

m. faithfully, Mark

# CORNELL UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

**VOLUME VIII** 

NUMBER D

### **ADDRESSES**

at the Presentation of the Memorial Tablet

to

### JAMES MORGAN HART

in

SAGE CHAPEL

JUNE 3, 1917

Edited by

**CLARK S. NORTHUP** 

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#### I. THE MEMORIAL TABLET

The proposal to erect a memorial tablet for Professor Hart was laid before his friends and former pupils in the following letter:

Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., 15 June, 1916.

It has been suggested that the friends and former pupils of Professor James Morgan Hart place a bronze memorial tablet to him in Cornell University. The undersigned Committee, appointed by the head of the Department of English at Cornell, has found that a suitable tablet can be secured for about \$150. You are invited to send a subscription for this purpose. It is believed that every one who studied under Professor Hart will wish to be included in the list of subscribers. It is urged that subscriptions be sent in at once. These will become payable probably about November 1. A gift of from one to five dollars from each of those who desire to share in thus honoring their friend and former teacher will provide an adequate fund.

Faithfully yours,

Max B. May, Cincinnati '88, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Cincinnati, Ohio.

MARY A. MOLLOY, Cornell '07, Dean and Professor of Philosophy, The College of St. Teresa, Winona, Minn.

WILLIAM A. HAMMOND,
Professor of Ancient Philosophy and
Aesthetics, Cornell University.

MARTIN W. SAMPSON, Cincinnati '88, Professor of English, Cornell University.

CLARK S. NORTHUP, Cornell '93, Chairman, Assistant Professor of English, Cornell University.

The tablet was made by the Gorham Company after a design approved by President Schurman on behalf of the Board of Trustees. It was formally presented to the University on Sunday, June 3, 1917, at 4:45 P. M. In the absence of President Schurman, who was obliged to be out of town on University business, Professor Hammond took the chair. The speech of presentation was made by Professor Sampson, who spoke as follows:

To Cornell University through you. Professor Hammond, its representative, the pupils and friends of James Morgan Hart offer this tablet: to remain in the keeping of the University as a permanent

memorial of the colleague endeared to them by many years of faithful friendship; of the scholar whose deep and illuminating knowledge brought inspiration to them and honor to Cornell; of the professor in whose classes they gained reverence for truth and belief in the validity of sane learning; of the man with whom their daily association meant their daily certitude that high ideals are real and attainable; and of the leader whom they sought to follow because he demanded of them not intellectual servility but independence. These pupils and friends,—and all of his pupils were his friends, as, truly, in great measure his friends, had they willed, could hardly avoid being his pupils,—counting it an unforgetable privilege to share in the establishment of this memorial, now reaffirm their abiding confidence that in this monument, whose fabric may time touch lightly, they have placed a record more lasting than brass.

