old Big Sun wasn't doin' any whoopin', but jus' sittin' low in the saddle an' hangin' onto that girl's heels like a jack-fly hangin' onto a sick steer. They were plum out o' range by this time, an' were makin' a movin'-picture on their own account. For Big Sun had his knife in his hand, most realistic-like, an' I reckon he'd left the rest o' them broncos 'bout a mile an' a half behind when Spider kind o' shifted in his saddle an' caught up his reins. I could see he 'd been awonderin' if old Big Sun weren't jus' a trifle too earnest-like in that partickler chase. An' in 'bout two minits we weren't debatin' none 'bout it. For plain as your hand we could see that Redskin varmint push up alongside the girl an' grab for that temptin' cloud o' flyin' hair. I reckon she must have caught sight o' that Injin's face, an' seen the knife in his hand, the way she began to pour the leather onto that cayuse o' hers agin, an' tried some desperit to break away. 'Bout all Big Sun got was a handful o' hair, tore clean out o' the girl's head.

"It were mighty clear air that day, an' when Spider seen that he handed me over the field-glasses an' said: 'Jus' hang onto these for me a minit, Ike!' sez he, 'bout the same's though he was thinkin' o' takin' a chew.

"I've heard a heap o' tall talk 'bout greased light-

nin' an' such like, but I reckon greased lightnin' was a ord'nary way-train along-side the some speedy style Spider shot out over them plains. An' then it was a noo an' unexpected kind o' chase, for we could see that plum locoed old Injin was headin' the girl off out into the open prairie, some artful. An' 'bout that time, too, this yere Noo York tender-foot seen there was goin' to be a little privit scalpin'-party 'fore white folks could interfere. An' I allow he weren't doin' a heap o' doublin' up 'bout that special minit.

"**T**HEN we seen that locoed old Injin ride up inch by inch an' grab for the girl once more. An' this time he pulled away 'bout one half her ridin'-skirt. Then he crawled up on her agin, blood-mad, strainin' neck to tail, creepin' up inch by inch, an' Spider's pinto 'bout a good half mile behind. We seen that Injin's arm go out—so—an' feel for a good hold on the girl's back hair. We seen him drop his bridle rein an' the other hand go up, an' the girl tearin' an' pullin' an' wrenchin' to git free; an' the two o' them swayin' an' rushin' on at a three-minit clip all the time this is goin' on.

"Then I seen Spider pull up short on a hogback, and knowed what was a-comin'; I kind o' held my breath, not misdoubtin' Spider none, but jus' realizin' he was tryin' a uncommon ticklish bit o' wing-shootin'. But Spider never was a slouch with a gun, I must allow. I jus' watched that little puff o' smoke drift away from his Winchester, an' then let

my eye travel on, a little scarey, mebbe, to where I'd seen that crazy Injin an' that white woman a minit back racin' neck an' neck through a gopher-town.

"An' I seen there was jus' one figger left ridin' on. Big Sun's hoss was canterin' off to the East with a empty saddle, an' Spider was a-lopin' out slow toward the woman, some cautious and timid-like.

"'Bout twenty minits later Spider brung her in. He was leadin' her winded cayuse by the bridle-rein, 'bout six feet ahead o' her, an' sayin' nothin'. She'd been havin' a bit of a cry on the way back, and been tryin' to tell Spider what she thought o' him. But Spider kept pushin' on ahead o' her, uncommon red in the face. He seemed to be drinkin' in distant landscape some anxious, an' kept gittin' hotter an' hotter an' mop-pin' the sweat o' shame out o' his eyes.

"He was 'bout as red 's a boiled beet when we rode out to meet 'em, an' I seen something was sure 'nough wrong. Even the girl weren't understandin' that queer actin' o' Spider's. But in 'bout two shakes of a lariat-end I was onto jus' what was a-cuttin' him up that cruel style. This yere girl had 'bout a foot o' ridin' skirt tore off, an' quite unbeknowin', I reckon, was showin' an inch an' a half o' well-turned ankle!

"An' if you'd a-knowed Spider I allow you'd understand his feelin's mebbe some better'n I'm layin' 'em out to you now!"

The CANONIC CURSE

By ARTHUR E. McFARLANE

AT the request of my friend, Bruce Carrington, Jr., and the lady soon to become his wife, I herewith unreservedly give to the public the detailed account of their recent amazing and horrible experience. The sensational guesses and wildly distorted half-truths appearing unceasingly in certain New York yellow journals have made this course a bitter necessity. As to the matter contained in the narrative—and the plain baldness of my style should make it sufficiently evident that whatever of the "flesh-creeping" enters into it, enters only because I have been unable to exclude it—I own as I set it down that I find myself ready to doubt my own sanity. That the "devil-bought" soul of a Flemish kapellmeister should be able to reach out from the Middle Ages and set a dead hand upon a Harvard graduate in the first year of the twentieth century is, I confess, something wholly impossible and incredible. Indeed, only the fact that for years I have known Carrington for one of the most cool-headed and least credulous of young New Yorkers could induce me to have anything to do with his story at all.

