

gresses or commemorative events. His social instincts were strong. He was a member of more than forty medical, historical, fraternal, and social organizations. At the time of his death he was Vice President General of the Society of the Cincinnati. Incredibly, he found time to write some four hundred books and articles, mostly on historical and biographical subjects. He was elected to this Society in October, 1951, in recognition of his work and in anticipation that he would be an active member. C. K. S.

VICTOR HUGH PALTSITS

Dr. Paltsits had attained the distinction of being the second oldest member of this Society when death claimed him on October 3, 1952. He was born in New York City on July 12, 1867, a son of William Thomas and Sidonia Ida (Loose) Paltsits. From the public schools he went to Cooper Institute, where from 1882 to 1886 he took scientific courses, working for two years of the period with Thomas A. Edison in his first machine shop. However, linguistics drew him, and at Columbia and with tutors he studied not only modern and classical languages, but ancient Egyptian and Coptic as well. In 1888 he entered the employ of the Lenox Library as reading-room attendant, and in the course of years worked up to the office of assistant librarian. He firmly believed that "the most enjoyable part of life is work," and he bemoaned the fact that life did not contain hours enough to permit him to do all of the historical research and editing which were waiting for his hand. Although the volume of his careful, meticulous writings is amazing, he had an equal appetite for the company of the librarians, bibliographers, book collectors, and historians, whom he found at the meetings of societies. Conscience

made him charge against his vacation periods the time lost from his job by attending such meetings; or perhaps he used this as an excuse to avoid taking the vacations which might separate him from his beloved books.

In 1907 Charles Evans Hughes appointed Paltsits to be Historian of the State of New York. Happily he settled in Albany for his life work, only to be turned out four years later to make way for a man of a different political complexion. This was the lowest period of his life. Bitter and shaken, he felt that he was now outside of the scholarly circle which he had so enjoyed. I. N. Phelps Stokes restored him by engaging him to assist in the compilation of *The Iconography of Manhattan Island*, and on this he labored practically full time until 1914, when he was called to be Keeper of the newly-created Division of Manuscripts in the New York Public Library. Here he had not only the kind of work which he liked and the place in the community which he desired, but the daily companionship of Wilberforce Eames, whom he loved with a passion rare among men, a devotion which grew despite daily contacts for almost fifty years.

Visiting scholars who knew Paltsits only by professional contact in the Manuscript Division seldom realized that there was a pleasant man behind his manner. He could pun well, and although an elder in the Presbyterian church he could write burlesque epistles in King James version English. He was vain about his scholarship and his honorary doctorates from Brown and Rutgers; but he was aware of this failing, and he retained his kindly affection for those friends who were obliged occasionally to deflate his ideas. He was an antiquarian rather than a librarian; he never realized that space, bulk, usefulness, and cost of accession must be taken into consideration in accepting materials, but he did not try to force his ideas of value upon others.

At the bottom of this failing was the fact that he was intensely interested in too much. An example of this is that he was a founder of the American Military History Foundation, the History of Science Society, and the Society of American Archivists. A fitting reward for his years of attending meetings was his term as president of the Bibliographical Society of America in 1938-39.

Paltsits was elected to the American Antiquarian Society in 1904, and immediately became one of its most devoted members. He appointed himself a committee of one to make New York authors present us with copies of their books. To our Proceedings he contributed papers on "A Scheme for the Conquest of Canada in 1746" (April 1905), "The Almanacs of Roger Sherman" (April 1907), "The Founding of New Amsterdam" (April 1924), and "New Light on 'Publick Occurrences,' America's First Newspaper" (April 1949). He was a sharp, but never an unreasonable critic of errors in the Proceedings, and was not himself a difficult author to edit. His cash contributions to the work of the Society were limited only by his purse and by the competing demands of like institutions. He saw no use for money, after the simplest demands of life had been taken care of, but the furtherance of knowledge. His retirement came in 1941, when taxes and inflation combined to make his pension inadequate. Cheerfully and without complaint he sold his books and manuscripts, instructing the auctioneer to send us all of the items which were passed. When he informed us of this he added, "Among the joys of life, this membership in the Society, among the best of men in the Nation, has been right in the front row, and the Society's praise has always been upon my lips, because a love for it has been in my heart." He was, although a casual acquaintance would hardly believe it, a very loving man.

For Dr. Paltsits retirement meant an increase in the incredible busy-ness of his life, the more incredible because years before he had had the warning of a heart attack. It struck again the day after he had written us that he intended to attend the October meeting. His wife, Anne Mueller, died in 1944. They had two children, Victor John and Florence (Mrs. Frederick W. Misch). C. K. S.

ABRAHAM SIMON WOLF ROSENBACH

When the news came that Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach had died on July 1, 1952, it came as a shock to his host of friends and associates, even although he had been hospitalized so many times in the last few years of his life. It seemed impossible that they would no longer have him to turn to for advice and information, to visit and converse with on literature and collecting, to absorb the enthusiasm and inspiration of his broad outlook upon life. Technically a dealer in rare books, he was primarily a bibliophile and a book collector—one of the greatest that the world has ever known. I knew him as a close friend for over forty years and I never went to New York or Philadelphia without visiting with him, often for days at a time. Therefore this cannot be an ordinary obituary sketch—a chronological record of his career and his achievements. In fact, such a summary, even if it covered only the high lights of his life, would require a volume of hundreds of pages. Much of the story is told in the Doctor's numerous contributions to learned periodicals, and especially in his entertaining volumes *Books and Bidders* and *A Book Hunter's Holiday*, and also in the lengthy necrològies which appeared in the newspapers at the time of his death.

For the record, a brief summary of his life follows. He was born in Philadelphia, July 22, 1876, the son of Morris

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