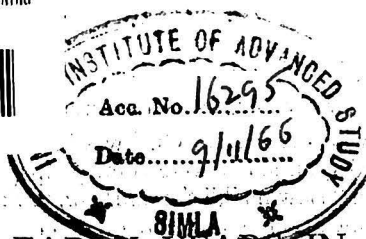


PRESENTED TO THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY, SIMLA

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MY EARLY YEARS IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Spring in the Kuwait hinterland with the Badawin

By MRS. V. P. DICKSON, M.B.E.

Report of a lecture delivered to the Royal Central Asian Society on Wednesday, July 26, 1961, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir William Dickson, G.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., A.F.C., in the chair. The lecture was followed by the presentation of the Lawrence of Arabia Memorial Medal to Mrs. V. P. Dickson.

The PRESIDENT: Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you Mrs. Violet Dickson, who is going to talk about "Early Years in the Persian Gulf." She is a master of her subject and I know we shall all listen to her with the closest attention, because she really is a very great authority.

There is no immediate connection between Mrs. Dickson's father's family and mine, although it is the same name, but there is, in a way, a link; because I have been for a long time in the Royal Air Force (and I see there are one or two members of the R.A.F. present), and the Royal Air Force is associated with the Middle East in a very big and dramatic way, and our feeling to the Middle East, particularly the Persian Gulf, Kuwait and Bahrain, is one of very great affection. In the same way, that region is very dear to the families of those who served there. And I look up to and hero-worship people who are entitled to call themselves Arabists, who really know about Arabs and their way of life.

After the lecture I shall have the honour, on behalf of the Society, of presenting Mrs. Dickson with the Lawrence of Arabia Medal. Instead of speaking afterwards, I thought I would just tell you now, in a few words, why the Society has decided to make this award to Mrs. Dickson. The reasons put forward by the Council are the following:

"Mrs. Violet Dickson's life work has been amongst Arab women and she is thus eminently eligible for consideration for the Lawrence of Arabia Medal, particularly since it is intended for research, etc., in the Near and Middle East.

"She has lived for some forty years in the Arabian Peninsula and South Iraq, where she has made a point of getting to know Arab women both in the tents and towns, often wearing Arab dress and sharing their lives. She has an unrivalled knowledge of their customs, mentality and language, and her quiet, wide tolerance has made her welcome wherever she has been. This includes all classes in Arabia. I think it is not too much to say that her influence has helped to smooth the introduction of Western ways, particularly amongst the peoples of the desert. Her work has often been alone and she has travelled extensively in those wild places. She has penetrated to places hitherto closed to European women.

"Mrs. Dickson is most modest about her achievements, but has published a book on the flora of the desert, and her other special knowledge, such as ornithology, is made available to the West in many chapters of her husband's books, to which she contributed under her own name. Her addition to Western knowledge of Arabia in her subjects is unique, and her ability to convey it in sketches is also evident."

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with the utmost pleasure and very great pride that I introduce you to Mrs. Dickson.

MY first view of the Persian Gulf was in December, 1920. Major H. R. P. Dickson and I were coming up from Bombay by the British India "slow mail," the *Bankura*, to Bahrain. The voyage was extremely pleasant and the ship had many deck passengers. It was interesting to lean over the rails on the upper deck and watch them. There were whole families going to Persian ports, others for Bahrain, Kuwait and Basra. I remember admiring particularly the beautiful Persian silver tea glass holders which were being used by a family en route to Bandar Abbas, and I made up my mind to get some like them one day.

It was nine years later that we were posted to Bushire, and that summer up in Shiraz I found in the bazaar the silver cup holders which I had wanted for so long. They had figures on them from Persepolis, and I have used them for coffee, with china cups and saucers replacing the glasses.

However, Bahrain was not destined to be our home just then. When the ship reached Muscat a cable was received with instructions for us not to land in Bahrain but to come direct to Basra. A message was sent to the servants in Bahrain, who did their best to pack up everything. A few days later the ship lay off Bahrain, and the servants and the kit and two *slugi* dogs came on board. The horses were left to follow later; also a pair of Arabian oryx and a Persian wild sheep. An Arab mare sent to me as a wedding present from Ibn Saud never reached us, but we heard later that she did arrive in Bahrain.

