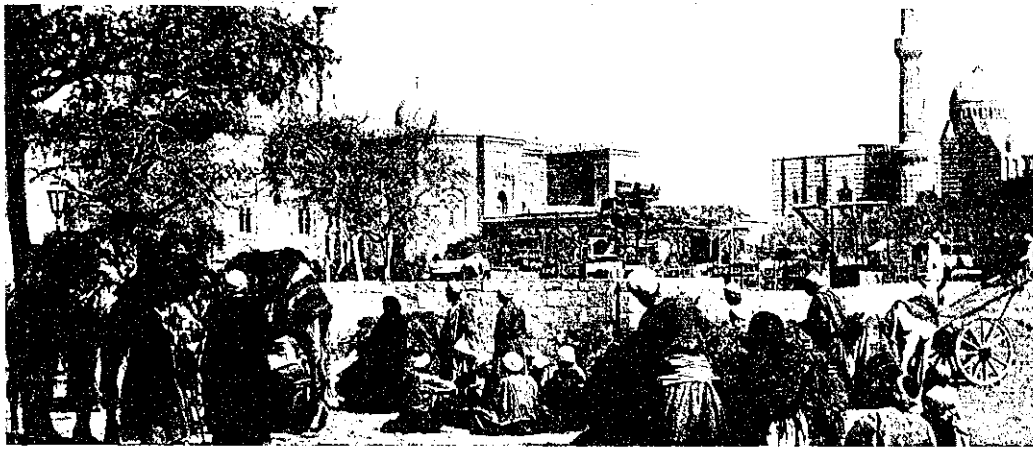


## Shopping in the Orient



In the  
Fodder  
Market  
near the  
famous  
Citadel.

## THE CAIRO MOUSKY

A MORNING SHOPPING RAMBLE  
THROUGH A FAMOUS ORIENTAL BAZAAR

By GLADYS SANDFORD

THROUGH Opera Square and down into the main street of the Mousky our taxi-driver whirls us, shouting invectives to the pedestrians who overflow from the path on to the road. The narrow street is seething with a cosmopolitan crowd. Soudanese cooks returning from the market, their shiny black faces in striking contrast to the white turban above, heavy baskets of provisions slung across their backs, and gaunt, sparsely feathered fowls tucked under their arms, push their way through the throng. French, Italians, Greeks and Assyrians, Jews of every nationality, dignified Copts and lower class native women with half-naked babies sitting astride on shoulder, street hawkers with trays of sweetmeats and fruit, well-dressed women whose yasmaks of finest white georgette in no way hide their features, and filthy beggars exposing their horrid, festering sores and rotting limbs, all jostle each other. A babel of foreign languages, curses from the drivers of vehicles, and the cling clang of the drink seller caused by metal disc beaten against drinking cup, together with his monotonous cry of "Lemonade," fill the air. A small opening in the traffic and our driver shoots ahead a few yards, again jams on his brakes, and we all perform an involuntary front incline. Accelerating again, and with shouts of "Oy'menak" (to the right), "Oy shemalak" (to the left) and "Oy rigglak" (mind your legs) we proceed to our destination.

Turning sharply to the left, we proceed on foot through the slipper bazaar, which stands at the entrance of a labyrinth of extremely narrow paths, where only two people can walk abreast, and lined on either side with stalls and shops, some of the latter of quite imposing dimensions inside. On the right we pass "Monsieur Jack" standing at the entrance to his shop—a dapper little man wearing European clothes, red tarbush, and an exceedingly important manner, the latter more apparent than ever since the

sale of a Persian carpet to the Prince of Wales two years ago. But his shop is only for the wealthy, so we pass on, resisting the entreaties of the seent merchant in the next stall to "come and smell." In tiny stalls on either side are festoons or strings of beads, leather bags, and beaten metal scarves. We stop for a few minutes to reply to the greetings of an elderly jeweller. In the glass cases before us are saucers full of semi-precious stones. For our benefit he opens a small safe and produces his show pieces, heavy neck ornaments in cumbersome settings, but the gems are beautiful. Then, paper after paper of precious stones are unfolded, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. In a few minutes we were shown some thousands of pounds' worth of jewels, and his "shop" consisted of a tiny box-like place not more than 6ft. by 5ft. To this place come the higher class natives when they desire to turn their jewels into ready money, and hours will be spent baggling and arguing before a bargain is clinched. Always the jeweller's small son of eight sits beside him like a detective, his eyes never moving from the goods that are being handled.

Our next halt is at a tiny slipper stall. The owner, an elderly man, sits cross-legged below rows of gaily coloured slippers strung on lines above his head. We each fit ourselves with a pair. I ask "Cam Jelusse?" (how much?) and am told 75 piastres (15/-). I finally pay

him 8/-, and the old fellow presents us each with a small bundle of what appear to be cheroots, but are really sticks of incense, made up of various spices mixed together with cowdung. When burnt the odour is not disagreeable.

From here onwards the path widens to twice the previous width. On each side now are stalls filled with brasses and china, and one or two shops that are filled with piles of Persian rugs. Small boys sit outside in the light, repairing damaged rugs, and do their job so well that often it is impossible to find the mended part. Inside, we gaze on carpets from every part of Persia—Bokharas, Kermanis, Sheraz, Herati, and Shewan are there in bewildering variety. In a heap on the floor lie some smaller rugs, at first appearance very beautiful. The merchant immediately draws our attention to the wonderful sheen, and when I tell him that this sheen has been artificially produced by putting the rugs through hot greased rollers, he becomes confused. This process is often followed by unscrupulous merchants with the cheaper grade of rug, especially modern ones, and sales are effected by stating the sheen is caused by their great age!

We saunter slowly, examining the wares on view at each shop, until we come almost to the old stone arch, through which one passes into the amber bazaar. Looking through this arch, the sunlight streams through on to the cases filled with amber, making a glowing golden mass of colour. Overhead, between the leaning tops of the buildings, is a glimpse of clear blue sky, against which rises the sharp outline of a minaret from the mosque at the end of the bazaar. And in the foreground the old, grey stone arch. Go there early in the morning, before the American tourist is on the warpath, and one finds one of the most beautiful scenes of Eastern life. The whole atmosphere is perfect—the merchants in their silken robes, the working native in his rough blue cotton galibeah, red or yellow



A Country Cart.