

unpraying heart uttered one petition for help and summoning all that remained of her naturally strong resolution, she turned suddenly upon Le Compte.

"You should not have come here," she said, eagerly; "there has been enough of this; we must part."

"You speak, *ma chère*, as if it were an easy thing to part," was the reply, in a low, melodious, but decided tone; "forever, too—it may be for you, but for me, after what has passed, impossible."

Laura sunk into a garden-chair, while he poured out his tale of love in no measured words, assuring her in terms that scorched her very soul, that he was in earnest, that a union as his wife had, from the first, been his intention; this he asserted on his honor.

"It can never be, Le Compte," replied Laura; "you know it can never be. There are reasons—" Her voice seemed to come from a sepulchre, and she had not power to close the sentence.

"Love conquers all obstacles," he said gently, yet firmly.

"But it cannot obliterate former vows and promises," sobbed Laura, almost incoherently.

"It does on my part, it may on yours; only say the word, and you are mine—mine for ever."

"Never! I will not!" cried she, resolutely, withdrawing her hand from his, and rising from her seat, she whispered in his ear.

The words must have been of dreadful import, and they cut deep, for they caused him to stamp his foot wrathfully, and brought a terrible oath to his lips; but the excitement was but momentary, his smooth, clear, polished voice was heard again, fearfully distinct in the ears of his trembling victim, as he said, "This need be no barrier to our happiness; you must fly with me; there is no time like the present: dancing has commenced at the house, many hours must elapse before we are missed, the silver moon smiles on our project, I will arrange the way."

But he spoke to closed ears. "Led captive at his will," had been brought to Laura's mind as she realised the awful nature of his proposals, backed as she knew by a will which she had learned to dread. Nature gave way, and she fell senseless at his feet, as suddenly as if she had been smitten by his hand. Le Compte, for the first time in his life of intrigue, was baffled. Elopement had been his design ultimately, but his arrangements were not fully completed; with Laura yielding to his will, as he had anticipated after a brief struggle, he could easily make a way on the spur of the moment, but with Laura in a fainting fit, it was quite a difficult matter. He carried her to the water and tried all the means in his power to restore her, unsuccessfully. He saw at length with the eye of a physician that the trouble was more than a mere faintness, so bending over her as she lay ghastly in the white moonlight, he muttered a fierce curse if she thwarted him, and returning to the house, the rumor was soon spread through the hall by the servants, that Miss Marten had stepped out for air, and fainted in the pine walk.

The house was aroused, and Laura was conveyed to her aunt's still unconscious, where she wandered for weeks and weeks in the mazes of a brain fever.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN BELGIUM.

THE Representative Chamber at Brussels has been occupied with a scheme of University reform, and from the 'London Tablet' we learn that the violent unreason of the Radical party has had the remarkable effect of bringing *pro hac vice* to the Catholic side so pronounced a Liberal as the ex-Minister, M. Frère Orban, who in 1857 upset a Conservative Administration by means of a street *émeute* against convents, and who more recently attacked the clergy in a speech at Liège. M. Frère Orban has been threatened with the hostility of his liberal friends for the part he has taken on this question, and it is creditable to his patriotism and his moral courage that he has despised those threats and has adhered to the policy which he conscientiously deems most conducive to the best interests of his country. The state of things which it is now proposed to change was established by the law of 1849, under which degrees were conferred on University students by a mixed Board (*jury combiné*) of examiners appointed by the State, and selected partly from the professors of one of the "free universities," and partly from those of a State University. It is scarcely necessary to mention here that one of the universities called "free" is the Catholic University of Louvain, which is supported by the clergy and laity, and receives no direct pecuniary aid from the State. The working of the mixed Board system is admitted on all hands to be most unsatisfactory. It was denounced as a failure seven years after its establishment, by M. De Decker, then Minister of the interior; but it has nevertheless gone on until the present, when its evils can no longer be tolerated. They were forcibly stated by M. Frère Orban to the Chamber on the 29th ult. He said that by the present mode of conducting examinations and conferring degrees education and science were enslaved to the State. It is gratifying to observe that enlightened Liberals are beginning to discover that University education, to be worthy the name, must be free, and that there are things in which state interference is invariably mischievous and paralyzing. M. Frère Orban quoted a number of authorities to prove that the mixed Board was destroying all freedom of teaching. Their action resulted in "collusion or collusion." Their examinations were such as could be passed by the merest cram, and were therefore a sham and had lost all value in the eyes of independent men. Their examination papers were printed, and might be got by rote as a catechism; and he excited the laughter of the House by suggesting that the expense of a University course might as well be saved by allowing the candidates in law, medicine, and engineering, to obtain diplomas by reciting from memory before the board a cut and dried catechism of their respective professions. To remedy the evils of the present system, it is proposed that the Government should for the future abstain from all direct interference in the holding of examinations, or in the

