

McCormick Theological Seminary

HISTORICAL CELEBRATION

In Recognition of the Eightieth Year of the Origin of the
Seminary, the Fiftieth Year of its Location in Chicago,
and the One Hundredth Year of the Birth of

CYRUS H. McCCORMICK

November first and second,
Nineteen hundred and nine.



Chicago, Illinois
1910

Historical Address in Appreciation of the Life and Work of Cyrus H. McCormick

BY PRESIDENT WALTER W. MOORE, D. D., LL. D.

TWO events in the history of our country stand out above all others in their importance and far-reaching effects. One was the achievement of our national independence by the thirteen colonies on the Atlantic slope, and the other was the conquest of the vast territory which stretches across the continent from the Alleghany Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

THE SCOTCH-IRISH STOCK

In the accomplishment of both of these stupendous tasks, which have made America what she is to-day, the providence of God assigned the brunt of the battle to that bold and hardy and God-fearing race commonly known as the Scotch-Irish, who, coming to the New World to secure the religious liberty denied them in the Old, pushed through the already settled coast lands and took possession of the forest covered foot-hills and long fertile valleys of the Appalachians. There "they took root and flourished, stretching in a broad belt from north to south, a shield of sinewy men thrust in between the people of the seaboard and the red warriors of the wilderness."¹ These were the men who before any others declared for American independence, and who from the beginning to the end constituted the backbone of the Revolution. "They gave Washington thirty-nine of his generals, three out of four members

¹ Theodore Roosevelt: The Winning of the West.

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of his cabinet, and three out of five judges of the first Supreme Court."

These, too, were the men who led the way across the mountains to the great interior, "the pioneers of our people in their march westward, the vanguard of the army of fighting settlers, who with axe and rifle won their way from the Alleghanies to the Rio Grande and the Pacific,"² who by battle and by bargain, overcame and displaced Indians, French, and Spaniards alike, and gave to the American people the vast inland empire of which your own great city is now the metropolis.

CAPPING THE WORK OF THE NATION-MAKERS

It is to the "Presbyterian Irish" then, as Mr. Roosevelt calls them, to whom we are chiefly indebted for the winning of the west. It was they who furnished most of the leaders as well as the rank and file of that victorious army of continental conquest, such as James Robertson, who, with John Sevier, tamed the rugged wilderness of East Tennessee, and solved there the problem of self-government, giving to the settlers the first written constitution ever adopted by a community composed of American-born freemen; Andrew Lewis, the leader of the backwoods hosts in their first great victory over the Northwestern Indians; William Campbell, their commander in their first great victory over the British at King's Mountain;³ Andrew Jackson, who won at New Orleans the most successful land battle ever fought by American arms; David Crockett, hunter, humorist, and hero, who died in the Alamo with his back to the wall and a semicircle of dead Mex-

² Idem.

³ Idem, pp. 134, 135.

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icans around him felled by his swinging rifle; and Sam Houston, winner of the independence of Texas and first president of that republic. These, and many other leaders in our winning of the west, were furnished by the Scotch-Irish, to say nothing of their afterwards putting five Presidents in the White House. But, while it was these robust and resolute pioneers of the Scotch-Irish stock who scaled the Alleghanies, subdued the wilderness, subjugated the savages, displaced the aliens, and gave to English-speaking Americans this mighty domain which stretches from Canada to Mexico and from the Appalachians to the Pacific, yet this wide and fair and fertile domain which is now occupied by thirty-one populous and prosperous commonwealths could never have been what it is to-day, at least on its present prodigious scale, a region of fruitful farms and thrifty towns and opulent cities, creating new wealth at the rate of sixteen billions a year, a continent of fabulous possessions and possibilities, the home of fifty millions of busy and happy people, the granary of a world, God's greatest answer to the universal prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," all this, I say, could not have been had it not been for the genius and character and work of still another man of that same Scotch-Irish strain. That man was Cyrus H. McCormick. It was his invention of a machine for cutting grain by horse-power which crowned all the other achievements of the sterling stock from which he sprang, and without which all the other exploits of those strong nation-makers, splendid as they are, would have been incomplete. For it was the reaper which flung open the mighty empire of the northwest, by making possible its enormous crops of grain, and thus stimulating the construction of thousands of miles

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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." And in 1861 Edwin M. Stanton showed upon a map how "McCormick's invention in Virginia had carried permanent civilization westward more than fifty miles a year." But even such statements as these, remarkable as they are, do not measure the value of his invention in lessening human toil, supplying mankind with cheap and abundant food, 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, Europe, Asia and Africa. "To-day," as Herbert Casson says, "the sun never sets and the season never closes for American harvesters. They are reaping the fields of Argentina in January, Upper Egypt in February, East India in March, Mexico in April, China in May, Spain in June, Iowa in July, Canada in August, Sweden in September, Norway in October, South Africa in November, and Burma in December. It is always harvest somewhere" and the music of the reaper follows the ripple of the ripened grain all round the world. The harvester has not only made America the best fed nation on the globe but has enabled the whole world "to take dinner at one long table."

