The judgment which the Lord Chief Justice delivered yesterday in the Bradlaugh – Besant case will, at the first glance, surprise most people; but when the reasons which led to so severe a sentence being passed are fully known, surprise will give way to a feeling of a very different kind. It has been apparent from the beginning of the trial that the Court was disposed to deal as leniently with the defendants as the limits of justice would allow, and had everything remained as it was at the time when the actual hearing of the case was concluded, the defendants would, as the Lord Chief Justice, stated, have been released on their own recognisances. Unfortunately, the defendants have not been content to accept the finding of the jury even temporarily, but, in defiance of the verdict, have willfully sold the pamphlet objected to, not even waiting until the Court had delivered judgment. Now, it is all very well for a defendant to object to the finding of a jury, or to the ruling of a judge, as long as he does not carry such objection to the extent of disobeying what is really the law. He can apply for new trails make motions, and get his views argued in any way that may be possible, if in the meantime be accepts the law as it stands and abides by it. Let him get it altered if he can, but until that can be accomplished he is bound to adhere to the law as it happens to be laid down, rightly or wrongly. Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant had up to yesterday a good deal of sympathy on their side, but now, when the defendants admit that they have been selling “The Fruits of Philosophy” since the jury by their verdict rendered it positively unlawful for them to do so, they have done an act which alienates such sympathy from them entirely. Of course, it is possible that the defendants may have courted this kind of martyrdom rather than otherwise, but they are very much mistaken, we think, if they have been counting upon getting the approval of any large section of the community for what they have done. As the matter stands, however, Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant are released until the Court of Error shall decide whether or not the indictment is to be quashed but if the ruling of the Court of Queen’s Bench is affirmed, the sentence passed by the Lord Chief Justice will at once come into operation. The agitation has been an unwise one from the first, but the turn which the case has now taken decides very distinctly on which side the chief blame at present lies.