THE BRADLAUGH BESANT TRAIL

The trail was resumed on Thursday. The Lord Chief Justice, in summing up, agreed with the Solicitor-General as to the mischievous character and effect of the prosecution. The book had been published now for 40 years, but it appeared never to have got into general circulation. It was effete; but by this injudicious prosecution it had been resuscitated and sent into general circulation to the extent of thousands of copies. Was the thing proposed in the book calculated to deprave and debase the morals, and were the details calculated to inflame the passions and corrupt the morals of those who read them? These points the jury must decide. As to population, its evil was real and not imaginary, and no one would deny that the remedy was difficult to find.

The jury retired at a quarter to one, and at 20 minutes past two o’clock returned into court, when the foreman, in answer to the usual question, said, “We are of opinion that the book is calculated to deprave public morals; but we entirely exonerate the defendants from any corrupt motive in publishing it.”

A verdict of “Guilty” was then entered.

The Lord Chief Justice said that under the circumstances he would not pass the sentence at present, but he would do so that week day, sitting in banco, when the exoneration would be considered, and the points reserved would be discussed.