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RANK AS EPOCH-MAKER

It has been said that for six thousand years, with the exception of the rulers and their retinues, the human race was hungry. To the masses of mankind life was an agonized struggle for food. Even within the memory of men now living there were bread-riots in New York City, and starving men fell on the streets of Boston and Philadelphia. But with the advent of the reaper life ceased to be merely a battle for bread. With the world growing wheat at the yearly rate of ten bushels a family, as this marvellous invention has enabled it to do, the gaunt spectre of famine has vanished forever. With our eighty-five millions of Americans eating twelve thousand million loaves of bread a year and yet sending a thousand million dollars worth of food to other nations, the pinched children of want need never again suffer the pangs of hunger. By cheapening the bread of the toiling millions this Virginia inventor "has moved all the civilized peoples up out of the bread line" and has opened to the laborers in field and forge, in mine and mill, the possibilities of a higher life. "The Man with the Hoe," the stolid drudge, "brother to the ox," has at last been freed from the all-absorbing struggle for mere existence and given some opportunity for mental culture and social recreation and the refining amenities of the home.

It is evident therefore even from this brief preview of what he accomplished, that the man whose life and work we commemorate to-night was not merely one of the world's great inventors and captains of industry, but an epoch-maker of the first magnitude, the creator of an economic revolution,

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the greatest promoter of agricultural development that ever lived, and one of the supreme benefactors of the human race.

It would be incongruous and unseemly to use the language of exaggeration when speaking of a man so genuine as Mr. McCormick, to whom anything fulsome was always distasteful, and I beg leave to say that in this estimate of the value of his services to mankind I have endeavored to weigh my words and to refrain from any overstatement, and that after a careful study of his life I am prepared to prove that the position I have claimed for him, pre-eminent as it is, is fully justified by the facts of his career and the results of his work.

THE OLD HOME

“Rockbridge County (in Virginia) has given birth to a remarkable number of distinguished men. Among them have been soldiers in all the wars of the United States, judges of both state and federal courts, attorneys-general of Virginia and of other states, representatives in state legislatures and in congress, celebrated ministers of the gospel, and missionaries to foreign lands. This same county has given a general-in-chief and president to the republic of Texas, a United States minister to France, Russia, and Austria, governors of Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, and West Virginia, while eight United States senators were born within a radius of six miles of Lexington (the county seat). This is a record which, as Prof. Latane has said, may well challenge comparison with any other county in the land. But the one Rockbridge name that has gone round the world, that is known to-day in every civilized land, is that of Cyrus H. McCormick, the inventor of the reap-

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er. In every country of Europe, in Asiatic Russia, in Persia, in Australia, in South America, and in South Africa, is heard the click of his reaper and the whir of his binder."⁴

Cyrus Hall McCormick was born February 15, 1809, at the old homestead, Walnut Grove, midway between Lexington and Staunton, being the eldest of eight children, six of whom lived to grow up. His parents, Robert and Mary Ann Hall McCormick, held an influential position among the people of the Valley, both being of high intelligence and marked force of character, devout, thrifty, and well to do, and they made for their children a comfortable and happy home, teaching them habits of industry and self-reliance, and training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. There was no coddling. There were even touches of Spartan severity in the training of the lad whose life was destined to be one of stern conflict with innumerable difficulties and with active and relentless opposition. He was often roused at five o'clock in the morning to work in the fields. He went barefooted, as boys of his age ought to do. He sat on a slab-bench in the little log school house. He learned to read from the book of Genesis. His other text-books were Murray's Grammar, Dilworth's Arithmetic, Webster's Spelling-book, and the Shorter Catechism. On Sundays he listened earnestly to strong preaching in New Providence Church and sang with delight the great hymns of the ages, for he was ever a lover of music and ever a deeply religious nature. The words and melodies of those sweet old hymns remained with him throughout life, sang in his heart during

⁴ Professor J. H. Latane: Bulletin of Washington and Lee University, July, 1909 p. 6.

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all the stress of his stalwart years, and sustained and cheered him even down to the end. As a result of this old-fashioned, wholesome, character-making, Presbyterian training, the key notes of which were industry, honesty, and religion, he carried with him through life a rare capacity for work, a dominating sense of duty, a clear and reverent and happy faith, a quiet scorn of pretense and ostentation, and a passionate love for justice and truth. In other ways, too, heredity and environment played their usual important part in the making of his character and the development of his gifts. He inherited from his father his genius for invention and from his mother his skill in practical affairs.

