

THE BRADLAUGH CASES.

MR. BRADLAUGH has the Court of Appeal against him again. *Attorney-General v. Bradlaugh*, 14 Q. B. Div. 667. It was against him before in *Clarke v Bradlaugh*, 7 Q. B. Div. 38, but the House of Lords reversed the decision, and Mr. B. will probably endeavour to procure the House to repeat the operation.

How simple a thing it is to start a long course of difficult and expensive litigation. After Mr. B.'s election for Northampton in the spring of 1880, upon entering the House of Commons, he claimed to be allowed to take an affirmation instead of the usual oath. Afterwards he expressed his willingness to take the oath, and it was referred to a select committee to consider whether the House had any right to prevent him so doing. Various other proceedings were taken and ultimately he was expelled and a new writ issued. If he had taken the oath in the first place there would have been no difficulty, but claiming the right to affirm, and then abandoning it, brought in its train all that followed—a small enough cause for so much effect.

After his re-election, while the House was in session, Mr. B., accompanied by two members, approached the table. Mr. Speaker rose and called "Order, order;" but Mr. B., directly he reached the table, proceeded to read the oath from a paper which he held in his hand, kissed a New Testament which he had brought with him, subscribed the paper, and left it upon the table, together with the certificate of his return. On the same day he took part in three divisions in the House; and, this being done, the question whether he had forfeited the penalties prescribed by the statute for sitting and voting without having taken and subscribed the oath, was in fair shape for trial in the courts.