I.

FROM the time his organ studies introduced him to it, Carrington had made medieval music his hobby. Throughout his law course at Harvard he was constantly ransacking both the college and the Boston library for everything bearing upon the subject; and every bar written by the old monkish composers seemed to have an irresistible fascination for him. In fact, when he graduated and entered the office of his father's firm, it is probable that he was more familiar with canons and fugues, counterpoint and Gregorian chants than he was with Coke and Blackstone. And that summer of 1901 he had definitely made up his mind to spend his holidays among the famous musical libraries of Belgium and Northern Italy, when a letter from his chum Keppel suddenly turned his eyes from the Continent and sent him to Canada instead. Keppel was working up his "Ph.D." in the great Parisian library, the Bibliotheque Internationale, and the postscript of the letter read:—

"By the way, old man, if you're still as big an old-music crank as ever, something I came on the other day ought to interest you mightily. It seems that when Louis XIV. took Liege in 1659 and rifled the abbey, he sent the whole choir library over to his Sulpician favourites in Quebec, and there's nothing to show that it was ever returned. Is any such collection known to you? If not, why don't you go and look it up?"

It certainly was *not* known to Carrington, nor in his knowledge to any other "old-music crank." It was the beginning of the June hot spell; the law business was dead, and the Carrington mansion on Madison Avenue a seven-times heated furnace. On the following Monday the young fellow was out for Canada.

From the beginning the Sulpician fathers were kindness itself. "They were most highly honoured that M. Carrington should have come all the way from New York to see their library. They believed it did contain a large number of old musical manuscripts, though they had never done anything toward sorting and arranging them. But, most unfortunately, their father superior was just at that time on a visit to their brethren in Montreal, and—they regretted it exceedingly—they could not admit him to their library without his authority. He might return almost any day. Could not M. Carrington wait? And if he could, would he not help himself to pass the time by making use of their organs? In the outside chapel attached to their foundation they had two which the musicians of the city had been pleased to praise not a little. Until the father superior should return, M. Carrington must look upon them as his own."

He accepted their kindly and novel hospitality as freely as it was proffered, and for the next few days he was in and out of the little chapel again and again. The big oriel organ was a revelation of swelling strength and billowy harmonies. And the smaller one, perched high in the loft opposite, made up in sweetness what it lacked in power. The young New Yorker and Father Laurence, the Sulpician organist, were soon the best of friends. Often in the afternoon when vespers were over the latter would take the larger instrument, and Carrington the other, and for a long hour they would play in unison, or in a kind of antiphonal, musical conversation.

Thus it was that when, one evening, Carrington entered the chapel and found the big organ rolling its melodious tide through the dusky aisles, he slipped quietly upstairs in the darkness, and joined him on the smaller instrument. He had never heard the father play so brilliantly before. In turn they set variations on each other's themes, and then as challengingly improvised on each other's variations; and every moment Carrington found it harder to follow the flying fingers of the old Sulpician. At last, outmastered royally, he struck a wailing dis-

cord of unconditional surrender, and stopped playing. From the obscurity of the other loft he was answered by a startled shriek of mingled fright and amusement. He ran wonderingly downstairs. His antiphonist descended in a panic. Even in the chapel gloom she was a vision of soft and radiant beauty.

With one voice they broke into the same explanation: each had mistaken the other for Father Laurence. She, too, together with three or four other musicians of the city, enjoyed the freedom of the organs. She, too, had often played against the skill of the reverend organist! They both went into a common burst of badly smothered laughter, though all the time the girl was biting her lips in an attempt to sober herself to a proper decorum.

When they turned a minute later they found Father Laurence himself standing in the doorway behind them; and, if anything, he was enjoying the situation more than either of them. But he came hastily to the rescue and introduced them. "Mlle. La Shelle, permit me to present M. Carrington, a famous musical scholar of New York. Monsieur, mademoiselle is the daughter of our neighbour, Colonel La Shelle, who, though he is not of our faith, is our very dear friend. The Colonel is, like yourself, an American, a distinguished engineer of New Orleans. But for five years now the harbour work he is doing for us has made him our fellow-citizen, and we could well wish to keep him forever." He pointed over the greensward. "Between his mansion and our chapel there is, as you see, neither hedge nor wall, and mademoiselle honours us by permitting our brotherhood to provide her with a second music-room!"

They chatted with the smiling father for a few minutes longer; then, with Miss La Shelle's permission, Carrington walked with her across the lawn to the lamp-lit corner of her father's long French veranda.

II.

WHEN, an hour afterward, the young fellow took his leave the world was changed for him. If ever a man had recognized the "one woman" at the first meeting of the eyes, it was true of him. And with the girl, too, the feeling was no less intense and overwhelming. It seemed to them that somehow they had known each other from the beginning of things. When they parted they gazed into each other's eyes in a kind of mutual wonderment. And that night Carrington dreamed that they were again in the chapel organ-lofts building up together a world of glorious harmonies. And when