

OBITUARY NOTICE

Mary Lumsden, M.A. (Cantab)

On 25th August, the day before she had planned to start on a climbing expedition in the Swiss Alps, Miss Mary Lumsden was taken ill suddenly and died. Oriental studies latterly claimed much of her energies; but during earlier years many and varied interests occupied a life devoted to public service. A member of Girton College, Miss Lumsden in 1896 took a second class in the Mathematical Tripos, and in the following year Part I of the Moral Sciences Tripos. After leaving Cambridge she was engaged with Miss Octavia Hill on work for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the provision of artisans' dwellings in Walworth. On behalf of the Society of Friends she went to France at the beginning of the War to help in resettling the country folk after the German withdrawal from the Marne. Later at home she aided housing projects of the Ministry of Munitions. A cause which appealed strongly to her generous nature was the work of the National Trust, and for many years she served on the committee.

Miss Lumsden's sympathies were specially centred on furthering a fuller understanding of the Chinese people and the history of their civilization. At her house in St. John's Wood she delighted in arranging parties at which students and other Chinese visitors to London were brought in contact with British friends, and she was ever ready with schemes for promoting friendly relations and extending our means of hospitality. Recognizing the study of Chinese culture to be a potent factor in fostering a better appreciation of the Far East, Miss Lumsden was a keen supporter of the lecture-ship founded last year by Sir Percival David at the School of Oriental Studies. She attended all the lectures, and herself contributed to the discussions. She chose to specialize in the history of the Chinese drama in the belief that the

results would throw light on the mentality of the race, and with tireless enthusiasm she had accumulated much information on this subject.

A personal knowledge of the country was the basis of Miss Lumsden's love of China. She had travelled far, making Ta-li Fu in Yün-nan her headquarters. It was there that she found the chief opportunities for entering into the life of the people, and with her camera collected intimate records of social and religious customs which were used to illustrate lectures delivered before the Royal Asiatic, the Edinburgh Royal Geographical, and China Societies. She brought to England and educated a Chinese girl who is now a teacher in Peking. The full measure of her wide sympathies and selfless generosity will never be known; for Miss Lumsden was one who shunned publicity and preferred to do kindnesses by stealth. On the dispersal of her library the Society has received a valuable gift of seventy-five volumes and many periodicals.

W. P. Y.