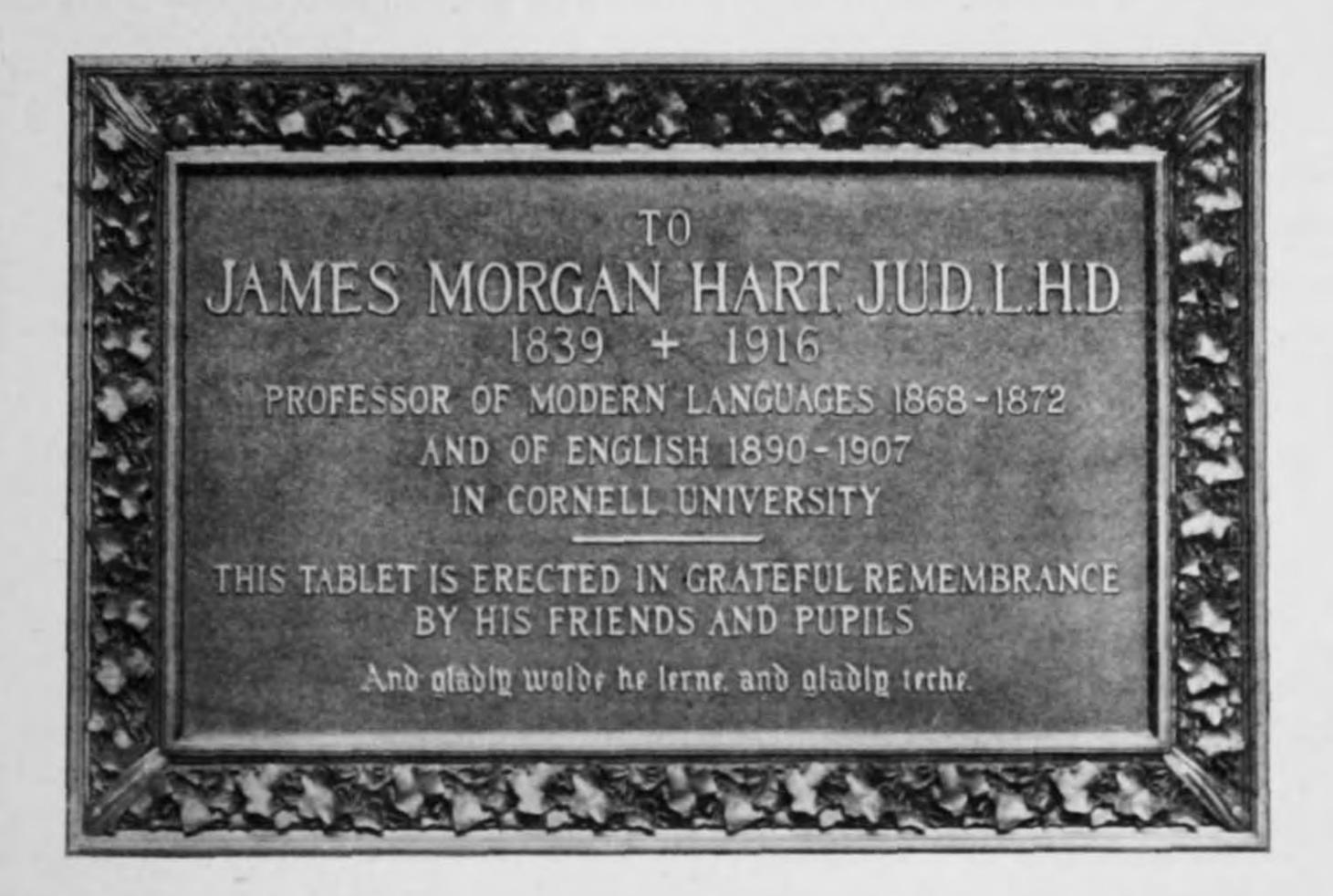
In accepting the tablet for the University, Professor Hammond spoke as follows:

President Schurman, who has been absent on important business connected with the University's Military Department, has asked me to accept on behalf of the University this tablet, erected to the memory of James Morgan Hart by his friends. The President's invitation places on me no unwelcome burden. I esteem it a happy privilege to assist in placing upon the walls of this University Chapel a lasting memorial to a professor who gave the best years of his long and distinguished life to Cornell University and from whom a quarter of a century ago I received the most kindly and helpful advice, when I became his junior colleague.

Professor Hart was a figure and character quite unique on the campus. In manner and ideas he was unlike other men; full of quaint notions and fancies, of happy whimsical humor, of flashes of appreciative and denunciatory criticism, and possessed of a large fund of profound convictions (which were the essential man) touching language and literature, scholastic ideals, public life, and life in general. He was a positive, affirmative, but not dogmatic, personality, a man who arrested attention, who made no ambiguous impression; he was tenax propositi, yet in his genial being he was hospitable to persons with whom he differed, while at war with their ideas. His only intolerance was the intolerance of sham. He was a careful, judicial, scrutinizing critic, to which attitude of mind he had been trained by his early study of jurisprudence. He had the Socratic gift of keeping his students from falling into the lethargy of tradition. The legend on the tablet aptly describes the academic side of this scholar: "Gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche." On his seventieth birthday a group of Professor Hart's former students presented to him a memorial volume (published in 1910), containing studies in language, literature, and philosophy. This memorial of young scholars to the old scholar who had educated his brood to spread their wings was the finest sort of tribute to gladden the

declining years of the teacher.

Professor Hart was not merely scholar, teacher, and wise counselor in University affairs; he had a genius for friendship and intellectual companionship. We all remember the daily greetings on the campus walks, greetings full of the spirit of comradeship, commonly followed by some piquant story that put sunshine in our hearts, oftentimes with a gruff touch that only concealed the kindly soul.



