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I.—LITERARY.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF UNION THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

BY PROF. W. W. MOORE.

I. THE BEGINNING, 1812-1823.

The Presbyterian Church in America was composed originally of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, and for a number of years the ministers of their various congregations were drawn from beyond the seas. As the church grew, however, and the population of the country increased, the supply thus obtained proved to be inadequate, and the necessity for a native ministry became more and more apparent. Academies and colleges were accordingly established from time to time during the eighteenth century at various places, such as Princeton, Lexington and Hampden-Sidney; and the candidates educated in these institutions received their theological training from the president of the college, when he chanced to be a minister (as was commonly the case), or from other approved divines here and there throughout the country. But not until 1812, the year of our second war with England, did the church establish an institution to be devoted exclusively to theological education. In that year Princeton Seminary was founded, with the Rev. Archibald Alexander (formerly President of Hampden-Sidney College) as its organizer and first professor. In the same memorable year the Synod of Virginia adopted the plan of a Seminary to be located within her bounds, inaugurated measures to raise funds for its sup-



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About seventy-five years ago there was a lad in Rockbridge county, Virginia, of Scotch-Irish descent and Presbyterian training, who, when only fifteen years old, made a grain-cradle for his own use in the harvest field, and swung it over many a broad acre of wheat, keeping his place among the full-grown hands on his father's farm. That boy was destined to release millions of his fellow-men from the severe toil, of which he then had a practical experience, by inventing a machine for cutting grain by horse-power, and to link his name for all time with three great departments of human interest—industry, education and religion—by the liberal and judicious use of the large wealth which came to him through his beneficent invention. In 1831, just seven years after he had made the light cradle for his boyish strength, Cyrus Hall McCormick produced the first successful reaping machine, fashioning with his own hands every part of it, both in wood and iron, in the carpenter and blacksmith shops on his father's farm. It consisted of a vibrating blade to cut, a platform to receive the falling grain, and a reel to bring the standing grain within reach of the blade. The reaper was tested in a field of six acres of oats, near Walnut Grove, the McCormick homestead, midway between Lexington and Staunton, and astonished all who witnessed its work. But none of those then present, not even the young inventor himself, however far-seeing and sanguine, could have foretold all the vast consequences which were to flow from that triumph of his genius. For, not only has it revolutionized the whole method of farming in the areas then cultivated, but it has opened the mighty empire of the Northwest, by making possible its enormous crops of grain, and thus stimulating the construction of thousands of miles of railway, and peopling half a continent with prosperous settlers.

As long ago as 1859 the great lawyer, Reverdy Johnson, said: "The McCormick reaper has already contributed an annual income to the whole country of fifty-five millions of dollars, at least, which must increase through all time." About

the same time, William H. Seward said that, "Owing to Mr. McCormick's invention, the line of civilization moves westward thirty miles each year." But even such statements as these, remarkable as they are, do not measure the value of his invention in lessening human toil, increasing the world's wealth, and promoting the advance of material civilization. For they take account only of North America, whereas the reaper has benefited in the same way South America, New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain, France, Russia, and other countries of Europe; and the great establishment at Chicago is still sending its reapers over the world at the rate of one hundred and forty-four thousand a year. The machine was first brought to the attention of the British public at the World's Fair in London, in 1851. At first it was the subject of some ridicule: the London *Times* called it "a cross between an Astley (circus) chariot, a wheel-barrow, and a flying machine." But in a few weeks, when, after prolonged tests, the Great Council medal was awarded the inventor, "the Thunderer" changed front completely and admitted that the McCormick reaper was equal in value to the entire cost of the exhibition. In 1867, at the Exposition in Paris, Mr. McCormick was decorated by the emperor with the Cross of the Legion of Honor for his valuable and successful invention. In 1878, when he was called to Paris for the third time to receive the Grand Prize of the Exposition, he was elected a corresponding member of the French Academy of Sciences, "as having done more for the cause of agriculture than any other living man." In the language of the Faculty of Washington and Lee University, "It is not too much to say that no man in all history has achieved so much for the progress of that branch of industry which is universally recognized as the basis of individual comfort and national prosperity."

