

How "disposed of?" Does the editor mean to insinuate that the Brooklyn Presbytery, adopting the fashion of a certain Court we have all heard of, hangs a man and tries him afterwards? Mr. Beecher is either guilty or not guilty, and the case can never be disposed of "to the satisfaction of all parties" until he is either acquitted or condemned. Is the aforesaid Presbytery, then, in possession of the proof of his guilt which his enemies are so anxious to get hold of? Or are they, on the other hand, such partisans of Mr. Beecher that they are fully prepared to "whitewash" him, and let him go? The newspapers are not trammelled by "the Congregational system;" why, then, don't they "dispose of the case to the satisfaction of all parties?" Why don't the jury that tried Mr. Beecher do it?

We are not very familiar with the procedure of Presbyterian Church Courts, but we suppose that before a man can be tried, somebody must prefer a charge against him, and some one, too, who can present *prima facie* evidence of the guilt of the person accused. Such, at least, is the practice of our law courts. The magistrate cannot "commit" a man, nor even if committed could the Grand Jury return a "true bill" against him, on mere street rumour. Who, then, has charged Mr. Beecher before the Church, or before the Council, with the crime laid against him? Nobody. He has been indicted in a law court, and acquitted. Is that sufficient ground for the Brooklyn Presbytery to convict him? Mr. Bowen has recently asserted it as his "unwavering opinion" that Mr.

Beecher is guilty, but positively refuses to bring proof, if he has any. Mr. Beecher himself has again and again, under oath and otherwise, solemnly denied the charges laid against him. How then, in these circumstances, could Presbytery do more than Congregationalism has done to dispose of the case?

Furthermore, has the *Presbyterian* never heard of cases where a minister has been similarly charged, and perhaps has been believed, for a time, to be guilty, who has afterwards been proven to be innocent? If not, we could tell him of at least one case, in which an eminent minister in England was accused, as Mr. Beecher has been, by the woman who declared herself to have been *particeps criminis* with him, and died under the imputation, who nevertheless was afterwards proven to have been innocent by her own remorseful dying testimony. With such instances before us, it becomes us to be very careful how we "dispose of" such charges. We are inclined to think that any body of men, to whatever Church belonging, that should have done so "long ago," would have either been guilty of gross injustice, or would have rendered a verdict without any practical value in the eyes of the community.

Further on, the *Presbyterian* says:—

"The fatal error of Mr. Beecher and his friends was adopting the policy of silence. Had they courted inquiry and called a council at the very outset, the case would not have been involved in the suspicions with which it is now surrounded. Such a thing as delay in the case being possible, points to a fatal defect in the theory that a congregation should govern its own affairs."

But, innocent or guilty, who is there,