

# John Weaver, Philadelphia's Unique Chief Executive



His recent outburst of popular indignation in Philadelphia was inspired by one of the most far-reaching attempts to profit at the expense of the tax-paying population of the Quaker City ever recorded. The project involved the making of a seventy-five year contract for lighting the city with the United Gas Improvement company, an organization endowed with remarkable facilities for obtaining highly remunerative contracts from municipal sources.

Briefly stated, the facts are as follows: The United Gas Improvement company holds a thirty year lease of the Philadelphia gas works. According to the agreement, this lease may be terminated by the city in 1907, but it involves the payment of \$20,000,000. The municipal authorities, represented by the city council and the department officials, maintain that the enforced payment of this large sum would result in financial hardship to the city, claiming that the city needs \$45,000,000 to meet immediate expenses and that it has a borrowing capacity of only \$15,000,000. The municipal authorities made a new lease with the United Gas Improvement company to run seventy-five years. The consideration named is \$25,000,000, to be paid in three years.

To further the working of this scheme a syndicate of New York capitalists offered to loan the city \$25,000,000 at 5 per cent to take up the old gas lease to advance \$25,000,000 more within five years, to reduce the price of gas to 50 cents per thousand and to share profits with the city, one-third for ten years and one-half for sixty-five. This is the comprehensive plan which the council favored and the citizens repudiated. This is the scheme which John Weaver, the mayor of Philadelphia, pronounced fraudulent and declared that he would never be a party to its adoption and, furthermore, that he intended to do his utmost to defeat it, which he did subsequently.

The chief executive of Philadelphia is today one of the most picturesque and interesting personalities in American politics. He enjoys the distinction of being the first English-born citizen to be elected to the majority of a great American city. A quarter of a century ago, then a rosy cheeked Devonshire lad of sixteen, John Weaver stood sturdily down the gang plank of the ship which brought him to America. He was a stranger in a strange land, but he was honest and courageous. There was no one to welcome him with open arms, nor had there been any leave taking when he left his native country. Dick Whittington ran away from London only to turn back and become its lord mayor. John Weaver had run away from England to become mayor of Philadelphia.

His father wanted him to remain in Devonshire and perpetuate the family avocation of market gardening. John expressed a desire to seek fortune elsewhere, but his father saw no good out of England and very little outside of Devonshire. The lad persisted, and the parent lost his temper. Before the reaction arrived the boy slipped away quietly to Liverpool and took storage passage on a liner. When he had paid for his ticket he had not enough remaining of the money he had accumulated in Devonshire to occasion him the slightest worry.

Although he was penniless, he was by no means destitute, and he was not at all dismayed when he paused to take stock of his most available assets. He was honest and willing, and he knew it. He had a clean, truthful face and the bearing of a gentleman, and he probably knew that also. These heaven sent blessings served him admirably. They made such a favorable impression on one of his fellow travelers that he volunteered to see that the bright faced Devonshire lad was given a chance. He took him to Philadelphia and gave him

a shelter until he was able to secure a foothold in his adopted country. It was a struggle at first. Mr. Weaver admitted that in an address to the Young Men's Christian association in Philadelphia last winter. He said that one of the most difficult things he had ever done was to abstain from the luxury of putting an "h" before every word beginning with a vowel and to refrain from decapitating every word that ought to have it. He knew that he could never lay absolute claim to American citizenship, he declared gradually, until he should accomplish the feat, and he set about it with such energy that at the end of his first year in Philadelphia he had divested himself of his Devonshire marks of identification.

Then he obtained a situation in a department store at \$1 a week. As mayor of Philadelphia he receives a salary of \$12,000 a year, but he assured the young men at his lecture that the latter sum seemed paltry and sadly inadequate when he remembered the merit of financial independence which attracted him when he first realized that he was worth a dollar a day. In the intervals he applied himself diligently to the study of shorthand, that stepping stone in the upward career of so many successful men. He soon became an expert at recording dictation that he was able to find a position in an attorney's office. This change enabled him to gratify a long cherished ambition; he might now begin the study of law, which he had always intended to do.

