



### LADY RICHMOND

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death of Lady (Elsa) Richmond who died on May 4th, 1971 at the age of 91. Lady Richmond was one of the very few who had been members of the School since its foundation in 1931 and had served on the Council from the beginning. In recent years owing to increasing deafness and infirmity she had been unable to attend meetings but had always been an enthusiastic supporter of the work of the School and taken a personal interest in its activities.

She was the widow of Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond who after his retirement from the navy became Master of Downing College, Cambridge and was an eminent naval historian. It was her husband who executed a charming caricature of Gertrude Bell at an Oriental Party with the legend:

From Trebizond to Tripolis  
She rolls the Pashas flat  
And tells them what to think of this  
And what to think of that.

The intimate connection between Lady Richmond and the British School of Archaeology in Iraq stemmed from her being the half-sister of Gertrude Bell. When her husband, then a Vice-Admiral, was engaged in an official cruise up the Persian Gulf, Elsa took the opportunity of visiting Basrah and Baghdad where she stayed with Gertrude in October and November 1924. There was a warm affection between the two and in a letter Gertrude described her as "wonderfully quick and intelligent." These were the last rather sad days of Gertrude Bell and the visit was a solace, for she remarked: "It had been so

endlessly enjoyable to have her to talk to. She is amazingly well, never tired . . . and is amused by everything, . . . Elsa and Herbert are universally loved—I continue to think Elsa perhaps the nicest person in the world.” Elsa was then 44 and was taken on a visit to Ur by moonlight where she was shown round by Leonard Woolley then on the third of his twelve campaigns, and this was an experience which she never forgot and encouraged in her a life long interest in Mesopotamian excavations.

Forthright, upright, courageous and judicious she displayed in herself the strength of character that we have come peculiarly to associate with the great Victorians. She will be greatly missed by all her friends who will remember her sharp and kindly wit and the interest she took in their affairs. She was deeply involved in “Moral Re-Armament” and racial antagonisms were to her a matter of poignant and deep distress.

The School will remember her not only for her endearing personal qualities but as a powerful representative of the Bell family to whom it owes so much.