

## YOUNG FOLKS.

## FASHIONABLE SUICIDES.

Of all Chinese customs, the most remarkable has been the public, fashionable suicides, conducted in public with every show of pomp and sometimes actually under the general direction of a mandarin. A gay procession would be formed and a delighted throng would follow the prospective victim to the scaffold, which had been erected with great care. The seats commanding the best view of the sacrifice would be sold and there would be a great turn-out of the suididing party's friends, as well as the public at large. Perhaps it would be a young widow who had resolved to end her miserable existence on account of the death of her husband, a widow not being privileged to remarry in China. The occasion would be treated as a regular holiday by the natives. For a time the woman would chat pleasantly with her friends, partaking of a beautiful feast with them on the gallows. Then having caressed a little child that was placed upon the table before her and adorned it with a necklace, she would take a basket of flowers and scatter the blossoms gayly among the crowd, after which she would cheerfully place her head in the noose and swing off into eternity. As a rule nowadays suicides are not performed with such publicity, but they are very common.

## THE GUINEA-PIG.

The good qualities of the guinea-pig are numerous. There is its courage to begin with. A boar guinea-pig is a fearless animal and full of fight. No rat dare come near him. Guinea-pigs kept loose on the floor of a foul-house will scare rats away most effectually. Some people say that this is because they are so noisy and restless, but the fact is, however, that a boar guinea-pig will attack a rat relentlessly, and with great vigor. His thick neck and hog mane give him a great advantage. His neck, indeed, is, in proportion to his body, like that of an old boar pig. His claws are sharp and he can use them to considerable purpose; while the absence of a tail is also in his favor. Many strange facts in natural history are at first rejected as inventions. Amongst these is the fact that, when the guinea-pig engages in combat with the rat, he goes straight for the tail of his opponent with intent to bite it off at the root. He is frequently successful, too. Besides being courageous, the guinea-pig has a large share of the domestic virtues. It is scrupulously clean; it is a model parent; it does not fight with members of its own kind. Its only vice is a slight disposition to greediness. If a guinea-pig has secured a choice morsel—a large piece of carrot, say—it will run away with it to eat it in a corner. Here, however, the simplicity and straightforwardness of its nature leads it into cries of exultation, which betray its treasure. Its brethren come round, and there is battle-royal till the fragment is pulled to pieces. But there is no scratching or biting.

Another of the guinea-pig's virtues is the strong personal attachment it soon acquires towards those who have charge of it. When your guinea-pigs hear your voice they will squeak out lustily to you, and press with all their little strength against the barriers that hold them in check. They will answer you if you call to them, and they can occasionally be seen as favored pets running about the room at meal-times and watching for fragments of toast or sugar or fruit. This is, of course, in houses where the good points in their character are understood.

## A WOUNDED LION.

A very dramatic narrative of an encounter with a lion is published by an Algerian paper. It appears that for months past farmers residing near a forest in the African colony have been victimized by the lion, which carried off their cattle, and especially evinced a partiality for their sheep. Exasperated by the gaps made in their small flocks, it was determined to make war on the depredator, and seventeen settlers, with five or six Arabs, set out on what proved a very perilous adventure. They took up their positions in parties of four and five, at certain spots in the forest which it was conjectured the animal would pass, and toward nightfall the enemy was seen coming leisurely along by one of these parties, numbering five men. After consulting together it was decided that they should fire simultaneously, and at a given signal they did so, the lion being seen to fall, uttering a tremendous roar of pain. He was not dead, however, as the men too quickly imagined, and when they approached the animal he rose to his feet, crushed one of the assailants with a blow of his powerful paw, and seizing the head of his victim, smashed it at a bite. Turning from the mangled remains, the brute next attacked another man, biting off his arm and otherwise injuring him. Two other members of the party were also grievously torn and bitten by the enraged animal, and might have lost their lives in the terrible encounter had not their uninjured comrade leveled his gun at the lion's ear and been lucky enough to stretch him out on the ground dead.

## A CONJURER'S MEAL.

Robert Houdin, the famous conjurer, tells an amusing story of an impostor who advertised that he would perform a wonderful feat. He agreed to eat alive any person in his audience who would submit himself to the operation.

A large audience assembled, and the entrance fees filled the supposed conjurer's purse. When the house was filled he came upon the stage, and asked: "Ladies and gentlemen, are you ready? What man amongst you will come up here so that I may eat him? The bigger the better; my appetite is sharp set. What! nobody going to accept my challenge? I did not calculate on having an auditory of cowards!"

Stung to the quick by this opprobrious word, a hale, burly fellow got up from where he was sitting, and presented himself upon the stage. Without being told to do so, he began to strip himself of his coat, and how much else he would have stripped himself of I can't say, had not the conjurer stopped him, saying, "Don't do that—my digestion is strong, I'll eat you clothes and all. Are you ready?"

"Ay—fall to, my man," replied the victim.

Presto! quicker than thought the conjurer throws a handful of flour into the victim's face, and all over his clothes.

"Avast there!" shouted the victim, "what are you at?"

"My good fellow," replied the conjurer, "don't be unreasonable. I must baste you and flavor you before I eat you," saying which he threw a cup of molasses over the victim, who by this time, beginning to divine the nature of the trick, determined to see it out, and not run away. Most persons would have run away under similar discipline.

