

OFFICIAL REPORT

NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

—OF THE—

National Brick Manufacturers' Association,

—HELD AT—

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self before he finishes. You see he has the same initials as myself, and there is said to be much virtue in these honest Johns. Before yielding to him, I will relate a brief anecdote, that I think is quite apropos.

A story in which pathos is mingled with humor comes from one of the poorest districts of the East End of London.

A minister a few weeks ago gave a poor boy a warm suit of clothes, which seemed to the little fellow as he put them on something like a dream of what heaven must be. More than a week passed away, and the minister met his little friend again. Knowing the boy's home and the drunken father who had broken it up and pawned it all for drink, he was pleased and surprised to find that the boy still wore the suit.

"Still wearing your suit?" he said.

There was a world of pathos in the boy's reply:

"Yes, sir; I've slept in it!"

THE PERFECT BRICK.

DR. JOHN W. STAGG, Birmingham, Ala.

Mr. Toastmaster, Ladies and Gentlemen, my Fellow Countrymen: I use that last word with men, it impresses the women also. I love everything American, and have a great deal of sympathy with the spirit of the old New England farmer who met one of his kinsmen who had returned from the West and told him about the remarkable soil. "Well," said the old farmer, "I don't want to go any place where I can't put my spade down and feel a rock." (Laughter.)

I have a great deal of admiration for that "get up and git sprit" of the West. I knew a man from Ohio who went out to North Dakota. He landed in some such weather as this. He did not like the country and so started back home. A man met him on the way, and said, "Where are you coming from?" He said "North Dakota." "Where did you get that calf," he asked. "Well, I met a man going out there, and he had this calf and I traded him forty acres of land for it, but when I found the darn fool couldn't read I worked off eighty acres on him." (Laughter and applause.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have a great deal of love and affection for the man that I heard a lecturer in Boston tell about. Three soldiers were returning home immediately after the war. They were hatless, coatless and shoeless, and one brawny fellow said to the others, "Boys, I am going home to my wife and raise a crop, and then if the blamed Yanks follow me again, I'll lick 'em again. (Laughter.) When you take these three characters and combine them, will you count it anything but American?"

We do not look on Lincoln and Grant as men who killed our kin, but we look on them as men led by God to work out the great problem, and you will not look upon Lee and Jackson as men who killed your kin, but men of God to help a great section work out a problem that neither understood, but we understand it now. (Applause.)

However, I am glad to see from the West and North and East, people in this Southern city of Birmingham in the State of Alabama. I was to speak on brick, and I believe you have ruled out Egypt. Don't you know brickmakers have kicked up a good deal of fuss ever since that time they built the tower of Babel? (Laughter.) The brickmaker was the chief instrument needed and he caused a great deal of trouble about that time, and brickmakers have played a considerable part in this world ever since. I am reminded of another story. A brick layer was laying up a wall and just as an old darkey passed, a brick slipped out of his hand and landed on the old darkey's head, and he thought he had killed him sure, and first then the old darkey looked up, and said, "Look heah, don't you drop any mo' brick down that way, you might hurt my haid." (Laughter.)

I am here to talk about beautiful brick. Brick are not simply used for laying the foundation of the house, but they belong to the world of art, and this great Association of fine men from all the length and breadth of this great country of ours are as much concerned in beautifying the world as any collection of men that ever came together anywhere. It is the power of the soul to keep itself clean and show a sharp outline of the beauty of the mind. Have you ever noticed how much art is indebted to brick? Not long since, I was passing one of these stores, and of course it was a sharp man from the North that said to me, "We want a brickmaker who has soul enough to sacrifice himself and leave out of consideration for the time being the material value that is in everything he puts upon the market, and is of as much value to the world as Ruskin saw when he suggested that beauty that belongs to the natural grain of the wood." It is true that you are dealing with dirt, but the man who is able to transmute in this world is the great man. You transmute the dirt into a thing of beauty until you make a palace fit for a king or mansion for the millionaire and you lift the populace until they dream of something better and more beautiful. Therefore, I pray the blessing of God upon any craft of men who bind themselves together to do their work better and more honestly. It has risen above that which is small, and up to that which is highest to bring into the principles of the man moved by the warmth of his soul, to ask how can I take my vocation and so dedicate it to the service of mankind that the world shall be brighter and better and more beautiful. You have that power in your Association, and I am glad to see that you have the good sense, some of you ugly men, to bring along your good wives and even up this thing until it is as good looking a body as I ever saw. (Laughter.)

I thought at first, I would take a text, and I thought I would preach from the one "Flee from the wrath to come." You may think I have never had any experience in brickmaking, but I have. I undertook once to make six million brick in order to use 2,000,000 that would cost me nothing, and I had a rare experience, and just as I had 300,000 brick in the kiln, the whole side wall fell down, and the foreman lost his head, and finally I got together about 150 colored men and I mixed up a puddle of mud and set to work to daub up the side and the corner, and the next day was Sunday and we had to work pretty fast, and a day or so after, I heard one of the

colored men talking about it and he said, "The whole side of that kiln fell in, and Mr. Little done lost his hald, but the preacher, he took hold and he made the men work like Hell, and he saved the kiln." (Prolonged laughter and applause.)

Just one more story I want to tell you, and I tell it under the protest of my wife. It is the story of a man who worked at a hotel up in the Blue Ridge Mountains. There came to the hotel an Englishman, and this man who worked at the hotel was telling a comrade of his about this Englishman. He said, "We had an Englishman over at the hotel, and we were talking about a big deer we had killed, and he said they had bigger deer than that in England. I couldn't contradict him, because I had never been in England. Somebody went fishing and caught some great big trout and I showed them to the Englishman and he said they had bigger trout than that in England, and I could not contradict him, because I had never been over there. And I thought I would find something bigger than they had in England. One day I found a big mud turtle and I took him up stairs and put him in the Englishman's bed, and then I hid and waited until the Englishman came up stairs and went into his room, and began to get ready for bed. Then presently I heard him yell, "Murder, murder, take him off, take him off!" and I let him thresh around a while, and then I looked in and I said "That's an American bedbug; have you got any in England bigger than that?" (Laughter and applause.)

Toastmaster Sibley: Ain't he a brick? A "perfect brick"? (Applause). I think it is very appropriate at this time to hear from a brickmaker, "The Impressions of a Tenderfoot," Mr. Daniel E. Reagan, Terre Haute, Ind. (Applause).

THE IMPRESSION OF A "TENDERFOOT."

DANIEL E. REAGAN, Terre Haute, Ind.

Mr. Toastmaster, Ladies and Brickmakers: I think there is some mistake about this. Brother Randall accosted me this evening in the hotel lobby and said, "Mr. Reagan, we are up against it." I said "What do you mean by that?" He said, "Well the man who was to respond to the toast, "The Tenderfoot" has disappointed us, and we want you to deliver a little toast on that subject," and I told him I would. Now, having partaken of this splendid hospitality in this beautiful city of Birmingham, I could most assuredly better respond to the toast, "The Impression of a Tender Heart" than "The Impressions of a Tenderfoot." (Applause.) And more especially, my friends, since most of the time I have spent in the city, my feet have been either under the table or under a car seat going "round the Horn." (Laughter and applause.) We went about 40 miles around the horn in five hours. In Indiana we can beat that, we go around a horn in about two minutes with three fingers. (Laughter.) Really, ladies and gentlemen, I felt so embarrassed when I got up that what few ideas I did have, have deserted me, and you can imagine how I feel to stand up before 400 or 500 most intelligent and intellectual people. I have been surprised ever since I came, for I came down here expecting to hear something about burning brick, and I