MISCHIEVOUS BOOKS.

Everybody knows the old problem presented by the position of the man who had got a tiger by the tail, and whose difficulty was to know whether it was better to hold on or let go. The case of Mr. Bradlaugh and his "Fruits of Philosophy" is another dilemma of much the same sort. The question in this case is, whether it is better to allow such a book to be circulated, or by attempting to stop its sale run the risk of causing it to be circulated more widely than ever. For such a risk is undoubtedly run by the prosecution now in progress against the author of this pamphlet—of which, without prejudging the issue, I think it may fairly be said that such a book is not a fit subject for indiscriminate sale to the public at large. If the trial of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant should result in their conviction, of course there is an end to the matter; but supposing the verdict should be in their favour—which is quite possible—what then? Where the pamphlet sold by tens it would then sell by thousands, and, indeed, I have heard it said, I know not with what truth, that Mr. Bradlaugh has been offered between £2000 and £3000 for the copyright of his work. As it is, the effect of this prosecution has so far been most unfortunate. The police reports will have shown your readers that a number of imitations of Bradlaugh's brochure have been hawked about the streets, and, in fact, this trade is still going on openly to a considerable extent, and secretly in a still larger degree. At the same time, certain sharp booksellers and hawkers have been doing a very nice little business by selling pamphlets bearing the title " Fruits of Philosophy," the contents of which the purchaser finds to his great disgust as harmless as anything issued by the Religious Tract Society, but winding up with the crafty announcement that another pamphlet will hereafter be issued giving "practical details" on the subject. Of course, the real book is a very different sort of thing, and the result of the trial which is to decide whether it is a proper and lawful publication or not, is naturally looked forward to with great anxiety.