**THE BRADLAUGH PROSECUTION**

Of course, says the Times, after the verdict especially, we have no wish to call in question the intentions of the publishers. They may believe the book the best present they could make to a young man or young woman, indeed to a white family, about to enter life upon a career of utility and honour. But, on the other hand, we are also aware that there are persons who sincerely believe the greatest service they can render their innocent neighbours is to strip them of everything they fondly regard as a virtuous sentiment or right principal of section. There certainly are persons who think they are only opening our eyes and breaking our fitters when they reduce goodness, and even affection, to a calculation of material consequences. Indeed, some do not leave us the trouble of a calculation, for they tell us, and think it the very best of good tidings, that we grow out of our antecedents and upon them by laws so irresistible and uniform as to save us from responsible action. Happily, the real truth is that the world is greater than one man or one opinion, and since we have to choose between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant on the one hand, and certain reserves and proprieties surrounding the first laws of Nature and the domestic hearth on the other, we are glad to find that this well-intentioned pair are not held to have established a right to dictate new rules of action and new conditions of existence to a reluctant and, as it feels, an insulted world.

That the pressure of population is the chief cause of poverty, and that poverty is inseparably connected with unhappiness, misery, and crime says the Daily Telegraph, we are all agreed. Nor is anything more reasonable than that the grave responsibilities attendant on the marriage state should be fully pointed out and carefully insisted on. It is another matter to publish for indiscriminate sale in the open streets a work which, while professing to deal with operations of population and national prosperity, in reality suggests vice of a character so abandoned, revolting, and unnatural, that to see its precepts accepted as “philosophical fruit” would be to witness the first beginnings of the downfall of this nature, while to disseminate them is a crime against public decorum and the simplicities of human nature. Whatever may be thought about the expediency of this particular prosecution, it is unquestionably a public duty to protect the young from those whose pernicious teaching would, if allowed to go unchecked by the strong attn of the law, destroy body and soul alike. We have spoken of this matter with pain, and we would willingly, if we could, have passed it over. The liberty of the Press is, and always has been, dear to every Englishman; but between the liberty of the Press and the right which has now been publicly claimed to deprave the imaginations of households no connection is possible. No matter how honest the motive may have been, the act done by those who published and said this vile work is far worse in its tendency and effects than if they had offered poisoned food for only in the markets, or thrown deadly drugs into wells and drinking fountains. The greatest public and private wrongs have been perpetrated in the name of “good intentions, and we can receive no greater wrong than that which through the medium of a cheap and early accessible publication and under the guise of a philosophical treatise, pollutes the minds and degrades the morals of the young and ignorant.