Before being admitted to the bar Mr. Weaver was law stenographer and recorder of the Philadelphia Law academy, of which he subsequently became successively treasurer, vice president and president. When he was admitted to the bar he became attached to the office of the corporation counsel and at once entered upon a life of yeoman service. He soon secured a reputation as an untiring party worker, and his diligence and devotion to party interests had its speedy reward. Once more opportunity opened at his door when the Republican leaders of the Quaker City, almost in despair over the difficulty of securing a candidate acceptable to all wings of the party, were searching in the political market place for a man whom they could trust implicitly in the office of district attorney. At such a time the personality of the rugged and fearless young Englishman who had toiled in the law office every weekday and taken volumes of dictation without betraying a sign of fatigue or demanding a word of explanation came into prominence. "Why not nominate John Weaver?" somebody ventured.

Why not, indeed? The voters of all political creeds were demanding a change. Affairs in the district attorney's office were being conducted to suit no man, but opposition to reform was well entrenched, and its benches began to ask satirically, "Who is John Weaver?" The moment had arrived for John Weaver to show them who he was, and he did it. In one of the most ferocious contested campaigns ever fought in the City of Brotherly Love John Weaver triumphed. It is a fact, however, that at the time of his nomination he was practically unknown in the city of his adoption. His life had been so devoted to securing a foothold that he had not found time to cultivate political acquaintances. When his nomination was announced in the papers there were no accompanying sketches throwing light upon his personality. In a day all the journalistic sleuths in the city were in search of John Weaver. When they found him they were not made much the wiser; he was exceedingly agreeable in his manner, but he had little to communicate beyond the fact that he had a tolerably exacting law practice and on Sundays taught a Bible class in the Temple Baptist church.

The first definite personal charge against Mr. Weaver to be made public was the fact that he was a naturalized Englishman. This had been overlooked at the time of his nomination, and its discovery threw his political supporters



JOHN WEAVER.

into consternation. At a hastily called meeting it was at first proposed that he should withdraw. After some discussion, however, he was permitted to remain a candidate. "But, of course, you'll not take the stump," the party leaders counseled. "The office has always been looked upon as a semi-judicial one, and your opponent, who is running on an independent ticket, holds that attitude."

True to his word, Mr. Weaver appeared in public, and his plain, brief talks met with instant appreciation. No widely had the leaders miscalculated the effect of racial prejudice on the 60,000 votes of the very element his English antecedents were expected to antagonize. Almost as soon as he took office his declaration that he would be unhampered by any consideration beyond the public welfare was put to the test. Certain men who had been indicted for ballot box stuffing and had suffered exile under the former district attorney returned to the city and

surrendered themselves to the authorities. "We told you so!" said the men who had opposed Weaver in the campaign. "We warned you that he would set free the scoundrel that put him into office. He is bound body and soul to the politicians that put him up."

Again he disappointed them. When the trial began and his critics saw how the "machine district attorney" was trying his best to convict the indicted men they were obliged to modify their views. The prisoners were acquitted, but it was not the fault of the district attorney. About this time the Republican leaders were trying to unite on a successor to Mayor Ashbridge. They were looking for a man who could unite all the warring elements in the party and check the independent movement that had been a source of worry for some years.

"Why not put up John Weaver?" somebody asked. "If you don't believe he's the right man take note of what the opposition is saying about him." The suggestion struck home. Weaver was elected on, nominated and elected. Within six months after his inauguration he drove policy out of the city, thus reclaiming over \$5,000,000 which the vendors had extracted from their dupes. Pool rooms and other forms of organized gambling were practically eradicated. He put a stop to police blackmail and removed the force from politics. He also broke up the pernicious system of levying tribute on school teachers and sent four school directors to the penitentiary.

These are only a few of the reforms he has instituted. Most important of all, he has maintained his lofty position of political independence even to the extent of standing out resolutely against the very men who supported him. Devoted Baptist that he is, he has been equally firm against the importunities of the clergy when they have asked him from time to time to remove some official who showed signs of being antagonistic to reform. In the face of a storm of criticism, backed by the prayers and appeals of the clergy, Mr. Weaver declined to remove the director of public safety from office. To the ministers' letters on the subject he replied: "No, gentlemen, I shall not do as you wish. You have made no charge."