Many readers of his instructive early work on The German Universities, written at the request of his fellow student, George Haven Putnam, will recall the charming recital of his youthful friendship with the Privy Councilor von Ribbentropp. The lines which in a foot-note he there applies to von Ribbentropp, I wish to quote here as applicable to Professor Hart:

"Happy their end
Who vanish down life's evening stream
Placid as swans that drift in dream
Round the next river bend!
Happy long life, with honor at the close!"

In accepting on behalf of the University this bronze tablet, I desire to express to the friends of the late Professor Hart the University's gratitude for the beautiful gift, which to coming generations will be a visible and enduring reminder of one of our most accomplished, influential, and beloved teachers.

Representing the students who worked under Professor Hart at Cincinnati and Cornell, Dean Frank Thilly spoke as follows:

This tablet which we dedicate to the memory of our dear friend and teacher, and the words which we utter to do him honor, are only feeble expressions of the respect, affection, and gratitude we feel for James Morgan Hart. But the spirit which moves our hearts and the hearts of those who have been touched by the influence of his rugged personality and his honest scholarship, is a great and abiding thing, a living testimonial to the worth of the scholar who was able to give it birth. These outward signs of the reverent spirit will pass away, but the sentiments of respect and affection and gratitude, and the appreciation of the higher values which this spirit implies, will endure and quicken the souls of men. That is one of our comforts in the presence of the loss of a good man.

As one who enjoyed the benefit of Professor Hart's instruction as an undergraduate in the University of Cincinnati many years ago, and whom he encouraged to follow the academic calling, I wish I could reveal my deep sense of obligation to him. It was not merely the knowledge which he imparted in the class-room, and the interest which he aroused in the study and the appreciation of literature, that made his teaching profitable to his pupils; it was, above everything else, his sterling intellectual honesty, his freedom from cant and affectation, and his unobtrusive love of the ideals of scholarship that endeared him to us and made our association with him a liberal education in itself. His blunt manliness and downright straightforwardness appealed to us; the respect we felt for him connected itself with the pursuit of the vocation of the scholar, and we saw that this demanded all the power and all the devotion of which a full-grown virile man was capable. And his was the hospitable mind, understanding and sympathizing with the growing soul of youth and encouraging it to try its wings in independent flights of thought and fancy.

Without apparent effort on his part to induce us to read the master-pieces of literature, he somehow succeeded in bringing it to pass that we acquired a fondness for books and that we developed a desire for literary expression. As I look back upon my life in his class room from the height of a long experience, I am struck with the absence of all academic machinery in his courses; we seemed to learn and to grow naturally and without the aid of artificial stimulants, inspired by a master artist whose chief concern was with his work and whose interest was centered upon those whom he had undertaken to lead in the ways of wisdom.

We who have enjoyed the rare privilege of intellectual companionship with such a man can best repay the debt we owe him, by striving to do for others what he did for us and by arousing in the youth of the land that enriching love of spiritual things without which no people can rise to the full stature of its manhood. And that will be the highest tribute which we can offer to the memory of James Morgan Hart.

#### II. CONTRIBUTORS TO THE TABLET FUND

Toward the tablet \$278.50 was subscribed by 106 persons, of whom 30 are or have been members of the Faculty, and 76 are alumni (two of them being alumni of Cincinnati). The cost of the tablet was \$200, and incidental expenses amounted to \$13.75. This leaves a surplus of \$64.75, which will be devoted to the purchase of books for the Hart Memorial Library.

The list of contributors follows. The year of graduation is added in case the person concerned was a pupil of Professor Hart.

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# III. A SKETCH OF PROFESSOR HART'S LIFE<sup>1</sup> By Clark S. Northup

Professor Hart was born at Princeton, N. J., on November 2, 1839, and was the son of Dr. John Seely Hart and his wife, Amelia C. Morford. John S. Hart was a scholar and teacher of note. He was at different times Principal of the Philadelphia Central High School, Principal of the State Normal School at Trenton, and a professor in Princeton, and was the author of several important text-books of rhetoric and English literature and of a valuable study of Spenser's Faerie Queen. The son passed his boyhood in Philadelphia and in due time matriculated at Princeton with the class of 1860. Here his studies were chiefly in Latin, Greek, mathematics, chemistry, physics, physical geography, and geology. His liking for Professor Arnold Guyot and geology was so great that he came near selecting it as his life-work. But, to quote his own remark, dis aliter visum.