Robert McCormick was a man of unusual business acumen and enterprise and acquired a large estate, 1,800 acres in all, consisting of four adjoining farms, on three of which he operated successfully saw mills and on two of them flour mills. But he was more than a substantial farmer and man of affairs. He was a reader, being specially fond of history and astronomy. He had an imagination. Naturally, therefore, he gave much attention to the mechanical side of farm life and the problem of labor-saving machinery, and acquired considerable local fame as an inventor. In the workshop on his farm he fashioned an ingenious hemp-brake, operated by horse-power, a clover sheller, a blacksmith's bellows, a hydraulic machine, a threshing machine, and a hillside plow. The subject to which he gave most thought, however, was a machine for the cutting of grain. But here he missed the way entirely, and in 1831, after various experiments extending over some twenty years, he gave up the

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project as hopeless. It was reserved for the son to succeed where the father had failed.

THE YOUNG INVENTOR

He had already shown that he had inherited his father's inventive talent. While still a lad he had one morning astonished his teacher by bringing to school an elaborate map of the world, showing the two hemispheres side by side, which he had drawn upon paper in ink, and then mounted by pasting the paper on linen, and hanging the whole on two varnished rollers.⁵ Such aids in the school room are common enough now, but that a mere boy should produce such a thing then showed clearly that he possessed the true inventor's power of striking out a path for himself. When only fifteen years old he had made a grain cradle suited to his boyish strength, which embodied a distinct improvement over any other form of that implement, and had swung it over many a broad acre of wheat, keeping pace with the full grown hands, all unconscious of the fact that he was destined to release millions of his fellowmen from the severe toil of which he was then having a practical experience.⁶ At the same early age he, too, had invented a hillside plow for throwing alternate furrows on the lower side, and a little later a self-sharpening, horizontal plow. When at eighteen he studied the profession of surveying he made a quadrant for his own use which is still preserved, and is one of many witnesses to the accuracy and thoroughness of his workmanship. He had

⁵ Herbert N. Casson: *Everybody's Magazine*, 17, p. 761.

⁶ Memorial Volume of Cyrus H. McCormick, p. 5.

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already made an improvement on Robert McCormick's machine for breaking and cleaning hemp. For years he had seen his baffled father at work on the mysterious reaper; and in the same year that the elder McCormick abandoned the task in despair, the younger inventor, as though fired to the supreme effort of his genius by the silent challenge of the discredited reaper standing outside the shop door, rejected decisively his father's model, adopted an entirely different principle, and in a few months, after much patient brooding over his new conception and many ingenious efforts at combining the various parts, he solved triumphantly the problem of the centuries.

THE FIRST REAPER

The machine which he constructed, every part of which, both in wood and iron, he fashioned with his own hands, consisted of first, a reciprocating knife with a serrated edge for shearing off the stalks; second, a platform to receive the falling grain, flexibly affixed so as to accommodate itself readily to the irregularities of the surface; third, a horizontal and adjustable reel to sweep the standing grain towards the blade and to deliver the severed stalks parallel upon the platform, in a swath ready to be raked off and bound; and fourth, a divider, serving to separate the grain to be cut from that to be left standing.

This first machine, therefore, crude as it was in construction, being built by hand in a plantation shop, nevertheless embodied all four of the cardinal features which all subsequent attempts have shown to be indispensable to a successful reaper. Having created the true type, the inventor him-

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self never departed from it, and in conformity with that type all other successful harvesters have since been made. "Despite all subsequent invention, and it has been lavish, no one has contrived a successful substitute for McCormick's original plan. From it has proceeded in unbroken succession, and with remarkable adherence to the primary arrangement, although subsequently enriched with many refinements in details and supplemental improvements, the reaper that has taken and still holds possession of the markets of the world."⁷

In the summer of 1831, then, late in the season, after laboring hard to complete his machine in time for the harvest of that year, Cyrus H. McCormick hitched a horse to his new invention and drove it clattering into a small patch of wheat on his father's farm, which at his request had been left standing, for the first test of its powers. The revolving reel swept the yellow grain against the blade and in a moment more it lay in a golden swath upon the platform, from which it was raked off by a young laborer named John Cash. That was the first grain ever successfully cut anywhere in the world otherwise than by manual labor.

Several days later, after making certain improvements in the reel and the divider, the young inventor gave a public exhibition of his machine at Steele's Tavern, a neighboring village, where with two horses to the reaper, he cut six acres of oats in a single afternoon, a feat equal to the work of six laborers with scythes. He had opened a new era in the history of agriculture.

