

As there seems to be some misapprehension in the public mind as to the relationship existing between this Society and the State, it may be well to make a brief explanation. It is a very simple question when properly understood. Chapter 24 of the Revised Statutes expressly declares that the "*Society shall be the trustee of the State; and, as such, shall faithfully expend and apply all money received from the State to the uses and purposes directed by law, and shall hold all its present and future collections and property for the State;*" and then goes on to prohibit the Society from selling, mortgaging, or transferring, or in any manner removing from the capitol any article without the consent of the legislature, except the sale or exchange of duplicates. The Governor, secretary of state and state treasurer shall be *ex officio* members of the executive committee, and take care that the interests of the State are protected. These State officers compose a majority of the library committee, who direct and order the purchase of books.

If, then, the Society is *the trustee of the State*, and holds all its present and future collections and property *for the State*, can the matter of ownership be for a moment doubted?

It is a painful reflection, that we have so frequently of late been deprived of the fellowship and counsel of worthy associates in this board. Last year we were called upon to lament the death of Prof. S. H. Carpenter; and now we have to deplore the departure of Judge L. B. Vilas, Gen. G. B. Smith, and Gen. H. C. Bull—all early laborers in the Society's behalf, serving it long and well in our annual and committee meetings, and in the halls of legislation.

Judge Vilas was elected a life member of the Society in January, 1856; contributed his portrait to our picture gallery; and was chosen a member of the executive committee in 1866, serving in that capacity till his death, always evincing a warm interest in the Society.

Gen. Smith became a member of the Society in 1854, and a member of the executive committee in 1861, serving nearly nineteen consecutive years in the board, and rendering the Society