

## THINGS STRANGE AND WONDERFUL.

**SURELY** this world would be soon reduced to a dreadful state, were the Protestant idea of private interpretation, with all its legitimate deductions, to receive the actual approbation of the world. Private interpretation, as applied to moral conduct, means that there can be no fixed and positive standard of right, other than the individual conscience; no voice of general authority, which is with certainty, to draw the lines between what is good and what is evil, permitting the one, and prohibiting the other. Provided that only a person brings himself to the belief that particular acts are justifiable, or that particular opinions are sound, he may practice the one and advocate the other, whatever be their characters; and no other man or woman has the right or power to authoritatively condemn what the first has chosen thus to do, or to proclaim.

The Mormon may take down his Bible and read how the early Hebrews were permitted to take to themselves a plurality of wives, and he may argue himself into the conviction that what was lawful for others, thousands of years ago, is equally lawful for him, in present days, and, having thus satisfied his judgment, he has the intrinsic right both to practice and to preach polygamy.

Some time since, a Protestant parson contended that it was lawful under certain circumstances, to commit suicide, and of course the "individual conscience" it is which is to determine when the "proper circumstances" have arrived; therefore man may take his own life, practically, at his own will.

Certain individuals are even now preaching that the idiotic and deformed should be slain, in order to improve the condition of the human race; and men of such views, do no wrong in advocating their abominable theories, if they have only convinced themselves that they are right. And to go a step further, still upon the line of private interpretation, any one of these "advanced thinkers" may put his theories into practice, and innocently kill an idiotic or deformed brother; provided only, the slayer begins by satisfying his own conscience that this is the proper thing to do.

And Martin Luther, with other of the early reformers, so-called, approved of adultery; and might not others follow in these opinions, theoretically and practically, and come to banish entirely the marriage relation? But, we might follow in this train, *ad infinitum*. Suffice it, therefore, to remark, that Protestant doctrines are assuredly among the number of the things that are strange and wonderful.—Exchange.

## QUEER CHARACTERS.

**THE** baptized Catholic who persistently fails to observe the regulations of the Church, is generally indifferent because of ignorance, or one who by a life of sin really abandons his religion; but there is another class, intelligent, honest and respected; versed in the doctrine and history of the Church, which they profess to believe and revere, will defend and support, and yet live without its pale. They will never deny their Catholicity, nor allow the slightest reproach to be cast upon it; they may even insist upon their children attending punctually to every observance, and urge others to do so; they may go to Mass regularly, participate actively and generously in church work; they believe, proclaim and are able to prove the truth and divinity of the Church, and that only by faithfully complying with her tenets can man be saved; that only by her sacraments can man obtain the grace of salvation—but they never receive the sacraments. They freely acknowledge the necessity of their duty to do so; the evil of their example in scandalizing their children and others; that their failure to do so places them without the pale of the Church, and death without repentance would condemn them to hell. They know, appreciate, and when urged or remonstrated with, frankly acknowledge it—yet, year after year they continue their queer course of life. Professionally and apparently to the outside observer they are Catholics, but willfully and deliberately they disobey the Church law. They believe and will defend precepts they will not practice; they uphold an authority they will not obey; they will fight for a Church they scandalize; they advise and perhaps enforce religious practices they persistently neglect; they answer that outside the Church there is no salvation, and deliberately place themselves out of it, and keep out; they contend that there is but one road to heaven, and stubbornly refuse to follow it. And they have been pursuing this life for years, despite pleadings of their pastors, urging of friends, and the promptings of their own senses and conscience, and seem disposed to continue it.

They are a sort of unsolvable problem. It is useless to explain to them the law of the Church and their duty; they know it. To remind them of their neglect, they admit it. To upbraid them, they submit humbly. To warn them of the dangers of eternal damnation should they die in their state, they fully realize it! To persuade them, they promise—that is all. And so they go on year after year without repentance, without grace, with the sins of years upon their souls, trifling with God's mercy, tempting His justice, inviting His wrath, and courting eternal damnation.

But they do not intend to be lost. They hope to repent and be saved. How? When? Oh, some time. Will they live to see another lent, another month, another day? Of course they are not certain about that. They may die before the next sun, without an opportunity to repent and make amends for the sins of years and years—but though they see hell open before them they will risk it anyhow. They are queer characters, and may God be merciful to them.—*Central Catholic*.

The *Liberta Cattolica* of Naples learns on undoubted authority that in naming Cardinal Oreglia as Camerlengo of the Catholic Church, the Holy Father gave him instructions and special power to authorise him—if, at the moment of a future Conclave the conditions of the Holy See should continue in their present abnormal and intolerable state—to convoke the Sacred College outside Rome to enable the members to proceed tranquilly to the election of a new Pope.

## THE DYNAMITE EXPLOSIONS.

(Dublin Freeman, May 23.)