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⁷ Reuben Gold Thwaites: *Cyrus Hall McCormick and the Reaper.*

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all the stress of his stalwart years, and sustained and cheered him even down to the end. As a result of this old-fashioned, wholesome, character-making, Presbyterian training, the key notes of which were industry, honesty, and religion, he carried with him through life a rare capacity for work, a dominating sense of duty, a clear and reverent and happy faith, a quiet scorn of pretense and ostentation, and a passionate love for justice and truth. In other ways, too, heredity and environment played their usual important part in the making of his character and the development of his gifts. He inherited from his father his genius for invention and from his mother his skill in practical affairs.

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ington, eighteen miles to the south of his home, which was witnessed by fully a hundred people. The field was hilly, and the machine, not having yet found itself, at first worked badly, sluing as it moved, and cutting the grain irregularly. There is a story, that the owner of the field, seeing this, rushed up to the inventor and shouted, "Here! this won't do. Stop your horses. Your machine is rattling the heads off my wheat!" and that various bystanders bluntly pronounced it a humbug, one of them exclaiming, "Give me the old cradle yet, boys!" It was a disheartening moment, but just at this juncture one of the spectators, the Hon. William Taylor, a man of commanding appearance and a citizen of note, who had been watching the work with keen interest, came forward and said, "Pull down the fence and cross over into my field, young man. I'll give you a fair chance to try your machine." This offer was promptly accepted, the reaper was driven into Taylor's field, which was not so hilly, and again cut six acres of grain in less than half a day.

Thus it was that at twenty-two years of age this young inventor, on a secluded farm in Virginia, constructed the first successful mechanical reaper. It was crude, no doubt, as all inventions are at first, but it was a reaper that reaped, and it included every fundamental element of all the practical harvesters since constructed, and laid the lines on which all subsequent invention has had to move.

MANUFACTURING THE MACHINES IN VIRGINIA

Though he had mastered the essential principles of a reaper and embodied them in a machine that would actually cut grain, he did not at once apply for a patent, but with the

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thoroughness characteristic of the man he "subjected his machine to repeated tests during three successive harvest seasons under a variety of conditions and with different grain, and took out his patent (June 21, 1834) only after having fully vindicated and exhibited its practical value."⁸

Even then he was not ready to put his reaper on the market, for as he himself afterwards said, he would not "attempt sales either of machines or rights to manufacture until satisfied that the reaper would succeed well in the great variety of situations in which it was necessary to operate." "Thus season by season, from 1834 to 1839, the inventor patiently carried on his trials, personally manufacturing his several experimental machines in the blacksmith shop at Walnut Grove. This historical building can still be seen upon the old farm, preserved by his widow and children as the birth-place⁹ of the mechanical reaper." Some weeks ago I stood within this quaint old shop, and noting its primitive arrangements and appliances, wondered, as hundreds before me have done, at what this youth had accomplished with the limited resources at his command.

The two things he most needed were money and cheaper iron. So "he decided to build a furnace and make his own iron. His father and a neighbor joined him in the enterprise. They built the furnace, made the iron, and had taken the first steps toward success," when the financial crash of 1837 wrecked the business and plunged them into an abyss of debt. Cyrus McCormick gave up everything he owned

⁸ Herbert N. Casson: *Everybody's Magazine*, 17, pp. 759, 760.

⁹ Reuben Gold Thwaites: *Cyrus Hall McCormick and the Reaper*, p. 243.

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to the creditors, and he and the rest of the family "slaved for five years to save the homestead from the auctioneer." In 1839 he began in earnest the manufacture and sale of the reaper in company with his father and his two brothers, William and Leander. The problem was one of extreme difficulty. He was without capital. There were no railroads. All the material had to be hauled overland. "The sickles were made forty miles away, the blades, six feet in length, being transported on horseback. In this manner the work was carried on in the old blacksmith shop at Walnut Grove, the first two machines being sold in 1840; two others in 1841 (at a hundred dollars each), seven in 1842, twenty-nine in 1843, and fifty in each of the years 1844 and 1845." The first consignment sent to the west, in 1844, was taken in wagons from Walnut Grove over the mountains to Scottsville, a distance of some sixty miles, then down the James River canal to Richmond, thence by sea to New Orleans, and then up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers to Cincinnati.