conferring of degrees, both which duties are to be left to the University authorities. When the Bill becomes law—the liberal professions will be open to all holders of the appropriate academic diploma, the genuineness of which is to be attested by a Government Commission to be appointed for that purpose. The State, however, reserves to itself full liberty of requiring such attestations of competency as it may see fit from those who seek employment in the civil or military service of the country. The fraction of the Radical party in the Chamber, led by M. Tesch, who offer opposition to this measure, do so, not on its merits, but on the rather barefaced pretext that it will confer some advantages on the Catholics. It would be more correct to say that it removes a portion of the injustice under which Catholics have long suffered, in having their programme of studies and their method of tuition dictated by the professors of rival establishments, and their students examined by unfriendly examiners. Even these, however, are advantages not to be lightly relinquished by the men who clamor for the repeal of the Budget of Worship, and for the imposition on the national Clergy of compulsory service in the ranks of the army.

Since the above was written, the Bill has passed the Representative chamber by a majority of 78 against 26.

M. Frère Orban and two other Liberals voting against their party in favor of it. This measure is expected by the Belgian Conservatives and Catholics to have the effect of setting free to a great extent their higher education from State control, and of placing it under the effectual supervision of the Church. Its passage through the Legislature is therefore regarded by them as a most gratifying success, not only on account of the benefits expected to flow from the reform itself, but also on account of the indication it affords of political strength on their side. The lower grade of Radicals, who in Belgium are of a very low type indeed—have fought tooth and nail against the Bill, and have been beaten. Catholics in Belgium really possess so decisive a preponderance in the country as regards numbers, wealth, intelligence, and respectability, that the time must sooner or later arrive, though its advent has been from various causes unduly delayed, when they will assume their legitimate influence over the affairs of the nation. As regards University education, Catholic superiority is already unquestionable. The scientific reputation of the University of Louvain which now has 1,200 students, stands first in the country, and is neither unknown nor unrecognized in the rest of Europe. Independent of that State support without which the other University could not exist, and with which it does not *flaunt*, Louvain has progressed year by year in academical strength as well as in public esteem, until now it may be said with truth—as we are assured by those on whose testimony we can rely—that its graduates are to be met with in every profession, and in all the higher walks of life, doing honor to their *Alma Mater*. The animosity of the Radicals is therefore easily intelligible, and of itself forms an attestation of the success of the Catholic University.

SECRET EXPENSES.

CONSIDERABLE sensation has been created lately by the publication of a book in Italy by Luigi Zini, formerly a Prefect of this kingdom. It contains startling revelations on the administration in Italy. He has a chapter on secret expenses. A few of the items will amuse you. He writes, "Let no one sneer. I write with my eyes upon certain ancient autographs, in which I can read—'Employés'—under this—'Writers of correspondence, and their monthly remunerations'—here follows a line of eight or ten names; one has opposite it 100 francs, another 80, and then a humble scribbler 60. Farther on—'Non-employed'—and they are eleven, who receive varied stipends, averaging from 100 to 500 francs monthly, excepting a poor ex-cleric, who received the charity of 50 francs; and a foreign party received the figure of 2000 francs. Another chapter begins 'Journals at the disposal of the Ministry, with monthly retributions,' and here the eye wanders over a lot of native and foreign names, which are credited with 250, 500, 1000, and as high as 2000 francs monthly. Then follow 'Journals with correspondents paid by the Government.' Other journals are credited with 'extraordinary remunerations.' Signor Zini, ex-Prefect, has a chapter on "Secret Agents," and he writes: "Not a few elegant and educated young men lived among you (Italians), knew you, professed themselves your friends, and made a show of endorsing your sentiments and your aspirations, just to get possession of your secrets and divulge them. Many serious and sober persons appeared suddenly, presented by some one, insinuating themselves everywhere, trying to enlist sympathy and win confidence. They came suddenly, suddenly they disappeared. They often spoke of their own affairs, but no one knew them intimately. Sometimes they surprised you, because words sometimes escaped incautiously, in an unguarded moment. You were deftly surrounded by the evils of the secret police! Secret agents, paid by the Ministry of the Interior, covered—and still cover—Italy like a leprosy. No province was free from it. I have the list of them all, their names and qualifications." We always suspected as much. It was in this manner then that the Government of Italy moved that powerful agent in modern politics, public opinion. Correspondents, foreign and native, leaders, writers, secret police! These are the exponents of public opinion in Italy. I leave comments to the reader.

On the 19th inst., the Roman patricians were received at the Vatican. They congratulated his Holiness on the anniversary (April 12th) of his return from Gaeta and his wonderful escape at the Church of St. Agnes *extra muros*, where the floor gave way, and himself and suite were precipitated down into the basement without the slightest injury to any one.—C. Standard.

The total number of emigrants who left Ireland during the three months ending 31st March, 1876, was 6,762. This shows a decrease of 1,778 as compared with the corresponding period of last year.