**THE CHARGE AGAINST. MR. BRADLAUGH AND MRS. BESANT.**

The trial of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant for publishing an obscene book entitled “Fruits of Philosophy” commenced at the Guildhall on Tuesday. Several women were present in Court, amongst them being Mr. Bradlaugh’s daughter; and as the counsel proceeded to read extracts from the book the magistrate suggested that it would be becoming if they withdrew. Mr. Bradlaugh stated that the ladies were his witnesses, and as they would not leave the objectionable passages were pointed out and handed to the magistrate to read. After the counsel’s address and witnesses for the prosecution had been heard, Mr. Bradlaugh addressed the Court in defence, arguing the pamphlet did not come under the Acts dealing with obscene literature. He understood the learned counsel to say that the book was indecent and unbecoming, but he must make out much more-although he would show that that could not be made out against it – before the Court could decide against him (the defendant) in this matter. Now the only statute bearing upon the subject was the 20th and 21st Vic. cap. 83, section 1, and there were no words in that statute that really defined the meaning of the word obscene. He understood from the learned counsel that the work might get into improper hands, but he submitted that if it was not unfit *ab initio* nothing that became of the book after it left his possession could in any way affect the present charge. Nor was the question of price one which could be entertained. He would put into the box a representative of Messrs. Reeves and Turner, who would prove the publication of an essay by Malthus on population.

Mr. Straight objected, on the ground that such evidence was not revalent to the inquiry.

Mr. Bradlaugh said he was not only entitled but compelled to call the witness, and cited authorities in support of his contention. He would now put before the court a summary of his own of the works of Malthus, and upon that, amongst other things, he relied. He would also put in evidence John Stuart Mill’s “Political Economy,” People’s Edition. Mr. Bradlaugh, after reading an extract from this work, submitted, with the definition of Lord Campbell and with the declaration of a man occupying so high a position as John Stuart Mill, that the pamphlet was utterly beyond the scope of such a prosecution as the present. He then put in evidence Professor Fawcett’s “Political Economy,” and Mrs. Garrett-Anderson’s “Political Economy,” and read an extract from an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, written by Mr. Montagu Cookson, Q.C., “On the Morality of Married Life.” Mr. Bradlaugh continued at great length to refer to various books bearing on the Malthusian theory, contending that such literature could not, under either common or statute law, be held to be obscene. At this stage the case was adjourned until Thursday, Mr. Bradlaugh, in the meantime, to go out on his recognisances.