

Mr. George B. Williams' Recital

ON February third, in Assembly Hall, Mr. George B. Williams, of London, gave a dramatic recital of Shakespeare's "King Henry the Fourth, Part I." Mr. Williams has won an enviable reputation in both England and America, and it was a great treat to listen to so distinguished a reader. For two hours he entertained the college delightfully. All poetry to be perfectly appreciated should be read aloud. Dramatic poetry should not only be read aloud, it should also be read in character, as Mr. Williams' reading amply demonstrates. Of course, a dramatic reader can never give an adequate substitute for the staged play, especially if it be an "acting play" and not a "closet drama;" yet Mr. Williams' interpretation was unusually effective. Indeed, it was illuminating and vital. The principal characters, with the possible exception of Hotspur, were well individualized, and enough of the play was read to bring out the plot movement effectively.

The interpretation of Falstaff was especially felicitous; it is unquestionably Mr. Williams' role. Falstaff's wealth of "avoirduois," his poverty of conscience, his marvelous gift of lying, his matchless affrontery, his keen and brilliant wit, his valorous discretion, were all realized. Mr. Williams is certainly one of the few satisfactory interpreters of Shakespeare's greatest comic character. His work is a stimulus to the study of Shakespeare.

It is strange that the colleges do not lay more emphasis on vocal interpretation in the study of literature, especially in the study of poetry and drama. Emotional qualities are certainly best brought out in this way and verse is ridiculous as an appeal to the eye. The critical lecture is important, and the libraries are very properly filled with works of criticism easily accessible. But these do not quite realize literature for the student. That can best be done through the art of reading aloud.