**THE CHARGE AGAINST MR. BRADLAUGH**

At the Guildhall, London, yesterday, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, better known as “Iconoclast,” and Mrs. Annie Besant appeared on remand before Alderman Figgins, charged with publishing an obscene book, on the 24th March. Long before the commencement of the case the court was crowded, amongst those present bring a large number of well-dressed girls and woman. Mr. Straight and Mr. Mead prosecuted; and Mr. Bradlaugh, who had a small library of books beform him, conducted his own fence and that of Mrs. Besant. The work which the defendants were charged with publishing was entitled “Fruits of Philosophy, an essay on the population question. By Charles Knowlton, M.D.”

Mr. Straight, 4n opening the proceedings, alluded to the importance of the case, and called attention to the obscurity of the book in question.

Mr. Bradlaugh said he at once admitted that if the work was obscene three would be no justification for the publication, but what he contended was that the work in question was not obscene, and that it was published for the public benefit.

Mr. Straight then proceeded in allude to the contents of the book, when Alderman Figgins expressed a doubt whether females should be allowed in court.

Mr. Bradlaugh said that many of the ladies present were witnesses in the case, and had come there to give their opinion on the subject at issue. Two of those ladies were his own daughters, and demanded, by their right as citizens, to be present and listen to the proceedings.

Mr. Straight, in continuation, said it was impossible to say into whom hands a work published at expense might come, and it might get into the hands of girls and youths at school, and be used for the worst of purposes. The learned counsel then marked certain portions of the work on which the prosecution relied for a committed, and handed it to the alderman.

Officers were called to prove the purchase of several works at the defendants’ shop in S…………………..street, and that Mrs. Besant was present, and that Mr. Watts pleaded guilty, at the Central Criminal Court, to the offence of having published an edition of the same work. This was the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Bradlaugh said that he should endeavor not to occupy the time of the bench very long, and he was indebted to the City for the manner in which the learned counsel had opened the case. In the first place he submitted, while he denied that the book was obscene, that the learned counsel must prove much more than that it was ………………………and unbecoming before they could put him in peril of a ……………….He submitted, in reference to the observation of Mr. Straight that it might got into the hands of children, that if the work was ……………………….., they could not ground a verdict upon something that resulted from it afterwards. A …………………… for instance, might get into the hands of a person who cut his throat with it, but who would think of indicting the …………..? (A laugh.) He then proceeded to refer to the many works which had been published by scientific men on the subject of checking population. For instances, there was one by one of the most eminent welters of the day, Dr. Aston, who referred to the social and moral relations of the ……………………………….and that in words much stronger than say that could be found in his work, and he should show that 1bs publication of that book had the highest sanction of it. Dr. Acton’s work was addressed to fathers, mothers, and young people, and he should put several persons into the witness box to show that there were numerous works containing similar doctrines to that contained in his work, the publishers of which had not been prosecuted. He then proceeded to observe that the law of population was written on in the first place by Malthus, then by Mr. Fawcett, and Mrs. Millicent Fawcett, in their works on political economy, while the subject of checking the population had been dealt with by the late John Stuart Mill. Mr. Straight had referred to the price of the work, but what would be the use of a publication of the kind that would cost half a guinea and have to be on Mr. Churchill’s shelves? The object of his work was to reach the squalid and the poverty ………., so as to enable them to have no greater burden in the way of ………………………..than they could maintain. Mr. Bradlaugh then referred, as a proof that he was not doing all this out of ………………….the fact that in 1868, he delivered a lecture on the subject before Lord Amberley and other eminent men, and he had for the last 18 years advocated those principles in the paper he had published. He mentioned this as a proof of the ………………..of his position.

Mr. Straight, in reference to Mr. Bradlaugh’s observation that similar works had been published, and the publishers not been prosecuted, said there was an old saying that two blacks did not make a white, it was no excuse for the present publication.

Mr. Bradlaugh repeated that the publication was not obscene, but scientific.

The chief clerk (Mr. Martin) cited a case in which the Lord Chief Justice defined an obscene libel as bring that which suggested to the minds of the young anything of an improper character.

Alderman Figgins said he could not attempt to decide that, but must submit it to another tribunal.

Mr. Straight said that Walker defined the word obscene to be “immodest, offensive, disgusting.” He (the learned counsel) to say the least of it, considered some portions of the publication of Mr. Bradlaugh deserved that name.

The court having adjourned for ten minutes Mr. Bradlaugh put in a large number of books on similar subjects, observing that he had spent upwards of £100 on books since the previous hearing. The lengthy remarks of the defendant on the characteristics of each book occupied some hours.