

California Celebrates Luther Burbank's Sixty-first Birthday

'MARATHON DANCE' BREAKS THE RECORD

TRIBUTE TO HIS ACHIEVEMENTS OF FAMOUS HORTICULTURIST

Plant Wizard Continues Experiments and New Marvels Grow Under His Touch

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much better. When I started with the bulbs they were that size"—he indicated an oval by crooking his thumb and forefinger. "Now, the bulbs are as large as an apple or a potato. This was a popular edible plant with the Indians," he continued. "It used to be the cause of wars between the Indians and the whites, for the white men would let their hogs get into the beds of the camassia and destroy the plants."

A Queen Among Vegetables

A plant, the philosopher of plant life reasoned, which led to war must be a queen in the vegetable kingdom—Helen of Troy of bulbs. Burbank did not say that, but his actions would suggest that he had that idea of its royalty in mind. For he has taken this plant, which was so humble in the eyes of the white man and has recreated it into a distinguished food product.

"When will it be put on the market for general sale?" Burbank was asked. "I can not say," he answered. "That is problematical. I am working on it."

Has Drawn Nature's Teeth

Burbank has drawn the teeth of nature and has tamed the vicious plant of the desert—the cactus—so that man can now eat of its thornless leaves and now delicious fruits. He is a veritable Daniel come to judgment on the cactus, or a Daniel in the lions' den, for Burbank's wonderful skill has made the cactus as safe to the touch as the sweetest melon. The cactus Burbank considers his greatest achievement—or, rather, he accepts the verdict of the scientist who has said: "The development of the thornless cactus by Luther Burbank will add as much wealth to the world as the discovery of a new continent would."

Over the thornless cactus there has been a redundancy of controversy, just as there was over the wonderberry. The critics of the wonderberry have been silenced by the fruit of the marvelous plant. "By their fruits ye shall know them," applies as true literally as figuratively. As Christianity has as its own, so Luther Burbank might adopt the direct meaning of the phrase as his motto.

Only Thornless Cactus

"There is not in existence today an absolutely thornless cactus of agricultural value which did not originate on my grounds within the past 12 years. This fact is demonstrated on my own plants which I have here the varieties which have been claimed as spineless. The United States government collector, David C. Fairchild, sent me samples of the government spineless cactus. They are but partly spineless. Mine are absolutely spineless. I told Mr. G. W. Oliver when he was visiting at my place that I would give him \$10 for every thorn he could find by rubbing a leaf against his cheek."

Among the Beds

"Nearest to the beds were several rows of brilliant, squat, cone shaped cactus, the sort that were popular in the flower pots at home, tantalizingly prickly, forbidding, pernicious. Beyond stood some ungainly hedges of cactus, larger than elephants' ears, thick and fibrous. Thin points darted from the dark green flanks of the leaves. There were not many spines, but there were some. "This is the government cactus," said Burbank, "the government spineless cactus." He rushed ahead. He bent over a bottle green plant and affectionately rubbed it with his cheek, just as a lion tamer would rub his cheek across the jaws of a subdued, harmless beast. "See, there is not a spine, not a thorn," he cried in triumph, "delighted to show his innocuous creation tamed and sprouting with all the vigor of its ancestors."

Their Wide Distribution

"I took me seven years to get the thorns off," said Burbank, caressing the great, smooth leaves. "Now I am working to make the plant more hardy so that it can grow in any locality. I have one variety which grows in its native state in the northern part of the United States, in Minnesota and Maine, and in other states. It will grow in Alaska. There should be no misconception," Burbank continued cautiously, "about where the thornless cactus will grow. It will only grow in a narrow border skirting the United States south from the middle Atlantic states, throughout the whole of Florida, in the Gulf states, Texas, Arizona and, in all parts of California, practically, except the mountains. It will grow for five years without water in a tropical climate, but not in a torrid climate. It will produce heavy foliage or fodder for stock. I have produced 46,000 pounds of cactus leaves from one eighth, and 197,000 pounds from the acre the second year."

has been planted successfully and \$250,000 was paid here for plants which were purchased here for a few thousand dollars. General Booth of the Salvation Army has undertaken the introduction of the thornless cactus into India. I have received communications concerning the plant from the governments of England, for British Africa; Germany, for its colonies; France, Turkey, Egypt, China, Japan, Mexico and other governments. The United States government has devoted much attention to it."

In a far corner of the nursery yard were a group of the cumbersome looking plants, and on the fleshy leaves were brilliant red fruit, about the size and somewhat the shape of a 16 candlepower electric light globe. Burbank demonstrated how the fruit should be cut. With his knife he removed the thick rind and disclosed the rich purple pulp. But it was not the season for thornless cactus fruit—or Burbank has not developed it yet to bear ripe fruit at all months of the year. It could not be tasted.

