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English artists. These evidently had no attraction for the intruders. The picture cannot be negotiated in New Zealand with any degree of safety, whilst its shipment out of the country should not be a work of ease without the senders laying themselves open to police scrutiny."

As it turned out, however, the thieves soon found a way of turning the picture to account, and as the result of negotiations with the Mayor (Hon. T. W. Hislop) netted a cool £50. The picture is city property, and of this fact the thieves must have been well aware. Immediately after the theft, the Mayor received a letter signed "A. G. Ransom," demanding £150 for the picture, and threatening personal harm to Mr. Hislop should he attempt to take advantage of the knowledge contained in the letter. The writer indicated the Sailors' Rest as the place where correspondence might be addressed to him. The letter was placed in the hands of the police, and Mr. Hislop sent a reply. The spot was watched to see who should take delivery, but the thief was not to be caught so easily. Someone else, who was very excited, called for the letter, and instead of shadowing him, the detective on guard took him into custody. It transpired that he had been merely spoken to in the street by someone he did not know, and asked to call for the letter. He was therefore released.

The holder of the picture then changed his address. He wrote a second letter, in which he grew cheeky, and joked about the matter. He said that if they thought he would be fool enough to call for the correspondence himself they were very much mistaken, for he knew that the place would be watched. He mentioned the column of the "New Zealand Times" in which he could be communicated with. The second reply by the Mayor was not "lifted," the thief having grown more suspicious.

In each letter there was a threat to destroy the picture to the size of a postage stamp unless the money was paid. The thief at the same time wrote to Mrs. Rhodes urging that something should be done by her, otherwise he would destroy the picture.

Mr. Hislop continued to receive threatening letters, and the police seemed to be getting no nearer to the solution of the mystery. It was therefore agreed that £50 should be paid to save the situation, the money being handed over to a person named. The exchange was accordingly made, and when the president reached the academy at 11 a.m. on Friday, July 17th, he found the picture waiting for him.

The Hon. T. W. Hislop was interviewed the same evening by a representative of the "New Zealand Times." He said that in his opinion the best thing had been done under the circumstances; to prevent the total destruction of the picture. "If the picture had been my own personal property, I don't know that I would have paid the ransom, but being

a public gift which could not be replaced, and one that was for the common benefit, I decided to act in what I considered to be the public interest. I hope that the culprit may yet be tracked down. The fellow got some pretty severe frights, and is not, I think, likely to repeat the job. It is to be hoped that the Fine Art Academy will in future take proper care of this and other pictures placed in its charge. I may add that the whole business was not managed by me at all, and the picture was brought to the academy by an intermediary."

The Oxford Manner.

What is the Oxford manner? It indubitably exists, for one is continually hearing of it, whether for good or evil. "What's the matter with your manner? There's something I don't like about your manner," an editor—a man who came from no seat of learning, but had, so to say, sprung up outside by the irrepresible force of his personality—once remarked to a young contributor who was proposing to do some work for him. "It's the Oxford manner, I hope," the young man replied. "Whatever it is, it's a d— disagreeable manner," said the editor, closing the discussion. That is one point of view; but there is another, to which Gladstone once gave utterance. He could, he said, bestow no higher praise on any human being than to say that his manner suggested the typical Oxonian. What, then, is the "formula," as mathematicians would say, of this manner which affects different people so differently? The typical Oxford man, is, shall we say, is just a shade more convinced than other people that his mission in life is to instruct and civilise the intellectually dark and barbarous places of the world, but is also a shade more careful than other people to qualify himself to sprak the last word on every subject under the sun before culling for silence and speaking it. Moreover, when he does speak it he speaks it very quietly, as one who feels quite sure of himself, and is not accustomed to be contradicted. Of course, it would be easy to enumerate Oxford men to whom the description is inapplicable. One would not apply it to the Nash of Jesus who became Beau Nash of Bath; to the Burton of Trinity who became Captain Sir Richard Burton; to the Russell of Exeter who became "Parson Jack"; or to the Hook of St. Mary Hall, better known as Theodore Hook, who offered to sign forty Articles if the signature of thirty-nine did not suffice. But there is, on the other hand, a preponderant number of Oxford men whom the definition does fairly well hit off. It hits off Jowett, and Matthew Arnold, and Arthur Hugh Clough in one department of life, and Lords Lansdowne, and Milner, and Curzon, and Mr. Asquith in another; and they are, on the whole, more typical than the men whom our first list enumerates.



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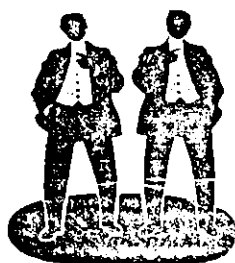
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