

William Morgan was born in Virginia in 1776. He was a stonemason by trade, but afterwards became a brewer, and for a time, about 1812, he was one of Lafitte's piratical band, in Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico. He afterwards lived in Virginia and New York.

There is no evidence whatever that he was ever made a Mason. At Rochester, N. Y., he craftily persuaded his employer that he was a Freemason, and through his influence, without any certificate or demit, succeeded in being admitted as a member of a lodge in that city. He afterwards, emboldened by his success in Rochester, at the town of Le Roy again deceived the fraternity, and pretending that he had received the Masonic degrees up to and including that of "Most Excellent Master Mason," was admitted in the chapter there, and received regularly the Royal Arch Degree. That was the only degree he ever lawfully received. He was thus a perjured man throughout his brief Masonic career. In intellectual character he was naturally bright, but illiterate, and learned only in the dark ways of the world. Added to this, he brutalized himself with drink. Outside of his house, in taverns, he was a bar-room oracle; in his house he was an intoxicated tyrant, and treated his wife shamefully, seizing her by the hair of the head and dashing her against the walls and furniture. He soon came, as a result, to want, and was the recipient of both common and Masonic charity. Such was the man who conceived the scheme of bettering his fortunes by publishing a pretended expose of Masonry. An idea of the sum he expected to gain may be learned from the fact that his confreres who were with him in the scheme bound themselves to him in a bond with the penalty of \$500,000, to pay him one-fourth part of all sums that should be received from sales of the book. He owed numerous debts, which were pressed for payment, and led to his imprisonment several times in gaol. On the last occasion, Sept. 12, 1826, he was released, upon two persons paying his debt, and accompanied by them he entered a carriage, after some high words and persuasion, and was driven first to Rochester and then to old Fort Niagara, near Lewiston, on the Niagara River, that being the boundary line between the United States and Canada. There he was kept under lock and key for two or three days. From that time until a comparatively recent period there was no authentic information as to his whereabouts. The enemies of Freemasonry asserted that he was drowned by its brethren in the Niagara River, while dispassionate persons believed that he had been taken to Canada and liberated. There was certainly no evidence of death. His body was never found, nor any one that saw him killed. Had he possessed any estate no court of probate would have granted letters testamentary upon the evidence of his disappearance.

Now as to the sequel. One account, purporting to have come from Morgan's son, is that, instead of having been mysteriously murdered, he lived nearly thirty years after his disappearance from New York, and finally died in corpulence and contentment at Van Dieman's Land, where he was editor of a newspaper called the *Advertiser*, which still survives him, and in which he used to refer in a pleasant way to the stories told of his murder in the United States. According to the statement of young Morgan, his father was released upon condition that he should leave the country forever. He accepted the offer, and was accompanied by Masons as far as Quebec, where he entered the British navy and sailed for England. He afterwards was discharged from that service, and sailed for Van Dieman's land, where he settled. His son was a resident of San Francisco at the time when he communicated this information relating to his father, whom he visited during his lifetime once every two years.

Another account, given August 17, 1851, by A. P. Rogers, of Anoka,