

**CHARLES SUMNER'S
EXPLANATION IN REPLY TO AN
ASSAULT: A SPEECH PREPARED
FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE,
MARCH, 1871**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649300648

Charles Sumner's Explanation in Reply to an Assault: A Speech Prepared for the United States Senata, March, 1871 by Charles Sumner

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

CHARLES SUMNER

**CHARLES SUMNER'S
EXPLANATION IN REPLY TO AN
ASSAULT: A SPEECH PREPARED
FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE,
MARCH, 1871**

"He, being Dead, yet Speaketh."

CHARLES SUMNER'S

EXPLANATION IN REPLY TO AN
ASSAULT.

A SPEECH PREPARED FOR THE UNITED STATES SENATE,

MARCH, 1871.

"Poor me he fights, if that be fighting, where
He only eudgels and I only bear.
He stands and bids me stand : I must abide ;
For he's the stronger, and is drunk beside."

JUVENAL, Sat. III. v. 273 - 277, Dryden's Version.

BOSTON :
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS.
NEW YORK :
CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM.
1878.

PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT
AND SECRETARY OF STATE.

Si rixa est, ubi tu pulsis, ego vapulo tantum.
Stat contra, statique jubet ; parere necesse est.
Nam quid agas, cum te furiosus cogat, et idem
Fortior !

JUVENAL, Sat. III. v. 273 - 277.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERET JIMBEN WARDPALL
1918

TO THE READER.

THIS statement was prepared in March shortly after the debate in the Senate ; but was withheld at that time from unwillingness to take part in the controversy, while able friends regarded the question of principle involved as above every personal issue. Yielding at last to various pressure, Mr. SUMNER concluded to present it at the recent called session of the Senate, but the Treaty with Great Britain and the case of the newspaper correspondents were so engrossing as to leave no time for anything else.

WASHINGTON, June, 1871.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN June, I think, 1871, I received from Mr. Sumner this "Explanation," with the following prefix, "Unpublished, — private and confidential, — not to go out of Mr. Bird's hands." I frequently urged him afterwards to make it public. His reply was, in substance, that he should not do it for personal vindication merely; that, so far as Mr. Motley was concerned, he thought the matter stood well enough before the public: but if the time should come when the ends of justice required its publication, he should remove the injunction of secrecy. While he lived I respected his injunction. After his death I felt that justice to his memory not only justified, but required me to make the "Explanation" public; just as his literary executors would regard it as not only proper, but it might, in their discretion, become a duty, to include this, with other "private and confidential" papers, with his works or in his biography. Accordingly, after conferring with Mr. Whitelaw Reid of the New York Tribune, I sent it to him, and it was published in that journal of April 6, 1874.

The publication attracted a good deal of attention, in a spirit very much depending upon the relations, per-

sonal and political, during his life, between the critics and Mr. Sumner on the one hand and the persons involved in the "Explanation" on the other. From one of these classes I expected neither generosity nor justice. Not such defenders does the memory of CHARLES SUMNER need; for, if invoked, they would only, as recent events have too clearly and sadly shown, have done him injustice.

Mr. Sumner prefixed to the "Explanation" a passage from Juvenal, of which I give Dryden's translation:—

"Poor me he fights, if that be fighting, where
He only cudgels and I only bear.
He stands and bids me stand: I must abide;
For he's the stronger, and is drunk beside."

An extraordinary spectacle has lately been presented to the world. An ex-President of the United States, travelling through Europe, has publicly proclaimed CHARLES SUMNER as notoriously derelict in public duties, and a liar. The chief of his Cabinet has echoed the same slanders. The transactions detailed in the "Explanation" form the subject of a portion of these charges. I do not enter upon a general examination of these assaults, which, from their obvious malice and improbability, were at once and instinctively repelled by the whole truth-loving community. Full justice to Mr. Sumner's memory has been done by the public press, and specially by one of his most trusted friends, and the public verdict against his defamers is substantially unanimous. My only purpose in the present publica-

tion of the "Explanation" is to place in more permanent form his own reply to one of these assaults. The completeness of the vindication increases our regret that he does not live to reply to the other assaults lately made under responsible names, and also increases our amazement at the cowardice as well as the baseness of these slanders on the dead.

F. W. BIRD.

EAST WALFORD, December 18, 1877.

