

THE BASILICAS OF CARTHAGE

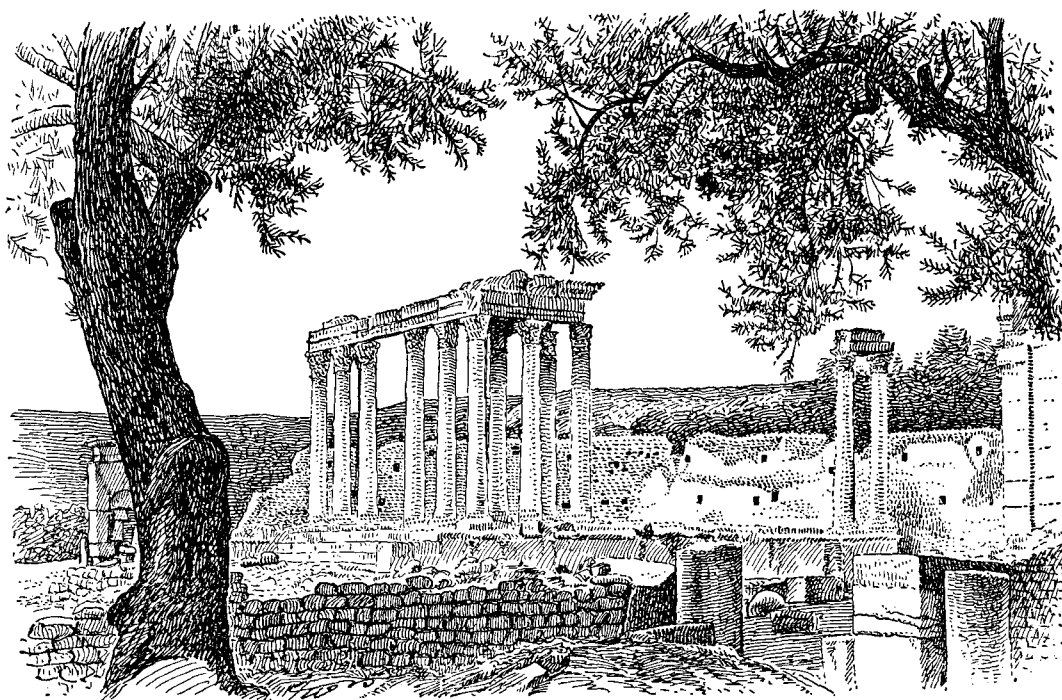
By BYRON KHUN de PROROK

NEXT spring the first American pilgrimage to Carthage and North Africa is to take place. The archbishop of Carthage, Mgr. Lamaitre, has obtained the special blessing of the Holy See and has asked the cardinals and bishops of America to assist me in inaugurating the first pilgrimage to the land of St. Augustine since the days of St. Cyprian and St. Louis of France.

It was one of the wishes of Cardinal Lavigerie to restore the Christian ruins of Carthage. He placed in the hands of Father Delattre this great task over fifty years ago, and it is due to his heroic patience that Christian Carthage has risen from its sleep of ages.

church, because of the richness of its Christian monuments, because of the names of its great doctors and heroic martyrs—Carthage must be restored—and that is a task that Mgr. Lamaitre and Father Delattre have placed in my hands.

One day Father Delattre was crossing the fields to visit the home of a sick Arab when he stooped down suddenly and picked up a small piece of marble lying among the corn-flowers. The fields of Carthage are covered with flowers in the spring. Beneath the vivid blooms the soil is composed of marble dust, with here and there, a grey mass of antique stones rising above a sea of color. The stone that the missionary picked



RUINS OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE

Few people remember the great history of the early church in Africa—that Carthage was the centre of Latin thought for several centuries and that some of the great questions of the early Christians were decided on that venerable and historic soil. Carthage claims too, after Rome, the greatest number of martyrs. It is not in Rome or elsewhere that the first Christian basilicas and churches may be seen. In Rome they were all destroyed or built over, but in Carthage they stand in picturesque ruin, little changed since the days of St. Augustine.

Because of the historic importance to the early

up bore part of an early Christian epitaph. He looked around and found many more. In a few days Arabs were at work and a great ruin, buried for fifteen centuries, soon lay uncovered.