**THE** trial of Cunningham and Burton on a charge of treason-felony, arising out of the dynamite explosions in London, terminated on Monday. The prisoners were convicted and sentenced to the extreme penalty of the '48 statute—penal servitude for life. Although the trial extended over a full week, the evidence being minute and voluminous, the jury appear to have had very little difficulty in making up their minds, being absent only fifteen minutes from the time they left the box until they handed down their verdict. With the justice of the verdict Judge Hawkins expressed his entire concurrence, but those who have carefully followed the evidence, no matter how much and naturally incensed against dynamites, must have been struck with the absence of anything in the shape of direct testimony of the complicity of the two men in the cowardly outrages with which they were charged. The evidence was altogether circumstantial, and Burton, who seems to be a man of more than ordinary intelligence, cleverly enough observed before sentence, that although from the moment the explosions occurred the whole weight of the Government and that of the United States was brought to bear, yet there was nothing but circumstantial evidence adduced at the trial. The Attorney-General in opening the case set out with the allegation that the prisoners belonged to a vast conspiracy formed to levy war against the Queen, but as Mr. Little, the counsel for Burton, remarked in his speech for the defence, no proofs were forthcoming of the allegation; there was no evidence of a vast conspiracy, and no corroboration of the statement that Cunningham and Burton belonged to any such body. Strong suspicion unquestionably attached to the conduct of the two prisoners. Burton's passages to and from America, the coat he wore on board the ship, and which subsequently turned up in one of the infernal machines, his possession of the boxes with detonators—these were incidents which created a *prima facie* case against him. But his explanation, made with the permission of the court, before his counsel spoke to the evidence, was at least plausible, and in one or two points suggested the extreme danger of quickly accepting the evidence against him. So, too, in Cunningham's case. An *alias* is always an element to be reckoned dead against the prisoner, and rightly too. When a man conceals his name, it is something more than a *presumptio juris* that he is concealing something else. But he also, to a certain extent, disentangled the net which the Crown wove about him, and there was something in the point that if he contemplated the blowing up of the Tower he would be unlikely to remain there while the experiment was in operation. Cunningham, it will be remembered, was found with the other visitors on the occasion in the Tower, and was detained by the police. Speculation upon the evidence is now, however, fruitless, and, whatever doubts we entertain, we sincerely trust the Crown has convicted the right men. The authors of the nearly simultaneous explosions at the Tower and at Westminster were foul and miserable dastards, whose presence among men was a pest to society. If their insane object was merely to blow up public buildings, the effect of their plans was to place in imminent jeopardy the lives of women and children and of perfectly harmless tourists. Indeed, the whole terrible series of dynamite outrages in England call, by their utter brutality and savagery, for the vigilant co-operation with the authorities of every respectable member of the community in ridding society of its most ferocious enemy. It will have been observed that throughout the trial of Cunningham and Burton not even an attempt was made to identify them with this country and with its people.

## A BOY HERO.

**A** DESPATCH from Litzitz, Pennsylvania, of the 13th of May, says—The full details of the suicide of Mrs. Hiram Pfautz, and her determination to drown her five children, show one of the most heroic efforts to save life on the part of her ten-year-old son, Harry, on record in this section of the State. The mother, who was the wife of a rich farmer, and an educated woman, had become demented through religious madness. She wanted her seven children to go with her to a mill-dam, a mile and a half away, to gather flowers. The eldest did not go, their father being away from home. Mrs. Pfautz and her two sons, two daughters, and a babe went to the dam. The boy Harry led the way. They sat a while near deep water, when Mrs. Pfautz asked Harry to pick up a stick near the dam. He stooped to do so, when the mother swiftly and noiselessly rushed up behind him and pushed him in. She then rapidly seized the other three children and tossed them in one by one, and then jumped in herself, babe in arms. Harry, an expert swimmer, quickly got out, and hauled his brother, aged 7, who had clung to a board, ashore. Harry then jumped in, and safely brought his sister, aged 9 ashore. Nothing daunted, he once more plunged in, and grasped his mother, who still held the babe. The mother exclaimed she wanted to die, but the boy bravely held on, and begged her not to resist. By almost superhuman effort he succeeded in getting the mother and babe safely out of the eight feet of water to the shore. Meanwhile the other children stood speechless on the bank. The next moment Harry dived in for his three-year-old sister, who had sunk the third time. Harry found the body at the first dive and brought it up and on to the bank, closely pressing the little one to his breast. He at once commenced rolling the body of the girl, but finally burst into tears when he realised that his little sister was dead. His mother, who stood shivering on the bank with the wet children, implored Harry to run back to the farm to get a waggon to bring them home. Suspecting his mother, he implored her not to do anything rash. She promised not to, but the boy concluded to take the two children back with him, leaving the mother and babe alive with the dead child. The three children went home in their wet clothes and there told the horrified father what occurred. He quickly drove to the scene, but found no one. The moment that Harry and the children had gone the mother seized the dead child and her babe and again leaped into the water, and sank to rise no more.