THE PROSECUTION OF MR. BRADLAUGH AND MRS. BESANT

The trail of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant for publishing an obscene book was commenced yesterday in the Queen’s Bench. The Solicitor-General, Mr. Douglas Straight and Mr. Mead prosecuted. A preliminary application to quash the indictment was refused, the points being reserved. The Solicitor-General then opened the case, referring to the case of the “Confessional Unmarked” to show that it was not necessary that there should be an intention to vitiate public morals supporting that suit was the general effect of the book. His lordship said in that case they would be criminally liable. Formal evidence of the publication having been given, Mrs. Besant addressed the court for the defence, leaving it to Mr. Bradlaugh to establish that the similar ground had been taken by a large number of eminent writers. She denied that the work was obscene, argued that the information it conveyed was useful and necessary, and that opinion honestly expressed should not be put down because some police agents did not agree with it. She denounced the prosecution as a disgrace to English justice. Mrs. Besant had not concluded when the court end. The defendants were cheered by a large crowd as they left Westminster-hall.