

lost a doubt that had been creeping into me, whether I was destined to be a painter after all. Hugh Scott had unwittingly sown a seed of it, when he said of my watercolours that I only sketched, that perhaps I would never do more than sketch, but if it turned out that way it wouldn't matter. (I wanted it to matter, whether I became more than a mere sketcher or not.) And Cecil Kelly, one of the more talkative and approachable of the Canterbury teachers, had told me I started up too many hares and didn't run enough to earth, or some such proverb.

In 1932, at Dunedin, I found that I was never talked down to in this way; and that I was in the centre of a group that was robustly critical of the jail-keeping type of art teaching prevalent elsewhere in the country. In fact it was impossible not to be in the centre of this group—it had no fringes. Outside was the hostile world. A member of it, in the person of A. Elizabeth Kelly ('for portraits', as her infinitely discreet advertisement in the catalogue of the Canterbury Society of Arts told you) came to rail at Bob Field for his bad example to the students of the country, on whom her husband's livelihood depended. Bob, who was usually quite communicative, wouldn't tell us what the matter of her communication had been; so we were left to suppose it had been too unpleasant for him to want to tell us. All we heard was her criticisms of the Dunedin tramway service and of the roughness of the footpath in Tomahawk Road, Andersons Bay, where Field lived.

His work had lately been featured in the influential quarterly *Art in New Zealand*, published by Harry Tombs in Wellington with the aim of showing New Zealanders what was being done by their artists. From their remarks to me about the Group Show the year before, I knew very well that the Christchurch gang would be very wroth at Field's work being accorded equal status with their own in such a publication.

Referring to the work of this Society portrait painter who had taken the trouble to come and see their master, these young painters rudely and robustly styled her 'Ponds Cream Kelly'! It was good to be able to participate in such criticism of a system which had so bored me that I had begun to doubt myself. I began to feel a new confidence. But, above all, it was exciting. Here, they were looking at good prints in colour of the very artists who had commanded my attention at thirteen, Sisley and Cézanne and many more—Van Gogh, Gauguin, Pisarro, Matisse, Van Dongen, Picasso; names I hadn't heard before, and pictures that to look at sent me to the top of my feelings. If these painters were known in Christchurch, the knowledge had been carefully kept from students like me. There had been a conspiracy to suppress their influence.