THE MOVE TO THE WEST

This order from the west for seven machines revealed to Mr. McCormick, who was now a stalwart man of thirty-six, his great opportunity, and he was quick to seize it. In the fall of the same year (1844), with \$300 in his belt, he set out on horseback for the west, for he saw plainly that the great interior with its wide, flat and fertile prairies was the natural home of the harvester. "In that vast land-ocean, with few laborers and an infinity of acres, the reaper was as indispensable as the plow. To reap even one of these new

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states by hand would require the whole working population of the country."¹⁰

In your own state, where he was afterwards to make his permanent home, a sight awaited him which fired his zeal to fever heat. "We saw hogs and cattle feeding in the autumn wheat fields, which could not be reaped for lack of laborers. Five million bushels of wheat had grown and ripened, enough to empty the horn of plenty into every farmer's home. Men, women and children toiled day and night to gather in the yellow food. But the short harvest season rushed past so quickly that tons of it lay rotting under the hoofs of cattle. . . . The sight of the trampled wheat goaded McCormick almost into a frenzy of activity."¹¹

On he rode through Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio and New York, looking everywhere for manufacturers who would build his machines. At Brockport, New York, on the Erie Canal, he found two men who appreciated his invention and agreed to build a hundred machines, a decision by which both of them eventually became independently rich.¹²

In the first two years after leaving Virginia he sold 240 reapers. By 1847 a Cincinnati branch was turning out machines under the superintendence of his brother Leander, and others were being constructed in Chicago on a royalty basis.

ESTABLISHMENT AT CHICAGO

But the work was unsatisfactory. He was involved in many troubles because of bad iron, poor workmanship and

¹⁰ Herbert N. Casson: *Everybody's Magazine*, 17, p. 762.

¹¹ *Idem.*

¹² *Idem.*

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unreliable manufacturers. So in 1847 "he cut the Gordian knot by building a factory of his own at Chicago." The place was then but little more than a country town built in a swamp, but he clearly foresaw its future pre-eminence as the connecting link between the great lakes and the great west, and he saw at once that this little town of ten thousand people, ugly and forlorn though it was, was the place where he could best assemble the materials,—steel, iron and wood—for the making of his reapers, and also the place from which he could best ship the finished machines both east and west, and thus it was that Chicago acquired her most illustrious citizen.

The year after his arrival his patent expired, and although it was only eight years since he had put his first machine on the market, and although it was acknowledged that his invention had conferred incalculable benefits upon the race and enormously increased the wealth of the nation, Congress refused to grant him just and deserved protection by an extension of the patent, and persisted in the refusal through a four-year contest at Washington, waged by the ablest lawyers in the land. Thus the basic principles of his reaper were thrown open to the public, and immediately a host of competitors sprang up, flooding the market with machines in which his ideas had been incorporated. But Cyrus McCormick was an unconquerable man. He had an indomitable will and a deathless tenacity of purpose. Though smarting with a sense of the injustice done him, he faced his rivals single handed — *Athanasius contra mundum* — and determined to win by the sheer superiority of his product. And win he did. Perfecting his mechanism year after year, by unceasing

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experiments and continual improvements, and giving a written guarantee with every machine he sold, he kept his reaper in the lead. How great his achievement was may be seen from the fact that of more than two hundred harvester companies that took the field only ten survive to-day.

From the day he set foot in your city he prospered in spite of innumerable difficulties. By 1860 the Chicago works were producing four thousand reapers in a single year, 50,000 of them in all were clicking in American wheat fields, "doing the work of 350,000 men, saving \$4,000,000 in wages, and cramming the barns with 50,000,000 bushels of grain." For years he had struggled with the strength of a Titan to overcome mechanical difficulties and the obstacles of nature, to vanquish indifference and prejudice, and to beat down unjust opposition in the courts, in Congress and in the business world, and now at last he was out on the open highway to boundless success. Great toils, and great trials as well as great triumphs still awaited him, but the clouds had parted and his path was sunlit. And along with fortune Fame had come.

INTRODUCTION OF THE REAPER INTO EUROPE

The reaper had been 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 wheelbarrow, and a flying machine." But in a few weeks, when it was put into a grain field and given an actual trial, and when its instant success was greeted with a burst of cheers from the crowd, and when the inventor was given

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“not only a First Prize, but a Council Medal, such as was usually awarded only to Kings and Governments,” “The Thunderer” changed front completely and admitted that the McCormick reaper was equal in value to the entire cost of the exhibition. William H. Seward spoke of it as a national triumph, saying, “No General or Consul drawn in a chariot through the streets of Rome by order of the Senate ever conferred upon mankind benefits so great as he who thus vindicated the genius of our own country at the World’s Exposition of Art in the Metropolis of the British Empire.” At the Paris Exposition in 1855 his reaper received the gold medal of honor as “the type after which all others are made.” Eight years later, after a field contest at Hamburg, with dozens of other manufacturers, all making machines more or less like his, the United States Commissioner cabled to New York, “McCormick has thrashed all nations and walked off with the Gold Medal.” At the Paris exposition of 1867 he was decorated by Napoleon the Third with the Cross of the Legion of Honor. How significant the contrast, as Mr. Casson notes, when the last emperor of France fastened this badge of the Order of Merit upon the breast of the man who “had built up a new empire of commerce that will last as long as the human race shall eat bread.” Other European triumphs followed, and 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.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Herbert N. Casson: *Everybody’s Magazine*, 17, p. 764.

