

She accompanied her husband on many expeditions into Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, and was an intrepid traveller, ski-runner, and mountaineer. Her sense of humour, added to her courage, carried her through many dangers and difficulties and added much to her accounts of their adventures.

For some years now they have devoted themselves to literary work, alternating with long ski-ing expeditions in the Austrian and Bavarian highlands, their names being well known in the world of Alpine sports.

Mrs. Rickmers had complete command of the German language and has done good work in translating English books on Indian subjects into German and *vice versa*. She also contributed reviews to the Society's *Journal*.

She had a good life and a dangerous one, and enjoyed it to the full. Her loss will be much felt by her many friends.

43.

C. FRAZER.

George Eumorfopoulos

Wherever Chinese art is valued, the name of George Eumorfopoulos has long been honoured as that of a great collector and discerning critic. Contributing to this fame were his numerous loans to exhibitions and gifts to museums, the publication of his collection catalogue, and finally the purchase of his collection by the nation. But perhaps he became even more widely known through personal contact with those countless visitors from all countries whom he welcomed in his home at Clandon and, since 1922, on the Chelsea Embankment. Among devotees of Oriental culture who have come to England, scarcely one can have left without seeking this privilege, always so readily granted. With equal hospitality the house and collection were thrown open to the uninitiated, many of whom must have been moved by their host's enthusiasm to start on the discovery of a new world.

He had a catholic taste; many Persian and mediæval

European works, for instance, were treasured as well as the far more numerous Chinese section which he loved best during the last thirty-six years of his life. English and Continental porcelain had at first stirred his collecting instinct, and there was a brief phase in this early period when Japanese tea bowls took precedence. Then he started his main collection with the porcelain of recent centuries, at that time deemed the zenith of Chinese craftsmanship and the natural quarry of collectors. Railway making in China soon offered him the chance to exercise his flair independently of fashion. It occasioned the opening of ancient tombs on a large scale, bringing to light vast quantities of *ming ch'i* or things made on purpose to accompany the dead, and also a lesser number of cherished possessions buried with them. Some of these finds, imported here, were then almost unknown to us, and but for Eumorfopoulos' discernment in appraising their qualities, there might not have arisen the Western demand which influenced Chinese peasants to preserve objects found in tombs, instead of throwing them away or smashing them, as was their wont with anything not made of valued material such as bronze or jade. Thus saved from destruction, pottery and clay figurines rapidly became the vogue, and a T'ang horse or camel was a coveted addition to the furniture of London drawing-rooms. Among collectors, too, an appreciation of the earlier ceramics grew apace, excavated Sung pieces, for instance, supplanting the less subtle products of the Ch'ing period. Eumorfopoulos was the pioneer in this retrospective movement, his delight being to secure fresh types for study and demonstration to his friends.

After the ceramics, metal-work came next in his affections. The first bronze he got was the famous owl goblet whose engaging air was enough to recommend it, apart from ritual associations. He always let his æsthetic reaction determine the choice; rarity and archæological import were of less account. Yet questions about the cultural setting of any piece never failed to rouse his curiosity. He recognized the

significance of sacrificial bronzes as the chief monuments of early Chinese civilization and basic criteria for the beginnings of Chinese art. Ritual implications weighed with him, he told me, when buying his second bronze, distinguished otherwise for the beauty of its patina and design. Some notice of this wine-container of the *yu* class (catalogued as A 24) is fitting, because it started not only the series of hieratic vessels in the Eumorfopoulos collection, but also our familiarity with the best archaic casting. Its arrival in London came as a revelation to the collecting world here, unaccustomed to the standard it set in craftsmanship and costliness. In 1912 it was sold by John Sparks to W. Cleverley Alexander for more than £1,000, then a sum unheard-of in this country for a Chinese bronze. Some years after Alexander's death in 1916, Eumorfopoulos bought it at double the price, and thenceforward he added greatly to his bronzes so that in time they could compare with any group in Europe. Besides the ceramic and metal, most other mediums were represented in the collection which finally totalled well over 4,000 pieces. Of the folio catalogue begun in 1925, six volumes on the ceramics were written by R. L. Hobson, two on the paintings by Laurence Binyon. Six volumes dealing with the remainder of the collection were allotted to me, two being on the bronzes and one on the Buddhist sculpture. The last three that fell to my share were prepared for publication but never printed; they treated of the jades, jewellery, and miscellaneous objects.