The cactus, from what Burbank says, is the most versatile plant in the world.

That is what makes it difficult to divide Burbank's work by the calendar and to say that in the sixtieth year of his life he gave this plant to the world and that in the sixty-first year his contribution was this. Cell by cell, year by year, he builds up his plant, selecting this characteristic one season, that characteristic another; the fresh shade of color he developed in 1907, a more graceful leaf in 1908, a more delicate flavor to the fruit in 1909. The plant might be ready for the world in 1910—but Burbank might see the opportunity for improvement and give the public part of his re-creation.

World. He announced with pride that he had just received a letter from a prominent automobile company which said that the pulp or fiber of the leaves had been tested as a brake for machines and found to be more durable than steel. It could also be worked into paper, and cactus paper promises to become the most aristocratic of all kinds, for it has proved excellent as bank note paper.

Spineless Blackberries

"Not content with drawing the teeth of the cactus, Burbank has performed a like operation on blackberry and raspberry bushes. His hothouse were boxes of berry shoots. Burbank stuck his bare hands into the mass of leaves. There was no sting. "I have acres of them growing," said Burbank. Near them were sprouting hardy cotton plants which are intended to grow in any equable climate.

Next to his cactus, Luther Burbank is most interested in his wonderberry—for it is over that plant that the great controversy of last summer waged. Burbank now feels vindicated. John Lewis Childs, a well known seedman, has written an able review of this controversy, which he has called "The Crime of the Wonderberry." He says:

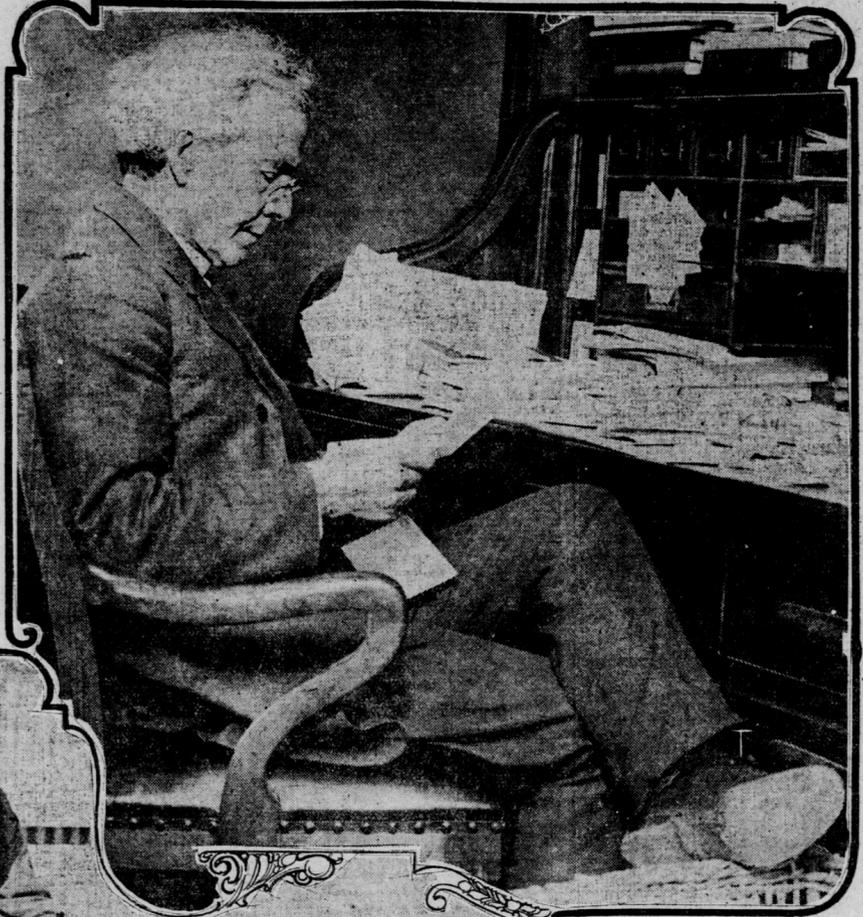
It is said on good authority that a certain man, unconnected with a certain horticultural publication, himself a creator of plant novelties and an aspirant for fame, tried to associate himself with Luther Burbank and his work. Mr. Burbank declined; since then this certain publication has gone out of its way to discredit Mr. Burbank and his work in every manner possible. When I introduced the wonderberry last year no horticulturist of note had seen it or knew anything about it. It had been carefully guarded, as all valuable novelties are, and had been grown only by Mr. Burbank in California and by us here at Floral park. The publication referred to immediately attacked it as worthless, though the editors had never seen it and knew nothing about it. It was a case of many things—all bad—and finally it was alleged to be the black nightshade (Solanum nigrum) and poisonous. (The potato, the egg plant, the tomato and wonderberry are all solanums.)

