

Each of the stories constitutes a little world in itself. A well-known American editor and writer remarks in one of his articles that a Jesuit college is really a world to itself, governed by rules entirely its own, its atmosphere conducive to studious endeavor, perfect discipline and strict morality, and it so hedges its pupils from hurtful influences for the scholastic term of ten months that they pursue their work wholly unhampered by extraneous affairs. All who are conversant with the internal arrangements of our institutions of education will at once perceive the foregoing description is applicable to nearly every Catholic college in the land. But the other colleges have not got their Francis Finn, to note the life of their communities and reproduce it for the benefit of the extramural Barbarians. A keen student of the life about him, possessing a dramatic sense and a saving grace of humor, Father Finn is often photographic and minute in detail, while he does not forget the importance of the mass which the detail is to explain or embellish. He ignores nothing that is significant, makes use of nothing that is not significant; and binds every element of character and every incident and bit of description together in a consistent, coherent, dramatic whole. Literature means delicacy of touch. While our author is absolutely free of realism, in the depraved sense of the word, his books are emphatically "human documents." He is a realist, but his realism is not destitute of soul. It treats of clay without becoming clay, or even dwelling in clay. His is the realism whose other name is the natural. When realism peers through the outward semblance to, and through the internal soul, and takes due cognizance of both, it is as harmless and useful as photography or landscape gardening.

As to the style of our author, it would be difficult to be too eulogistic. There can be but one opinion of him: he is a master of English. His sentences are usually short and of the Macaulian build, but unlike Macaulay, he does not deal in a succession of short, assertive sentences, most of which an ordinary writer would group as limiting clauses about the main assertion. The result is great vigor and definiteness. His style fits every requirement of his subject as closely and becomingly as a glove fits a shapely hand. It is made to serve all the purposes of the tales, and is, betimes, the expression of the higher poetry, of description, of sensation,