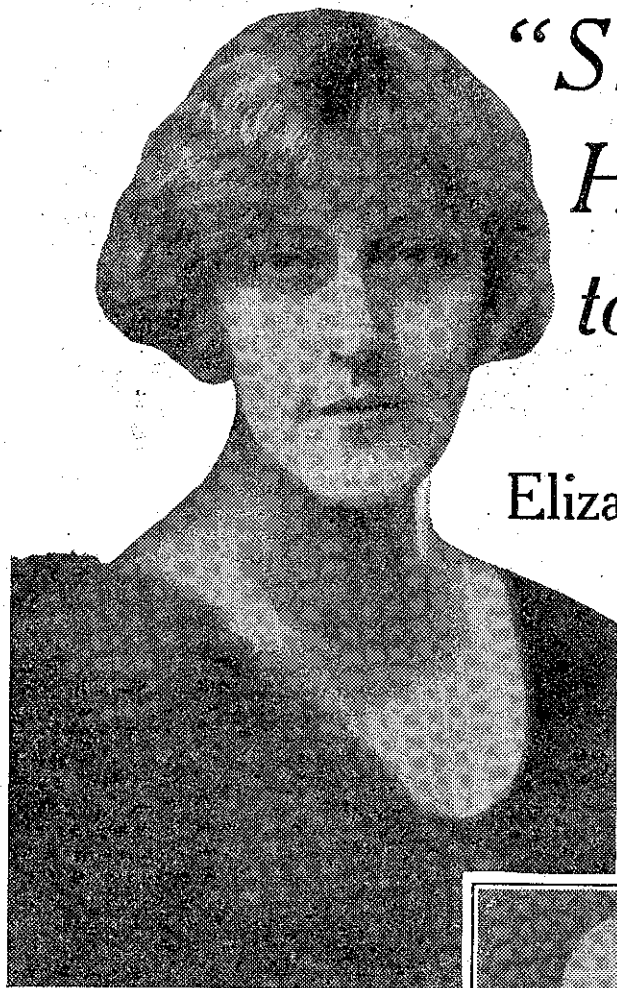


"She Whom Europe Has Been Pleased to HONOUR"

Elizabeth Kelly, Christchurch Artist, and Her Talented Husband

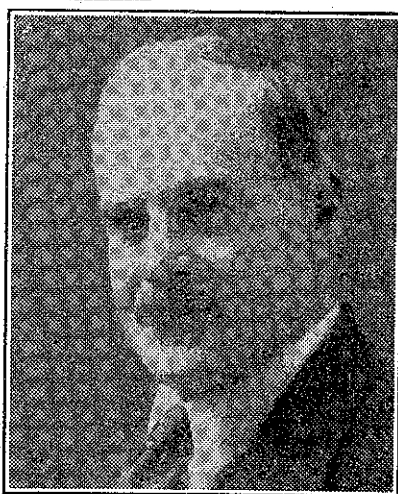
(Specially written for the "Radio
Record.")



THERE were three of us at the table, Elizabeth Kelly, Cecil Kelly and myself. The mellow light of the candles shed itself over the crystal, the champagne winked golden-clear in the goblets, roses and violets, expensively out of season, splashed colour across the old lace cloth; the fog, rising out of a Christchurch winter's night, trailed clammy, futile fingers across the shuttered windows . . . this was a very special occasion. The afternoon papers had told of the award made to Elizabeth Kelly, New Zealand's best-known portrait painter, of the Paris Salon's coveted Silver Medal, the first to come to New Zealand.

Cecil Kelly and I lifted our glasses very solemnly on that memorable night in the winter of 1934 and toasted "she whom Europe had been pleased to honour." In a haze of cigarette smoke by the fire after dinner we talked of art—modern art, the days of Michael Angelo, the pre-Raphaelites, Augustus John, our own little New Zealand school. John's much-discussed "The Girl in the Yellow Jacket" had been exhibited in New Zealand a few months before—we talked about that, too.

On an easel in the shadows at the back of the room stood an almost completed portrait of John Schroder, associate editor of "The Press." It was something of a secret at the time—to-day, of course, that same portrait is a matter of artistic history. I looked at it once or twice, and thought of the day, not so many years before, when John Schroder, then with "The Sun," called me into



Many works that have since been praised by world-famous critics have had their beginnings in the fascinating studio overlooking the River Avon in Christchurch—Elizabeth and Cecil Kelly.

his room and remarked, "Your literary style isn't bad—it's improving—but it's still a bit—er—flowery."

Another easel held a painting of Cecil Kelly's—Lyttelton harbour viewed through the little pass at the top of the Lyttelton-Sumner road. The clay banks had caught the purple tints of deepening shadow, the harbour below was a rich mixture of afternoon sunlight and deep blue water, the hills beyond—Mount Herbert, Rhodes Peak—reminded me of that line of Jessie Mackay's, "the running ring of fire on the Canterbury hills." I still maintain that this is one of the finest things that Cecil Kelly has ever done.

Since then Elizabeth Kelly's work has gone from strength to strength, and her canvases from recognition to more recognition. First came the Royal Academy—word

that one of Elizabeth Kelly's portraits had been accepted for exhibition. Next the Paris Salon, two portraits this time, and again congratulations were showered down. In the next year both the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon wanted Mrs. Kelly's portraits—and this time the Academy gave her a coveted place "on the line." Later came requests from the London Portrait Society and the Royal Cambrian Society.

But now comes a singular honour. The corporation of the city of Lincoln, England, desires to hold a "one-man show" of Mrs. Kelly's work, the paintings to be exhibited in the public art gallery. The pictures, mainly portraits, are those which have been exhibited during the past year or two in France and England. It is difficult, over the span of years, to recall all the (Continued on page 58.)