

The Passing Of The World-Famous "PRIMATE" HARRIS COLONY

FOUNTAIN GROVE, founded by Thomas Lake Harris, is no longer a colony of mystics. By the terms of a deed just filed Harris and his wife waive all claim to this garden spot of 2000 acres, situated three miles from Santa Rosa and famous the world over as the one-time home of "Primate" Harris and his followers.

To-day Kanai Nagasawa, a Japanese Prince and near relative of the Mikado, is at the head of the Fountain Grove vineyard. Prince Nagasawa was one of the Harris converts who came to California with him twenty-five years ago, when Fountain Grove was purchased by these mystics for a home for the "Brotherhood of the Divine Spirit."

Nine years ago Primate Harris and his wife left Fountain Grove and took up their residence in New York City. Since

teaching. It was when his talented cousin, Margaret Oliphant, published their memoirs and branded Harris as a fraud and impostor that the reputation of Thomas Lake Harris belted the globe. Especially in England and America did the book make a stir.

Yet now this man whose mystic attractive powers played such havoc with so many lives is surrounded by great wealth and quietly living in New York with his wife, Jane Lee Waring Harris. And Fountain Grove, once the focus for all eyes inclined mysticward, is merely an excellently managed vineyard. The only element of romance left is that the manager is a Japanese Prince and doubtless still a believer in Harris and his doctrines.

Harris to his faithful followers has recently issued the statement that he has discovered the secret of perpetual youth.



the late Colonel George E. Waring, Commissioner of Street Cleaning, New York. Although she had lived at Fountain Grove for years, it was not until just before his departure for New York, some nine years ago, that Harris married her. She is a woman in the middle fifties, and of course a blind believer in the primate.

Harris was thus graphically described by Lawrence Oliphant: "The primate had two voices—one the distant echo of the other. The high voice was rapid and vivacious; the off one solemn and impressive. His hair was thick, and once black, was streaked with gray and hung over his ears to his shoulders. His eyebrows were beetling and bushy; his eyes were revolving lights in dark caverns, and, like his voice, had a self-adjusting focus. His cast of countenance was Semitic. He wore a heavy mustache and a long gray beard. Sometimes he looked to be only twenty-five years old and at other times over eighty."

Although Fountain Grove vineyard is so close to Santa Rosa, few people there saw Primate Harris, though he dwelt at their very elbow for twenty-five years. But strange and varied have been the rumors that have floated down from this home of the mystics. There have been stories about Harris burying an obstreperous wife for hours in soil up to her neck, that the devil might leave her, and this

that time Prince Nagasawa has had charge of Fountain Grove, and under his supervision the 2000 acres of vineyard have yielded an immense profit, and the Fountain Grove wines are more famous than ever.

But since the departure of Harris the air of mystery that shrouded this strange colony of people has been gradually dispelled. Santa Rosa people drive at will over the beautiful grounds, and a limited number of intimate friends are royally entertained by Prince Nagasawa.

Whether the Prince and the four other members of Fountain Grove are still blind devotees of Harris it is impossible to definitely ascertain. But the place is no longer the home and hotbed of the weirdest communal scheme ever perpetrated. According to Prince Nagasawa, Fountain Grove is now run on a purely business basis, the owners living there surrounded by the comforts and luxuries of any other wealthy vineyardists.

There are four handsome houses on the Fountain Grove property. Prince Nagasawa occupies the fine mansion used by Primate Harris when he was leader of the community. The other three houses are at the disposal of Miss Nicholas, Miss Parting, Mr. and Mrs. Hart and the visiting Harris proselytes.

So the last leaf in the history of the much discussed Fountain Grove is turned down, for without Thomas Lake Harris the future pages will be but blank compared to the vivid chapters that have at times electrified the philosophic world.

For Thomas Lake Harris, spiritual prophet, seer, reformer, hypnotist or what not, is no ordinary man. He was a human magnet who drew after him thousands of converts who were as clay in his hands, turning over to him all their worldly goods and obeying his dictates as humbly as a slave.

