

would not have killed Morgan, unless "they were impelled by a delusive idea that they were discharging a duty."

But, "they were impelled by a delusive idea that they were discharging a duty." Therefore they killed Morgan.

Masons readily admit the truth of the major premise or first proposition, but they deny the minor or second proposition, and then the conclusion falls to the ground.

Suppose we say that they *were not impelled* by any such delusive idea? The conclusion would then be that they did not commit the murder. The whole error of the anti-Masons has been that they always assumed the existence of a motive, without any attempt to prove it. This assumption the Masons reject, as unfounded in reality.

The true statement of the question as given by an anti-Mason who lived contemporaneously with the occurrences, and whose views are expressed, if not with impartiality, at least without bitterness. William L. Stone in his "*Letters on Masonry and anti-Masonry*," wrote in his 47th letter, dated March 31, 1832, as follows:

The judicial history of anti-Masonry is closed, and yet the inquiry remains—"What was the fate of Morgan?" For, notwithstanding the number and extent of the legal investigations described—notwithstanding the number of persons engaged, directly or indirectly, in the abduction—and, notwithstanding, likewise, the fact that some of the actors in the dark conspiracy had become witnesses for the State, no evidence had yet been elicited showing what was the ultimate fate of the wretched victim; or, if his life had been taken, marking with judicial certainty the persons of his executioners.

* * * Neither the apprehensions nor the jealousies, usually existing among partners in crime, nor the hope of reward, nor the compunctious visitings of conscience, had the effect to produce any satisfactory legal disclosures in regard to the final disposition of Morgan, after his confinement in the magazine.

For fifty years has the Masonic fraternity been denounced for the commission of this crime by demagogues and by fanatics, and for fifty years has the fraternity treated the accusation with contemptuous silence. But in this, I think, that there has been a great mistake. Silence has been taken for confession, and the accusation gains strength because there is no effort at refutation.

It is time that this "masterly inactivity" should cease, and that our slanderers should in turn be denounced for their slander. Hence it is that this article has been written. When such able, and at this date, conscientious but mistaken men as Mr. Weed, repeat the old charge and ingeniously assign a motive for the murder of Morgan, it is well that they should be told to remember that there never was any proof that there was a murder.

I have given the stories of Morgan's appearance at different places, subsequent to the time of his supposed death, to be received for what they are worth. While few will be inclined to attribute any credibility to the myths of his residence with the Apache Indians, or in Van Dieman's Land, it will be acknowledged that there is something very remarkable in the fact that so many respectable persons, at different times and from different places, should have concurred in the statement that they had recognized somebody who passed for Morgan in the city of Smyrna.

The case of Morgan may, therefore, be succinctly stated in the following terms:

First, as to his disappearance about the time of the publication of his pretended revelations. Of this there is no doubt. In this transaction a few Masons were engaged. But whether Morgan finally consented, as it has been urged, under the influence of certain promises to make this disappearance a permanent one, or whether he was forced to leave the country, is a disputed question. If he did not die, the presumption is strong that he went away voluntarily, because it was always in his power to return.

Secondly, as to his murder, there never was the slightest particle of evidence. The charge was made by anti-Masons, some of them governed by fanaticism, but most of them by political motives of the most unworthy character. It was always denied by the Masons and the question never was tried in a court of law. No man has therefore, at this day, any right to speak of "the murder of Morgan" as a fixed and known fact.

Lastly, as to the motive for slaying him, no such motive existed. History proves that no penalty, beyond expulsion from the Order, was ever inflicted on any Mason for a breach of trust. There are, at this time, over five hundred thousand Masons in the United States. Now, I assert, without the fear of contradiction, that of this half million of men, there is not one who believes that Masonry requires him, under any circumstances, to inflict the penalty of death as a punishment for revealing the secrets of Freemasonry.

Bissell, a masonic juror, in one of the trials in 1831, testified in these words:

"The whole tenor and object of the Masonic lectures, and other proceedings, is to