Threats of impeachment and even impeachment itself have no effect on John Weaver. Cries of "Resign!" fall equally impotent. From his sanctum in the city hall he serenely listens to the complaints of clergymen, the criticisms of praying laymen and the admonitions of the Law and Order society and then does as it pleases him. Over his desk hangs a neatly framed card bearing this expressive legend: "Don't make explanations. Your enemies won't believe them. Your friends don't need them."

Mayor Weaver is not a handsome man, but he has a pleasant face. He is especially fond of having callers and is always ready to talk to them. He smiles a good deal and gives one the impression that he is unassuming and frank. He never assumes a dogmatic attitude. No one has ever heard him indulge in satire, and he is never separated from his good manners. He does not seem to be either a fine scholar or a subtle humorist. He has a good business head, a courteous and combative character and a pair of shrewd though kindly eyes. He most of all impresses one with the idea that he would be a valuable friend.

John Weaver has shown in the solution of the perplexing monetary problem which he confronted him in dealing with the affairs of his city a most remarkable aptitude for figures. He insists that the record of the city's financial condition shall be kept in such a plain and unmistakable manner that any one at any time may satisfy himself as to how the account stands. When Mr. Weaver retires from the Philadelphia city hall he will not leave behind him the muddled system which he found there.

He was the teacher of a Bible class in the Temple Baptist church at Tropic, the little suburban town in which he lived for many years. Last fall he purchased the rather handsome residence formerly occupied by ex-governor Patton in Drexel road, Overbrook. Into this spacious and well appointed home the Weavers removed from their somewhat contracted city home and are considered a valuable addition to the cultured Overbrook colony. Mrs. Weaver is a very popular woman in church circles and has acquired a good deal of local reputation as a logical and effective speaker. She is rather petite and girlish looking, with fair hair slightly tinged with gray, and blue, English eyes, she is the wife of a family of four, seven brothers and sisters, none of whom are now living at Tropic. The Weavers have only one child living—Roy, a bright eyed, rollicking boy of ten. Two others, a boy and a girl, died in childhood.

The mayor's desk at night. When he leaves his desk at the close of a weary day there rises in his memory the picture of a little sailboat riding lazily at anchor in Barnegat bay, and the recollection invigorates him. As he emerges from the dismal walls of the public building he counts the days that separate him from his coming vacation, and a long and happy play spell with his yacht. Even during the busy days of his summers in the district attorney's office he always found time to attend the regatta of the yacht club. It has always been his ambition to hit upon some design that would prove to be better than anything yet invented in the yacht line. As the result of numerous experiments in this laudable direction the good people of the Barnegat bay region have been treated to more than one novelty. One of the mayor's constructions, the Phantom, is the only racing yacht in those waters that does not carry ballast. It has been a great success and has an advantage over boats of the scow type in rough water, for it has easy lines and great stability. Mr. Weaver is one of the chief supporters of the Seaside Yacht club, at Barnegat, and is always addressed as "commodore."

ELLIS A. SPOONER.

## CHINESE PALMISTRY.

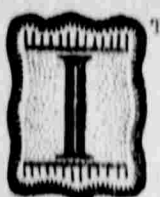
The Chinese who pursue the art and mystery of palmistry do not confine their investigations to the palm only; they examine carefully the lines on the back of the hand, thus making "chiro-maney" a better term than palmistry. Nor do they omit the nails, each variety of which has its own significance. Tapering nails mean brains; hard and thick nails mean old age; coarse, stumpy nails mean dullness of wit; broken and sloughing nails mean disease and ill health; yellow nails mean high rank to come; dark, thin nails mean obscurity; bright greenish nails mean loyalty and goodness of heart; fresh white nails mean love of ease; nails like sheet copper mean pomp and glory; nails of a half moon shape mean health and happiness; nails like copper tiles mean skill in arts and crafts; nails like the end of a plank mean stanch sincerity; nails with sharp pointed tips mean cleverness and refinement and nails which are rough, like stone, mean profound stupidity.

The Chinese, again, who are nothing if not thorough, push every investigation of this kind with German minuteness to its logical conclusion; consequently when they have exhausted palmistry they proceed to "colometry" and extract indications from the lines on the feet.

## COLD STORAGE.

Cold storage of fruit in the United States has grown to enormous proportions, nearly 5,000,000 barrels of apples having been stored last year. It is found that if properly packed and handled the fruit does not sensibly deteriorate.

