

THE PLANTER'S SON.

Cyrus Hall McCormick was born February 19, 1809, in Walnut Grove, Rockbridge County, Virginia, of Scotch-Irish descent. Died in Chicago, May 13, 1884.

In the early part of the century Cyrus Hall McCormick was a lad in his teens, living on a farm in Virginia, and watching his father try in vain to make a reaping machine. Some of his time was spent at the public school but most of it was passed in helping on the plantation. This being a large one, there were on it several saw and grist mills, a carpenter's shop, and a blacksmithy, which the planter's son found more interesting to his turn of mind than books and tutors. His talent for mechanical invention was hereditary, his father, Robert McCormick, having invented a hemp breaker, a threshing machine, and an improved bellows for the blacksmith shop before he took up the reaper problem. When fifteen years of age he invented a light, easy-acting grain cradle which enabled him, a mere lad, to keep pace in reaping with men. Two years after this he invented a hillside plow, which was the first self-sharpening plow ever made. With his faculty for invention he keenly watched his father, Robert McCormick's efforts in trying to contrive what had for countless centuries been attempted in vain—a machine for reaping. Gradually he became absorbed in the same problem—gradually he evolved the leading devices necessary to cut grain as it stands in the field—gradually his fertile mind made the master-stroke of the century.

SIX SUCCESSFUL STEPS IN THE LIFE OF McCORMICK.



In 1831—when Mr. McCormick was only twenty-two years old—this reaper was tested before a number of leading Virginia farmers. It cut several acres of oats successfully. The year following it harvested fifty acres of wheat. It was a success, but just at that time, the iron-smelting business promising quicker returns, the young inventor's attention was diverted into another channel. In 1837 he returned to the reaper, which he had previously secured to him by patents, made several valuable improvements, and began to manufacture them for sale. In 1845 he had too manufactured at Cincinnati. Two years after that he moved to Chicago, where he set up his own factory—the first works ever built devoted exclusively to the manufacture of harvesting machines. Several years of struggle in introducing the reaper were followed by a bold step in 1851. He invaded Europe with his reaper. He braved the ridicule of the critics and the visitors by exhibiting his reaper at the First World's Exhibition in London. The *London Times* promptly described his invention as a cross between "an Astley chariot, a wheelbarrow, and a flying machine," but just as promptly, after it was tested on Mechis' celebrated experimental farm, made the amende by declaring "the McCormick Reaper to be worth the cost of the entire Exposition."

This triumph at the first of all Expositions made McCormick and the reaper famous in Europe and America. He was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor in Paris. He was elected to the French Academy of Science. He was honored as having done more for agriculture than any other man.

Cyrus Hall McCormick was the inventor of the reaper and the founder of our business. We delight to honor his name, and this we do by carrying forward our great enterprise on his lines of honest, durable machines, fair dealing, and the giving of more than value for every dollar received.