It was not the ignorant and superstitious who were caught in the meshes of Harris' peculiar magnetism. People of wealth, culture and refinement became his willing slaves, performing the most degrading mental tasks that their spirits might be cleansed sufficiently to enter his brotherhood.

At a word from him devoted husbands forsook the companionship of their wives.

Mothers parted with children at his dictates. Sons and daughters renounced their parents.

Among the most distinguished followers of Harris were Lady Oliphant, her famous brother, Lawrence and his wife, Alice Oliphant. Lady Oliphant died in the brotherhood, but Lawrence Oliphant and his wife before their deaths awoke to the true character of Primate Harris and his

Although past 70 his remarkably youthful appearance almost justifies his assertion.

It was in New York, years ago, that as a Swedonborgian, with all the modern improvements, Harris first created a tiny ripple of excitement. He easily became the leader of the band of spiritualists who believed with him. With these people he decided to go to a distant place and found a community. The "spirit" led them to a spot in North Carolina, which they named Mountain Cove. They believed that this was the original spot of the Garden of Eden.

Harris acted as messenger between the Lord and his own people, and owing to his position as the viceregent of God he received and held in trust for God all the property of the disciples and the community. But after a community life of two years the disciples disbanded and Harris went to England in 1853 to lecture and preach.

There he met Lawrence Oliphant, who, even at that age, 30, had had a remarkable career. Oliphant, despite his admitted talent, had every kind of "wheel" except a balance wheel, and became infatuated with Harris. It was not until seven years later, however, that he joined the brotherhood.

Harris had selected Brocton, N. Y., on the shore of a beautiful lake, as the spot for his second colony. He crossed to England to raise funds for the purpose and renewed his acquaintance with Oliphant. Gladly he held himself aloof from Oliphant after thoroughly arousing his curiosity. Harris warned Oliphant how hard it was to get into the brotherhood on any terms. This only spurred Oliphant on. Lawrence Oliphant was then wrapped up

in politics. Harris first tested his complete power over this perverted brilliant man by accompanying him to the House of Commons on an occasion when Oliphant expected to electrify everybody. Harris forbade him to open his lips at the critical moment, and Oliphant, whose pet ambition had been to be a Parliamentary success, was adjudged a failure.

Oliphant then turned his back on his brilliant career in politics, literature and society and followed Prophet Harris to Brocton. His name among the brotherhood was changed to Woodliffe. He rose at 4 a. m., spoke to no one, received his food from a silent messenger, dug out cow stables, returned at 9 at night to his loft over the stables containing empty boxes and a straw mattress, only to be sent out again in the dead of winter to draw water for two hours. Thus at Primate Harris' command did Lawrence Oliphant, traveler, author and politician, "cast the devil out of himself." Not only did he perform this menial work, but he

gave his entire fortune, \$125,000, to Harris to invest along the shores of Lake Erie. Groups of three or four persons were formed in the brotherhood, but if any affection developed they were broken up immediately. Thus, when Oliphant's self-sacrifice had gloriously resulted in routing the evil one within him, he sent for his mother. Lady Oliphant came, but Harris would not allow her to see her son, much less speak to him.

Harris, when Oliphant's probation of two years was up, sent him to London to

test the strength of his belief. He recalled Oliphant frequently to the community, and, though Oliphant chafed somewhat under this restraint, he remained loyal. Before allowing his disciple to undertake war correspondence in 1870, Harris gave him a sign by which he should know when he must return. That sign was to be a bullet whizzing into a room where Oliphant was to be seated. During the Paris commune Oliphant had just turned into a house to avoid a charge of soldiery when a bullet grazed his hair. He obeyed the sign and returned to London in New York at once, though the London newspaper, which he represented, entered a vigorous protest.