# Yokosuka, the Strong Gibraltar of the Empire of Japan

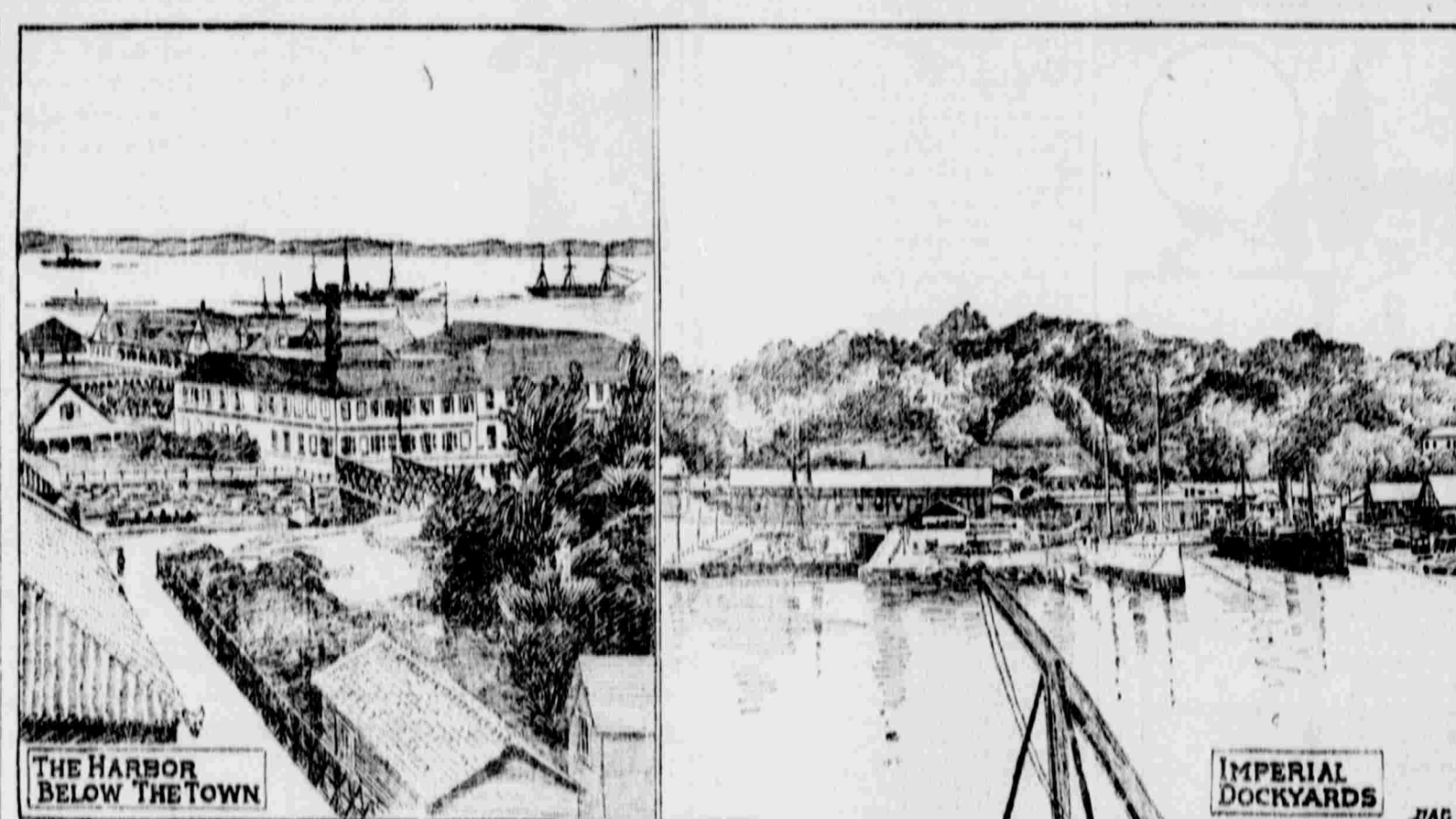


It is only recently that the outside world has come into possession of the evidence which establishes the fact that in Yokosuka Japan has a second Gibraltar. This information has not leaked out from any source within the empire. The Japanese journals have always spoken of Yokosuka as a popular seaside resort, a suburban retreat to which the thrifty Yokohama citizen and his family might repair at the close of the feverish midsummer day and take a refreshing dip in the surf.