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EFFECTS OF THE INVENTION

I have already referred to the beneficent effect of Mr. McCormick's invention in extending the wheat growing area of the world. So long as the sickle and the cradle were the only means of reaping, the production of grain, which is man's most important food, was subject to rigid limitations. The difficulty was aggravated in America by the scarcity of farm laborers in the West. Ripe wheat will not wait. The harvest season is brief. The crop must be garnered within a period of ten days. A man with a sickle can cut about five acres a day and it is back-breaking toil. This area was considerably enlarged of course by the introduction of the cradle. But the mechanical reaper, drawn by horses, leveling the grain in mighty swathes, gathering it in with giant grasp, and tossing out the bound-up sheaves, has increased the capacity of the human harvester to fifteen acres a day instead of five, besides freeing him from the hard labor of wielding the sickle or the cradle, and straightening his weary back, and seating him comfortably on the machine as the driver of the team. The gathering of every bushel of wheat used to require *three hours* of a man's time. "In seventy-six years the reaper has reduced the time-price of harvesting wheat to *ten minutes* a bushel." To the reaper therefore we are indebted for that mighty river of wheat which now flows from the west, turning the wheels of 14,000 flour mills, and giving to the millions good bread at low prices.

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BY-PRODUCTS OF THE REAPER

Along that life-giving stream scores of rich cities have sprung up like magic, a network of railways has criss-crossed the country, huge fleets of whalebacks have covered the lakes, and hundreds of gigantic factories have been established for the making of all manner of farming implements,—for the reaper gave a mighty stimulus to agricultural invention, and in its wake there followed inevitably a multitude of other labor-saving devices for the sowing and cultivation and gathering of crops of every variety, mowers, tedders, rakes, balers, self-binders for corn and rice as well as wheat, corn pluckers shellers and grinders, grain-drills, harrows and cultivators, involving also of course an enormously increased output of wood and ore from the forests and the mines.

One of the most important of the indirect effects of Mr. McCormick's invention was its contribution to the preservation of the Union as the outcome of the conflict between the states. "During the Civil War the reaper was doing the work of a million men in the grain fields of the North." In 1861 Edwin M. Stanton said: "The reaper is to the North what slavery is to the South. By taking the places of regiments of young men in the western harvest fields, it releases them to do battle for the Union at the front, and at the same time keeps up the supply of bread for the nation and the nation's armies. Thus without McCormick's invention I fear the North could not win, and the Union would be dismembered." There was an enormous draught of recruits from the rural districts — Mr. Lincoln called out every third man — yet the crops, instead of decreasing, increased.

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Europeans could hardly believe it, when told that the North was supporting a vast army and yet was "selling enough grain to feed 35,000,000 people and sending three times as much grain to England as we had ever sent before."

PATRIOT AND PEACEMAKER

This contribution of the reaper to the preservation of the Union was an effect of his invention which of course Mr. McCormick did not foresee, though the preservation of the Union was a thing which he desired with all his soul. Born and reared in the South, yet living for years in the North, he understood the standpoint of both and his views of secession and slavery were those of an unsectional patriot and a statesman. A northern writer has said with truth that "No other man of his day either in or out of public office was so free from local prejudices and so intensely national in his beliefs and sympathies."¹⁴ He did not want the Union to be broken by secession, but on the other hand he did not want the Constitution to be destroyed by federal reformers. He wanted the South to be freed from the incubus of slavery but he did not want it done by violence and wrong and in a way that would pour upon the nation a cataract of calamities. He had himself forged a machine that could do the work of thousands of slaves and that was certain to prevent the introduction of negro labor into the wheat states of the west. He wanted the institution of slavery abolished but he deprecated the impatience which, refusing to abide gradual and peaceable emancipation, the only natural, true and safe solution, plunged the country into war. Before hostili-

¹⁴ Herbert N. Casson: *The Interior*, February 8, 1909.

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ties actually began, he strove with all his might to make the wrangling partisans listen to reason, and even after the war was at its height he proposed a plan, endorsed by Horace Greeley, for stopping the conflict and restoring peace. But the plan failed, the madness continued, and the war was fought to the bitter end.

To the overpowered and impoverished South he was one of the first of the magnanimous men of the North to stretch out a friendly hand, but unfortunately all men in the North are not magnanimous any more than all men in the South, and because he gave help to prostrate institutions in his native state, this great-hearted patriot who loved both North and South and who had labored with giant strength to preserve the Union in a rational way, was actually accused of disloyalty to the Union. He disposed of these charges with his customary vigor and conclusiveness and held steadily on his lofty and beneficent course.