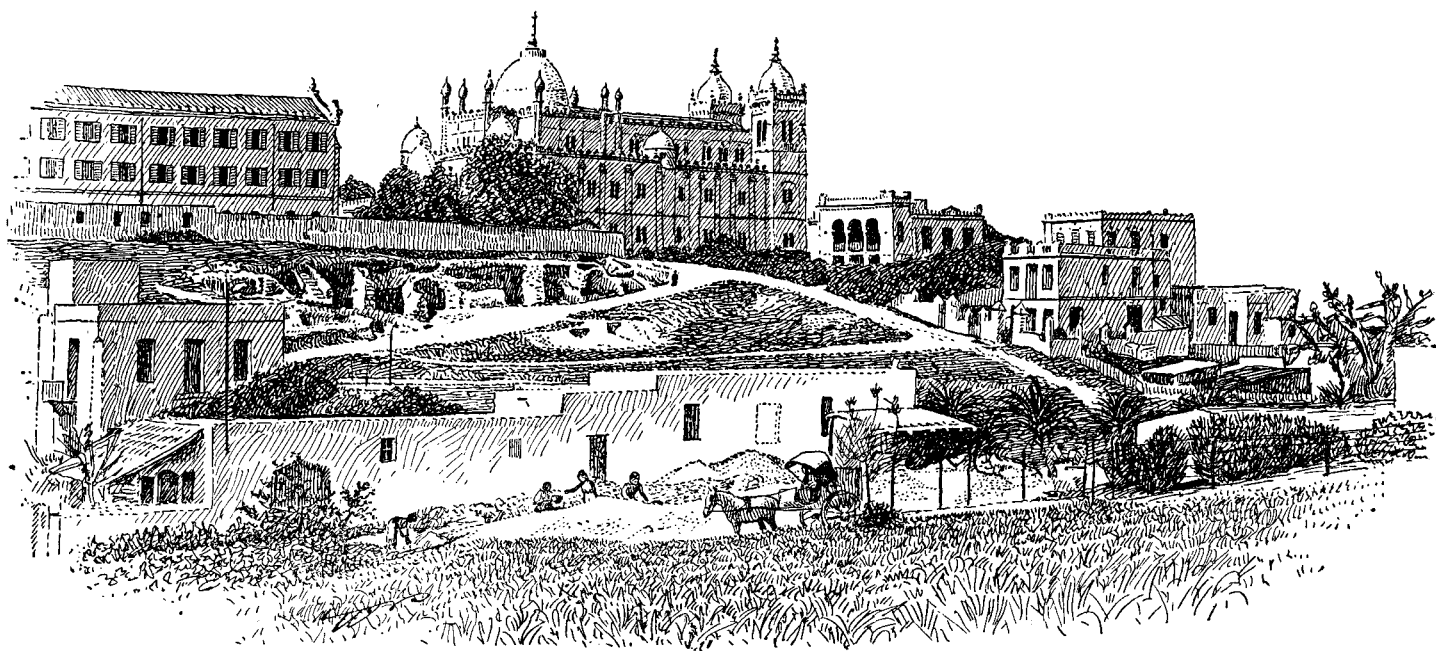
In the course of excavation, hundreds of tons of earth were removed and 14,000 pieces of inscription were recovered. Beautiful mosaic floors, those eternal pictures in stone, once more revealed a lost art to the explorers. Columns and capitols—the ciborium, confessional, and a baptismal font entirely of vivid mosaic, were found. The columns were raised on their antique bases and are now vividly outlined against the

clear blue skies of Africa. This ruin overlooks the emerald gulf of Tunis, from which the mighty fleets of Carthage, Phoenicia, Rome, Byzantium, the Vandals, and Barbary Pirates once sailed to victory or annihilation.

To the left of the ruin, reaching up in a succession of silver white terraces, is the hill crowned by the Arab village of Sidi-Bou-Said. It is spread out like the wings of a dove, the ancient emblem of pagan and Christian Carthage, and seems suspended above the azure gulf by the blood-red precipices of Cape Carthage. Across the gulf one gazes through scarred columns to a purple amphitheatre of surrounding mountains. The Bou Kornein, the twin-horned sacred mountain of the Carthaginians, rises above the last spurs of the legendary Atlas mountains, and seems

St. Monica, built in memory of the mother of St. Augustine, knelt on the old floors, and the little orphans of Africa had placed garlands of flowers which hung in colorful chains between the columns. They chanted the litanies of the saints of Africa, and the names of St. Perpetue and St. Felicitas, St. Monica and St. Augustine, St. Cyprian and St. Louis arose on the perfumed air. *Omnes sancti Africani, orate pro nobis!* . . .

Carthage has three great basilicas uncovered by Father Delattre, as well as the amphitheatre, several chapels and great cemeteries. Two basilicas have been located and are ready for excavation. In the museum of Father Delattre there are thousands of relics—chief among which are the famous statues of the Virgin Mary of the fourth and fifth centuries, the



TOMB OF SAINT LOUIS

still to stand as an emblem of the pagan rites that once dominated this ancient land.

Everywhere there are vivid North African flowers springing up between the broken mosaic flowers and over many a crumbling wall. The spirit of the great basilica is at its magic best at sunrise. The old columns become bathed in a softer crimson light, the birds sing amidst olive and cypress trees, and across the rolling hills of flowers one hears the cathedral bells and the soft lapping murmur of the Mediterranean sea. Science has uncovered and catalogued these great ruins, and it is now left to the pilgrim to come and view these eloquent stones that speak of the eternal past and of the living romance of the ages. Not long ago Father Delattre celebrated Mass among these ruins—the first Mass in fifteen centuries. It was a historic scene—with its resurrection of the sacred memories of dead saints.

