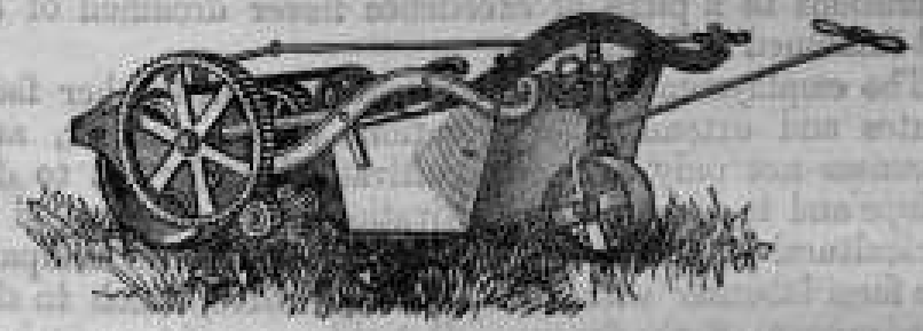
arriving at the end of the shed, the young student found the crop all cut, but lying higgledy-piggledy. A distributor was required.

"The signs of the artificial harvest were cleared away; and, after many trials, he invented a canvas sheet stretched on rollers, something on the same principle as the tapes which deliver the sheets on a steam printing-machine, which delivered the cut corn in a regular swathe. He next devised the well-known reel for collecting the corn against the cutter. The whole machine was ready to work in the summer of 1828, and the harvest-time was impatiently expected. Before the corn was perfectly ripe, about eleven o'clock at night, when every woman and child was safe in bed, the machine was drawn from its place of concealment, harnessed to the good horse Jock; and the young student, with his brother, a future farmer, made their way to a field of wheat, talking in whispers. The first experiment was successful. After a few more private trials the machine was exhibited before a party of farmers on the farm of Pourie, near Dundee. A copy of the original invention was made at a foundry at Dundee, exhibited before the Highland Society in the same year at Glasgow, and received a prize of £50, although, from imperfect fitting, it would not work; and some eighteen machines, made by different hands without the inventor's supervision, equally failed.

"The late Lord Panmure volunteered to advance the cost of a patent; but Mr. Bell declined the kind offer, not being desirous of retaining any exclusive right over an agricultural improvement. The probability is that, if he had patented his reaping-machine, it would have been brought to perfection and into notice many years earlier; for inventions open to every one are, like common-ground unfenced, not always considered worth cultivating. But the time had not come for such an agricultural machine; unskilled labour was too cheap; and, if such a machine had been ordered, there was no class of implement makers able to supply it. It is only on a large scale that such implements can be profitably manufactured.

"From that time the invention slept and was forgotten,

although one machine was preserved, and was occasionally worked at Inchmichael by Mr. Bell, the farmer; and a complete description of it, with drawings, was inserted in Loudon's 'Magazine of Agriculture,' in 1830, and afterwards in his 'Encyclopædia.' But for twenty subsequent years the question was, not how to supersede, but how to employ the labour which the late war, the English poor-laws, and Irish rack-rented potato-gardens had created. The labour-saving reaping-machine was not wanted, and remained unknown to all but the curious, until 1851 brought round general prosperity and the Exhibition in Hyde Park. Of course among the competing nations were the United States men, with an immense space very



MOWING MACHINE.

imperfectly filled with discordant violin-pianos, Excelsior bedsteads, artificial legs, false legs, chewing tobacco for the Duke of Wellington, India-rubber in all manner of forms, photographs, rocking-chairs, and M'Cormick's reaping-machine. That reaping-machine was one of the greatest successes of the whole exhibition. The sensation it created among the poverty-stricken collection from one of the wealthiest and most ingenious countries in the world was immense. Very soon it was flanked by another implement on a different plan, by another American—Gideon Hussey; and our farmers learned, to their astonishment, that these same machines had been in use in America for fifteen years, and were sold by thousands. The newspapers woke up our Scotch friends; and the

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