

Hiram Corson

— June 15, 1911

(Retired: 1902)

The Trustees of Cornell University desire to record their appreciation of the services of the late Professor Hiram Corson, to the University and their regard for his personal character and influence.

When Professor Corson came to the University in 1870, only two years had elapsed since its opening. Although provision had been made from the beginning for the teaching of the ancient and modern languages and English literature, the public regarded the new institution largely as a scientific and technical school. It was of the utmost benefit to the University that so early in its career a scholar of the established literary reputation of Hiram Corson should have given to it his loyal and unselfish services, — services that extended through a period of activity of thirty-three years, and of eight years of scholarly retirement. During this time Professor Corson displayed an extraordinary range of intellectual ability, teaching the philological elements of the Anglo-Saxon and English languages, the formal side of rhetoric, the history of the literature and the literature itself.

Gifted with a voice of wonderful sweetness and power, and with a dramatic instinct of the highest order, he was one of the greatest public readers ever heard in this country. Through this marvelous power of vocal expression he made literature interpret itself and convey its message to the heart and mind.

The influence of his unique personality was equally deep with that of his teaching. In an age whose material interests were increasing with alarming rapidity he stood as a representative of a higher order of things, —things unseen and immaterial, the spiritual elements in the nature of man. It was his mission to interpret these elements in literature and to awaken a response in his hearers.

Source: Resolutions passed by the Board of Trustees of Cornell University, June 21, 1911. (From Minutes of Board of Trustees, p. 342)