The Wonderberry War

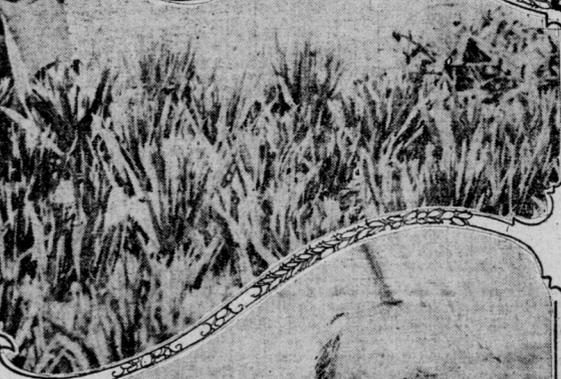
From this starting point other would be horticulturists, envious of Mr. Burbank, took up the cry against him and the wonderberry, and the most malicious and untruthful reports about it became current all over the world. Never in the history of horticulture was such a well organized and so persistent a crusade against a man ever launched, and all based absolutely upon false assertions. Not one of these envious and zealous men had any personal knowledge of the wonderberry whatsoever, but seed was procured from my early and started under glass. By April some small seedling plants, three or four inches high, had set and ripened a few fruits. As might be expected under such conditions the berries were small and tasteless. Here then was proof positive that the thing was worthless, and all of Mr. Burbank's enemies and rivals were happy. They met to felicitate one another, to pass resolutions and to write press notices condemning the wonderberry and kept it up until the middle of summer, inducing tens of thousands of people who had plants of it to pull them up and throw them away, thus helping along the crusade against Burbank.

By the end of July plants grown under proper conditions in the open

Intimate views of Luther Burbank at his home in Santa Rosa, taken four days ago by a Call photographer



BURBANK SPENDS ABOUT SEVEN HOURS A DAY AT HIS DESK



BURBANK EXAMINING A BED OF CAMASSIA WITH WHICH HE HOPES TO SUPPLANT THE POTATO



BURBANK IN HIS HOthouse STUDYING THE GROWTH OF YOUNG COTTON PLANTS

ground all over the country began favorable reports set in. At this time Doctor Britton, head of the

said Burbank, "which have a particularly improved flavor." On one side of the lot was edged with walnut trees. "These are just 3 years old," said the grower of wonders. "They were tall, graceful trees. They are a cross between the eastern and the California black walnut," explained Burbank. "They are remarkably rapid growers and good bearers." Then he turned to a small patch of growing hybrids. "These are crosses between onions, leeks and garlic," said the wizard, nonchalantly, as if of those odoriferous vegetables alone and unabetted was not sufficient without having accumulated the strength of the three bound indissolubly in one pungent bulb.

Botanical Clearing House

Santa Rosa, or Burbank's place, to be definite, has become the world's botanical clearing house. All over the earth the agents and correspondents of Burbank are working collecting rare and common native plants. "They are in parts of South America which have never before been botanized, and I receive 2,000 specimens a year from one collector there," Burbank stated. "Three or four missionaries in the interior of China send me rare plants, and in the Pacific islands, in Alaska, and all parts of the world there are collectors who add to my assortment of seeds. I take the seeds, grow them normally the first season and then experiment with them."

Burbank is an empirical philosopher of plant life. "I am working now with a grape from western China," he continues. "It is a wild grape, a rapid grower. I will plant 100,000 seedlings and probably will secure 100 individual plants—one out of 1,000—which will suit my purpose. I will cross these grapes with other varieties and get a product which is new and valuable."

"This year I am grafting 400,000 seedling varieties of plums and plumbots."

"That the Carnegie endowment was withdrawn last year does not disturb Burbank," the Carnegie Institution, he commented lightly, "wanted to capture Burbank for the benefit of science. I worked for it. I prepared a review of my work. I went through the list of all the plants I have experimented upon, from A to Z, more than 20,000 different species in the last 40 years—briefly reporting the results of my work—where I had succeeded with a plant; where I had failed. I had just finished that compilation when I learned that the allowance had been withdrawn. On 15 minutes' notice I had to put my work on a commercial basis. I did that. While I received \$10,000 from the Carnegie Institution, that did not cover the expense of my work. I spent \$6,000 more directly on the work than I received during those five years."