We have given with some fulness these facts in regard to Mr. McCormick's influence upon the material interests of mankind for the purpose of emphasizing the statement, paradoxical as it may appear, that his influence upon the higher interests of the race was still greater and more beneficent. He did not think more of machines than of souls. For fifty years he was a consistent, earnest, fruitful member of the Presbyterian Church, and from the earliest days of his prosperity to the end of his honored life, he was the large-hearted and open-handed friend of educational and religious institutions, ever

ready to help them with his sympathy, his prayers, his counsel, and his means. In every part of the country, north, south, east, and west, there are churches, academies, colleges and seminaries which to-day are flourishing and doing a great work for God, because of the timely and generous assistance he gave them in their days of poverty and struggle. He never ceased to love his native State. Two of her venerable and useful institutions, held specially warm places in his heart: Washington and Lee University, in his native county, and Union Theological Seminary. It is well known that he gave the former \$20,000, and that in 1866, when our Seminary seemed doomed because of financial losses by the war, he gave \$30,000 for the endowment of the chair now occupied by the writer of this sketch. Had it not been for the liberality of Cyrus H. McCormick and the activity of Benjamin M. Smith in those dark days, our largest Southern Seminary would have had a lame career indeed during the last thirty years. Of course his chief work on behalf of Christian education and the spread of the gospel was his endowment of the great theological institution in Chicago which bears his name.

But before speaking further of that, we should notice one other wise and far-reaching benefaction of this many-sided philanthropist and enterprising Christian: A religious newspaper called *The Interior*, which had been started in Chicago to represent the Presbyterian Church was twenty-five years ago about to succumb to financial difficulties, when its friends and owners applied to Mr. McCormick to purchase it. "To promote the cause of union between the Old and New schools, to aid in harmonizing the Presbyterian Church in the North and South, to advance the interests of the newly established Theological Seminary in Chicago, and to promote the welfare of the denomination generally in the Northwest, were among the objects dear to his heart." So in 1872 he bought the paper as requested, placed it on a firm financial basis, secured an editor of rare ability, and thus made it one of the representative religious journals of America, which will no doubt continue to wield a wide and salutary influence for generations to come.

We are sure that these facts will have interest and value to all our readers, many of whom perhaps are not as familiar as their elders with the history of this great and good man. The Seminary at Chicago could never have been what it is but for

Mr. McCormick's adoption of it, so to speak, in 1859, and his subsequent munificent relations to it. Before he brought it to Chicago the institution had led a very precarious existence, having no solid basis and no assured future. It was he who gave it all three of the elements which Dr. Nathan L. Rice pronounced absolutely essential to a successful theological seminary—a suitable location, a pecuniary basis, and qualified professors who enjoy the confidence of the church; and it was, therefore, he who made possible all its later development, and especially its remarkable growth in the last fifteen years.

Like Princeton, Union in Virginia, and most of our other theological schools, that seminary began as a mere department of a literary institution, Hanover College, Indiana. Like them, too, it soon abandoned this form of organization as unsatisfactory. It is an interesting fact that the two leading seminaries in the Northern Church were founded by Southern men—Princeton by a Virginian, Dr. Archibald Alexander, and McCormick by a North Carolinian, Dr. John Matthews. Dr. Matthews began his work at Hanover in 1830, and there continued it with various assistants for ten years, when it became evident that in order to its proper development, the theological department must be detached from the college and independently organized. It was accordingly moved in 1840 to New Albany, Indiana, where for several years it grew and prospered. But the increasing sharpness of the controversy in regard to slavery, in which some of the professors took a prominent, but disastrous part, and the establishment and immediate success of the Seminary at Danville, Ky., gave the New Albany school another serious check, and led eventually to its removal to Chicago. The decisive consideration in favor of this re-location, was an offer by Mr. McCormick of one hundred thousand dollars for the endowment of four professorships, on condition that the seminary should be permanently located at Chicago. The gift was accepted, and the institution established on what is undoubtedly one of the best sites for a seminary that the continent affords. To this original munificent donation Mr. McCormick added frequently and largely during his lifetime, and since his death the same princely benefactions have been continued by Mrs. McCormick and Mr. C. H. McCormick, Jr., so that now the seminary owns property valued at \$1,300,000, and possesses an equipment for its great work that is well-nigh perfect.