The project of a Central Museum of Asiatic Art was blessed by the Royal Commission on National Museums in its *Final Report*, dated 1929. That led those of us who had championed the cause to look for realization of our hopes, and a committee was formed which included Eumorfopoulos. During conversations on this subject, often he told me of his earnest wish that the collection might continue intact as part of the future Museum, his intention being to give it to the nation. As time went on, however, financial conditions forced him to modify this generous desire to the extent of offering the collection

for a sum far less than it was likely to fetch in the open market. Eventually in *The Times* of 2nd January, 1935, the Directors of the British and the Victoria and Albert Museums jointly announced acceptance of the unique opportunity. The sum agreed upon was £100,000, and a leader on the subject in the same issue contained this sentence: "In allowing his collection to be bought at such a figure, Mr. Eumorfopoulos takes rank with two other great benefactors of the British Museum, the Lord Elgin of the Marbles, who accepted £35,000 for what had cost him more than twice that sum, and Sir Hans Sloane, whose executors accepted about one-quarter of the value of the famous Sloane collections." Thus the collection, though now divided, remains intact and will be reassembled when the proposed Central Museum of Asiatic Art comes into being.

Not quite the whole collection, however, became public property; for the comprehensiveness of the ceramic section was such that it contained types already well represented in the two national museums. To avoid duplication, these had been excluded from the purchase. Some were sold by Messrs. Bluett and Sons in 1935, and a substantial remnant continued to occupy, though sparsely, the show-cases at 7 Chelsea Embankment.

About fifteen years ago Eumorfopoulos started a separate collection for the Benachi Museum in Athens, his aim being that it should exemplify the whole range of Chinese pottery and porcelain. Part he presented in 1930, and part recently. It totals 799 pieces. During the last four years of his life fresh Chinese acquisitions began to fill gaps in the show-cases, and he added also to his earlier purchases of English and Continental drawings, paintings, and sculpture.

Closely linked with and largely inspired by the great collection and its creator was the Oriental Ceramic Society, founded by a coterie of twelve connoisseurs at the beginning of 1921. They elected Eumorfopoulos president, and he continued in that post until his death; their symposia often

took place among his treasures ; and even since 1933, when the membership was widened, his house has remained the virtual headquarters of the Society.

His writings comprise six brief items—two articles in *Artibus Asiae* for 1925 and 1927, one in the *Burlington Magazine* for 1919, another in the *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 1922–3, and two prefaces in the collection catalogue. This reticence in print, matched by his habit in conversation, reflected a modesty which almost amounted to self-effacement. On the rare occasions of outspokenness, his wide knowledge, accuracy of observation, and fertility of ideas were revealed. He sought no glory for himself, nor was he heard to protest if others claimed his theories as their own. Testimony to the extent of his reading was found lately when, in accordance with the terms of his will, I went through his library to choose whatever books were needed by the Courtauld Institute of Art. This munificent bequest, supplementing similar gifts to the Institute during his lifetime, came as another proof of keen interest in academic studies. From the foundation in 1930 of a department of Chinese Art and Archæology in London University through the generosity of Sir Percival David, he attended all the lectures and gave access to his collection for research and demonstrations. During the last eight years, since the chair of Chinese Art and Archæology was established, his frequent presence was a source of encouragement to both students and professor.

Retirement from the firm of Ralli Brothers in 1934 left Eumorfopoulos free to satisfy his ambition to visit the Far East. In February of the next year he went as one of a committee to select objects for the International Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House, and visited China, Japan, Canada and the United States. The fatigues of the journey seemed to have affected him so little that in September he felt able to attend an art congress in Leningrad. But these exertions must have told on his health ; sickness prevented him from taking an active part in the final arrangements for

the great Exhibition in which his own collection figured prominently. After another illness, sustained with fortitude, he died on the 19th December last at his house on the Chelsea Embankment.

Much is omitted from this obituary, because I have attempted to touch on only the side of his life familiar to me. His obvious joy when he flew to the Ur excavations in 1929, for instance, gave a hint of archæological interests in other fields. The full tale of his benefactions, public and private, can never be known; his was a lovable personality and he will be missed sorely by many in all parts of the world.

George Eumorfopoulos was born in 1863 in Liverpool of Greek parentage. In 1890 he married Miss Julia Scaramanga, who survives him and is held in equal affection by the countless recipients of their hospitality.

The following decorations were conferred on him:— Greece: Knight Commander of the Order of the Redeemer and Commander of the Order of George I; France: Officer of the Legion of Honour; and Italy: Chevalier of the Order of the Crown of Italy.

40.

W. PERCEVAL YETTS.