But Oliphant, after being recalled from the scene of the Franco-Prussian war, didn't stay long in America. He returned to London and with his mother went to Paris. Here he met Alice Le Strange, a young, cultured and wealthy English woman. They were married after great opposition from Harris, whose permission

both had craved most humbly.

Two years later Oliphant, his wife and mother returned to Brocton. His wife soon became as thoroughly infatuated with the brotherhood as he. Lady Oliphant and Alice were made to wash, iron, mend clothes and raise chickens, while Oliphant himself was in New York most of the time attending to the business of the community.

When Harris pulled up his stakes at Brocton and came to California to found another colony Alice Oliphant was among those who accompanied him. Oliphant was ordered to stay East and when he crossed the continent expressly to see his wife the prophet said him nay and dutifully Oliphant returned East. Later he went to the Holy Land and thence to London, where his wife was allowed to join him.

In May, 1881, Lawrence visited his mother, Lady Oliphant, who was seriously ill at Brocton, and he started with her for Fountain Grove. She died in his arms shortly after arriving there. Harris, it is said, was very angry that any cure at all should have been sought for Lady Oliphant. This with the discovery that jewelry Alice had worn when entering the brotherhood and which the priorate had taken away from her, adorned a member of Harris' household, and the eyes to the kind of brotherhood he had joined. What he had suspected before he now thoroughly believed. This jewelry incident is told by Margaret Oliphant, the popular novelist, in her memoirs of her cousin Lawrence.

Lawrence Oliphant and other members of the Brocton community tried to get back the money which they had invested in land and which Harris held sole title to. Harris telegraphed to Alice Oliphant in England for the aid of her authority in order to put her husband in the madhouse, where it is said Harris' first wife was. Proceedings to declare Oliphant a lunatic had already begun, but the sanction of the nearest relative was needed.

At this the scales began to drop from Miss Oliphant's eyes also. Eventually both of them recovered the land at Brocton their money had bought.

While the Oliphants are perhaps the most noted of Harris' proselytes, he has had others of equal wealth and good birth. Among the ladies who resided at Fountain Grove was Jane Lee Waring, a sister of

was to cure her of objecting to his way of making platonic love. Again it was rumored that whenever a person had an attack of the "devils" he or she was kept without sleep as the "infernalists" were more active at night time. One woman, it is said, was allowed to sleep only from 9 o'clock at night to 2, the other hours being put in at hard work.

Besides the handsome residences at Fountain Grove, Harris had a little cabin ten miles back in the hills, where he spent the hours in solitary seclusion and in the "conversion of fleshly molecules into psychic animates."

About five years ago Santa Rosa woke up one morning to find that the little fourteen-year-old girl, Mary Harris, had committed suicide at Fountain Grove. They had not even been aware of the existence of this girl and her sister, so closely were the children kept when visitors were around. Not only were these two girls denied a peep at the joyous outside world of childhood, but they were even deprived of each other's company, as the testimony at the inquest developed.

For days before this young girl committed suicide she was kept a prisoner in her own room on the groundless charges that she was "stubborn and wayward" and needed disciplining. The testimony, however, proved that she was no more "stubborn" or "wayward" than any high-spirited young girl fretting for physical and mental freedom. She was kept in solitary confinement awaiting orders to release her from her grandfather, Primate Harris.

Mary Harris rebelled against this with all the strength of her independent spirit. One day she attempted to gain her liberty by jumping from a twenty-foot window, only to be picked up limp and helpless in the garden and returned to solitary seclusion. Then fourteen-year-old Mary Harris swallowed the bitter draught, determined on release at any cost.

But the old days at Fountain Grove will never return. With Harris in New York there is no longer the human magnet there to attract distinguished people from the four corners of the earth. To-day it is merely a rich vineyard, with Prince Kanai Nagasawa as manager in chief.

New Zealand shares with Iceland the distinction over other parts of the earth in freedom from all forms of cattle disease.