

### THE LESSON OF THE HOOPER TRIAL.

If the trial of Hooper on the charge of murdering his wife by the administration of prussic acid has failed to establish his guilt, it has at least taught one great lesson, namely, that the present method of dealing with cases of suspicious death is radically wrong, so far as the calling in of medical aid by the Crown is concerned. Every one must freely agree that in this case there was established by the prosecution a wonderful chain of evidence, each link of that chain going to prove that the prisoner had deliberately arranged to remove his insane wife, and thus leave himself free to marry another woman, and all the circumstantial evidence seemed of such a kind that it was difficult to see what defence could have been brought in rebuttal of a charge of attempted murder. Nay more, the established movements of Hooper, the purchase of prussic acid, the carefully arranged transport in the baggage car, the whole circumstances surrounding the actual death of his wife, are difficult to explain otherwise than on the assumption that he was planning a further attempt on her life. Yet despite all this circumstantial evidence the jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty," and in our opinion they did rightly; they had no option, and if it be asked why no other course was open to them, the answer must be that however ably the crown proved the intent to murder, however clearly they established the moral guilt of the man, legally they failed notoriously to establish their charge; the evidence brought forward could not prove that prussic acid had been