

to one) yet out of one-fourth of the votes the arrangement was such that the Liberals got at least one-third of the members! And of the whole number represented, the two-thirds anti-Liberal majority stood for four-fifths of the entire population! This is "fair"—immensely, unimpeachably, unqualifiedly fair—from a strictly Liberal standpoint.

As to the assertion that Dr. Groves is a believer in polygamy, we know not nor does it matter whether he is or not. It seems a little singular, however, that a man so thoroughly conjugal in his temperament should be a confirmed bachelor!

### THE BRIGGS CASE.

The Presbyterian general assembly, now in session in Washington, yesterday resolved itself into a Judicial Court of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the purpose of hearing the case against Dr. Briggs, accused of heresy. A brief review of this now celebrated trial is as follows:

When Dr. Briggs in 1891 was transferred to the chair of biblical history in Union Theological Seminary, New York, he delivered an address on the authority of the Scriptures. In this he maintained that the Bible had not been handed down to us without error, and that, consequently, the reader had to exercise a certain amount of critical judgment, a theory not in harmony with the Presbyterian creed. The matter was brought to the attention of the general assembly at Detroit, and that body disapproved the action whereby the professorship had been given to Briggs. Charges were also preferred in the New York presbytery in the spring of 1891, but that body dropped the case, stating that it did so "without approving of the positions stated in his inaugural address; at the same time desiring earnestly the peace and quiet of the church, and in view of the declarations made by Dr. Briggs touching his loyalty to the holy Scriptures and the Westminster standards, and of his disclaimers of interpretations put on some of his words, deems it best to dismiss the case and hereby does so dismiss it."

The seemingly wise decision did not satisfy the prosecuting committee, but they appealed to the general assembly at Portland last year, who remanded the case for a new trial back to the New York presbytery, by whom the accused was acquitted. The prosecutors again appealed to the general assembly now in session.

At the Portland meeting last year Dr. Patterson, editor of the *Philadelphia Presbyterian Journal*, introduced a resolution, which was laid over till this year. It was evidently penned against Dr. Briggs and reads as follows:

The general assembly would remind all under its care that it is a fundamental doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are the inspired and infallible word of God. Our church holds that the inspired word as it came from God is without error. The assertion of the contrary cannot but shake the confidence of the people in the sacred books. All who enter office in our church solemnly profess to receive them as the only infallible rule of faith and prac-

tice. If they change their belief on this point, Christian honor demands that they should withdraw from our ministry. They have no right to use the pulpit or the chair of the professor for the dissemination of their errors until they are dealt with by the slow process of discipline. But if they do so act, their presbyteries should speedily interpose, and deal with them for violation of ordination vows. The vow taken at the beginning is obligatory until the party taking it is honorably and properly released. The general assembly enjoins upon all ministers, elders and presbyteries to be faithful to the duty here imposed.

Here is evidently a hand-to-hand contest between Dr. Briggs and Dr. Patterson. For if the former is acquitted the latter's dogma must be rejected and vice versa. The Presbyterian church is by this case in a dilemma. If Dr. Briggs is pronounced guilty of heresy, the probability is that not a few liberal clergymen will secede and perhaps found a new church. Should the accused be acquitted the ultra conservatives would probably secede. This status of affairs accounts for the evident desire manifested so far to delay the final decision as much as possible.

### A WEEDY, STUBBORN FIELD.

The *Kansas City Times* is responsible for the statement that Taney county, Missouri, is absolutely churchless. The section is said to be the home of family feuds which would do credit to Sicily. Immigrants passing between the two states, Missouri and Arkansas, are careful to go round it. There is not a mile of real highway in the county, which has a population of 2973 and 1300 voters; though rich in natural resources, it is stagnant and poverty stricken, and while having a large area of government land, is shunned by immigrants. In view of this condition there is force and timeliness in the query: Instead of needlessly duplicating mission churches in other parts of the new West as is so commonly done by eastern societies, instead of spending thousands on missions to redeem the heathen even, why not redeem Taney county from the stigma resting upon it?

### THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.

The thoroughbred Briton whether at home or abroad respects the good Queen Victoria and recognizes her birthday in one way or another as a matter of loyalty if his allegiance to the land of his nativity has not been thrown off; but if it has, he does much the same thing as a matter of respect which no degree of alienation can ever eradicate. There is nothing wrong in this, but on the contrary a good deal that is right. The queen's subjects have every reason to be respectful if not thankful, for of all modern rulers she has ruled the least, and hence the best, while her personal virtues and her domestic simplicity have placed her in the foremost station among the good women of the earth.

This is the eve of Queen Victoria's birthday. Tomorrow she will have lived three-quarters of a century and it is proposed abroad to celebrate the

event with more than customary honors. Her recent appearance in London in a grand public function was the first for some time and it was intimated would be the last. That fact has brought more sharply to mind the age and length of reign of the queen and stirred the loyalty of her people.

With one exception Victoria is the oldest of the reigning monarchs of the world and no one of them has had equal length of reign. Her only senior in point of age is Christian IX of Denmark, who was seventy-five years old on the 8th of April, but he has reigned less than thirty years, while Victoria will on June 20 have completed fifty-six years. The only other European reigning monarch who comes near her in age and length of reign is Francis Joseph of Austria, who is about eleven years her junior both in age and rule. The shah of Persia is ten years younger than the queen of England and came to the throne a little more than eleven years after her accession.

It is also a matter of history that in the long line of English rulers the age of the present queen has been exceeded but twice, her grandfather, George III, dying at the age of eighty-two and her great-grandfather, George II, at the age of seventy-seven. Her uncle and immediate predecessor, William IV, died at seventy-two. Elizabeth, the most famous of her female predecessors, reached the age of seventy and Henry III, in the thirteenth century, sixty-five years. This last sovereign equaled her length of reign, fifty-six years, and it was exceeded by only one English monarch, George III, whose total nominal reign was fifty-nine years, but about eleven years of that time there was a regency, the king being insane.

It is a matter of pleasure to all well-meaning, right-minded people—and this may even include the Prince of Wales, the one most interested personally—that Victoria is in very good health and gives fair promise of seeing many more birthdays. Those who shout "Long live the queen!" do so with excellent reason; England as a monarchy is not likely to do as well again, while the chance of doing worse is always imminent.

### THE FASTEST YET.

With ocean steamers reeling off miles at the rate of a hundred in four hours we thought a point somewhere near the limit had been reached, but it begins to look as if we might be mistaken; not mistaken a little, but greatly and bewilderingly so. It now seems that an inventive genius named Sheffield, who operates in New York, has incubated and applied an idea for a motor which is to drive those marine monsters through the foaming main at the rate of eighty miles an hour! This would send a ship from Fastnet to Sandy Hook in a day, and it sounds a little too Utopian to be received and entertained all at once.

The *New York Press* says that fast ocean travel is Sheffield's hobby. It is more; it is his life. He proposes to replace steam as a motive power; to propel a vessel across the Atlantic with a few gallons of sulphuric acid and a