

contributions—in order to enable the executive commission to do its work. Although his endowment has not yet been fully doubled, contributions besides his own have far exceeded in number and amount any ever before made to the Singletax cause in the United States. As a result, the people of this country are moving rapidly on to the point of realizing Mr. Fels' original object of putting the Singletax in operation somewhere in the United States by 1914.*

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Hostile Testimony to Singletax Progress.

One of the interesting evidences of Singletax progress is that which some of its more thoughtful but imprudent adversaries unwittingly furnish. Take, for instance, the movement for the relief of congestion in New York City, under the leadership of Benjamin C. Marsh† as executive secretary of the Committee on Congestion of Population in New York. This movement has before the legislature of New York a bill that would reduce taxes on buildings, relatively to sites, in New York City by one-half. That is, a building would be taxed only half as much as its site, their values being the same, or of a vacant lot of equal value. It is essentially the Vancouver plan, as far as it goes; and the exemption is to be progressive—a reduction of taxes on buildings in such equal amounts annually as to bring about the complete 50 per cent exemption of improvements with the fifth year. No one attempts to argue against this congestion reform. Every one of any intelligence at all admits that it would be better than the present system; and nearly everybody admits that it would tend to reduce congestion, as of course it would. But the bill was bitterly fought, and was postponed until the reassembling of the legislature on the 6th of September, and it may be defeated, because—because what, do you suppose? *Because it would be an entering wedge for the Singletax!*

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If that is the best kind of fight that New York landlordism can put up, New York landlordism had better quit fighting. A better system of taxation; but don't adopt it, for it would let in the Singletax! A good method for getting rid of congestion in a crowded city; but don't adopt it,

*Persons wishing to know more about this phase of the Singletax movement should write for information to Daniel Kiefer, Chairman Fels Fund Commission, Cincinnati, Ohio.

†Mr. Marsh may be addressed for information as follows: Benjamin C. Marsh, Executive Secretary, The Committee on Congestion of Population in New York, Room 506, 320 Broadway, New York City.

for it would let in the Singletax! If the Singletax has indeed reached the point of popularity in New York at which it must be guarded against to the extent of opposing improvements in taxation and of clinging to disease-breeding and death-dealing hives for the homes of the poor, there is no use in fighting the Singletax any longer. If a mere halving of taxes on buildings, throwing only that much of their present burden over upon the monopolists of building sites, would open the way for the full Singletax, then the full Singletax is already upon the threshold,—then the feet of the young men are at the door, for the dying body of landlordism lies within. We hope that these fears of land monopolists are well founded; but we should suppose that even so, they themselves would be ashamed to make such an appeal. Think of it! In the face of congested conditions which enrich them at the expense of the labor and the lives of their brethren, they oppose an ameliorative measure because it would be an entering wedge for the Singletax!

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WILLIAM THOMAS CROASDALE.*

William Thomas Croasdale has been dead twenty years, yet those who knew and loved the man can hardly think of him as other than alive. So vigorous was his personality, so strong the impact of his mind and character upon those with whom he came in daily contact, that all such must remember him to their dying day as one of the most vivid incidents of their experience.

His life was comparatively short, without striking incident or startling adventure; and measured by merely material standards, without considerable success. Judged, however, by the impress he made upon those about him, by his practical usefulness to the Singletax movement and other public causes, by the energy with which he thought and wrought, Croasdale's life was one of distin-

*This editorial is by a Boston newspaper man and publicist, Edward N. Vallandigham, who was an editorial associate of Mr. Croasdale's on the *Wilmington Evening* in the early eighties, and an editorial writer for *The Standard* at the time of Mr. Croasdale's death. The medallion of Mr. Croasdale, of which a photograph appears in the body of the article, is by Mr. Croasdale's friend, E. Stuart Hinton, now of Chicago, the sculptor who modeled a bust of Mr. Croasdale for the Reform Club of New York City in 1892, a plaster replica of which is owned by the Manhattan Single Tax Club. Mr. Hinton's medallion is an excellent likeness and full of character. For the fine photograph of it we are indebted to Alfred Cox (935 McClurg Building, Chicago), a photographer of many distinguished persons, who is justly famous for the painter-like quality of his photographic portraits. Platinum copies, 7 inches by 9 inches (loose-mounted on rough gray paper sheets), may be had of him for two dollars each, postpaid.

guished success and even more distinguished promise.

His life was of unvarying usefulness, steady personal growth, perfect probity, and enduring fortitude, crowned with the respect of all who knew him, with the enthusiastic love, loyalty and admiration of his friends.

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Croasdale was a Delawarean by birth and a Quaker by inheritance, employing upon occasion the "plain language" throughout his whole life. His father, a man of small means, died in the son's youth, and seems to have left little or no impress upon his character. His mother, a woman of high character, native force, and quick intelligence, owed the comfort of a beautiful old age to the son, and undoubtedly endowed him with an inheritance of her own vigorous qualities.