Our arrival at Basra on New Year's Day, 1921, was on what must have been one of the coldest days of a bitter winter. I was frozen to death. Having planned to live in Bahrain, I was not equipped for the icy winter of Iraq, and all I could do was to wear some of my husband's warm clothes and coat. Here we received further instructions to proceed at once to Baghdad by river steamer.

The journey up river by Lynch boat is something some of you may remember. These paddle boats were evidently made for coolness in summer, as in each cabin there was an open space running the whole length of the room at the top and about two feet wide. This let in the freezing night wind nicely, and I succumbed to the most awful neuralgia. However, after some days slowly winding round the curves of the River Tigris we reached Kut. During the trip some of the more energetic Englishmen aboard would jump ashore at times and walk up and shoot a few black partridge along the bank, and then rejoin the ship at the next bend in the river. There were two barges tied one on each side of the ship, and these were covered in ice each morning.

We disembarked at Kut from the ship and went to the A.P.O.'s house, where Captain Jeffries gave us dinner and we warmed ourselves in front of a roaring coal fire before boarding the train for Baghdad. We arrived early next morning to be greeted by snow, mud and an icy wind, and it was only about noon that we reached the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. St. J. B. Philby at South Gate.

After some months in Baghdad we were posted to Hilla, and there we lived till September, 1922, when we went to Bahrain where my husband was to be liaison officer between Sir Percy Cox and Ibn Saud.

It was after the Uqair conference in November that we left Bahrain

for Basra and from there went on leave to France and Switzerland, and later to England before leaving to join a Regiment in India, where we spent the next four and a half years, firstly in Quetta and then in Bikaner. We returned to the Persian Gulf, to Bushire on the Persian side, in 1928, my husband being appointed Secretary to the Hon. Political Resident, Sir Lionel Howarth. The transfer as Political Agent Kuwait came in May, 1929, and we occupied the Agency on the sea front till 1935, when we moved into the new Agency to the east of the town.

It was during our early years here that we made friends with the Badawin camped in summer round the wells of the Shamiyeh. Riding on our horses we would visit some tents and have coffee or else a chat, and at the Briasi gate old Abdullah always had the coffee pot ready for our return just before sunset. A certain family whom we got to know well suggested that we come out by car and visit them in the desert in spring. This we did for many years, and we used to share their tent with them. We soon needed our own tent, however, and the women wove us the six long black wool strips and made the tent up, and later made the tent divide and the *ruag* or back curtain. Our tent from then on moved round the desert with them in autumn and spring, and the Ruler gave us permission to camp in the area reserved for himself and his family. Here the grazing was always better than anywhere else, and I soon discovered that Amsha, Salim's wife, was very intelligent and knew the names of most of the grasses, flowers, and herbs and their medicinal uses. So during the days when I would be alone with them we would go for long walks collecting plants which I drew or painted at the time.

It was suggested to me later that it would be interesting to make a collection of them with their Arabic names and uses; perhaps someone in London might be interested later on.

My attempt some years later to find someone interested was rather discouraging at first. I thought perhaps the Natural History Museum would be the best place to start, but no one seemed at all interested, and finally I took my dried plants away and decided to try Kew. Here, instead of taking them to the Herbarium, I took them to the gardens, and from there I was directed to the Herbarium, but I seemed to have walked for miles before I reached it. I then left my plants with a note to the Director. After a little time I received a most encouraging letter from him, saying that they were very interested in plants from Kuwait as collections had been made in Iraq and later in the south-west corner just outside the Kuwait border, and my collection would continue on from there. They suggested that they give me the necessary press, field note books and instructions, which they did, and I returned to Kuwait full of enthusiasm in the autumn.

To go back a little, I would like to mention how in 1911 when I lived at Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, I was privileged to meet the late Lord Gainsborough from Exton Park, Rutland, together with his friend Mr. Horwood, who had come there for a holiday. They were anxious to find some of the rarer wild flowers which grew there. They invited me to go with them on their walks, and each day we would go together to find gentians, sundews, or the rarer water soldier in a small pond.