After graduation he went abroad. Possessing great linguistic ability, he soon spoke French and German as well as he did English, and became proficient in several other languages, notably Italian and Sanscrit. He studied mainly at Geneva, Göttingen, and Berlin. His studies were largely in civil and canon law, but he was an observer of life and gathered literary material in many fields. Receiving the degree of J. U. D. vera cum laude from Göttingen in 1864, he shortly afterward returned to America and settled down in New York for the practice of law. But literature was more to his taste, and he wrote much for the magazines, and frequented the literary circles of the city. When Cornell was opened in 1868, Dr. Hart accepted President White's invitation to become Assistant Professor of South European Languages. At first he taught only French; the next year he was transferred to the assistant professorship of North European languages and literatures, teaching both French and German. From 1870 to 1872 he taught only German.

Shortly after leaving Ithaca, he married Miss Wadsworth of New York, who lived only a short time.

The next four years he spent in a second period of foreign study and in literary work in New York. In Leipzig he read Gothic and Old and Middle High German with Braune. In Marburg he read Beowulf with Grein. He spent the winter of 1872-3 in Berlin, and in

Based in part on an obituary notice in The Cornell Alumni News for April 27, 1916, and in part on an autobiographical sketch found among Professor Hart's papers.

the spring of 1873 became special correspondent of The World at the Vienna Exposition. Before the end of 1873 he returned to New York. In 1874 he translated for the Putnams Langel's Angleterre Sociale et Politique, and then began his work on The German Universities (1874), which was long the chief book on the subject, and is still of great value. From this period also date his editions of German classics. After devoting some time to the study of English philology he was called in 1876 to be Professor of Modern Languages and English Literature at the University of Cincinnati. Here he had great success as a teacher and became widely known in scholarly circles as a careful and conservative worker. He was probably the first teacher who ever carried an undergraduate class through the entire Faust in one year. Among his pupils in Cincinnati were Dean Thilly and Professors Sampson and Strunk. Besides many articles and reviews he published in this period A Syllabus of Anglo-Saxon Literature (1887), and made extensive collections for an Anglo-Saxon lexicon, which, unfortunately, he never brought to completion.

He spent the summer of 1880 in Dublin studying Old and Modern Irish under the late W. M. Hennessy, and the summer of 1886 in Tübingen reading Icelandic literature with Sievers.

On June 20, 1883, he married Miss Clara Doherty, of Cincinnati, who survives him.

In 1890, Professor Hart was recalled to Ithaca as Professor of Rhetoric and English Philology, and filled this chair for thirteen years. He greatly strengthened both the rhetorical and the linguistic courses of the curriculum, and gave attention to both undergraduate and graduate work. From the first he was able to attract to graduate study young men and women who were primarily interested in the study of English and wished to give their whole time to it. Some of these remained as instructors; others went out to fill responsible positions in both high schools and universities.

The summer of 1895 he spent in Copenhagen, reading Old and Modern Danish and Swedish with Jessen, and Skaldic poetry with Thorkelsson.

In the early nineties English instruction in the schools of New York State was in a most unsatisfactory condition. It was apparently an article in the creed of most principals that anybody who could teach at all could teach English, for which no special preparation, of course, was required. On the other hand, English was

fast supplanting Latin and Greek as a disciplinary and cultural study; hence there was a great need of better training for teachers. Quickly comprehending the situation, Professor Hart labored resolutely with voice and pen to improve conditions. He wrote many articles for the educational magazines, and some text-books of composition; he delivered addresses at teachers' gatherings; he organized a teachers' training course; at Cornell he revoked the certificate privilege in English until school instruction should improve in quality. If instruction in English to-day is more efficient than it was twenty-five years ago, the improvement is due in some considerable degree to Professor Hart and to those whom he inspired with better ideals and with a desire to make English an instrument of real culture, in both school and college.

