

The Sydney Lyceum Club,
77 King Street,
SYDNEY

COPY

Dear Mr. Newling,

I should have replied earlier to your letter. The name history of the portrait is on the canvas, at the back.

The original painting was by an unknown man, Eric Saunders, and I gave him the paid commission to get him out of a jam which might have ruined his future. He painted the fur beautifully, but the thing as a whole was very badly done. The eyes were marbles, the nose a yule log, the mouth a young girl's and the whole face an oblong. The figure might have been sitting, hunkering or almost standing; the right hand was a woman's and the left (broad and knobbly) a man's. The background was a Reckitt's blue. The portrait was entered for the Archibald Prize, and of it Hugh McCrae wrote me:-

"I saw Mary Gilmore twenty feet high, and in colours keyed up till they screamed."

Kate Beard repainted the head, face, neck, black ribband and lace front, also the background. Mr. Parker on our joint advice, cut the picture and made it an oval as you have it. Knees, table, books and blue drape went. The portrait part is all Kate Beard. The clothes, apart from the neckband and lace, Eric Saunders.

Yours sincerely and in haste.

(Sgd.) MARY GILMORE.