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Bargain Hunting in Persia

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Bargain Hunting in Persia

CHARLES A. HOFFMAN, M. S., an instructor in Physics and Chemistry in the American College of Teheran, Teheran, Persia, has only been in Persia about four months, but already he has spent some of his leisure time in learning what he could about Persian fabrics and wares. In a letter he has written something of his luck in picking up Persian textiles.

"So far I have invested only about twenty-five dollars in materials, and those, other than rugs. I believe that I have gotten twenty-five dollars worth of education out of it too, for I always question everyone I can about the origin and worth of anything I see. Of course, we can't believe a fourth of what the clever salesman tells us, but some of it is true and all of it is interesting.

"Cotton prints are plentiful. You can get almost any variety, style or amount at about a dollar a square yard. Many of those available have been used and are perhaps five to twenty years old. You can have them made to order if you know about what size and pattern you want. The new ones can sometimes be bought for as little as sixty-five cents a square yard if you know how to bargain or happen to find a dealer who thinks that he has to sell at once.

"There is no fixed price for anything. The dealer asks two or three prices and then comes down little by little as he has to. If one expects to buy anything costing over fifty dollars it is quite the custom to visit the dealer five or six times and haggle over the price for a week or two before an agreement is reached. The dealer serves tea and chats with you on your first visit about anything but the price. The second visit will find him inclined to suggest a price, and so on and on, until at last an agreement is reached. There is no rush about anything here in Persia and for an American used to efficient business methods, this waste of time seems unnecessary.

"The inlay work is wonderful. It costs from five to ten cents per square inch, which doesn't sound like much but soon counts up when one figures out the price of an inlay box. I can get almost any amount at that price as it is made right here in the city. Most of it is on boxes from 2x3x6 inches to 5x8x15 inches in size with the inlay work on the top and four sides.

"Handiwork of all kinds is available and all that is necessary is to know what one wants. There are clever machine imitations, but they can all be told by examining the back of the fabric minutely. Very beautiful patterns are worked out in gold thread on black, grey or red backgrounds. The cloth is thick and the thread is as large around as a pin. This is called Resht work. Some pieces are partly done by machine and this of course makes them cheaper. The price of the real hand-

work is two to four dollars per square foot of surface covered solid with handwork, depending on the design and amount of surface left vacant for the ground color to show through.

"The other handwork that you will see has not had so much Russian influence as this Resht work and is more distinctly Persian. Some pieces are from fifty to a hundred years old. Most of them are the pear design worked out in various sizes, shapes and colors, often on a background of cloth made of silver-wound thread. Some of these are worth twenty-five to thirty dollars per square foot and others may be had for a fifth of that or less. The Kashmere that I have seen is the pear design in red and a touch of green almost completely covering a dark blue background. Often the pieces have silver work fringes. This Kashmere costs from three to ten dollars per square foot. A very similar pattern made partly by machine and of cotton may be had for thirty to ninety cents per square foot. The same designs worked out in silk cost from one to three times as much as the ones worked in wool.

"Then there is Kerman work, made of a wool woven in a twill weave. Very intricate designs are worked out in bright colored yarns. In this real handwork there are many more or less apparent errors which stamp it is the real thing. Machines do not make mistakes like those made with a needle.

"There is a kind of coarse silk shawl worn by the Zoroastrian women that is a dark dull brick-brown or red with light spots one-fourth inch in diameter so arranged as to make a simple design. The dyeing is done a bit at a time by hand. A shawl that is three by ten feet in size costs about five dollars and a half.

"Solid brass and silver vessels with hand wrought designs or set with turquoise and rubies are also available if one has the money. Rugs of every kind are here, but of course some varieties are more abundant than others.

"This is a shopper's paradise, and all the more one if one has the time and energy to expend in haggling and bargaining with the dealers and salesmen. They expect to be talked down to some extent, but I have found that it takes a person with more time than I have at my disposal to take a week off to haggle and bargain and come home with a fabulous treasure."

Books on Physical Education

Miss Winifred R. Tilden, head of the department of physical education for women at Iowa State College, suggests the following books for the home economics teacher who also teaches physical education:

(1) "Physical Education for Elementary Schools," published by I. S. T. C., Extension Service, Cedar Falls, Iowa. This book emphasizes games and athletics, rhythm, posture, marching, natural gymnastics and stunts. It

contains music for folk dances and programs for recreation periods, both in the rural and town schools.

(2) "Physical Education for Elementary Schools," by Lydia Clark, published by Benjamin H. Sanborn and Company of Chicago, New York and Boston. This book presents in detail physical training, games and folk dancing for each grade from the first through the eighth.

(3) "The Text-Book of Gymnastics," by K. A. Knudsen, published by J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia. This text-book takes up general athletics and special athletics for each part of the body; athletics for different ages, from small children to adults. I consider it an especially fine reference book for teachers since it contains illustrations of muscles used in the various exercises.

(4) "Education Through Physical Education," by Agnes R. Wayman, published by Lea and Febiger, Philadelphia. Such topics as work for girls and women in leadership; general information on conducting meets; departmental organization; programs, information hygiene; physical activities; gymnastic program; individual work; dancing, sports and games; competition; conduct of games and meets are discussed in detail. This is an excellent text-book for teachers who are organizing Physical Education or for directors of recreation programs, either for playgrounds or public schools.

International Committee

(Continued from page 8)

preciate how much adaptability it takes to adjust ones teaching to new conditions.

Now I simply must study!! For I am doing some graduate work in New York University and the reputation of Iowa State College is at stake!! I am doing it principally to fit myself better for the work of this committee which calls for a great deal more knowledge and judgment and vision than I have.

Thank you so much for letting me tell these things in so informal a way. I do hope you will correct the errors that I commit with this machine and forgive me for not putting it all in the form of an article as it deserves to be put.

Very truly (and affectionately) yours,

Eda Lord Murphy.

Miss Jessie Manship of Le Grand, Iowa, a junior member of last year, visited the campus during Homecoming. Jessie is assistant principal of the Beaman Consolidated School of Beaman, Iowa. After one or two years of teaching experience, she expects to return to Iowa State College to complete the work for her degree.