It was in 1934 when I made my next visit to Kew with a larger and better collection. In the Herbarium I was taken up to the room of Mr. Horwood. He did not recognize me nor I him, for some time, but as we talked he told me that he had written a book on the flowers of Rutland, and that his friend Lord Gainsborough had assisted him with this work, and I suddenly realized that he was the Mr. Horwood whom I had accompanied on walks in Woodhall in 1911. A curious coincidence. So from that day I was shown every kindness and help in the determining of the plants over a period of many years. In 1955 I was able to publish with the help of Sir Philip Southwell a book on the wild flowers of Kuwait, which included a collection made by Professor Good on Bahrain Island. This book is used in the Anglo-American school at Ahmadi and also by the Department of Agriculture in Kuwait.

The older inhabitants of Kuwait used to tell us that they remembered when the *arfaj* bush grew right up to the walls of Kuwait, but now one had to go for ten miles or so to find any. I remember being shown a photograph taken out near Mishrif, some ten miles away, showing the young children of the American Mission almost hidden by the wild daisies. It was many years before we saw the same thing, but at the time we hardly believed it to be possible. In a poor year of rains each small plant comes up and then, in order to produce seed, blooms at a height of about two inches, whereas in a good year the same plant will grow to a height of twelve or fourteen inches. Many of the Kuwaitis at that time felt that the country was over-grazed and that animals had become much more numerous than before. Certainly the flock of goats from the town was now very large, and there was not much left to eat in the area where they went for their daily outing. But there was a limit to the distance they could go as they had to be back in the town by sunset.

The happiest days of a Badawiyeh's life are in February, March and April after good autumn and later rains. The Badawin's life is the care of his camels, possibly a mare, and today some sheep and a lorry. There has always been a special pet made of the young camel, it has been taught to eat a date from the lips of the lady of the tent and then to receive a kiss on its soft nose. The Arab mare has almost lived inside the tent with the family, and her foal has become another pet for the children to play with. The hunting greyhounds—*slugis*—are allowed to sleep inside the tent in the warm during the winter. The shepherd dog, however, must not come in the tent ever; its duty is to be with the sheep at night and to drive off wolves or bark should a stranger approach the tent. In the mild spring nights the camels no longer need to sleep in the shelter of the tent. The desert in every little hollow or water course is ablaze with yellow and other flowers, the animals are fat and milk and butter is plentiful and everyone is happy. It is now that the truffles appear in certain places. We used to go off on picnics from our camp to collect them, taking with us the donkey to carry the tea things and some water. Early in the season they are most difficult to locate as they barely raise a small mound on the ground, and only in the early morning or evening is a faint shadow cast indicating where they are. Later on they push up a big mound, and later still appear above ground when they are dry and old. They are looked upon as a great

delicacy, and eaten with a dish of rice they take the place of meat. They can also be sliced and sun dried to eat throughout the summer. It is now that certain herbs and plants are collected by the women and stored in their small tin boxes for later medicinal uses. Some of these interesting plants have been used by the Badawin of Arabia since earliest times.

Teucrium polium, known as *jaada*, is a perennial plant with soft grey leaves and a sweet scent when crushed. It was formerly used as a herb in Europe and in Spain, and still retains the name of *poleo montano*. This plant is supposed to be the *polion* of the Greeks, and is said by Arabian writers to be deobstruent, diuretic, anthelmintic and tonic. It is mentioned by Dioscorides 111, 115, and Pliny 7, 21 and 120. It was used always by the present Ruler's grandfather, the great Mubarak, when he had a fever. The dried leaves are made into a tea and then drunk. The *Colocynth* grows profusely in the desert in parts. Its fruits resemble small green melons or, when ripe, yellow oranges. It is the seeds of this fruit which are a potent laxative, and as many as seven seeds may be swallowed for a strong dose. I believe at one time the fruits were exported to Basra for the European market.

Heliotropium, or *ram-ram* as it is called, is used to cure the bite of a snake. During the summer when the snakes come out of their holes people do sometimes get bitten, so the Badu must have their own cures. The shepherd boy sitting out with the sheep or lambs all day saw and learnt much of the ways of the desert animals and insects. Exciting encounters between a monitor lizard or *waral* and a poisonous snake were rare, but the observant child would see the lizard being struck by the snake time and time again, but eventually the lizard killed the snake and ate it. Then still observing the *waral*, the boy would see that it made its way to a certain kind of bush, well known and common in these parts near the shore, and there would lie and roll on the bush for some time.

