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UNDERGRADUATE AS FALSTAFF.

Brilliant Acting in O.U.D.S. Production of "King Henry IV."

By S. P. B. MAIS.

Oxford, Tuesday.

THIS year's O.U.D.S. production of the Second Part of "King Henry IV.," given here this evening, will be remembered for any brilliant things, but R. W. Speaight's (Lincoln) Falstaff will, I imagine, stand out as one of the finest pieces of acting ever seen in Oxford or anywhere else.

Bridges Adams, of Worcester, who has produced, directed, dressed and designed the scenery for it, is to be congratulated on having staged a very beautiful revival with remarkable economy.

One arch does duty in about a dozen scenes, each one different from the other. Temple Gaby, of Christ Church, has composed music which interprets with vividness the characters of the King, the Prince, Falstaff, Doll Tearsheet and Shallow, and adds materially to one's enjoyment and understanding of the play.



Mr. W. Bridges-Adams.

The acting, apart from that of Speaight, which was on a plane by itself, was good. H. Grisewood, of Worcester, made a dignified and majestic Henry IV. and was almost alone in getting the full music out of the richly musical lines. L. A. Nye, of Pembroke, made of Prince Henry the unfeeling, cold-blooded cad that he really was. This was a clever performance, for the part is extremely unsympathetic, being neither dignified nor majestic.

M. A. E. Franklin, of Queen's, looked like a worked radish as Shallow, and was richly comic in his scenes with Silence, whose astringent

tarseness was quite wonderfully brought out by G. E. Williams, of Christ Church.

D. Gillies, of Pembroke, looked fearsome as Bardolph, but his bullock-like strength, like his gruff voice, somehow made one feel (as it should) that he was much more inclined to be gentle than Poins, interpreted by J. M. S. Green, of University, as a gentleman's gentleman of the most suave and unreliable kind.

P. L. de Lazlo (the son of the artist) gave us a Lord Chief Justice of the kind that Henry V. would have approved, a self-seeker first and last. "Thou art a great fool"—his verdict on Falstaff—is also a verdict on himself.

Clare Great was pleasing, but spoke too quickly as Mistress Quickly, and Olga Lindo as Doll Tearsheet played with such gusto that she tore her passions to tatters and ceased to be audible.

Rapturous Reception.

The crowds were all amazingly energetic and life-like, the recruits being deliciously sheepish, and the Royal Princesses as beautifully insipid and similar as any dancing sisters from America.

Others in the cast were the Duke of Canalejas (Magdalen), Sir Edward Hulton (B.N.C.), the Hon. D. B. Buckley (Trinity), one of the insipid princes, and the Hon. E. G. Hare (Balliol), one of the sheepish recruits.

The reception with which the play was greeted was quite rightly rapturous.

In Bridges Adams' hands the play becomes so good that we agree with Masefield that the Boar's Head scene is the finest tavern scene ever written and that the Cotswold scenes are like an apple loaf in some old barn where the apples of last year lie sweet in the straw.

It is a rich intellectual and aesthetic treat after the kind of fare that has been provided in the London theatres lately to come to Oxford and to see English undergraduates interpreting one of the richest of English comedies in a truly English manner.