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He was all his life an active journalist. In the early 70's of the last century, when less than 30 years old, he founded at Wilmington a newspaper to which he gave the happily distinctive name of *Every Evening*. From the first he edited this paper with a vigor that made it a power in that small community, and won its editorial page respectful consideration all over the country.

His Quaker up-bringing and his loyalty to the Union at the time of the Civil War naturally placed Croasdale in the Republican party. But the scandals of Grant's second administration excited his disgust, and the contested election of 1876 found him in earnest sympathy with the Democratic party, though his editorial page still maintained an attitude of great independence. He finally became the steady advocate of Thomas F. Bayard for the Presidency.

Brilliant and enterprising as *Every Evening* was, it did not at this time prove a financial success, and Croasdale in 1883 became the editor and titular owner of the *Baltimore Day*, founded upon the ruins of the *Gazette*, and backed by the capital of men who had faith in him, and who, I fancy, hoped with him for Mr. Bayard's nomination by the Democratic national convention of 1884.

In Baltimore Croasdale tried to make his paper an accredited Democratic organ. The vigorous character of his editorial writing was instantly recognized, and the *Day* for a time rapidly grew in circulation. But his strong sense of right and his unquenchable public spirit soon led him into advocating movements in opposition to the corrupt local Democracy. He fought valiantly also

for the interests of organized labor, and rattled the dry bones of Baltimore journalism in a fashion to scandalize that staid community.

By this time he had begun to be interested in the Singletax, as it has since come to be known, and soon after his removal to Baltimore he made the acquaintance of Henry George. The *Day* failed at length because those who were furnishing the capital felt unable to wait for success, and Croasdale in 1885 went to New York to become associate editor of the *Star* with William Dorsheimer, who had recently been Lieutenant Governor of that State, as editor-in-chief.

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On the *Star*, which traced its lineage back to the *Sun*, Croasdale's native vigor shone in his editorial work, and he was extremely happy in his new connection until he discovered that the paper was the subsidized organ of a railway company then striving to evade its lawful obligations to the Federal government. This was enough for him, even had not his growing interest in Henry George and the Singletax idea made him eager to be freed of trammels. He resigned from the *Star*, and after a vain attempt to reconcile himself to the editorial service of the *Evening Post*, he joined Mr. George in the editorship of the *Standard*, of which he became editor-in-chief when Mr. George gave up active connection with the paper. He was its editor when he died.

Croasdale was active with Mr. George in the United Labor party movement of 1886-87, having contributed editorially to the *Leader*, the *George* daily in the mayoral contest of 1886, and been a political leader of the party in the election of 1887. But, like Mr. George, he hailed with joy Cleveland's tariff reform message of 1887, and therefore threw himself eagerly into the Democratic campaign of 1888. In the latter year he organized the Singletaxers of the United States in support of Cleveland on the ground of their being freetraders and of Cleveland's representing the political tendency toward free trade. Out of this nucleus he afterward organized the first Singletax conference.

Croasdale's five years in New York were the happiest and most active of his strenuous life. There in the growing group of Singletaxers and among the active tariff reformers in the *Reform Club* he enjoyed intellectual companionship, while in the great issues of the day he found scope for his aggressive and energetic spirit.

He threw himself not only into the Singletax movement, but into the movement for ballot re-

form, and for tariff reform. He ran for Congress in 1890 as an independent Democrat in a strongly Tammany district, and developed unexpected effectiveness as a public speaker. Harper's Weekly, then under the editorship of George William Curtis, gave him generous newspaper support, while

who knew him despair of communicating to those who did not. In youth he was slender, nervous, a bit choleric, with red-brown hair, red-brown eyes, and a light curling red mustache. Ten or twelve years before his death he took on flesh, though, in spite of an old malady that made him careful of his movements, and in spite of increasing weight, he was still active. The power of the man was carried in his ample brow and speaking eyes.

He wrote admirably well, but never half so well as he talked. His talk, indeed, accentuated by a quaint impediment of speech, was deliciously vivid, brilliant, witty. With Croasdale, however, wit was never a mere decoration of speech. It was, so to speak, like the soundest architectural ornamentation, strictly structural, and one with the essence of what he had to say.

Brilliant and sustained talker though he was, he was also an excellent listener if anyone had aught to the purpose to say, and his own gift of wit did not prevent his according the most generous appreciation to the wit of others, even when it was directed against himself.

He was a most delightful man to work with, for while he had a volcanic impatience that sometimes expressed itself in hasty words, he was never ungenerous, never inappreciative, never arrogant toward his subordinates. Those who worked with Croasdale, even upon failing ventures, caught something of his magnificent courage, shared his often unjustified optimism, and sympathized with his enthusiasms. One felt that defeat was better under such a commander than victory with one less generous and less courageous.