Increase in Expense

"Now my expenses are \$1,000 a month. I have 12 men at my farm at Sebastopol, six at this, my Santa Rosa place, three girls, stenographers, working inside. Shortly I will need 18 young people to put up seeds." He drew a little package from his pocket. On the back was a diamond shaped seal with the name "Luther Burbank" in script. "With this seal on packages they are worth 25 cents; when without this seal the seeds could be bought for 2 1/2 cents."

Burbank's Vindication

By September the wonderberry was fully vindicated in all parts of the country and we were deluged with letters praising it. Burbank has not been injured, but great damage and annoyance has been done to innocent persons—how many the world will never know—more than 350,000 persons had planted seed of the wonderberry. While Luther Burbank's later works have been among edibles, he has applied his charm at the same time over his flowers and grasses. "I am working," he said, "over seedlings crimson Rambler rose, in which I am developing new shades. Then there is a new evening primrose, which is five or six inches in diameter. One petal of the new flower will cover the old blossom."

Under foot, as Burbank and the interviewer talked, were grass plats, over which men were working. "This is a lawn plant," he explained, "the well known Hippia. I am developing new varieties which will grow with one-tenth of the water needed for blue grass or other lawn plants. "Beyond were some strawberry vines. "I have grown some strawberries,"

Three Couples Keep Going for 14 Hours and 43 Minutes

Remarkable Exhibition of Grit and Endurance Watched by Crowds

Continued from Page One

and limbs with alcohol, giving them stimulants and food. The place was stifling hot and the dancers were the pictures of utter physical and mental weariness. The orchestra, unable to keep the pace, had divided in half early in the night, each half taking turns at playing while the other rested. By 1 o'clock in the afternoon the dance hall was filled with onlookers. There was then but half an hour more to break the record, but every step, it seemed, would be the last.

Within 20 minutes of the requisite time Miss Finnigan began to faint and her fingers clutched nervously at the shoulders of her partner. As her head drooped Doctor Brackett administered strychnine and the next instant she drew up again with a smile and danced on.

Record Is Broken

There seemed to be peculiar fascination in the slowly moving figures automatically stepping to the music and the crowd watched in silence. As the last few minutes began to pass the whistling and talking ceased, and when finally the record was broken and the dance halted wild cheering broke out. The dancers, limp, fagged, pale, with glazed eyes and feverish brows, were thrown on benches for a momentary respite and then rushed across to the German hospital, there to be examined and placed into steam baths.

Perils of Provincialism

A well known and careful writer on current problems has recently said that one of the greatest perils of the country today is "the peril of provincialism," involving the superficial handling of great subjects and great questions, says the Milwaukee Sentinel.

Each age has its problems. The twentieth century will have possibly more and greater problems than any preceding century of history. The ages of the past have prepared mankind for its highest development in the century now nearing the close of its first decade.

The problems now pressing upon thought and consideration are not only those that affect the well being of the individual, but society in all its aspects and relations. Every sphere in which man moves and every vocation to which he devotes himself affects and is affected by these problems. They are not superficial. The ill they seek to remedy are not surface eruptions on the body politic. They are deep seated. They are grounded in the very nature of man himself.

Women Are Conquering

Women are conquering slowly. Paris has its lady cabbies, lady lawyers, lady billposters, and now comes the announcement of a lady cyclist letter carrier or postman, says the London Globe.

It is the custom in state departments, in regard to porters, when the head of the family is laid aside or incapacitated, to install the wife either temporarily or permanently in the position.

A similar custom, we believe, obtains on the duties of Bedford's estate in regard to the porters. The lady "postman" is Madame Fazy-L'Amoulier, and she is attached to the postoffice at La Chappel-sur-Aveyron.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC TEMPORARY SERVICE Until Further Notice Account Washouts

Train No. 4, leaving San Francisco 9:00 a. m. ordinarily, will be consolidated with Train No. 2 (San Francisco Overland Limited), leaving here at 10:40 a. m. and running to Ogden via Portland, handling through passengers for eastern points.

Train No. 24 (Tonopah and Goldfield Passenger) will be run as usual, taking care of local traffic between San Francisco and Sparks.

Train No. 6, leaving San Francisco at 6:40 p. m., will run as far as Sparks, handling sleeper to Reno.

Train No. 10, leaving San Francisco 9:00 p. m., will carry No. 6's and No. 10's through passengers and will be routed to Ogden through Portland.

Passengers taking evening train for points between Sacramento and Reno must use No. 6, as there will be no connection with Train No. 10.



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