

# ARCHAEOLOGISTS

ARCHAEOLOGISTS are great treasure hunters. Many of their treasures would sell for little on the market, although they are extremely valuable for what they tell us of human history, and fortunes are sometimes spent in finding them. Occasionally, discoveries have great financial as well as cultural value — the golden treasures of Troy, of Mycenae in Greece, and of Egyptian Pharaohs, for example — and then the world at large becomes as excited about them as the archaeologists. Most finds, however, are less spectacular — perhaps the eye shadow used by an Egyptian beauty, a battered amulet with which a Cretan or a Trojan kept evil spirits away, or the chipped flint arrowhead with which a primitive hunter secured his day's food.

Scientist and ditch-digger, detective and treasure hunter — the archaeologist must be all these and more. The men and women who devote themselves to the fascinating science of ancient civilization must practise a sort of magic. From old scrolls and shattered pottery, from broken-armed statues and ruined temples, they must first reconstruct a picture of the past and then breathe life into it. They must take us traveling through time, so that we of the twentieth century A.D. may know how men and women thought and felt thousands of years ago.

Picking up a stray legend here, a baffling reference in an almost wornout manuscript there, at times nothing more than a strange local name or superstition, archaeologists slowly fit together isolated bits of evidence of long-forgotten people and cities. Sponsored by their governments, by private research foundations, or by universities, they then organize expeditions that help uncover the final proof. Some of their greatest discoveries are thus carefully and logically planned.