Now, for the final effort, conjurer lays hold of the victim's thumb, and putting it between his teeth, bites it severely. The victim roars, and drags his thumb away by main force. "What are you at?" mildly

remonstrates the conjurer; "how am I to eat you, if you don't keep still? My way of eating a man alive is to begin at the thumb, and work upwards. Here, I'll begin again."

The victim did not seem desirous of any further experience in the matter, but rushed off the stage, amidst the laughter of the audience.

The conjurer did not do what he said he would do, but nobody had proved that he couldn't do it.

## FREAKS OF A SWISS WATCH.

A lady school teacher has a delicately made little Swiss watch set in a bracelet. The face of it is about the size of a farthing, and the works are protected by a thin disc of glass about the same size on the under side of the bracelet next to the arm. In fact, it sits right over the young lady's pulse, and the watch is the wonder and admiration of all her friends. But the little watch never did keep time, though it cost five hundred francs (\$25) in Paris. The jeweller to whom it was carried told the lady that she ought not to expect a watch the size of a peanut to keep time. One workman said such small watches had to be bought on the principle of a chance in a grab-bag, as they sometimes turned out good time-pieces, and at others were wholly unreliable. The young lady noticed, however, that whenever she loaned her sister the five-hundred francs bracelet the watch kept much better time and when she kept it locked up in her jewel-case it kept the time almost as well as an ordinary time-piece. A well-known physician had his attention called to the matter by the young lady's mother, and explained it in a minute, from a scientific standpoint. He explained that the springs and machinery of the watch were so delicate they were affected by change of temperature and feeling in the young lady's body. When she became excited the watch doubtless went fast, and in her calmer moments it went slower. Upon investigation this was found to be so, and the phenomena excited so much curiosity that the young lady gave an exhibition to a few friends of the manner in which the watch was compelled to answer to the effect of the change in her various moods.

## A HUGE EATER.

If a man ate as much in comparison to his weight as a spider does he would, according to a scientist, eat four times his weight for breakfast, nearly nine times his weight for dinner, thirteen times his weight for supper, finishing up the day with another meal larger than any of the others. At this rate a man of 160 pounds would require the whole of a fat steer for breakfast, another with a half dozen good sheep for dinner, and two bullocks, eight sheep and four hogs for supper, with about four barrels of fresh fish as a lunch before going to his club banquet in the evening.

## ONE MAN COUNTED AS TEN.

A curious story is told of how a certain important act was passed through the House of Lords in England. It is as follows:—"Lord Grey and Lord Norris were named to be the tellers. Lord Norris, being a man subject to vapors, was not at all times attentive to what he was doing; so, a very fat Lord coming in, Lord Grey counted him for ten, as a jest at first, but seeing Lord Norris had not observed it, he went on with this misreckoning often; so it was reported to the House, and declared that they who were for the bill were the majority, though it indeed went on the other side, and by this means the bill passed."

## THE ELECTRIC EEL.

This curious fish varies in length from three to six feet and to give room for its powerful electric "instalment" the greater portion of its body is devoted to the batteries. The result is a capability of generating a shock so powerful that when the fish is in full working order it can stun or even cause the death of the largest animal. In the Guianas and Brazil the swamps and ponds which it frequents are shunned by the Indians, and in some cases, owing to the number of horses which have been killed in fording pools infested by these floating batteries, the lines or highways have been changed.

Do NOT FORGET our offer of prizes to the one who obtains the largest number of subscribers to this paper to the end of the year. So far very little has been done. Each one of our readers has a chance of obtaining a prize by working for two or three hours. If anyone procures five new yearly subscribers at 50 cents apiece and sends us the \$2.50 thus collected, that person is sure of a prize, for we will send a large story-book (described elsewhere in this paper) to all who get up a club of five.

MONTREAL DAILY WITNESS, \$3.00 a year, post-paid. MONTREAL WEEKLY WITNESS \$1.00 a year, post-paid. WEEKLY MESSENGER, 50 cents; 5 copies to one address, \$2.00. JOHN DUGGALL & SON, Publishers, Montreal, Que.

## NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Our subscribers throughout the United States who cannot procure the international Post Office orders at their Post Office, can get, instead, a Post Office order, payable at Rouse's Point, N. Y., which will prevent much inconvenience both to ourselves and to subscribers.

## SPECIAL NOTICES.

EPPE'S COCOA—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING.—"By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected cocoa, Mr. Eppe has provided our breakfast tables with a delicately flavored beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle maladies are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame."—*Civil Service Gazette*.—Made simply with boiling water or milk. Sold only in packets by grocers, labelled—"James Eppe & Co., Homoeopathic Chemists, London, Eng."

SEND 10c for 30 rich (1885) Chromos with your name on. Newset and Postnet Card issued: liberal cash commissions allowed for selling our cards. Catalogue and full particulars with first order. Address EUREKA CARD CO., Bolton, Que.

## WE WANT ACTIVE AGENTS

TO SELL THE  
Brenner Combined Alarm and Door Bell  
in every county in the United States and Canada. George C. Owens, