

2095

MR. J.

FINLEN'S
DEFENCE OF HIMSELF

AGAINST THE

ATTACKS

MADE UPON HIM BY THE

PARLIAMENT AND PRESS

OF ENGLAND.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY
Messrs. VAIL & GALLAGHER, 314, CALEDONIAN RD.
And sold by all Booksellers.

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Jones, associated myself with that gentleman upon
the various occasions of the Anti-Slavery Con-
ference, and in the various meetings of the
connection imposed upon me, at one
connecting Boston, and THE
throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. Many
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ventions, a great assembly called the Labour Par-
ticipating in it, and
POPULARITY may have some solace in it; that it is
the source of many pains and penalties is placed be-
yond dispute. Always seeking to avoid what may in
any way partake of egotism, I am, necessarily, slow
to speak aught of myself at all calculated to point out
my personal importance. Should I, under the peculiar
circumstances in which I find myself placed, be ego-
tistical, contrary to my wont, let the extravagance be
attributed to the entire exigencies of the moment,
and to nothing more. I have been before my
fellow-country people as a positive advocate of Demo-
cracy. In the year 1851 I was sent to the National
Chartist Convention to represent the advanced
Democracy of the City of London and the Borough
of Finsbury. In that Convention it was my honour
to co-operate harmoniously with Mr. Fergus O'Connor,
M.P. for Nottingham; Mr. G. W. M. Reynolds, Mr.
G. J. Holyoak, Mr. J. Julian Harney, Mr. Ernest Jones,
Mr. Robert Le Blond, Mr. Thornton Hunt (son of

Leigh Hunt), the Rev. Mr. Robertson, and a great number of other thorough-going men, some of them since dead, but happily most of them still living to work, and perhaps to suffer, for liberty. Before that time I had for some few years worked hard locally for the advancement of the selfsame principles with which I am now, and have been ever since, identified. Shortly after 1851, I, at the request of Mr. Ernest Jones, associated myself with that gentleman upon the *Peoples' Paper*, and also upon the Executive Committee of the National Charter Association. That connection imposed much work upon me, at once contributing Democratic literature and lecturing throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. Many conventions were held in behalf of Chartism—the best form of political faith ever expounded in England. Going beyond the ordinary phases of conventions, a great assembly called the Labour Parliament was convened and assembled in the Peoples' Institute, Heyrod-street, Manchester. Mr. Ernest Jones was the originator of that Parliament. I was one of four men representing London in that Parliament, the other three being Mr. Ernest Jones, Mr. James Bligh, and Mr. Jeffries. Inasmuch as the work of those assemblies had a most salutary effect upon the public mind, inasmuch as they not only indoctrinated the people with a profound love of the abstract principles of Democracy, but went far to prepare the people for the triumph of such social questions as must receive Parliamentary recognition before the peoples' homes can be made happy and independent. That such a consolidation of sympathy, of faith, and of hope, has tended greatly to the recent realization of a certain sort of political triumph, must be admitted upon all hands. More of that anon. Shortly after completing much work imposed upon me by the Labour Parliament—work which took me throughout England, I was called upon by a very im-

portant section of the Radicals of North Britain to assume the editorship of a weekly newspaper, started in the interest of the most ultra political views. Notwithstanding my multifarious engagements, I obeyed their call, and did my duty. Almost simultaneously with the performance of such editorial work, I was, along with my friend Mr. J. B. Leno, an editor of a literary magazine, entitled the *Spirit of Freedom*. One of the most important contributors to the *Northern Star*, the paper started in the North, was my very excellent friend Mr. John Frost, a gentleman whose noble devotion to the Chartist cause culminated, in the year 1839, in his being, along with two others, sentenced, under the administration of a brutal and bloody aristocratic Government, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered.

Circumstances being of such a character as to render my return southward necessary, I took up my abode once more in London. I was always at work, either at the bench as a French polisher, upon the platform as a public orator, or in the press as one of the *litterati* of Democracy. At length the organization of the people, which Mr. Ernest Jones and myself had cultivated, was utilized by the founders of a body of men now known as the Reform League. When that League grew into strength I was appointed, with three others—Messrs. Mantle, Odgers, and Cremer, as one of its lecturers and agents. In that capacity I betook myself to the north of England, and spent much time and exertion in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, in the advocacy of manhood suffrage and vote by ballot. Returning from that tour simply to spend the Christmas of 1866 with my family—my time being thoroughly mortgaged by people in many quarters of the North, I found to my horror that my beloved wife was stricken, nay, paralyzed by insanity, and my home, hitherto happy and compact, a perfect wreck. That calamity, upon which I cannot dwell

just here, formed a turning point in my career. Time rolled on, chequered and disagreeable certainly, or at times what some men would estimate as terrible, but never enough to deter me from the ardent prosecution of my efforts in favour of republicanism. Then, wandering from the mere beaten route of hackneyed agitators, I found occasions to busy myself in behalf of those noble, heroic, and most patriotic men, sympathetically designated the Manchester Martyrs. As a sample of such disinterested divergence, I give here the report of an extraordinary meeting which I held in the Home Office in vindication of England's honour, and glorification of the martyrs Allen, Larkin, and Gould. The report is taken from the papers of the day. Here it is:

EXTRAORDINARY SCENE AT THE HOME OFFICE.

On Monday afternoon, a deputation consisting of working men attended at the Home-office for the purpose of presenting a memorial, agreed to at a meeting held on Sunday, on Clerkenwell-green for the purpose of asking the Home Secretary to accept a memorial, having for its object a commutation of the sentence of the Fenians now under sentence of death at Manchester.

Lieutenant Colonel Dickson and five or six other persons arrived at the Home-office at two o'clock, and were informed that Mr. Hardy would not be able to receive them. They then left, but in the course of a quarter of an hour upwards of 100 men arrived—all work men in their working attire—and made their way up stairs into a room adjoining that in which Mr. Hardy was sitting. The attendant handed one of the deputation (Mr. Finlen) a letter, which he read. It was as follows:—

"Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Hardy to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, acquainting him that a deputation had been appointed, at a meeting held yesterday on Clerkenwell green, to wait upon him in reference to the Fenian convicts under sentence of death at Manchester, and expressing a hope that he would receive them this afternoon. Mr. Hardy desires me to inform you in reply that he has already declined to receive deputations on that subject—(cries of 'Disgraceful!')—and that he must equally do so on the present occasion, although he will be prepared to receive any memorial that may be sent to him for his consideration."

Mr. Finlen—It is signed by—but I can't make out the name.

A Voice—That will be after the men's death. (Cries of "Shame.")

Mr. Finlen—That is Mr. Secretary Hardy's reply to our efforts to save the lives of these unfortunate men. Our efforts I hope, will be acknowledge to be associated with humane desires. We have no political motives whatever in this matter but we solemnly wish that England should not be disgraced by these poor fellows being handed over to the tender mercies of Calcraft next Saturday. For myself, I declare that I will use thew and sinew, and will move heaven and earth, to the end that this monstrous determination on the part of Mr. Secretary Hardy shall be defeated. We will go to Birmingham, we will go to Manchester, we will go to Liverpool, we will arouse the Irish spirit. That will be responded to in Ireland and in America, and this Government will bring blood upon its head if, after refusing us as it has done to-day, it dares to take away the lives of those men who are as good as any members of the present Government. I would not have spoken this way if Mr. Hardy had granted us the interview we asked for. Mr. Hardy has committed a great blunder. Mr. Stuart Mill has has stated that the Tories are the most stupid set of people in the world, and this is the most stupid blunder a Tory Government ever committed.

Mr. Glegg—This memorial I hold in my hand was prepared yesterday, and as Mr. Secretary Hardy will not receive it, I must take it back with me. I will not leave a stone unturned to carry out our object; and as Mr. Finlen has said, we will go to Birmingham, to Liverpool, to Manchester, and very likely to Glasgow, to ask for help. We are working, and we have lost a day's work. I hope you are humanitarians, and I am sorry our work of mercy has failed. (Cries of "No, no.")

Mr. Campbell thought that if they had been Eyre of Jamaica or somebody of title, the Home Secretary would have received them. But because they were only hard working men of Clerkenwell he would not. It was the profits of their labour that enabled the aristocracy to ride in their chariots. He loved his country (Ireland). Why should he not love her? He was glad that he had them to sympathise with her. (We do.) But if they would not listen to the appeal of Englishmen and Scotchmen, it was not likely that Government would listen to Irishmen. They must keep in the background. He was sorry that the Home Secretary was not there. (Voices: He is here," and groans.)

Mr. Finlen exclaimed: I consider this a monstrous thing on the part of the Conservative Government.

on Voice—I move a vote of censure on Mr. Secretary Hardy. An attendant came forward, and said: I am requested by Mr. Secretary Hardy to desire that you will leave the office. (Loud groans.)

Mr. Finlen—This is a very outrageous proceeding on the part of Mr. Hardy. I am not to be intimidated by the officials of this place. Go away, sir. You are not a member of the deputation; you are only a servant. You are not a servant of Mr. Hardy, but a servant of the public. I say that, so far as this Government is concerned—and I say it publicly in this Home-office, under the roof of authority—that the Government is incurring a disgrace that will perhaps prove indelible by refusing to meet a body of working men, who cannot afford to lose another day's work. (Long and continued cheers.) The men are to be executed next Saturday (Cries of "No, no; they shall not be.")

The attendant again came forward, and said: May I remind you Mr. Finlen, of the message I conveyed to you from the Home Secretary?

Mr. Finlen—We will use every effort, strength and muscle, that that these men's lives shall not be sacrificed. (Cheers.) I would turn all the Tory Governments into the sea rather than see these brave and plucky Fenians immolated in the way which is intended. Mr. Hardy is in that room, and he and his colleagues must know that it shall be proclaimed far and wide that if these men's lives were sacrificed their own lives would not be held sacred or their position as advisers of a good and Gracious Queen maintained in the face of such paltry, bloody, and miserable conduct.

The motion was carried.

Mr. Finlen—We must not be content with a meeting on Thursday night. We will have torchlight meetings every night this week.

While these proceedings were going on, Mr. Hardy who was in his private room adjoining, and must have heard all that passed, despatched a messenger to Sir Richard Mayne, at Scotland-yard requesting his immediate attendance with a body of police. In a few minutes Sir R. Mayne, Captain Harris, and about fifty of the A reserve constables arrived at the Home-office, Sir R. Mayne and Captain Harris entering to see Mr. Hardy, while the men were drawn up outside the office. Fortunately the services of the police were not called into requisition, for while Sir R. Mayne was ascending the stairs the deputation were coming down.

In consequence of so much robust and nettlesome

stuff being declared in such a place as the Home Office in behalf of such glorious men as those who are brave enough to be Fenians, the attention of the public at large was more than usually directed towards myself. Upon one side—that of the true and honest poor of England and Ireland, I was bravely applauded and vindicated. On another side—that of the slavish middle-class, and the slave-making upper ten thousand, I was villified, howled at, and entirely reprobated beyond measure. I withstood all the vituperation of the rich ruffians of the land. I honoured and appreciated the generous sympathies of the glorious Democracy of Ireland and England. But the rich foes with which I have to contend have such an agency through the power they purchase from the Parliament and the press, that in resisting them a poor man like myself has to fight a fight requiring the employment of tremendous powers of energy. Although I had hitherto done many things as an advanced Liberal of the most Republican type, none of my previous acts either attracted so much attention, or provoked so much crude, so much uncouth antagonism, as did my signal action at the Home Office—an action in which I shall glory to the last moment of my existence, in honour of glorious Fenianism. Let it be known that Fenianism is Patriotism; that the men—and women too—called Fenians, are as brave in behalf of the speedy emancipation of Ireland, the Niobe of nations, as Tell and Emma were for Switzerland, Brutus and his Portia for Rome, as were the maids of Saragossa for the integrity of their peninsula; as Kosciusko was for Poland, as Count and Madam Bathyanie, Robert Blum, and Louis Kossuth were for the honour of Austria and the freedom of Hungary; as Garibaldi and Mazzini have been and are for the unadulterated emancipation of the Italian peninsula. As honour crowds upon the work and hopes of such heroes

because they have sought in most instances to throw off the odious yoke of foreign rule, so should it gather around the efforts and aspirations of the men and women congregated in the Fenian Brotherhood with the determination to free Ireland from the degrading rule of the brutal and selfish aristocracy of England. I honour them for the bravery and grandeur of their enterprise. Such a declaration I have frequently made from the platforms of England whilst addressing immense audiences of Englishmen. I, therefore, can tell the Government, the Press, the Police, the Reform League, too, that they make a very great mistake when they imagine that my efforts in behalf of Fenianism have been so solitary as to be confined merely to what I said and did upon the occasion of my memorable visit to the Home Office. I tell them all that I have openly done much for that body, and, what is of paramount importance, that the working people of England look with pride and satisfaction upon that body's efforts.

Because I have been so avowed as an ultra and most uncompromising reformer, I have been brutally abused by the Parliament, the Press, the Aristocracy, and by some few political adventurers in the shape of electioneering agents connected with the Reform League. I shall, because I can, fight and defeat the whole mob of them.

Following up the Home Office affair, after my efforts in the cause of justice and humanity had been defeated by the rose-water humbugs of the period, I then did the next best thing I could to mark my detestation of the flagitious crime of executing Allen, Larkin, and Gould, and that was to congregate together an immense multitude to proceed in procession to Hyde Park, there to listen to funeral orations in their honour.

The venom I have had to be exposed to will be pretty well exemplified by the recent action of my

organised antagonists. Upon Sunday, July 19, 1868, a great gathering of the people took place in Hyde Park, with the object of condemning the House of Lords in consequence of its hostility to Mr. Gladstone's measures, which are meant to remove from Ireland the State establishment known as the Irish Protestant Church. On account of that meeting being not only a tremendous success, attended as it was by not less than 50,000 people, but through those comprising it endorsing sentiments of the most republican nature, the antagonism of the Press and the Parliament, the Police and the Reform League, was at once provoked. Having taken an active and prominent part, not simply at the meeting, but in organizing it, being in fact the promoter of it, I was set up as a target for the malignant shafts which have been so barbarously hurled against me.

Being, through my unpaid labours for the liberties of the people, as well as through my many domestic reverses, a very poor man, I was compelled to enter upon the occupancy of a room without having at my command the means of furnishing it. Speaking literally, I had nothing whatever to put into it. My worthy friend, Mr. Meldrum, was good enough to spare from his own home for my use a few articles of furniture, very scant certainly, but calculated to meet the absolute or immediate wants of one situated as I was. The man Bacon, a person of whom the reader will hear much more before long, as I have instituted an action against him in one of the Superior Courts, in consequence of his outrageous and slanderous utterances about me in the presence of Mr. Knox—did not, as my landlord, look upon me with much favour, because there was nothing much in the way of furniture upon which he could put his hands in the event of rent not being forthcoming. Added to that consideration, he thought that he had found out that I was a Fenian—a thing

of terror to his peculiar mind. The manner in which he made that startling discovery was very simple and very open. My children had taken out of the room I occupy a few copies of a bill announcing the publication of two works written by myself, one being entitled "Fenianism: its Causes traced, its Existence Justified," the other being "The Wrongs of Ireland, and the rights of Irishmen." He found a "maresnest" in reality; but it was thought a fine thing for the police. Accordingly, Bacon sought their congenial association, and since he has thus precipitated himself into such companionship, holding in view the action pending against him, it is to be hoped the police will "save their Bacon."

As some evidence of that fellow's complicity with the myrmidons of Mayne, I mention here that he, Bacon, was venturesome enough to take into my room a certain sergeant of police. That gentleman, using the peculiar skill for which such worthies are noted, descended, upon his admission to my humble home, upon some fragments of documents which I had torn up and thrown in the grate. Upon the evidence of my children that officer of police was industrious, and, perhaps, dutiful enough, to put those fragments together, piece by piece. What did that mean? Was he of opinion that he could involve me in some direful conspiracy, such as the Fenian Brotherhood, or some other one nearly as formidable? Seeing that I had in my possession some copies of that popular newspaper the *Irishman*, it is most likely that it occurred to his judicial mind that little more was wanting to secure my arrest upon a charge of treason-felony. But the poor man broke down altogether in that respect, and then he fell upon the noble idea of concocting with Bacon that most libelous statement which was, so opportunely for my enemies, made to Mr. Knox. All the important points of that state-

ment I flatly and indignantly deny the accuracy of. I must not argue them here, since their author will have to answer for them in a court of law; but I do state that the asseveration that the children were starved and filthy, was the employment of a flagitious misrepresentation. I have witnesses, apart from Dr. Conway Evans, who said the children were well nourished, who will prove that upon the forthcoming trial, and amongst those witnesses there will be the lady who so kindly attended to them up to the time she unfortunately fell ill, which was only four days before the statement was made. I do most emphatically declare that his assertion that I received four hundred sixpences from so many Fenians, that I spent that sum of ten pounds in drink, that the matters of hours and convictions are entirely and supremely untrue. I never received such a sum of money from any body whatever. Concerning drink, my employer, prompted by his knowledge of the falsity of the statement, attended before Mr. Knox, and to that gentleman affirmed that since he had known me he found me to be a "sober, trustworthy, steady, and efficient workman." More of that on the trial.

I have said that the statement was opportunely made. Its apposite appearance in the papers on the morning of the day when Sir Charles Russell was to question Mr. G. Hardy concerning myself in the House of Commons, redounded much to the shrewdness of Scotland Yard. But Sir Richard has much more to learn before he can confidently hope to destroy me as a public man. I defy him and all his mercenary emissaries.