The White Sisters from the adjoining convent of

oldest known of their kind. There is also the finest collection of Christian lamps in the world. Thousands of inscriptions are placed on the walls of the monastery gardens from which we know most of the early Christian names of martyrs and saints, doctors and students; while many others have been found in the cities of North Africa.

There have been located 250 early Christian ruins in North Africa. The greatest archaeological heritage left by the early church in any part of the world is to be found in this great open air museum. Tebessa claims the greatest basilica known. It was built in the fourth century and its size, composition and grandeur equal those of any ruin of antiquity. It is said that there were 500 bishoprics in Tunisia at one period.

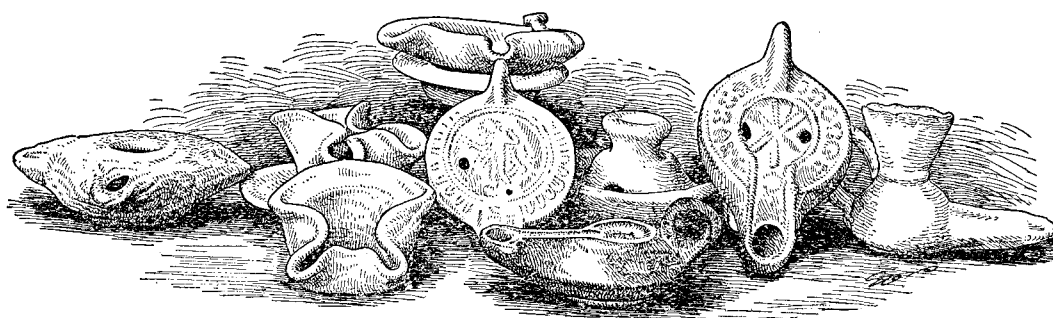
The martyrology of Africa is a book of golden deeds of heroism. The passion of St. Felicité and St. Perpetue are amongst the most noble records of

the history of mankind. The life and death of St. Cyprian, the martyred bishop of Carthage, is beyond the powers of the human pen. The forgotten martyrs of Lambese—James and Marion, and the heroic little girls of Tuburbo, who suffered for the faith at the ages of ten and eleven, belong to Africa.

That is why these wondrous ruins should be resurrected; for these edifices are relics of the beauty and history of the early Church. The sepulchres of Africa should carry a message and inspiration to pilgrims of every land, and it is hoped that in time, archaeologists

and historians will collaborate in fulfilling Cardinal Lavigerie's dying wish—"Instauranda Carthago!"

(Professor Francis Kelsey of the University of Michigan, who is the American director of the Carthage Expedition in collaboration with Byron de Prorok, is in need of a student to specialize under Father Delattre in the study of early Christian archaeology in Carthage. All the other departments have been filled. Candidates should write to Professor Kelsey, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.)



ANCIENT CARTHAGINIAN POTTERY

THE FALSE FACE

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

PEOPLE say that Colston, the mystery story writer (who once dreamed of doing better things) cultivates his impassive expression, wearing it like a mask, because really he is emotional, and feels obliged to check his natural frankness and his tendency to let himself go. People may be telling the truth about this, for I know that Colston is certainly not the stern, cold person he looks to be, and the other night, when several of us, all writers, lingered late after dinner, Colston's face was anything but masked as he told us what follows. We had been talking about unwritten stories—the plots, ideas, or experiences, which all writers wish to shape more or less enduringly, but for one reason or another never do. We all gave instances. This was Colston's contribution:

In my case (said he, referring occasionally to a tattered note-book) I shall never be able to write the story that I know might be written about the man with the false face. If I had dreamed the episodes (which indeed were like some of the things that make dreams dreadful or splendid) or if I had imagined them, possibly I would be able to transmute and give form to them. But they really happened. I really took part in them, and neither time nor meditation seem to dissolve their all too vivid reality into the malleable stuff out of which stories are made. What there is of the artist in me desires strongly to accomplish the transmutation. Possibly the artist in me is not competent

for the task. It would be a mystery story but scarcely the sort of mystery by which I earn my daily bread. Perhaps, however, it may be to the credit of my humanity that the poor man remains so actual, and that my pity for him, and my sympathy, are too strong to permit me to lose sight and memory of him, as an individual. Artistry and humanity are often on opposite sides, you know. Someone else, however, if I should ever print these notes, may receive a suggestion that may lead to the real story being written—some story possibly omitting all the facts I give, or substituting different ones, but having the soul of wonder, of misery, and of beauty that it must possess if it is to be at all like the soul of the story I divined but could not write.

There are two scenes recorded—or, rather, merely jotted down hastily, in my notes. One was the reception room of a great daily newspaper. The other was the ante-room of the operating theatre of a hospital. There is one main character, the man with the false face; and several minor figures—the assistant sporting editor of the newspaper; myself, the city editor; a number of reporters, a priest, and a hospital nurse.

The man with the false face went by a name that was also false. What it was does not matter. Only true things matter. But the truth about that man is precisely what I am not able to express. He used to visit the newspaper office about once a month, being one of that curious group of people, parasites of the