

N. Y., of August 19, is published a letter from Capt. Samuel I. Masters. The Captain is said to be a man of estimable character. He has made many voyages to the East; in 1846 was appointed United States Consul at Demerara, in British Guiana, and in 1853 Consul general for the Ladrone Islands. He now resides at Greenwich in Washington county, New York, and is described by the editor of the *Times* as "quite an aged gentleman, but physically a firm, erect and sinewy man with mental faculties wholly unimpaired." So much for the character of the writer; his testimony as found in his letter to the *Times*, appeared in the September edition of this magazine.

These are all the narratives that I have met with, which account for Morgan's fate after his disappearance. The anti-Masons of course had their story and it is repeated by Mr. Weed. According to this account, Morgan suffered what they supposed to be the extreme penalty of Masonic law for the violation of his fidelity. But as there never was any evidence of this event; as the body of Morgan was never discovered; as the story was always denied by those who were said to have been engaged in the crime; and lastly, as there is no law, principle or teaching of Masonry, which would justify such an act, I think that I may very properly place the anti-Masonic account of Morgan's death among the numerous myths of which he has been the subject.

I have always thought the Masonic fraternity have shown too much inaction and remissness in the treatment of this question. Viewing the accusation with contempt, they have, from the very beginning, met it with what they supposed, was a dignified silence, while their enemies have repeated it from day to day, and from year to year, until by the very reiteration of the story, some people have been led to believe it.

The truth of history as well as the honor of the Institution, require that a different and more energetic course should be adopted.

The charge that Morgan was murdered is without a scintilla of evidence. On the contrary, the men who are said to have committed the crime, were men of such a character and such was the tenor of their lives as to induce almost a moral certainty that they could not have been guilty. To this fact Mr. Weed very candidly testifies in these words:

Col. King had been an officer of the United States army. Whitney was a stonemason; Chubbuck, a farmer, Garside, a butcher, and Howard, a bookbinder—all men of correct habits and good character. \* \* \* \* \* I knew Col. King and John Whitney intimately. Both would have shrunk from the commission of a known crime. Of all the persons connected with the abduction, arrest, imprisonment and subsequent fate of Morgan, there was not one within my knowledge who did not possess and enjoy the respect and confidence of his fellow citizens.

There is a rule of logic laid down by Dr. Wilson in the following words:

There is some uniformity in the acts of men under similar circumstances; and hence a knowledge of the circumstances always gives a strong probability as to the course one will pursue. This, when it exists in but a low degree, is called merely a probability. But when the probability becomes very great, it is called a moral certainty.

Now let us see whether this axiom will not apply to the case of King and those who have been called his accomplices. To render it at all possible that these men who "possessed and enjoyed the respect and confidence of their fellow citizens," should forfeit this exalted position and become brutal murderers, it must be shown that there was some deeply controlling motive, sufficient to cancel and efface for the time, all these tendencies of moral character. Juvenal tells us that "*nemo repente fuit turpissimus*"—"no man ever became thoroughly base at once." The workings of evil are gradual and almost imperceptible. No one could, after a virtuous life and honest reputation, become in a moment a murderer unless there was some motive to influence this wonderful change.

But Mr. Weed is ready to supply that motive. He says that these men "were moved by an enthusiastic but most misguided sense of duty." But this is clearly a *petitio principii*—a "begging of the question"—which he should have been too good a logician to commit. He has evidently mistaken a premise for a conclusion, and it is a premise too, which he cannot prove and which his opponents do not admit. How does he know that these men were actuated by any such motive. They always denied it, and the history of previous pretended expositions of Freemasonry, shows that their publication never generated any such motives in the breasts of Freemasons. Why then should it do so in this particular case of Morgan? From the year 1726 to 1826, just a century, there were more than forty pretended expositions published in the English language,—many of them far more offensive than that of Morgan; and yet not one of them excited any other feeling than that of contempt. Why should Morgan's paltry book, alone, be capable of furnishing a motive for murder?

Mr. Weed's argument amounts to this, and I am sure that a greater logical fallacy never was presented to a reasoning mind.

The accused were all "men of such correct habits and good character," that they