In 1903, on the retirement of Professor Corson, the Departments of English Literature and of Rhetoric and English Philology were consolidated, and Professor Hart became head of the new department, with the title of Professor of the English Language and Literature. He continued to lecture on Early English and repeated his teachers' course till 1907, when he retired.

Although he had always found the climate of Ithaca somewhat trying, he continued to reside here until the summer of 1914, when, by order of his physician, he gave up his house and started for a French watering-place. But the news of war obliged his ship to turn back, and in consequence he and Mrs. Hart spent the winter in Asheville, N. C. They passed the summer of 1915 in Bronxville, N. Y., and then removed to Washington, D. C.

He died on Tuesday, April 18, 1916, in his apartment at The Highlands, Washington. His death was sudden and unexpected. He had been in his usual health and spirits and had retired as usual, without complaining of any discomfort. In a few minutes, however, he had quietly passed away. The funeral was held in Philadelphia on Friday, April 21, 1916, and the body was laid beside those of his father and mother in Woodland Cemetery.

Professor Hart wrote with ease, his style was terse and luminous, and his matter was always well organized—a "well of English undefiled." He wielded a vigorous pen, and loved the smoke of conflict; yet he was always a courteous opponent. It was more important to strike out the truth in the clash of opinion than to defeat an adversary. Few men have been more widely read or more deeply versed in the

special literature of their field; yet never was there a more modest and eager scholar.

He was an ardent book collector, and his collection of books in the field of Old English was nearly complete. He also possessed valuable collections of Middle English, of Byronic, and of Celtic literature. These books, including several thousand volumes, are now a part of the University Library; but most of them are still kept in his old office and recitation room, now No. 32 Morrill Hall, and now known as the Hart Memorial Library. For some years before leaving Ithaca he was engaged on a bibliography of Old and Middle English literature—a task for which his wide and exact knowledge admirably fitted him. It is to be hoped that this invaluable work may be completed and published.

Professor Hart was a member of the Cornell chapter of Alpha Delta Phi; the Cornell chapter of Phi Beta Kappa (of which he was president in 1900-1); the American Dialect Society (of which he was president in 1891); the American Philosophical Society, to which he was elected in 1877; the Philological Society of London; the Modern Language Association of America (of which he was president in 1895); and the University Club of New York.

# IV. A LETTER TO THE EVENING POST By Herbert L. Fordham

The following letter was printed in The Evening Post for April 25, 1916:

### To the Editor of The Evening Post:

Sir: In your issue of April 20, I read the obituary notice of one who for over twenty years has been my teacher and friend, James Morgan Hart. Mr. Hart was a great teacher, a profound scholar, a cultured gentleman, and a wise man. In his teaching he led the special student of early English through the development of the language, and also as a master craftsman he unfolded to students of modern English the art of expression. By painstaking, kindly, persistent, and relentless criticism, he would do all that a teacher could do to produce in the student a style of clearness, precision, and strength. In brief, or editorial, in story or oration, no one who ever came under his power will utterly disregard his instruction. On the contrary, during all the years, the fortunate student will seek to make

the most of "echo" and "repeated structure," and will search diligently for the one precise word as for an object of priceless value.

Mr. Hart's scholarship was of that rare sort which is not put on and off like a garment, but is an essential and predominating part of a man's life. A few years ago, after his retirement from an active professorship at Cornell, I asked him how he occupied his time now that he was free from the demands of the classroom. "Well," said he,

"I spend most of my time in study."

Study alone, if in too restricted a field or indulged in by a mind too narrow, may produce little of real culture; but study in the broad fields in which Mr. Hart used to browse and with a mind as able and as open as his necessarily added new charms and graces to a culture always deep and true. The worth and genuineness of the man were apparent in his modesty and simplicity. Quiet, incidental comment or anecdote was his method of revealing that which lay beyond, and was his invitation to share in the wealth of his mellow wisdom. His life was a stream of pure, living water quietly traversing and constantly fructifying the pleasant pastures of knowledge, a stream flowing unsullied from the eternal fountain of truth.

HERBERT L. FORDHAM.

New York, April 21.

## V. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY

On May 10, 1916, the University Faculty, by a rising vote, adopted the following resolutions:

In recording the death of Professor James Morgan Hart, Professor Emeritus of the English Language and Literature, the Faculty wishes to bear witness to the scholarly and manly qualities of the

colleague whose passing is a loss to Cornell University.