In view of this remarkable and continued liberality, the governing bodies in 1886 changed the name of the institution from "The Theological Seminary of the Northwest," to "The McCormick Theological Seminary."

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the seminary attained its present position without arduous and protracted struggles, frequent reverses, and sore disappointments. Through storm and calm, clouds and sunshine, it has pressed forward on its high mission. Up to the present time it has trained more than twelve hundred ministers of the everlasting gospel, and is destined to send forth thousands more.

It is evident then, that great as are the results of Mr. McCormick's invention in enabling men to reap the material harvests of the world, still more beneficent and far-reaching are the results of his consecrated wealth in fitting men to reap God's spiritual harvest. The equipment of Seminaries is obedience, of the most practical and fruitful kind, to the command given by the Saviour when he said: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest," for they are sending out annually large bands of soul-reapers, and will continue to do so for generations to come.

Before closing this sketch it remains for us to give a few specific dates and events in their proper chronological order. Cyrus H. McCormick was born on the 15th of February, 1809, the eldest of eight children, six of whom lived to grow up. His father, Robert McCormick, in addition to farming, had workshops of considerable importance on his farm, as well as a saw-mill, a grist mill, and smelting furnaces, and was himself an inventor, having devised and built a thresher, a hemp-breaker, various mill improvements, and having even made some beginnings on a mechanical reaper, which however was not a success. It remained for his son to discover and apply the true principle of the reaper which was to revolutionize the grain harvests of the world. As already stated, he turned out the first machine in 1831, but it was only after the disastrous panic of 1837 that he began in earnest the manufacture and sale of the machines in company with his father and his two brothers, William and Leander. The first consignment sent to the western prairies, in 1844, was taken in wagons from Walnut Grove to Scottsville, then down the James River Canal to Richmond, thence by water to New Orleans and then up the

Mississippi and Ohio rivers to Cincinnati. As the west, with its vast prairies, was the natural market for the reaper, Mr. McCormick, in the fall of the same year (1844) went to Cincinnati and began manufacturing there. Seeing in a short time that Chicago was the best centre for the reaper business, he moved to that city in 1846. The triumphs already referred to now followed rapidly. The great fire that swept Chicago in 1871 wiped his factories out of existence, but in less than a year he and his brother Leander had raised from the ashes an immense establishment, which with the growth of the last few years, now covers an area of forty acres, giving employment to more than 2000 men.

Mr. McCormick's private life was a singularly happy one, "and to this may be attributed no small share of the elasticity and courage that recognized no defeat as final. Congress failed to do him justice; his business was attacked by hordes of rivals; it was interrupted by the fire of 1871, and afterwards threatened by labor strikes incited by self-seeking demagogues. Hard work was the rule of his life and not the exception. But that his nature remained sweet and just is shown by his untiring work on behalf of others." * In nothing was the goodness of God to Mr. McCormick more clearly shown than in his home life. In 1858 he married Miss Nettie Fowler of Jefferson County, New York, an elect lady indeed, one whose earnest piety, loving spirit, and gracious address, made her the worthy help-meet of the gifted and large hearted man and stalwart Christian, whose life she brightened and blessed for twenty-six happy years, and who since his death has continued to abound in all good works. Of their seven children, five lived to grow up, the son who bears his father's name now occupying his father's place at the head of the great works in Chicago, and also wearing worthily his father's mantle as a Christian philanthropist. The great inventor died on the 13th of May, 1884. One of his friends has happily characterized the real secret of his success as follows: "That which gave intensity to his purpose, strength to his will, and nerved him with perseverance that never failed was his supreme regard for justice, his worshipful reverence for the true and right. The thoroughness of his conviction that justice must be done, that right must be maintained, made him insensible to reproach and patient of delay. I do not wonder that his char-

*P. G. Hubert, Jr., *Men of Achievement: Inventors.*

acter was strong, nor that his purpose was invincible, nor that his plans were crowned with an ultimate and signal success, for where conviction of right is the motive-power, and the attainment of justice the end in view, with faith in God, there is no such word as fail."

In reviewing the history of Union Seminary and the men who have made it what it is, we most gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity to pay this tribute of gratitude and affection to the memory of Cyrus Hall McCormick, inventor, philanthropist, and man of God, and we rejoice that his name is forever linked with the great work of our own beloved school of the prophets.

