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DEATH OF THE REV. PATRICK BELL.

We learn from recent British papers that the inventor of the first really efficient reaping machine, died in the manse of Carmyllie, Forfarshire, on the 22nd of April, after spending a quiet and most useful life, extending to three score years and ten. The cutting of grain by machinery is by no means a modern idea, attempts more or less successful having been made at irregular intervals from almost the commencement of the Christian era. It would appear, however, that mechanical science had not succeeded in any part of the world in bringing machinery to a general and practical application in the cutting of grain, till Mr. Bell invented his machine in 1826, and which is described in Loudon's Encyclopedia of Agriculture as "the most perfect invention of this description." But the invention was before the time when British agriculturalists felt its necessity, and, consequently, both the inventor and his machine remained a number of years in a state of obscurity. It is true that Mr. Bell's brother, an extensive Scottish farmer, continued to gather his grain crops by this machine for a period of twenty years with satisfactory results. Yet, in consequence of the abundance and cheapness of labour, and the natural shyness of farmers to change old practices, harvest work in Britain was generally carried on by means of the sickle, reaping hook or scythe, till the first World's Exhibition, held in London, in 1851, when American reapers and mowers, in a more advanced and perfect form, attracted universal attention. So little was the public acquainted with what Bell, and others before him, had done in this direction, that most people re-

garded the reaping machine as purely an American invention. This, however, was a grave mistake; but we must award to our cousins across the lines the great merit, next to the invention itself, of adapting it to their wants and circumstances, and of giving to it a practical and widespread application.

In 1852, the Highland Society instituted a very elaborately competitive trial between Bell's machine and one constructed on the principle of *Hussey's*, an American machine, deservedly held at that time in the highest repute on this side of the Atlantic. Taking into consideration all the circumstances of this trial, the judges unanimously felt warranted in awarding the premium to Mr. Bell, for the following reasons:—

1st. For the decided superiority of his machine in economising time and expense, owing to the greater breadth cut by it with the same horse power, the difference being as 10 to 6½.

2nd. For the character and quality of the work performed by it, as being cleaner cut, producing less waste or shake, and laying the swathe with a regularity better suited for binding in sheaves, than when laid off in unequal bundles.

3rd. For being less liable to choke, and to the consequent stoppages.

4th. For being mechanically adapted to deposit the grain in rows, performing the operation in a superior manner, and saving, in the opinion of the judges, the labour of two men, as compared with *Hussey's*.

5th. For the advantages arising from its having the means of laying off the grain to the right side or the left. This feature, combined with that of being propelled instead of being drawn, enabling it to enter on either side or into the