**THE PROSECUTION OF MR. BRADLAUGH**

The case of “The Queen v Bradlaugh and Besant,” was commenced on Monday in the Queen’s Bench Division, before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn and a special jury; the defendants ---- Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant ---- being charged with publishing an obscene book. The trail lasted four days, and excited the greatest interest. The Solicitor-General, with whom were Mr. D. Straight and Mr. Mead, appeared for the prosecution; the defendants conducted their own defence, admitting the publication, but denying that they had any evil intention in issuing the work complained of. Mrs. Besant, in an able, and at times eloquent manner, addressed the Court for the last part of two days, arguing that the pamphlet was one of a merely philosophical and physiological character, and that the definition of an obscene work, as laid down by Lord Campbell, was a work written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth, and calculated to shock the feeling of decency in every well-regulated mind. The book had been written and published by the medical man over 40 years ago, and she and her co-defendant had only republished it in defence of the liberty of the Press and in the interests of the poorer classes of the population. The pamphlet was a purely medical work published at a cheap rate; and the fault of any misuse of the knowledge with it conveyed lay with the receiver and not with the giver. Would, she asked, anyone say that the botanical work dealing with poisonous plants was calculated to deprave society because some person, or persons, having obtained knowledge therefrom, secretly poisoned others? If so, they might as well say that the sale of knives and matches were evils because of the murders and incendiary fires which had taken place. The Lord Chief Justice, in summing up, said a more ill-advised and a more injudicious prosecution had never, probably, been brought into Court of Justice, as, in consequence of it, thousands of copies had been sold of a work which had been published for years and had never before got into general circulation. His Lordship concluded by telling the jury, that if they were of opinion that the work in question was calculated to injure public morals on any grounds, however pure and good the intention of the defendants might have been in publishing it, it would be their duty to find the defendants guilty. ---- The Jury deliberated an hour and then returned a verdict for the Crown, adding, however, that they entirely exonerated the defendants from any corrupt motive.----The Lord Chief Justice said he would not pass sentence at present, and directed Mr. Bradlaugh to come up that day week and raise any objection to the indictment he thought and adduce any circumstance to which he might desire to call attention in mitigation of punishment.