American visitors to the island kingdom have had much to say of Yokosuka—of its charming villas and gardens reaching to the very water's edge, its superior bathing facilities, its swarms of happy children, its donkey carts and its thousand and one novel amusements, but not one of them has ever mentioned the fact that this same fascinating Yokosuka is probably the most formidable stronghold in the world.

This exploitation of Yokosuka as a resort and observation as a fortress have not been intentional on the part of the delighted foreign tourist, but they have been entirely so on the part of the Japanese government. The foreigner's gratified sense of the duty completeness of the seaside town has been so engrossing that he has had no disposition to advance beyond that feature. Nor could he have done so if he would. Yokosuka never once lost its smile while he lingered in her gracious presence. Everything she did made for peace and the joy of living. Every reminder of war was concealed with the marvelous ingenuity known only to the Japanese.

Just recently, however, Yokosuka's ever smiling mask has been penetrated. A spy in the employ of the Russian admiralty has furnished his government with a more or less accurate plan of a fortified system so complete in its arrangement and so comprehensive in its design that the St. Petersburg naval dignitaries were stupefied with amazement and concern for the safety of the only remaining floating armament it could assemble. The fearless man who



TWO VIEWS OF YOKOSUKA.

made the discovery is a former newspaper reporter who recently visited Japan in the disguise of an American tourist. He speaks English without an accent, and for several months previous to his daring feat he resided in San Francisco and made a careful study of American nomenclature and tricks of speech. While in California he made the acquaintance of several young Japanese merchants doing business in San Francisco and took passage with some of them who were returning to Japan to purchase goods.

On the voyage he cultivated this acquaintance until in one or two instances it ripened into intimacy. He did not hesitate to avail himself of this friendship in order to secure accurate information. Much of the information thus obtained was verified subsequently by actual observation. He discovered that the Uraga channel, the gateway to the bay of Tokyo, on which Yokosuka is situated, is practically closed to regular navigation except for a channel thirty or forty yards in width in the center, through which vessels are piloted with infinite patience and skill. This entrance is literally planted with mines. According to an expressive Japanese sentence, "the harbor is full of red." The spy declared in his report to the Russian admiralty that it was a labor of hours and of the most incredible difficulty for the steamer on which he was a passenger to enter the twelve miles between the entrance of the channel and the city. The boat that brought the pilot sailed ahead and exchanged signals constantly with the men on the bridge by means of flags and colored

rockets. Watch fires blanketing signal boards that resembled the wings of great windmills were burning along all the coast. The reason for all this extra precaution seems to be that the Japanese shift the mines nightly so that it is impossible for them to be exactly located by any expert. This accounts for the ten or twelve hours spent in piloting the regular San Francisco steamer a distance which is ordinarily accomplished in one.

All the way between Yokosuka and the great city both sides of the channel are covered by fortifications. They are of pyramidal form, rising but a few feet above the water line, and the material of which they are constructed is precisely the color of the water. The ramparts are to all appearance as smooth as glass, and there are apparently no embrasures. These works are so perfectly concealed that nothing can be made out concerning their plan from the deck of a passing steamer even with the aid of a powerful glass.

Arrived at Yokohama, the bogus American found it impossible to obtain any accurate information concerning the situation at Yokosuka. From native sources he could only extract the constantly repeated and smiling assertion that it was a summer resort pure and simple. An American merchant in Tokyo who had been in Yokosuka a dozen times confessed that he had heard rumors of the fortifications there, but admitted that he had never seen anything of them. The Russian was determined to see for himself whether or not his Japanese steamer friends had misled him.

He saw nothing suspicious looking except a preponderance of marines. Another rather suggestive feature that attracted his attention was the number of signs in all public places forbidding the use of the camera. He discovered that the place was provided with immense dry docks, a great arsenal and a school for naval gunnery; but, scan the landscape as he would, he could locate no fortifications. He returned to Yokohama convinced that he had been tricked by a Japanese friend. A local Protestant missionary, a representative of a New England society, came to the rescue and enlightened the "tourist from America" as to the actual situation.