It was from such tales as these by the shepherd that this plant was collected and the leaves dried and kept hidden away in the women's portion of the tent to be ready in case of a snake bite. Then should anyone be bitten by a cobra or viper, the first thing was to cauterize the bite with a red-hot piece of iron, and then make a poultice of the leaves of the *ram-ram* with boiling water and tie it over the bite. A piece of cloth was also tied above the bite, and the patient had then to be kept awake at all costs perhaps for several nights till the danger was past. To sleep was fatal, they said. Faith healing could also come into it. We knew well a tribal Shaikh called Lafi who was bitten on his ankle by a horned viper as he was sitting round the camp fire in his tent near Subaihiyeh. He quickly went into a coma, and his brother got on his camel and came into Kuwait as quick as he could to visit Seyed Yassin, a very religious man who had the power of curing a person who had been bitten by a snake. He arrived about midnight and woke the old man up. The Seyed recited some prayers and gave the brother some water to drink over which he had breathed. He then told him to return to Lafi who would be now in no danger. On the way back to Subaihiyeh he actually met Lafi being brought into Kuwait on a camel. Lafi told him that at about midnight he began to feel better, and now was able to ride his camel up to Kuwait

and visit Seyed Yassin himself. Lafi called on us a few days later and showed us the bite on his instep.

Haplophyllum arabica-messaicha, is a very highly aromatic annual plant which grows about twelve inches high and has yellow flowers, it is common in the Dibdibba area. The plant is collected and dried and stored away in a piece of black cloth. It is used to cure the sting of a scorpion, and is made into a poultice with boiling water and tied over the wound. I have actually been in a Badu tent in the desert when one of the young women was stung by a scorpion after dark. On this occasion, however, the fat from a spiny tailed lizard (*dhub*), was used to put on it, and all pain went after an hour or so. But they say that the *messaicha* is also as effective.

The Badawin lady uses in her toilet the leaves of trees, and plants. Each month she washes her hair using the powdered dry leaves of the *sidr* tree—*Zizyphus spina-christi*—as a shampoo. It makes a lather and leaves the hair shining and bright with a sweet smell like new-mown hay. The fine green powder is sold in the bazaars of Kuwait, Bahrain and Hufuf. Powdered henna mixed with the fine leaves of *trigonella* is then plastered on before braiding. *Sidr* bushes are plentiful in the Summan region of Saudi Arabia, and large trees growing in Hasa produce the best powder.

For a rouge for her cheeks the Badawin lady uses the fresh root in spring of a plant known as *chahil*—*Arnebia decumbens*. For cleaning her teeth she uses a piece of bark of a tree imported probably from India, which may be the bark of walnut—*Juglans regia*—or from the Holm oak—*Quercus ilex*. This imparts a brown stain to the lips and gums and is known as *derham*. The thin woody roots of a bush called *rak*—*Salvadora persica*—are also used as a toothbrush in Kuwait, mostly by men (*miswak*) but also by the women. This bush grows on the Rakba plain east of the Hejaz mountains. I have seen it growing at Uqair and in Somaliland. The Badawin say that the last thing the Prophet Muhammad did just before he died was to ask his wife Ayishah to clean his teeth with a *miswak* of this sort.

I am told also that the white and dry leaves from a bush known as *shinan* (*Seidlitzia rosmarinus*) will make a lather in water and can be used for washing clothes, though I have not seen the Badawin use the lather. This bush is found near the sea and on the islands where *halophytes* grow.

In the desert the children greatly relish the juicy bulbs of a kind of brown bluebell—*Dipcadi erythraeum*, and the ugly looking pinky red broomrape *tarthuth*—*Cynomorium coccineum*—is much sought for and enjoyed. The *tarthuth* is bitter when young but becomes sweet when it is full grown. The young circular seeds of the *saadan*—*Neurada procumbens*—are juicy and pleasant; when old and dry they have sharp spikes and attach themselves to the camel's feet. The tap root of the *rubahla*—*Scorzonera papposa*—is likewise quite delicious to eat. The berries of the *ausaj* tree—*Lycium arabicum*—can also be eaten, as was proved when an R.A.F. plane made a forced landing in June near Umm Qasr on the Iraqi border. The only survivor of the three members of the crew was the

one who ate these berries; he was picked up two days later, alive but exhausted.

Among my collection of plants was a crucifer which turned out to be a new species and genus. Later, in order to commemorate Mr. Horwood's connection with the original investigation and material, the genus has been named after him, and my contribution is acknowledged by the specific trivial.

