

declivities, all combine to recommend the greatest prudence and most minutious precautions. This lofty fastness is, as you have already divined, that of literary studies. Examine it briefly let us from its different stand points.

It is but a small acquirement, after all, to be able to write one's own language correctly. Heaven knows, however, the fewness of those who can lay claim to this merit. A small thing too, is it to write it with elegance, although those who do so, or think they can do so, are ridiculously vain of the accomplishment. The College professor does not bind himself to push his pupils any further in this branch of learning, and if he succeed in arriving even there does he not merit the hearty congratulations of every man of experience? The professor of an University must aim at something much higher and extend far beyond this limit the field of his labors. He will no longer content himself with setting forth the rules of literature, nor will he satisfy himself and his pupils by showing their happy application in some select passages of the great masters, or even yet with guiding the still unsteady hand of his pupil in his first literary essays. No, he will take from the shelves of his library the *Iliad* of Homer, the *Æneid* of Virgil, the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, the *Dramas* of Shakespeare, the *Tragedies* of Corneille and Racine, and of these he will communicate to his hearers the plan, the procedure, the style and the grandeur—expose their general purpose, explain the play of the passions which there meet in conflict, indicate with firm hand their beauties and their defects, and thus form his students to the mould of high literary criticism. Who can depict to us the joys reserved to the fortunate young man to whom God reserves such pleasures, to associate with the intellectual life of genius, ascend with it to the regions wherein the ideal is felt and seen, and create by contact with that genius those grand thoughts that stir whole generations. Those are, indeed, intellectual joys that fill the soul of man in its every faculty. The utilitarian, the dull and narrow spirit accustomed to measure all things from the standpoint of dollars and cents, will, no doubt, toss his head with disdain crying out: "This is all bosh—folly—utter folly." Let us pass him by in the silence of heart-felt pity. For us, who believe in intelli-

gence, who know what an important role thought must play in a society of rational beings, who recognize, perhaps by some experience, the danger of being cast without a critic on the mercy of realistic, pantheistic or vicious writers—cannot but desire to see the new generation more favored than ourselves. In literature, as in all things else, to have men of mediocre we must have men of supreme merit. And these latter cannot, as a general rule, be had but by means of a finished superior education. Genius itself requires a master.

Perchance have you thought, ladies and gentlemen, that in this imperfect sketch I have gone over with you the whole circle of subjects which constitute that which is to be termed—to contra-distinguish it from professional education,—high scholastic training in a University. This thought will come to you all the more naturally as since the Renaissance, the limit has been there quite naturally fixed. Disfigured by Descartes and Locke, Philosophy had no longer in fact that elevation and that certitude which in the Middle Ages gave it uncontested supremacy. In the eyes of even some of its adepts it was and unhappily is yet but one of the branches of natural sciences, governed by the laws of mechanics or of chemistry, or perhaps a vaporous cloud suspended in the heaven of science to reflect the empty phantoms of a delirious brain. For those men Philosophy is but a meaningless term, and the philosopher himself a dreamer. They imagine that they have already done too much for this science if, for lucre's sake, they consent to its teachings or give it in their curriculum a very modest place below that accorded to literature.

But for the Catholic Church, for the great Leo XIII, for us—Philosophy is a quite different thing. It is a queen that covers with her royal robe and presses to her warm and life giving heart all human sciences; it is a vast estuary into which all the great rivers, the torrents, the rivulets and the very brooklets of human knowledge flow to mingle their waters; it is, to follow out the metaphor with which we commenced, a lofty peak—higher than all the rest, the Mont Blanc in the Alps of science—towards whose summit the plateau raises itself and the mountain heights all seem to turn. Philosophy is,