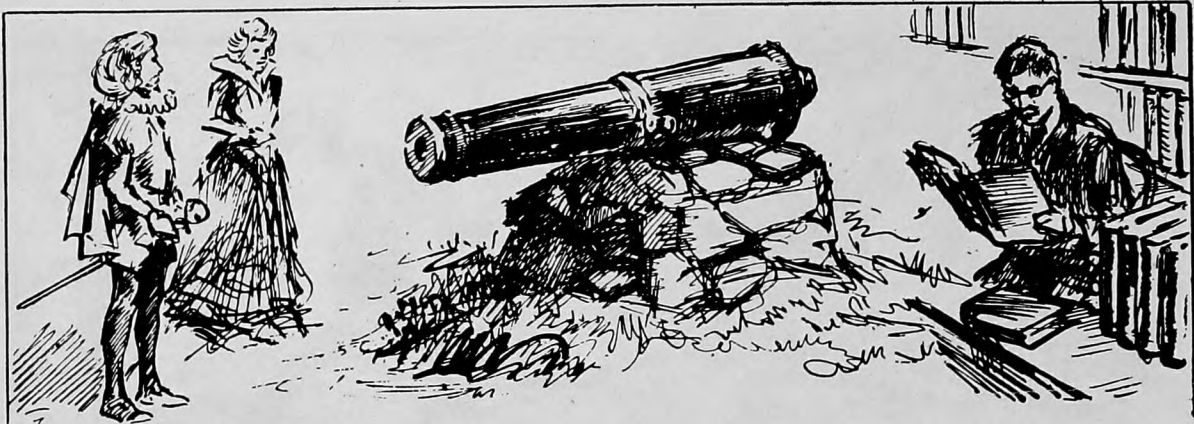




## Another



### Dr. Appleton Morgan, Scholar and Skeptic

Appleton Morgan, A. M., L. L. B., Lt. D., president of the New York Shakespearean Society, Editor of *Shakespeareana* and the Bankside Edition of Shakespeare's Works, lived in a cottage at the easterly end of Washington Street, near Central Avenue. Prof. Brander Mathews, of Columbia University, regarded him among the foremost Shakespearean scholars of his time. A leading figure in the long-drawn-out Shakespeare-Bacon debate, his scholarly pen laid low the exponents of the theory that Bacon wrote or had any part in writing the plays of Shakespeare.

Criticism was his field. He enjoyed delving into old tomes and coming up with startling bits of information that would disprove "an hysterical myth." "Proudly" acknowledging descent from James Morgan, the sentry who was hung on Gallow's Hill for the murder of Rev. James Caldwell, the Fighting Parson, he declared, "It was not Morgan who committed murder but the jury which convicted him on the shallowest circumstantial evidence."

The story told by the Rev. Newton Cadwell in *Record's History of Union County*, of the capture of the iron cannon, known traditionally as "Old One Horn," by the Minute Man of Westfield, in a skirmish with retreating British soldiers, following the Battle of Springfield, amused the skeptical Dr. Morgan. It was obviously fiction, he declared—"The Village Parson's Mid-Summer Night's Dream." In 1909, he wrote to the *Standard*:

"When, nineteen years ago, I came to Westfield as a summer resident, somebody told me about the old can-

non that had been fired at Springfield. Learning that this old gun was in possession of some firemen at Plainfield, I went there to get a look at it. Of course, I was suspected, in my innocence, of a sinister design, being from Westfield!—and got no sight of it.

"Some time after this, I heard that the gun had been mounted in the Soldiers' plot at Fairview Cemetery and lost no time in driving there. On first view of its lines, I exclaimed: 'That is not a Revolutionary gun.' Later, with every disposition to distrust myself, I summoned a commanding officer of the U. S. Ordnance Department to the scene." (The officer declared that it was an old parapet or casement gun, manufactured years after the Revolution)

A study of British and American reports of the Battle of Springfield, Dr. Morgan explained, revealed that no iron guns were used on either side, that "our field pieces were brass pieces captured from the enemy" in previous battles. Moreover, "it is obvious that no heavy iron pieces would have been used as flying artillery to be dragged from Morristown on the Springfield alarm."

F. C. Condit, secretary of the New Jersey Historical Society, concurred in this view. "If," wrote he, "there were any stragglers seeking to save their lives (by retreating through Westfield) they certainly did not encumber themselves with an iron cannon weighing nearly a ton.

In debate, the Morgan pen was caustic, the tongue sharp. Among his best known works are "The Shakespearean Myth," "Shakespeare in Fact and Criticism."