His friendly smile was like an illumination, and the dimple oddly set in his rough cheek and reserved for the many good women who gave him their confidence and friendship, was a delightful thing to see. Strangers often hated him, for his speech was frequently loud and more than occasionally rough and frank; but he soon conquered the affection and enlisted the undying loyalty of those who could read beneath the surface. He and Tom L. Johnson were as chummy as two boys. But toward Henry George, who held him in high respect and trusted friendship, he had more the reserve of a pupil, though one addicted to taking liberties, than their intimacy might have seemed to warrant.

Night after night Croasdale held forth at the Reform Club to a group of delighted listeners, pouring out witticisms that kept the company in a roar, listening with prompt appreciation to any good thing from those about him, taking his full

W. T. Croasdale

Thomas G. Shearman, Richard Watson Gilder (of the Century) and other such men financed his campaign; and he had a group of enthusiastic workers among tariff reformers, Singletaxers and workingmen. But the Tammany machine triumphed.

In less than a year after that Croasdale died at Merriewold Park, of which he was one of the originators, at the age of 48. His funeral was at the rooms of the Manhattan Singletax Club, 73 Lexington Avenue, New York, where Father Huntington conducted the Episcopal burial service and Henry George made the address. His body was cremated at Fresh Pond on Long Island, and the ashes were buried in his mother's grave at the Friends' burial ground in Prospect Park, Brooklyn.

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Croasdale the man, is a personality that those

share of drink, laughing at and with his friends, and leaving upon the minds of strangers who were often fetched in for the express purpose of hearing him talk, an indelible impression of vigor, generosity and sincerity.

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Such a man, so uncalculating in his devotion to the causes that appealed to his sense of right, so loyal to friends, so aggressive and indomitable, yet so nice of conscience, so unswervingly truthful, so transparently frank, so ready to give his time and energy without hesitation or stint, was a host in the Singletax battle.

His earnings were never large, yet he always maintained a comfortable home for his mother, and did his part in his ordinary social intercourse with men. Toward the end of his life he was left, by the death of his mother, without near relatives. After that his preoccupation with public affairs increased, though there never was a time when he did not indulge his natural and wholesome taste for human companionship.

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There came a time when an acute condition of a chronic malady made it necessary that he undergo a surgical operation from which it seemed extremely problematical whether he could recover. He came through the operation well, however, and during his weeks of confinement at Bellevue Hospital was the most cheerful of patients, receiving callers with his accustomed good fellowship and lively banter, and eventually coming out with the reasonable expectation of being physically sounder than for at least twenty years.

He ought, in the natural order of things, to have lived to old age, if, indeed, anyone can imagine Croasdale as old; but early in August, 1891, he fell ill at Merriewold, out of reach of medical aid acquainted with his pathological history, of what was diagnosed at first as typhoid fever and may have been that, and in a few days the man to whom so many looked for inspiration, the loyal comrade, the valiant fighter in many a good cause, was dead.

At the news of his death there was a surprising expression of regret, admiration and affection from many different sources—from those who had gone with him the whole length as a Singletaxer unlimited; from active tariff reformers, who had a very incomplete sympathy with his more radical aims; from conservatives who valued him for the honest, vigorous, outspoken man he was. His death left his near friends fairly dazed and half incredulous.

As to the Singletax cause, it suffered in Croasdale's death a loss that those who knew him best cannot but feel has never yet been repaired. We miss him in every new struggle, and who shall say how often in the past 20 years the words have been on the lips of his old associates, "If Croasdale were only here!" or the thought in their hearts that one blast upon his bugle horn were worth a thousand men.

EDWARD N. VALLANDIGHAM.

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"WE SELL THE EARTH."

Sometimes an every-day phrase illuminates whole centuries of history and epochs of human thought. It has often seemed to me that the little real estate advertising phrase which forms the subject of this article rivals in its cold unimaginative brutality that famous remark of the great French queen when she was told that the people had no bread. "And why do they not then eat cake?" she replied.

I remember that many years ago I came out of the mining camps of Trinity, and into a new and lively town. Stretched across the main street was a gorgeous banner, and it bore the motto in letters three feet long, "*We sell the Earth. John Jones & Co.*"

My companion on that long ride was a young school teacher named Roberts, a noted worker and student, a power for good in three counties. His early death was a distinct loss to the higher life of many a mountain community.

Roberts reined up, looked at the great sign overhead, and spoke to a member of the real estate firm who stood in his office doorway.

"My friend, you have a beautiful new sign," he said. "Will you let a mountaineer who does not know much, fasten a mild little comment upon it, down there, in the left-hand corner?"

Something about Roberts usually gave him his way with people. The real estate man laughed, and said, "You can't hurt our sign—go ahead, stranger."

Then Roberts crossed the street, obtained a large sheet of wrapping paper, and a huge crayon pencil. "*The Earth is the Lord's and the Fullness Thereof,*" he wrote, and riding up to the great canvas sign he fastened it on the corner. A little group of idlers gathered, and one or two religious-minded persons began to quote other apropos texts at the real-estate man.

"Didn't the Almighty give the earth to man to use as he pleased," said Jones a little stirred up by the situation.