**FORBIDDEN FRUITS.**

There can be no doubt that it was due to the singularly able way in which Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant conducted their defence that the verdict against them was given in the very qualified form in which it was returned yesterday. Mrs. Besant, who is a lady of decidedly agreeable appearance, aged about 32, spoke with an amount of skill and eloquence which fairly surprised the oldest members of the bar who heard her, and the earnestness with which she pleaded her cause evidently told on the jury. It is generally expected that the sentence passed on the defendants will be merely formal, if, in deed, any is passed at all, for it is thought not improbable that they will only be ordered to appear for judgment when called upon, though such a course would place them at a decided disadvantage if they desire to proceed further in the matter, and seek another trial of their right to publish their “Fruits of Philosophy." As regards that work, I find opinion very greatly divided; and I have heard several barristers question the soundness of the Lord Chief Justice's direction to the jury that they must convict if they found the book of a nature to corrupt public morals. The question involved in this matter is an exceedingly delicate and difficult one—not to be settled off-hand by strong language. But if it be wrong for such a work as "The Fruits of Philosophy" to be published at all, a huge blunder has certainly been committed by this prosecution. It has increased the circulation of the work tenfold, and the book has done far more mischief—if mischief it be—than it would have caused by being left alone. As it is, I don't suppose the result of the trial will entirely stop its sale, but believe it will be secretly sold in large numbers, though, probably, at enhanced prices. Suppressing a book is a dangerous game to play at, for it makes the object of suppression far more notorious than it was before.