

painstaking effort and earnest toil, he accumulated a fortune, without soiling his hands or darkening his soul with ill-gotten gains.

Like most men, Judge Vilas had an ambition to stand well with the people. He desired popularity, if he could secure it without the sacrifice of principle, or his own independence as a man. He would not "stoop to conquer." Whenever popular passion, prejudice or feeling came in conflict with his own well-matured convictions, of what was right and just, he never hesitated one moment to pursue the independent path, although he knew that the consequence would be disastrous to himself personally.

Our own beautiful city of Madison is today enjoying the lasting benefits of this strong element in his character. While he was mayor, he inaugurated reforms and improvements which have since become permanent, although he sacrificed a re-election to secure them; and he well knew the popular feeling and prejudice that threatened him when he proposed the reforms. All honor to such men—men who dare to be right at the expense of popularity. In the end, they have their reward, for when passion has subsided, and the clouds of prejudice have rolled away, their characters and memories shine out in the lustre of a more perfect day.

I could say much more of the well-remembered dead, whose mortal remains have so long reposed out yonder on Forest Hill. I could not well say less, for he still lingers fresh and green in my memory; and as time passes, and the mists of prejudice and mistaken ideas fade away, the real virtues and the large merits of the man beam forth with increased radiance.

Judge Vilas has left behind him a marked individuality, which gives him a distinct and permanent place in the history of his times. His faults and his errors are already forgotten, but his strong intellectuality, his devotion to principle, his fidelity to truth, and what he believed to be right, will never fade from the recollections of men. He is now among the choice few who have been taken from us by death, within the last four years, whose places have not been filled, and who are still missed as much as they were on the day they died. There are three great and noble names in this list, Judge Ryan, L. B. Vilas, and Geo. B. Smith—