**“ICONOCLAST” AND MRS. BESANT IN COURT.**

Considerable interest has been felt during the past week in the knowledge that a warrant had been issued for the apprehension of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, better known as “Iconoclast.” The circumstance as understood, were that Mr. Bradlaugh, in connection with Mrs. Annie Besant, had continued to publish a work entitled “Fruits of Philosophy: an essay on the population question. By Charles Knowlton, M.D. A new edition with notes. London Free Thought Publishing Company, 28, Stonecutter Street.” It will be remembered that at the last Central Criminal Court, Mr. C. W. Watts, the well-known lecturer, pleaded guilty to the charge of having published an edition of the work in question, which the prosecution alleged was of an indecent nature. Mr. Watts was bound over on his recognisances to come up for judgment when called upon. Rumour states that Mr. Bradlaugh twitted Mr. Watts with having shown the white feather by pleading guilty, and Mr. Watts having observed that Mr. Bradlaugh wished him to do what he would not do himself the former accepted the challenge, and in connection with Mrs. Besant brought out and sold at the National Reformer office, Stonecutter Street, the new edition complained of. It was well known that Mr. Bradlaugh had sought to come to an understanding with the solicitors for the prosecution as to the mode and time of hi apprehension, and had had his bail in waiting for several days. Meanwhile, the prosecution had determined to include Mrs. Besant in the charge and the double warrants have been executed by Detective Sergeant Robt. Outram, and Detectives summands and Williams, who had been waiting at the National Reformer office for their arrival. The warrants having been served, Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant were driven to the Guildhall in a cab, accompanied by the detectives and were placed in the dock. In the summons the parties were described as Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, 43, publisher, 10, Portland place, and Mrs. Annie Besant, journalist, the Oaklands, Mortimer road, St. John’s wood, and the formal charge was that of “selling and publishing in the City of London, on the 24th March, a certain obscene book.” The City Solicitor prosecuted : Mr. Bradlaugh (with the assistance of Mr. T.T.C. Parris) conducted the case of himself and Mrs. Besant – Mr. Bradlaugh said his defence would involve the calling of a large number of witnesses, and he would suggest that merely formal evidence should now be taken. He would have to issue same 40 subpoena. The Alderman said certainly, that would be the best course. Detective Simmonds said that on Saturday, the 24th March, he went to the publishing office, 28, Stonecutters street, and saw Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant in the shop on the ground floor. He asked the female for a pamphlet on the “Fruits of Philosophy.” Mr. Bradlaugh was behind the counter by her rule, and heard what he (witness) said. She presented him with a book (produced) for which he tendered a shilling and she gave him 6d. change. On the 24th March he went to the shop to purchase another copy of the same book. Neither of the defendants was there, and a young man served him. – By Mr. Bradlaugh : Was aware that Mr. Bradlaugh had given notice at the chief office, Old Jewry, that he and Mrs. Besant would attend on the 24th March, between four and five, to sell the book. Detective Williams proved that on the 24th, at five o’clock in the evening, he went to the shop, 28, Stonecutters street. He saw both the defendants behind the counter. He asked the female prisoner for a book. “The Fruits of Philosophy.” for which he paid her 6d. Mr. Bradlaugh was standing beside her. Mr. Bradlaugh, in reply to the Clerk, said he had to question to ask, and Mrs. Besant left the cross-examination in his (Mr. Bradlaugh’s) hands. Simmonds recalled produced the pamphlet, which he called the National Reformer, (Laughter) Mr. Bradlaugh asked that the notice might be put upon record. He need hardly state that his object in taking the position he had was merely a matter test. He would not at the present moment say whether he was right or wrong, but he might say that he regretted the authorities should have thought it right to arrest them, when they could have obtained their appearance by a summons. Mr. Martin, the chief clerk, said the usual course had been pursued. Mr. Bradlaugh said he did not complain, and was bound to say that he had received every courtesy in capturing him. This being the case for the prosecution, the defendants were liberated on bail in £200 each, to appear next week.