Digging to another civilization

BY HERMIONE BARKER BRISCOE, '28

In spite of the glamour of travel and study in Egypt, Turkey or France, Jack Bolles, '26 eng., has returned to this country to complete his education. Mr. Bolles stopped in Norman and Oklahoma City a few days this fall, en route from Santa Fe, where he has spent the last three months, to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he will study in Harvard. He will receive his master's degree in architecture of the University of Chicago department of research in foreign countries.

He spent six months in Turkey, five months in Egypt and some time in France and Yucatan, Chichen-Itza. The work varied from making restoration drawings of cathedrals in Cluny to doing excavation work near Antolia; at the same time making archeological and anthropological observations of ancient civilizations. A few of his interesting experiences are told in his own words:

"We landed at Ankara, and after gathering equipment, set out in a new Ford truck, rolling along an old Roman road at the rate of about 150 miles a day. We reached Alishar and pitched tents. Our water had to be hauled, and should we want a bath, we were forced to journey ten miles for it. We had with us a fine French chef, so had plenty to eat, considering the raw materials he had to work with. One of the most incongruous features about our camp was the utility to which we put fine oriental rugs. Such rugs were purchased very cheaply there, and as we needed them for warmth, we spread them on the dirt floors, and across our beds. Although the days were torrid, reaching a temperature of 110 degrees, the nights were as sweeping blizzards, cold enough to cause a scamper for warm equipment.

"Our excavation work consisted of razing mounds eighty feet high, in which successive civilizations had been built up. Some of these mounds were topped by structures resembling an acropolis, evidently belonging to the late Hittite regime. These were surrounded by mud fortifications. Successive layers in the order in which they were uncovered were the Armenian, Turkish, Turkoman, Seljuk, Byzantine, Roman, late Hittite, Hittite empire and early Hittite.

"From time to time we came across skeletons, doubled up with knees under chins, in huge pots, as they had been buried, with earrings, trinkets, and vases. It is fascinating to uncover civilization, built as in a house, room above room, each section containing evidence of tenants of different cultures.

"Not all of our time was spent in work. But we had little success in providing ourselves with feminine companionship though pulchritude was not lacking in Turkey. Irate mammies and papas saw to it that daughters, though unveiled, were discreet. Only one time were we able to speak to two young Turkish girls. They condescended to give us a friendly nod, and a mischievous twinkle but immediately their spying relatives rushed out, dragged the girls into the house and administered a severe beating.

"Girls dress modernly and wear French heels and hose, but those of the better classes are never seen in public. Frequently we were guests in the homes of natives, but never were the girls and women present. We sat in a ring about a huge pot and ate with our hands, then smoked Turkish cigarettes and drank liquors, the very finest.

"We had one good free show while there. Laundry day in Turkey consists of dumping clothes in the stream and stamping them out on a huge rock. We noticed a young girl, particularly beautiful and entirely unconscious of our presence. She was dancing her clothes out on the rock, substituting most graceful and original movements, for the usual awkwardness exhibited by the other women. It was better than a Ziegfeld follies show at home, and Flo himself would have paid a price to that girl to exhibit over here."

A boat trip up the Euphrates provided another adventure. The boys set out in a decrepit old boat, with Malatya spreading out from one bank, Kurdistan on the other. Kurds were unfriendly to foreigners and a landing on their side would be likely to end in a brisk, if not unpleasant adventure. Out of the calm and heat of the day came a terrific twister rolling a tremendous wall of sand from the desert. It hit the boat broadside and the boys pulled for Kurdistan, surviving the several hours of wind in a cove. They bailed water all the way back to Alishar.

In November, Mr. Bolles went to Egypt, proceeding from Alexandria to Cairo and Luxor. There the group worked on the temple of Rameses II, the Medinet Habu, near the Valley of Queens and the Valley of Kings.

"Mummies, yes we came across many, very well preserved fellows, put away with many beautiful trinkets and vases; but all I have for souvenirs are strings of beads from the mummies.

"One of the most important things we discovered at the Medinet Habu was the quai to the entrance. This established the fact that water fortifications were used at one time.

"In France we worked on the Cluny cathedral at Soane et Loire. Of Romanesque architecture, constructed about 1225, the structure is 615 feet long. It is largest in size of the cathedrals, the only one approaching its size being the St. Peters cathedral at Rome. Our restorative drawings show transit towers 200 feet high."

Mr. Bolles' work at Yucatan, Chichen-Itza last spring was under the direction of the Carnegie Institute of Washington, D. C. It consisted of restorative drawings of the observatory.

A VARIED CAREER

(continued from page 44)