

THE STANDARD / 31 August, 1892

By: Louis F. Post

VALEDICTORY.—One year ago, William T. Croasdale, then the editor of THE STANDARD, suddenly died, having almost with his last breath asked me to take charge of the paper. I promised, and for two weeks conducted it as temporary editor. Subsequently, at the urgent request of subscribers in all parts of the country, accompanied with promises of active co-operation, and in accordance with the wishes of its friends here, I assumed permanent editorial control. The circumstances seemed to make this imperative; but it was with strong misgivings and reluctantly that I accepted the responsibility, and in doing so I warned the friends of the paper that unless they increased its circulation it must be abandoned. After a full year's trial they have not succeeded, and I am forced to the conclusion that THE STANDARD can live only by means of an interminable succession of special contributions. That was Henry George's conclusion two years ago, when he favored its suspension but deferred to the opinions of others, and my experience has verified his judgment, THE STANDARD will not be published again:

It is usual, in closing the business of a subscription paper, to arrange with some other paper to serve as its successor in filling unexpired subscriptions, and Percy Pepon has kindly offered for this purpose the St. Louis Courier, the local single tax paper of that city. In the opinion, however, of such of those as I have been able to consult, whose special support in the past entitles their advice to special consideration now, THE STANDARD should have no successor, directly or indirectly, but with its last issue should absolutely cease to exist. After consultation, I coincide in that view; and I believe that it will be most acceptable to the great majority of STANDARD readers.

But there is an embarrassment in connection with it. The assets of the business are not more than enough to pay regular liabilities and return subscriptions received since the decision to suspend, and funds for the repayment of unexpired subscriptions must be contributed by those who have already contributed more than their share. Some subscribers, those who have been interested in having the paper established, regard themselves as associates with the larger contributors whose liberality has made its publication possible and from whose further contributions the refunding of unexpired subscriptions must be made, and would be averse to receiving back

any part of their subscription money. But these subscribers cannot be distinguished, without an extensive personal correspondence, from those who, having had no special interest in the paper, will expect a proportionate return. To meet this difficulty with the least expense, and so as to leave the least possible cause for just complaint, subscribers who wish a return of their unexpired subscriptions are requested to notify the publisher to that effect prior to September 21, 1892. On that date all accounts will be closed, and it will be assumed that unclaimed subscriptions are voluntarily contributed toward the expenses of final settlement. Unexpired subscriptions claimed on or before that date will be refunded as fully as possible. Meantime, all subscribers who order tracts or back numbers of THE STANDARD will be credited upon their orders to the amount of the subscriptions due them, according to the terms of the publisher's announcement which appears on the first page of the cover.

To many, the news of THE STANDARD's suspension will be painful. For myself, while I regret the necessity, I am personally relieved by it ; and for other than personal reasons I welcome the situation. Single tax men who have money to spend in aid of the cause spend it to greater advantage than by making special contributions for the support of a central organ. The doctrine is now generally understood; a very large number of publications frequently and fairly bring it to the attention of their readers; and many of these intelligently and persistently advocate it; while the Pepon syndicate, of St. Louis, supplies a growing constituency with local missionary journals, and the New Earth of New York especially addresses those who are chiefly interested in the moral and religious aspects of the question. A central organ is, therefore, no longer needed. A regular news letter containing items of special interest to single tax men would be useful, but that can and will be provided by *Justice*, of Philadelphia, the oldest single tax paper except THE STANDARD, and which I take pleasure in commending, as also by the *St. Louis Courier* by which it will doubtless be equally well done.

In the past THE STANDARD played an important, almost a vital part. There were times when its usefulness was beyond computation. One of these was when many were inclined to regard socialism as a kindred reform; and there was another, when a corrupt attempt was made to bring the single tax movement to the support of protectionism. But those times are now happily past, There is longer any excuse for misunderstanding the single tax idea; the movement has spread far

beyond THE STANDARD's constituency, far beyond the clubs, and beyond all organized or concentrated effort; the general press is doing our work among newspaper readers; public men are doing it in political circles; neighbors are doing it among neighbors; the single tax is in the air. A process of diffusion is going on all the time. It transcends the limits of any organ; it touches and converts those who never heard of single tax organs or organizations, and would not care for them if they did. It is changing the channel of men's thoughts. It is making a visible mark upon public opinion. The movement is stronger than ever -- stronger than ten years ago the most sanguine among us hoped for. Not the organized movement, which has never been strong; but the movement of the idea, which has now secured a hold that makes its advance to final victory only a question of time,

The time will come, it is probably not far off when a powerful organized single tax movement will spring up as if in the night, and outspoken single tax men will be found on every hand. Nothing is needed for this but the occasion, and the occasion in these days of unsettled politics may appear at any moment. Meanwhile, it may be that THE STANDARD, instead of serving, might be a burden. At all events, I have in the progress of this cause mourned over so many seeming disasters, which soon proved to be blessings in disguise, that I am disposed to look upon the death of THE STANDARD as another event of that character.

It certainly need excite no alarm in the breast of anyone as to the cause so dear to us all. It indicates no decline, no falling off. That the paper has not been self-supporting during the past year argues nothing. Like the whole class of periodicals usually described as "propaganda papers," both in the past and the present, it has never been self-supporting. As it was with William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*, and the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, so has it been with THE STANDARD. Papers of this class cannot be self-supporting. As Mr. George has often said, while the reform they advocate is unpopular the demand for the kind of reading matter they supply is small; and as the reform grows in popularity and the demand for such reading matter increases, the general press with its superior facilities furnishes an ample supply. As their cause succeeds they die.

To enumerate all for whose assistance in the past year I am deeply indebted would be impossible, and to name a few would be invidious. It is therefore best that I name none. Yet I cannot justly omit a

reference to Edward N. Vallandigham, who has rendered frequent and timely aid, to George St. John Leavens, who in the business management has been a most efficient coadjutor, nor to Henry George, Jr., whose letters from Washington, all freely contributed, have for months been the most attractive and interesting feature of THE STANDARD.

I have said that, while glad my task is ended, I regret the necessity. This is but natural. In common with all the old readers of THE STANDARD, it is with a pang I realize that it is dead. But my regret goes deeper. I have been associated with it from the start, its friends have been my friends, its work my work, and I part with it as with an old and cherished companion.