There are no outer works at Yokosuka. In constructing this stronghold Japan took the peak of Gibraltar for a pattern. The rock at Yokosuka, however, is several miles in length, constituting a series of volcanoes ready for eruption at a moment's notice. The strategic value of the situation was recognized by the Japanese general staff twenty years ago, when it was built a splendid fishing village, and the mikado's government at once set to work to develop it. Hundreds of years

before that time the mountains surrounding Yokosuka had been covered by iron and copper. These abandoned mines were used by the Japanese engineers to create a second rock of Gibraltar in every sense of the term. At Gibraltar the mouths of threatening canyons are plainly visible, but at Yokosuka nothing of the kind can be seen. During the twenty years of its construction into what is probably the most impregnable fortress in the world Yokosuka has posed as Yokohama's most popular suburb. If the citizens of that great city have been even remotely cognizant of what has been going on, they have been careful not to appear wise. It is a fact that no foreigner has ever seen the interior of these fortified mines and that all the work of making them impregnable has been done by native engineers and workmen.

JAMES JACKSON.

## A SOAPY LAKE.

Some interesting items may at times be unearthed from the consular reports. For example, there is a description of a soapy lake in the annual statement of the trade and commerce of Nicaragua. This sheet of water, the lake of Nioja, contains a strong solution of bicarbonate of potash, bicarbonate of soda and sulphate of magnesia. "This water when rubbed on any greasy object at once forms a lather." The report says it is used as a hair wash and enjoys a local reputation as a cure for external and internal complaints. The Nicaraguans are not conspicuous for commercial enterprise, but during the year they managed to export "four denajohns" of this wonderful water to the neighboring Guatemala.

## IDENTIFICATION.

Russia identifies its soldiers killed in battle by means of little metal lozenge-shaped picture images found on the bodies. On the back of each of these tokens are stamped the wearer's name, regiment and commission. Every man labels his soldiers in one way or another with a view to justifying himself twenty years ago, when it was a stiff service receive small oblong identification cards, which are supposed to be sewed inside the jackets.

## THE ROUND WORLD.

The Duke of Oporto, brother of the king of Portugal, is one of the finest fute players in the world. At the beginning of 1904 Germany had 13,000 islands of railway. The largest island in the world is New Guinea, 304,000 square miles. Great Britain is 33,446 square miles. The municipality of Dresden, Ger-

many, has made arrangements for accumulating the street railways of that city. Sixteen cents a day is now good pay for unskilled labor in Japan. Ten years ago it was 6 cents. A London physician suggested to his colleagues the other day that the success of many of the secret remedies advertised in the lay press lay in their

That they attempt to relieve the minor ailments of mankind, to which the profession pays too little attention. The princesses of Siam are taught to cook, wash and iron, bake and perform other household duties. At the age of fifteen they have completed their studies in the lines indicated and are ready for matrimony. The United States has 75,000 post-offices and 500,000 miles of postal routes,

with a yearly travel over them amounting to 500,000,000 miles. The service costs over \$150,000,000 a year. The receipts now almost equal the expenditures and have doubled in the last ten years. Hearing that a special commission was on its way to inspect the military magazine of Novorodinsk Russian Poland, the officer in charge fled after bribing two soldiers to set fire to the

magazines. They got drunk on the money, and the commission arrived and found the magazines nearly empty. In France there are 6,000,000 smokers, and of every fifteen there are eight who smoke a pipe, five who smoke cigars and only two who use cigarettes. Still the French consume more than 8,000,000 cigarettes a year. Penitence conservatism seems to show itself even in the matter of cremation.

In Germany during the first three months of this year the bodies of 139 women were cremated as against 207 bodies of men. There was an increase of 18 per cent in the total number of cases over the same period last year. Silk-worms fed on different leaves produce silks of varied colors—thus a diet of vine leaves produces a bright red and lettuce an emerald green. A farmer living near Marseilles has

discovered that by "watering" his melons with milk they will grow to twice their ordinary size. He carries off all the melon prizes at local agricultural shows. Since the post of sexton in the Derbyshire village of Etrich has been held by a family named Wetton, and the last representative, John Wetton, who has just died, leaves a descendant of his name to carry on the tradition.