Professor Hart was one of the earliest members of the Faculty, and gave to the University his first and his last years of service. During his long life he devoted himself with absolute unselfishness to the cause of learning, as represented by his chosen field, in which he attained national distinction, and as represented by the institution to which he was so deeply attached. He administered his department with far-seeing discretion, and brought into the Faculty councils a mature wisdom which went to the core of the questions at issue. He trained students to hold dear the things which were dear to him, and had the satisfaction of seeing his own men in positions of responsibility all over the country. The first insistent lesson he taught was accuracy, which he constantly termed the one prerequisite of scholarship. As far as was humanly possible, he sought to impart to his

students some measure of his own wholesome and abounding commonsense. A man of deliberate and well-considered carefulness in forming opinions, he manifested impatience only in the presence of the inane, the self-seeking, and the pedantic. Of honest error of judgment or to mistaken action he was sympathetically tolerant. His interest in young men was perennially just, and he apparently gained from them something of the inspiration which he assuredly gave. Best of all in a teacher and a leader, it should be said of him that with every opportunity to impose his authority and his methods, he never sought to make disciples. A student whom he had made courageous enough to differ with him was sure of a keen, friendly, and thoughtful response; a mere echo he counted futile. Here was a man who left behind him the memory of a personality greater and finer than is common, and who established by his example a precious ideal.

EDWARD L. NICHOLS, FRANK THILLY, MARTIN W. SAMPSON, Chairman.

#### VI. AN ADDRESS BY ANDREW D. WHITE

On November 2, 1909, about forty-five of Professor Hart's colleagues met at his house and presented him with a loving-cup. The presentation speech was made by Dr. Andrew D. White; a part of it is here by permission reprinted:

A numerous body of your old colleagues and friends have brought here to-night a token of their affectionate remembrance, of their respect, and of their good wishes; and they have kindly asked me to

place it in your hands.

Their main reason for choosing me is doubtless that I am the oldest of your colleagues here present, and I accept the honor all the more gratefully because I realize, quite as much as any one present can do, and more than most of the younger men are able to do, what your services to the University have been. Through all these years you have been largely instrumental in maintaining the high reputation of Cornell for its attention to the study of our own language and literature. In the early days of the University, when, on account of alleged heresies in its educational theories—heresies which have since become orthodox,—it was bitterly attacked, one sin was very loudly charged against us and this was that Cornell University was "degrading the scholarship of the state." Time has passed and no one now doubts that the character of the scholarship in the classrooms of the state, throughout its whole length and breadth, has been vastly improved. Of this fact there is abundant evidence, and none know

this better than those who can remember the entrance examinations for college in those early days and can contrast them with those passed at present. No one acquainted with the educational history of the state can dispute the fact that one of the greatest agencies, if not the greatest, in this change has been this University. The influence of its competitive examinations in the various assembly districts has doubtless had a steady effect for good, so too have the examinations for its endowed scholarships and fellowships, and various other causes might be named; but greatest of all the causes has been the teaching in Cornell class-rooms, which has permeated our whole system of public instruction. In this teaching and in the atmosphere of culture diffused from this center, you have stood among the foremost. From your class-room have been radiated influences which have told throughout the whole state in behalf of higher and nobler scholarship, and this service that you have thus rendered has well earned for you an honored place in the annals of public instruction, in this commonwealth. Your lectures, your writings, your conversation, have exercised a power which will be more and more appreciated as time goes on. Therefore it is that to me, who have watched your work and its influence and who have rejoiced in it as the unpretentious but precious contribution of an old friend, it gives especial pleasure to be made the agent in this presentation.

# VII. THE WRITINGS OF JAMES MORGAN HART COMPILED BY CLARK S. NORTHUP

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(With G. T. Curtis.) A treatise on the law of patents for useful inventions, as enacted and administered in the United States of America. 3d ed. Boston. Little, Brown & Co. 1867. 8vo, pp. xxxviii, [2], 631.

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pp. 174-5.

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Kotzebue. Apr. 18, pp. 276-8.

Algae-like formations in diamonds. Apr. 25, p. 295. Friedrich von Gentz—his times and his literary remains. Apr. 25, p. 298.

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