**THE BRADLAUGH PROSECUTION**

**A TRUE BILL FOUND**

At the Old Bailey, London, on Monday, the grand jury found a true bill against Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant for publishing an obscene book. In charging the jury the Recorder said: There is a charge against Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and another person for publishing an indecent work, and I am bound to state to you the circumstances of the law bearing upon the case. You will have the publication before you, and I will only state generally that the first part of the work seems to be physiological, and it is the latter part to which your attention will be particularly directed. It will be necessary for you, however unpleasant the duty may be, to look through it so as to see what the nature of the work is. The publication is admitted by both the defendants, as I understand. The first question you will have to consider is whether the book is in its nature indecent and obscene, and calculated to excite lust and corrupt the minds and morals of those into whose hands it may fall. Unless you are of this opinion it will, of course, be your duty to throw out the bill; but if you are of that opinion there are other questions which will arise, and you will have to consider the circumstances under which the publication has taken place, and whether they are such as to afford a justification of the publication. There are undoubtedly circumstances which will justify the publication of what you would not hesitate to call highly indecent works. Take, for instance, that which may be lawfully published in a medical lecture-room as being necessary to give the required instruction to students. Yet it this, with the illustrations which may be necessary to give them the requisite knowledge of their profession, were to be scattered broadcast through the land, the justification would not exist, and the publisher would be liable to an indictment. It is not what is necessary in the pursuit of science, and for the public good; it is not enough to justify a publication of this nature that the object of the publisher is innocent or even praise worthy. That has been distinctly decided in cases which have been brought before the superior courts. The question arose in the case of the publication of a pamphlet called the “Confessional Unmasked.” You will, therefore, have to consider the general nature of the work, and whether, whatever may have been the object of the publisher, it is calculated to excite to filthy acts, and to deprave and debauch the minds of its readers.