**TRIAL OF MR. C. BRADLAUGH AND MRS. BESANT.**

Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant were indicted at Westminster on Monday for publishing an indecent book. Before the jury were sworn, Mr. Bradlaugh said he had a motion to quash the indictment. The Lord Chief Justice said he could not hear motions then. Mr. Bradlaugh contended that a motion might be made before the jury were sworn, and he moved to quash the indictment for defect on the face of it. The Lord Chief Justice reserved the point. The Solicitor General opened the prosecution by describing the book, and evidence was then given of its sale by the prisoners. Mrs. Besant then addressed the jury, contending that the book was not an obscene work. If it was it had been published in the interests of suffering humanity.

The trial of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant was resumed on Tuesday morning, when the latter, in continuing her address, called attention to the increased illegitimacy and general depravity which resulted from overcrowding, and to the high death rate among children, and to baby-farming. At the conclusion of Mrs. Besant’s address Mr. Bradlaugh rose to address the jury. He stated that the book could not be considered obscene according to Lord Campbell’s definition of his own Act. The noble lord had said it was intended to apply exclusively to words written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth, and calculated to shock the notions of common decency. He (Mr. Bradlaugh) had taken up the pamphlet because, as a journalist, he had adopted the Malthusian theory as part of his programme. Mr. Bradlaugh had not concluded when the Court rose.

The further hearing of this indictment was resumed on Wednesday morning by Mr. Bradlaugh continuing his address to the jury. He submitted that the essay indicted was an essay on the population question; secondly, that the subject was one lawful to be discussed; thirdly, that it could be proved over and over again that over-population was the fruitful source of poverty, ignorance, crime, vice, and misery; and that therefore the advocacy of prudential checks to population was not merely lawful, but was highly moral. there was not one sentence in the essay directed against marriage. It was amongst the poor that over population was most felt, and that was moral which produced the greatest happiness to the greatest number without injury to anyone. It was no ground against him to say that some time or other some people might do something he had not recommended under circumstances that were never intended, and make that the basis for indicting him. The pamphlet did not go beyond anything that was necessary or legitimate for the poor of England. Over-population was also the cause of immorality.

The case was resumed on Thursday morning in the Queen’s Bench Division of the High Court of Justice – before the Lord Chief Justice and a special jury. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Bradlaugh having addressed the jury for the defence, and the Solicitor-General having closed the prosecution, the Lord Chief Justice summed up. The jury retired to consider their verdict at a quarter to one o’clock, and on the return of the jury, after an absence of an hour and thirty-five minutes, the Foreman said : “The jury are of opinion that the book is calculated to deprave public morals, but we entirely exonerate the defendants from any corrupt motive in publishing it.” The Lord Chief Justice: I am afraid, gentlemen, I must direct you upon that to find against them. Your exoneration of any corrupt intention will be taken fully into consideration, but I must direct you on the special verdict to find against the defendants. The jury then returned a verdict of guilty. The Lord Chief Justice : Under these circumstances I will not pass sentence at present. Come up on this day week, when the Court will be sitting in banco, and then, Mr. Bradlaugh, you can move on any legal exception to the indictment you may take. If that should be overruled, any circumstance you desire to call attention to an affidavit will be considered. Mr. Bradlaugh said he presumed he and his co-defendant would be at liberty on the same recognisances. The Lord Chief Justice : Yes; on your own recognisances. There was some bissing in the court at the conclusion of the proceedings.