

Dr. John Talbot Smith

WHEN the members of the graduating class, editing the St. Michael's College "Year Book" for 1916, dedicated to Very Rev. John Talbot Smith their fine and ably written Yearly, they intended to confer, and did confer an exceptional compliment on a past alumnus of the College, and now one of the most distinguished men in the ranks of the American priesthood.

The name of John Talbot Smith is so familiar to us as an author, journalist, Catholic playwright, lecturer, dramatic critic and all round literary athlete that to attempt an exhaustive review of the man and his achievements is, to use a hackneyism, like painting the lily or gilding refined gold.

Father Smith is a fascinating writer, and one of the outstanding figures in the American Church to-day. His literary activities are amazing and are always confined within sane and conservative lines. His versatility is phenomenal, and his range of vision altogether exceptional. In fact, he is so many-sided that it is not easy to classify him, and we are satisfied that if he had concentrated his mentality and marvellous energy on some one department of literature, he would have achieved a more enduring, if not a greater, reputation. His mellow, fluent and gentlemanly style is saturated with the sounds, scents and colours of a southern landscape, and the exercise of his cultivated judgment is with him a sacred trust which he holds for his Catholic beneficiaries.

He has the faculty of keeping abreast with orthodox contemporary thought, of cultivating and retaining a flexibility of intellect that prevents him ever becoming a mere imitator of popular writers.