When politics invaded the courts of his church and her chief benefactors were proscribed and men were deposed from the boards of management of her institutions and others put in their places on purely political and party grounds, he faithfully pointed out to the church her error and recalled her to the spirit of her Lord in these noble words: "When are we to look for the return of brotherly love and Christian fellowship, so long as those who aspire to fill the high places of the church indulge in such wrath and bitterness? Now that the great conflict of the Civil War is past, and its issues settled, religion and patriotism alike require the exercise of mutual forbearance, and the pursuit of those things which tend to peace."

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CHRISTIAN AND PHILANTHROPIST

Amid all the exacting labors of his life Mr. McCormick, like Henry Van Dyke's peace-seeker, always took time to look up at the stars. And therefore great as his influence was upon the material interests of mankind, his influence upon the higher interests of the race was greater still. 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.

He never ceased to love his native state. "He never grew too busy or too famous to remember with gratitude the days and scenes out of which he was ushered into the world of action." In his inaugural address as president of the Virginia Society of Chicago, he said: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning Virginia," he continued, "is the scene of all our most sacred and cherished memories. There stood the old home. There flowed the mountain stream. There bubbled the spring at which we quenched our youthful thirst. There were the friends of our childhood, now widely scattered or dead."

It is easy for the public to mistake the nature of a man whose life has had to be one long battle. It was perhaps not unnatural for some to think of this massive and unbendable Scotch-Irishman as hard-fibered and imperious and devoid of sentiment. But that was only one side. We get a glimpse

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of the other in the earthquakes of laughter, with which at times his great frame was shaken, and in the upspringing of tears at sight of blue mountains, reminding him of his boyhood home; and in his devotion to the memory of his mother. One day in his later life when speaking of flowers he said, "I love the old-fashioned pinks because they grew in my mother's garden in old Virginia." There were many beautiful and tender things within a man who could say that. And one of those beautiful and tender things was his abiding affection for 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, in Richmond. It is well known that he gave to the former a handsome sum for the establishment of a chair of Physics, and that in 1866, when our Seminary in Virginia seemed doomed because of financial losses by the war, he came to her rescue with a noble gift for the endowment of the professorship of Old Testament Interpretation. Had it not been for his timely help in those dark days, Union Seminary would not have been able to do for the church the great work she has been doing for the last forty years in the furnishing of so large a proportion of our ministers and missionaries.

MCCORMICK SEMINARY

Of course his chief work on behalf of Christian education and the spread of the gospel was his endowment of the great school in Chicago which bears his name. His interest in this institution rested on deep conviction.

As one of your own former professors has said: "He

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was not only a Presbyterian, but he was also a believer in the theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith; and it was his wish and his hope that the seminary should be a center of power for the defense of this theology, and through its graduates, for its dissemination throughout the wide area open to the seminary's influence."

In the course of time, through another far-reaching benefaction, he provided what was in some measure an organ for the institution. A religious newspaper called "The Interior," which had been started in Chicago to represent the Presbyterian Church, was thirty-six years ago about to succumb to financial difficulties, when its friends and owners applied to Mr. McCormick to purchase it. So in 1872 he bought the paper as requested, placed it on a firm financial basis, secured an editor of rare ability, the Rev. Dr. Francis L. Patton, succeeded since by other accomplished editors, and thus made it one of the representative religious journals of America.

Your seminary 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 twenty-six years.

Like most of our other theological schools, this seminary

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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 in this city. 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 her children, so that now the seminary owns an exceedingly valuable property and possesses

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an equipment for its great work that is unsurpassed perhaps by any seminary in our land.

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." And under that honored name it will continue to send forth through all the future its successive bands of soul-reapers.

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 our 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."

But it would be a mistake to infer from what I have said that the seminary attained its present position without arduous and protracted struggles, severe reverses, and sore disappointments. And in all these trials he suffered. The school was on his heart. Most of its friends appreciated fully what he was doing for it and were deeply grateful, but in some instances, as a minute of your faculty states, "instead of admiration and gratitude for his sagacity and beneficence, he was confronted with no little opposition and opprobrium."¹⁸ But "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall

¹⁸ Minute of the Faculty on the Death of Mr. McCormick, May 24, 1884.

