

September, 2018



British Home Child Group International

Luther Burbank—Tending the Human Plant By Sandra Joyce



Luther Burbank, one of the greatest pioneers of horticultural science, not only developed over 800 strains of plant varieties, he believed that the principles he utilized in the breeding and care of plants, could be applied to the rearing of children.

Noted as a 'kind' man by his colleagues and even though a strong supporter of Darwinist views, he also believed that with the proper care and attention, plants and children could escape their inherent fate.

In fact, one of his greatest aims in life was to introduce some of the scientific ideas that he used on plants on an every day basis, to children. Even though Burbank remained childless throughout his two marriages, he felt confident enough to write a book entitled, 'The Training of the Human Plant', in which Burbank consistently compares the breeding and care of his plants to those of a child.

In a 1908 interview that was printed in various newspapers in Canada, Mr. Burbank expressed admiration for Dr. Thomas Barnardo's methods of bringing up children and likened it to what he was doing with plants.

"Barnardo has demonstrated that infinitely more can be done with children than with weeds and plants. Whenever human beings recognized these realities in the realms of human life and begin to apply scientific principles to the training of children, then humanity will enter upon a new stage of existence."

Raised on a farm in Massachusetts and then continuing his work on farms in California, Burbank praised life in the country and believed all children should be raised in nature and not be officially educated until they were ten. In his book, he stresses the positive effects of fresh air, nature and nourishment on children. Just as he had believed that he had wrought miracles with plants by putting them into contact with elements to which they rapidly responded, he believed the same could be done with children.

In "The Training of the Human Plant", Burbank also said, "...there are also the orphans and the waifs; these must be taken into account. They must have wise, sane and consistent state aid. I am opposed to all kinds of sectarian aid. I would do away with all asylums of all types for indigent under sectarian or private control. The nation or the commonwealth should take care of the unfortunate. It must do this in a broad and liberal and sane manner, if we are ever to accomplish the end sought, to make this nation rise to its possibilities. Only through the Nation or state can this work be done. It must be done for self-protection."

He continued, "Now to the extent that we leave the children of the poor and these other unfortunates, - waifs and foundlings, - to themselves and their evils surroundings, to that extent we breed peril for ourselves. The only way to obviate this is to absolutely cut loose from all precedent and begin State and National Aid, not next year but now, today. Begin training these outcasts, begin the cultivation of them, if you will, as we do plants, in order that their lives begin to turn into right ways, in order that the integrity of the state may be maintained. Rightly cultivated, these children may be made a blessing to the race; trained in the wrong way or neglected entirely, they will become a curse to the state."

Luther Burbank *continued*

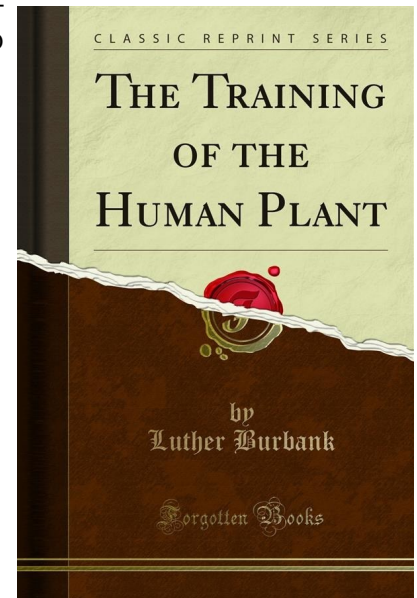
Passionate about his work and its social effects, one of Burbank's most notable cross-bred plants was the Russet Potato. He began crossbreeding potato plants in the mid-1800s, convinced that he could make this potato easy to grow, more palatable and most importantly, disease resistant. A potato resistant to the 'late blight mold' was imperative as it caused the Irish Potato Famine (1844 to 1849) during which over one million people died.

Currently, the Russet potato is used by most major fast food chains in North America (like McDonald's).

An Andrew Carnegie grant recipient in his early years, Mr. Burbank, once he became well known – mainly through his plant catalogues, was a generous philanthropist and stoutly supported many schools.

He summed his beliefs up in this quote: "In the span of my own lifetime I observed such wondrous progress in plant evolution that I look forward optimistically to a healthy, happy world as soon as its children are taught the principles of simple and rational living."

Luther Burbank died in April 1926 at the age of 77.



**RYE
HERITAGE
PARK**

• UNVEILING OF MARIA RYE HISTORICAL
PLAQUE - NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE •

Please join us at Rye Heritage Park at 2:00pm on
September 28, 2018. Reception to follow at Niagara
Historical Society & Museum, 45 Castlereagh Rd.,
Niagara-on-the-Lake

Free Land! by Sandra Joyce

On a recent trip to Quebec, British Home Child Group International's President Karen Mahoney visited Grosse Ile, Canada's main port of entry from 1832 onward. It was created mainly to isolate people ill from the tide of epidemics. Located on an island near Quebec City in the St. Lawrence River, many of the early British Home Children would have had to satisfy the requirements of the health standards at Grosse Ile before being allowed to proceed to their destinations.

While viewing the artifacts, Karen also discovered posters promoting emigration to Canada and free land grants for successful applicants.

The Dominion Lands Act was established in 1872 to encourage settlers to take up land in the sparsely populated Prairie provinces. Although the Act was like the American Homestead Act, the law was created to increase the population in those areas and to prevent the land being claimed by the United States.

Mass emigration was encouraged from Europe. In addition, Americans loyal to the British crown were urged to settle in the area. The system offered 160 acres of free land to any man or woman over 21 leading a household. The land had to be lived on and improved.

Boys over the age of 14 were also encouraged to emigrate to Canada as farm workers directly through the Department of Agriculture responsible for Immigration until 1891.

Immigrants petitioning the Crown for a Canadian land grant had to provide certain details which are very important to genealogists, such as name, occupation, residence, number of years in Canada, and after 1908, if not already a British subject, their intention to swear allegiance to the Crown.

Those who met the requirements were granted a patent, which gave them full title to the land. They could sell it, give it to their descendants in a will, or mortgage it as they saw fit.

Those who failed to meet the requirements were not granted a patent to the land, and the title returned to the Crown.

The Act originally applied to Manitoba and the North West Territories and upon creation of Alberta and Saskatchewan, subsequently applied to them and the Peace River Block of British Columbia.

The Act gave a claimant 160 acres for free, the only cost to the farmer being a \$10 administration fee. They agreed to cultivate at least 40 acres of the land and within three years build a permanent dwelling on it. This condition of "proving up the homestead" was instituted to prevent speculators from gaining control of the land.



Free Land! continued

For an additional \$10 registration fee and proof that they had improved their land, the settlers could buy adjoining land. It was easier to gain a profit by doubling up on the size of the farm.

The Act was, at first, unsuccessful due largely to some restrictions placed on it. The extensive exclusion zones required the property to be 20 miles away from a rail-road. In 1879, this rule changed to 10 miles and in 1882 was eliminated.

Not all the arable land in the West was given away through this Act. The Canadian Pacific Railway had retained half of the land to build railways and the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) kept five percent of the land that it had accepted as part of surrendering its charter. At one point in time, HBC had owned the entire prairies.



Free land grants were one way of populating the western provinces but the life there was hard. Farming implements and oxen, for ploughing the land, had to be bought. If the potential farmer had no children, men had to be hired. Winters kept roads impassable and isolating. Droughts caused some farmers to relinquish their claim and move away.

The Act was repealed in 1930 and the federal government agreed to transfer control over the public lands and natural resources to the prairie provinces by means of the Natural Resources Acts.



British Home Child Group International

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