Now, a word or two concerning Sir Charles Russell's impertinent question to Mr. Hardy about my private character. Both Mr. Hardy and Mr. Gladstone treated him as cavalierly as his flippancy required. I tell Sir Charles at once that I did belong

to the party he alluded to, and that I did so because the connection yielded me something wherewith to support a sick wife and a large family. But that gentleman and all others must understand that the cessation of my engagement with it was not occasioned in consequence of the cause which he in his questions foolishly implied. I was obliged to leave it because the police threatened Mr. Brooks, the proprietor, with their antagonism to him if he did not discharge me. Why they made that threat was on account of the part I took with the deputation at the Home Office. Such, at all events, was the reason assigned by Mr. Brooks when he had to discharge me. I could say much more upon this point, but I prefer letting a public and independent journalist speak for me. The following is from *Reynolds's Newspaper*, of July 25, 1868:

Sir C. Russel, a member of the House of Commons, has asked a very irrelevant and impertinent question in reference to Mr. Finlen. The baronet wants to know whether Mr. Finlen is the same individual who appeared as a speaker at the Judge and Jury Society, Leicester-square, a place where, Sir Charles alleges, obscene performances are witnessed. If this be the case, we feel certain that every information on the subject could immediately have been obtained by Sir Charles Russel from his brother officers in the Guards. But if private character is thus to be dragged forth and ventilated for political purposes in parliament, we would suggest that some "noble lord" ask the Lord Chancellor whether the Marquis of Hastings, who was lately proclaimed a defaulter on the turf—that is to say, a person who bets without having the means of paying if he loses—is still a member of the House of Peers, also of several of the most select West-end clubs? Whether he is still a magistrate, or whether he is the same individual whose name has been mentioned in a discreditable manner as connected with the doings of certain race-horses called Lady Elizabeth and The Earl? Whether Lord Willowby d'Eresby, the individual whose name was disreputably associated with an action brought against him by his cast-off mistress, is still

a member of that "honourable" house, and still Grand Chamberlain to the Queen? Whether it be true that the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Edinburgh, and other members of their lordship's house, have been frequent attendants at the St. James's Theatre, where performances by Madlle. Schneidee a notorious French actress, have been given that several of the leading daily papers have pronounced unfit for decent persons to witness? When these questions have been answered we have many more of a similar nature to that which Sir C. Russel has put to the House of Commons. So far, however, as Mr. Finlen is concerned, we presume that being out of work and short of cash, he applied his talents to a profitable purpose. Had Sir C. Russel been in the same predicament, we suspect he would not have obtained as many pence as Mr. Finlen probably did pounds.

In concluding what I have to say upon Sir Charles's legislative small-talk, I say that I challenge and defy anyone to prove that, during my connection with Mr. Brooks's party, I ever, in the performance of my business, did aught to offend or in anyway outrage the public ear.

The scribbling scamps of the newspaper press have founded upon the above atrocious misrepresentations leading articles equally atrocious. They howl at a man who has grown poor in the disinterested advocacy of a great cause. They make my poverty a crime! whereas, those who know me best, know it to be but a sad misfortune. I shall rise superior to it, despite the foul malignancy of literary bipeds who put their slavish brains and soulless carcasses into the common market where venality is vended, and thenceforward dedicate their pens as hirelings to the interest of the richest ruffians they find prepared to reward them. I say to them in general, in the proud language of Coriolanus—

"Ye common cry of curs,
Whose breath I hate as the reek of the rotten fen,
Whose loves I prize as the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt the air."

I scorn your foul and cowardly censure; I spit

upon your mercenary prejudices; I say in particular to the elegant censor employed as moraliser by the *Telegraph*, whose recent lucubrations I have read with great interest—"Cease viper, for you bite against a file."

In conclusion, I repeat that I am not to be deterred from the prosecution of the work to which I have committed myself. I belong to no organization but one, and that is the Democratic League, which has for its motto Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and for its programme the attainment of Universal Suffrage; Vote by Ballot, Annual Parliaments, Equal Electoral Districts, and Payment of Members; with a determination to have full liberty procured for the people of Ireland. Towards the realisation of such objects I shall be found working in the future as I have been in the past.

Mr. Brooks's party I covet not to my business in any way. I have no objection to my business in any way. I have no objection to my business in any way.

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My description appears in the newspaper press. I have no objection to my business in any way. I have no objection to my business in any way. I have no objection to my business in any way.

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