Some years ago (1942), after early autumn rains, an interesting sight was the number of bright orange hairy caterpillars about an inch and a half long feeding on the young plants which had come up under the bushes, especially in the western part of the state. As there was no sign of any cocoons to be seen, I collected some of the large caterpillars and kept them in a box of sand under a wire sieve, and then I discovered that they buried themselves in the sand and there made their cocoon. Prior to doing this they would begin to rush round and round and from side to side of the box as though they were in a great hurry. They then disappeared under the sand. Later when I investigated, the cocoon was about two inches down in the sand and spun round with the long orange hairs. Later during the summer a couple of rather small grey and brown moths emerged. These were identified (as *Chondrostege sibfasciata* Klug. *brunneicornis* Wilt.) by Mr. E. P. Wiltshire, as well as some from a collection I made for him one night out in the desert some fifty miles west of the town in the spring of 1944. Only males came to the light; the female of this species cannot fly, apparently. I have not come across them again recently, and we have had many bad years of drought.

I am going to describe to you an evening in 1953 when we went out collecting locusts. The shepherd reported when he brought the sheep back to the tent about 7 p.m. that a swarm of fat locusts had settled for the night about two miles away. The women of the tent were excited as they had not caught any to date. We waited till the moon was up about 9.30 p.m. and then we drove out in the car with two women, two boys and about five children complete with sacks to put the locusts in. It was not too easy to find the exact spot, but we located our quarry after a little searching in the moonlight. It was bushy country and the locusts were sheltering for the night on the lee side of the bushes, with some in the bushes. The idea was to approach each bush quietly and then sweep as many as one could quickly into the mouth of the sack. The children were frightfully excited, rushing this way and that, but the two women were very clever at collecting the locusts, and between us we soon had three sacks nearly full. We now decided to return to the tent, and the sacks were securely tied round the top and the squirming locusts left till morning. They do not die, and can live for as much as three or four days in a bag if they are not crushed. A dead locust is uneatable.

Next morning large cooking pots were set over a fire and when the water with some salt in it was boiling the locusts were poured into it and left to boil for about five minutes. They were then taken out and spread on mats to dry, and the next lot was done in the same way. Many were spread out on the top of the hair tent to dry, away from the donkeys, etc. Later they were all packed away in bags to be eaten when required.

Another method for cooking them is to dig a circular hole in the ground about eighteen inches across, light a fire in the hole, and when the hole is heated pour into it the live locusts and place a tray over the top. They roast in the embers and are equally good and tasty to eat. In a year of many locusts it was a common sight to come upon a group of these circular holes near where there had been a camp. This year the first sack of locusts brought into the town from Saudi Arabia was bought for eighty rupees. In spite of the modernization of Kuwait some of the old likings and customs still remain.

The years of 1958 and 1959 were two very bad years of drought over the whole of Arabia, during which hundreds of thousands of camels are said to have died, but the rains came at last during the autumn of 1960 over a wide area in north central Arabia and Jordan. This was not in time, however, to save many of the older animals. During the late summer the thin, emaciated animals would stagger into the pump stations of Badanah and Rafha and drink their fill of water at the troughs, then they lay down, never to have the strength to get up again, and just died where they lay. Later in the spring of 1961 exceptionally heavy rains fell in parts of Kuwait State.

On the morning of March 21 I drove up the Basra road to Raudhain, to find that heavy rain had fallen there from the black thunder-clouds which we had seen from Kuwait towards the northwest the previous afternoon. There had been very little rain at the Mutla and practically nothing along the road. The heavy rain had swept down the *raudha* and across the Basra road, and had formed a lake some three-quarters of a mile wide and a mile long, divided only by the now damaged strip of the new road. Some Muntafik shepherds had been camped in the depression, which was green from a previous rain and provided good grazing for their sheep. Now their tents were standing out in the lake, which was four or five feet deep in places, and the older occupants were huddled together under a few blankets on the side of the road with a few belongings and a single chicken tied by a string to its leg. The younger women were wading back and forth to their tents salvaging what they could of their personal belongings, while as I stood on the road the now strong breeze which had got up was washing towards me tent poles, bedding, kettles, etc. Four large lorries had been abandoned in the lake. The sheep luckily had escaped and were grazing some way off.