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doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." What imagination can conceive the joys that thrill his glorified spirit as one after another the hundreds of ministers who went out from his seminary arrive in the land of light when their work on earth is done and tell him how through the training here provided by his munificence they have been able to give the bread of life to their fellow-men, and when the thousands of ransomed souls who have been gathered into the Kingdom of God from every part of the world by the men from his seminary tell him how under God they owe to him their knowledge of the Gospel and their deliverance from sin. Ah, yes — "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed" — a seminary is literally a seedery — "shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" — bringing his sheaves with him.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE MAN

Cyrus McCormick was cast in a large mould. He was a massive man in body and mind. In his stalwart prime with the physique of a gladiator, deep chested, broad shouldered and ruddy, with his leonine head and thick black hair, with his firm face and strong eyes, he made an extraordinary impression of physical and intellectual force. And the longer one knew him the more that impression of power grew. He was the incarnation of decision, energy, tenacity and courage. But all men of power are not great men. The question remains as to their moral qualities — the substratum of character. Are they men of granite convictions that will defy the waves of passing opinion? Are they men of regnant conscience and stainless integrity? One of his friends who

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knew him intimately and who is here present to-night has happily characterized the real secret of Mr. McCormick's 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 character 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."

His ethical perceptions were as quick and keen as his business acumen. He did not have to work his way laboriously through a moral problem; he reached his conclusion in a flash, and there was no uncertainty or doubt. On a business question his judgment was clear and reliable; on a moral question it was almost unerring.

Cyrus H. McCormick was never disobedient to the heavenly vision. What conscience commanded, he did. In an age accused of complete absorption in things merely material and of indifference to the means by which money is made and of selfish misuse of accumulated wealth, he set an example of honesty, integrity and benevolence which gave him a distinction among the mass of men like a braid of shining gold on a sleeve of hodden gray. His wealth was honorably acquired and nobly used. His nature was not dwarfed but enlarged by his devotion to business. Some

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men become mere business machines; their nobler powers are atrophied — their natures are narrowed and shriveled by the very intensity of their devotion to business, even honorable business. It was not so with him. With all his sagacity and skill and success in practical affairs, with all his concentration of energy upon whatever enterprise he had in hand, he remained to the last an idealist, high-souled, broad-minded, sympathetic, benevolent, devout, — an Abou Ben Adhem, who proved his love to God by his love to his fellow-men. He was no mere moralist; the core of his character was his faith in God. He was no mere humanitarian; the mainspring of his benevolence was his gratitude and love to our Heavenly Father.

Religion to him was not a detached and occasional thing — a thing merely of times and seasons. It permeated and controlled his whole life. His business and his religion, so far from being relegated to different compartments of his life, were interwoven like warp and woof. In the most crowded periods of his career “his letters,” as Dr. McClure has said, “were a combination of intense devotion to business detail and of intense devotion to religious principle.” At the close of a long statement about machinery and contracts, he writes to his brother: “May the Lord grant us all grace to live so that we shall have hope in our death as had our dear father, and to this end may we have a well-founded hope in our life. The work is thine, O Lord. Wilt thou draw us unto Thee by the cords of Thy love. For of ourselves we can do nothing. May we be delivered from the bondage of sin and have that peace which the world cannot give or

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take away — peace in believing, which will be as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.”

Such expressions were as natural to him as breathing. He believed not only that there should be business in our religion and religion in our business, but that religion *is* our business. “I often regret,” he writes, “that my example has not been better, more pious; and yet I have often felt a concern that was not expressed. Business is not inconsistent with Christianity; but the latter ought to be a help to the former, giving a confidence and resignation, after using all proper means, which speak peace to the soul.” And again, at a critical juncture in his business affairs, when he was struggling with manufacturers who had broken their contracts, he says, “This is the point that should be aimed at, the feeling that should be cherished — unconditional submission and resignation to the will and hand of Providence; and with His smiles the most crooked ways may be made straight and chastisements converted into blessings. But for the fact that Providence has seemed to assist me in our business, it has at times seemed that I would almost sink under the weight of responsibility hanging upon me. But I believe the Lord will help me out. How grateful we should be! How humble on account of unworthiness! And yet how rejoicing that unworthy as we are, the Law has been satisfied, and we may be saved by faith.”

That was the real life of the man. And so, during his declining years, when chastened by much bodily affliction, he was sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust and bore his sufferings without a murmur. At last the strong

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staff was broken and the beautiful rod. The powerful constitution which had carried him victoriously through so many conflicts was exhausted, and he was ready for his rest. On the last Lord's Day of his life on earth, hearing it said that it was Sunday and a beautiful day, he answered, "Yes, sweet Sabbath." As he lay, peacefully awaiting the end, he uttered tender words to each of his children and his wife, taking their hands one after another, then while they knelt by his bedside he led with firm voice the last religious service as the head of his family, and finally sang with them his favorite hymn:

"O Thou, in whose presence my soul takes delight,
On whom in affliction I call,
My comfort by day, and my song in the night,
My hope, my salvation, my all."

To such a man death was but a translation. On Tuesday, May 13, 1884, he passed from this life to the life on high, leaving behind him a record of achievement as Inventor, Philanthropist and Man of God which will perpetuate his fame "to the last syllable of recorded time."