**THE BRADLAUGH PROSECUTION,**

Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant, the editor and sub-editor of the National Reformer, were charged on remand at the Guildhall with the publication of a book alleged to be of an immoral nature The court was crowded several ladies being present the case was heard before Mr. Alderman Figgins, and the other magistrates on the bench were Alderman Sir R, W. Carden, Sir Benjamin Phillips, and Mr. Alderman Allen.

Mr. Douglas Straight (with whom was Mr. Mead), who was instructed to prosecute on behalf of the City Solicitor. Said that his intention was to see that the case was put before the Court in such a way as to justify the committal for trial of defendants. The circumstances of the case were somewhat peculiar, and involved a question of considerable public importance; because on the one hand no one could doubt the desirability of free discussion of all topics relating to political or social matters, whilst on the other it was desirable within limits of the law to guard such discussion from degenerating into disadvantage to the general community. He could not conceal from himself the fact that everything had been done to show the bona fides of the defendant, Mr. Bradlaugh, and the lady by his side, in the publication of the book. The essence of the contention to be urged in defence was, he understood, to be that the matter contained in the work , although it might be of an obscene character, possessed such public advantages as would place the person publishing it in a privileged position.

Mr. Bradlaugh, for the defence, said that he was charged with misdemeanor for publishing an obscene work, and he was afraid it would be useless to ask that the case should be withdrawn from a jury. He argued that the book could not be made out as being indecent and unbecoming, and if that were not made out to the satisfaction of the court he ought not to be placed in peril of a verdict. He cited numerous authorities to show that the work did not come within the law as an indecent book, and argued that the publishers of this book were not responsible for any bad use made of it after it left their hands. With regard to the low price at which the book was published, he argued that the element of price could not enter into the matter at all, but if it were to enter into the matter it was evidence in his favour, as obscene book were usually sold at very high price the object was to place the book in the hands of the public, and he referred to medical works in order to show that it was necessary that young people should be more generally acquainted with the matters treated of in the work ; and, moreover, there were several similar works published at a higher price unchallenged. Whilst referring to the question of the limitation of population, he urged in his favour many works on political economy, maintaining that the definition of the law by Lord Campbell and the opinions of Mr. John Stuart Mill and Mr. Fawcett expressed in their manuals of political economy, put this work outside the law on the subject of obscene publications. It was not he said, probable that they would have given notice to the police of their intention to publish an obscene book, nor that he had taken up the matter, which had been one of the objects of his life, as a mere matter of notoriety. [Mr. Bradlaugh then put in evidence a large number of works now in circulation, giving reference to many pages in them, with a view of showing that the same subjects as that treated in the book, upon which the proceedings were taken, were unchallenged in other publications. None of the references, however, were read in court.]

The remainder of the day was occupied by Mr. Bradlaugh in referring the Bench to various medical works, with a view to showing the identity in language and illustration with the pamphlet upon which the prosecution is founded. From these he argued that there was not a line in the pamphlet which was not covered by books circulated by thousand, published by the best publishers, and written by the best men. The case was again adjourned, the defendants being released upon their own recognisances.