The remarkable sight was the number of large full-grown spiny tailed lizards (*dhubbs*) which the flood water had driven out of their holes and washed down on to the dry edge of the road. I counted eighteen of them; some were dead from the cold water and exposure, but others very much alive. As I approached they raised themselves up on all four legs and puffed themselves out in anger. Some who decided to cross the road were being killed by passing lorries bringing stones and pebbles. I had heard the tales told by Badu of how at times of sudden cloudbursts the lizards and snakes would be driven from their holes, but in my many years in Kuwait I had never actually witnessed this rather sad sight till this year. I did not see any snakes, but as I stood a young boy passed carrying two puppies in his arms to safety with the mother whining anxiously at a

distance, and then a little jerboa, very wet and bedraggled, came slowly hopping along and was easily caught. I kept it for several months in the house.

On April 7 a freak thunderstorm hit Qatar, Dubai and, to a lesser extent, Dhahran in Saudi Arabia. Hailstones fell which were the size of oranges and did much damage to property. The Political Resident was in Dubai at the time and vouched for the size of the hailstones. It was during this storm that the British India mail boat *Dara* had to put out to sea and later caught fire.

I must mention here the lovely little red velvet spiders, about the size of a threepenny bit, which appeared, after a rain storm on February 22, in the grounds of Salwa Zoo. They then disappeared after a few days as suddenly as they had appeared, not to be seen again perhaps for many years.

It almost invariably occurs when at last the rains have fallen and the grazing has come up in the desert after a year or two of drought, that the surviving thin camels get the highly contagious disease of camel mange known as *jerab*. This year it has been particularly severe. During April I spent a night with some friends of the Al Murra tribe in the southern part of Kuwait State. They had come up from Saudi Arabia the previous autumn after news had reached them of the good rains in the northern part of the state and had spent the last four months in the vicinity of Hafar al Batin and Qaisumah.

Each morning, after the pre-dawn call to prayer was over, the infected camels were treated. Each animal in turn was kept tied down with rope while one of the men held the nose and lips of the growling, snarling animal. The infected parts, which were devoid of hair, were first washed with "Tide" detergent, and then an arsenical solution—supplied by the Agricultural Department in Kuwait—was rubbed over the skin. These animals were all segregated from the healthy ones and sent to graze in a spot far away from the main herd. Infection is carried from one to the other by ticks.

The treatment was proving most satisfactory and many animals were already cured and the hair beginning to grow again over the bare parts. The desert now was taking on a brown look as the hot sun turned the grasses into standing hay. The beautiful spring of 1961 with its many flowers was coming to an end.

Mrs. Dickson then expressed her thanks to the friends who had kindly lent her coloured slides for use during her lecture, viz., the Rev. T. R. Ashton, M.A. (Ahmadi); Mr. Don A. Holm (Saudi Arabia); Dr. I. T. Legge (Kuwait).

PRESENTATION

The PRESIDENT: Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, I know that I speak for everyone present when I say how really greatly we have enjoyed—as I knew we would—your talk. Thank you very much on behalf of us all. For all those of us who have been in those parts, it took us back; and, for those who were never there—we learned what a romantic place it is.

And may I congratulate you and your late husband very sincerely for

your life work there. Your Arab friends and the English people you have known out there are deeply appreciative of all that you have done.

I would now, with your permission, like to present you with the Lawrence of Arabia Medal. I should like to say how pleased I am that we have with us, to watch this presentation, the brother of Lawrence of Arabia, Dr. Lawrence, also your own daughter, and many other people who are friends of Kuwait. With all the others here, I am sure they are delighted to be present.

I have already read to you the reasons which caused the Council to present this medal to you. I think I can add to them by saying this: you and your late husband, who died two years ago, shared in a great work among the Arabs. I think few people, going back to the '80s, could have done more to foster goodwill and understanding between our two peoples, the British and the Arabs.

Mrs. Dickson was then presented with the Lawrence of Arabia Medal.

Mrs. DICKSON: Ladies and Gentlemen, I do feel most highly honoured that I should have been chosen to receive, from the Royal Central Asian Society, the medal donated in memory of T. E. Lawrence, for the small contribution that I have been able to make in the study of the Arabs and the Arabian flora and fauna. I wish to express my grateful thanks to the Society for the honour. (*Applause.*)

