Dropping the Editorial "We."

When I first began to write editorials, which was the day I first embarked in the newspaper business, January, 1903, I hesitated long about adopting the style in general use by editors when giving their opinions.

I refer to the ancient custom of writing "we" instead of "I" in editorials.

Conscious of my poor equipment for the task I had set for myself, I decided that it would be unwise to make my writings conspicuous by a departure from the recognized form, because unusual attention would surely bring out the weak spots all through them.

With shaking hand I penned the first "we," although it went against the grain to do it, for, I knew then, as I know now that there is no sense in it.

The excuse given for the editorial "we" is, that it softens the appearance of conceit in the use of the big I.

But that is no excuse at all.

Listen to Tom Watson talking in the September number of his Magazine:

"Indeed there is only one of me. If there were two or three of us, it would be different. If I were a king, and spoke for all my people it would be proper for me to say 'we.'

"In talking to a friend, it is not considered conceited when one refers to himself as 'I.' In addressing a crowd the orator shocks nobody when he alludes to himself as 'I.' Why, then, should the same man in talking to his readers in newspaper, book or magazine call himself 'we'?

"Why should a little one gallus editor, whose opinions, as an individual, are worth nothing at all to any living mortal, swell out his chest and call himself 'we'?

Literary styles are made by the best writers, just as certainly as millinery styles are made by the best designers.

If there is any better writer than Tom Watson living today, he has escaped me completely.

Now, as there is only one of me, and as the opinions expressed on this page are my opinions, given for what they are worth, with a due and painful sense of their lack of quality, with no hope for them whatever, save that they may be considered fairly and charitably, I have decided to drop the editorial "we."

There never was any reason for using it except custom, and, as I have said before, custom awes me not, unless it carries good sense with it.

CLAUDE L'ENGLE.

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"The Heathen Chinee is Peculiar."

"Tricks of the trade" is an expression from which frequent usage has taken the shame of the practices described by it.

The seller of fruit carefully packs his strawberries with the small ones on the bottom and the big ones on top. The grocery man weighs in the wooden platter with the butter, and the paper sack with the sugar. The meat packer paints his spoiled hams, the syrup manufacturer puts in glucose, the milk vender adds water, the dry goods man cuts his cloth short, the lawyer conceals from his client the weak points in his case, and the doctor feels his patient's pulse, looks wise, and proscribes bread pills.

All these are "tricks of the trade," and no trade is free from them.

Competition is keen, and the chance of failure great, and in the scramble for success men often lose sight of the fine points of rugged honesty, if I may be permitted a paradox, and do things without thinking, which they would be shocked to see done by others.

It is a fierce struggle in which no favor is shown, no quarter given, this fight for business that enables the private citizen to keep the wolf from the door.

There are some concerns that are specially protected by the trend of modern court decisions, and by the acts of law making bodies.

For instance, so often have the courts declared it, that it is a rule of law which nobody now questions, that public corporations shall be permitted to fix their rates HIGH ENOUGH TO POCURE A REASONABLE INTEREST on the money invested, after expenses are paid, and that this right SHALL NOT BE INTERFERED WITH by taxation or regulation of rates.

Railroads are thus put in a special class, for the courts guarantee them a profitable business.

No specter of failure, that haunts the pillow of the merchant or the farmer, disturbs the calm repose of the holder of railroad stocks and bonds.

The railroads can compel the shippers, these merchants and farmers, to pay rates high enough TO MAKE RAILROADING PAY.

Insured against failure in business by the courts, the railroad directors look with scornful eyes at the tax assessor, and the world in general, including the railroad rate regulators whom the people have chosen.

The railroad business is a corked-up, lead pipe cinch, that makes a faro bank look like a search for the north pole.

It is true that railroads are subject to interference by commissions and are regulated by laws enacted which apply only to them.

It is also true that merchants, farmers, professional men and all the rest of us, are free from interference by commissions and special laws.

Railroads are hampered by special provisions, but are INSURED A GOOD LIVING, by the courts.

All the rest of mankind are free, but it's a case of "root hog or die."

Get together a bunch of farmers, and say to them—"You fellows must be regulated. You are too free. There must be a Farmers Commission. But, while we regulate you, the courts will declare and SEE THAT IT'S CARRIED OUT that you can charge and GET enough for your products to INSURE A FAIR PROFIT EACH YEAR"—and the farmers, to a man, will say—"Trot out your commission and trot her out quick."

Say the same thing to the merchants, and hear them clamor to be regulated.

Then go on down the line, and when you get through, there'll be more different kinds of commissions than there are varieties of beetles, which the last time I noticed the figures ran up into the thousands.

The railroad business being insured against failure by the benign judges of our most high, mighty and worthy Supreme Court, should not be allowed to use "tricks of the trade" for the exploiting of the public which has been so good to them.

Here is an example of the practice of this unnecessary evil.

The Seaboard Air Line owns the road running from Tampa down through Manatee County to Palmetto, and is extending it still further.

It is not called the Seaboard Air Line. It has another name.

"Tricks of the Trade."

The management of both roads adopted the playful practice of charging on shipments starting north of Tampa, consigned to points along the other division called by another name, the through competitive rate to Tampa, and the FULL LOCAL RATE from Tampa to destination.

The Seaboard is still doing this in spite of the ruling of the Railroad Commission to the contrary.

Complaint being made by shippers, the Commission ordered a hearing and finding the facts to warrant it, brought mandamus proceedings in the State Supreme Court to compel the Seaboard to operate the extension as part of the main line, and charge accordingly.

The Supreme Court decided in favor of the Commission and the Seaboard promptly appealed the case to the United States Supreme Court.

Justice Taylor, who was then Chief Justice and had the authority, granted the railroad a supersedeas, which being translated means that the railroad can go on charging and COLLECTING the through rate to Tampa plus the full local rate to destination, on shipments over the Manatee County extension.

This happened nearly two years ago, and no decision being forthcoming, up to this writing, the same old "tricks of the trade" are still going on.

The same old Seaboard is now building a road from Tallahassee to Perry. It has called this baby "The Tallahassee, Perry and Southeastern," but IT'S THE SEABOARD all right. Judge Raney and Capt. Maxwell are officers of the new road, and both of these gentlemen are high up on the salary list of the Seaboard.

"Tricks of the trade" again.

Better start another mandamus suit, gentlemen of the Railroad Commission.

And while you are about it, you may as well look into some other new roads now building.

Maybe you'll find some more "tricks of the trade."

"FOR TRICKS T R

The Times-Union defines a demagogue as one who appeals to a prejudice to induce men to vote against their own interest. That's one definition. Here's another: A demagogue is one who tries to deceive the people into believing HIS interest is THEIR interest, and into voting accordingly.

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Nestor Harris of the Ocala Banner is trying to tag this journal with the hated word "Organ." If you really want to find out how hard it is to play on us, Mr. Harris, write to the Jacksonville Gum Bunch. If we had been willing to be an "Organ" we could have been an "Orchestrial Pipe."

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I hope that the three Jacksonville Carnival fakirs, Wilson, Carter and Holloman, have turned over a new leaf, and will give the people a change from the rotten shows they dosed them with two years ago. I suggest as an evidence of good faith, that they give a free pass to every man who spent his good money to see the last fake pulled off by them. That was the worst ever.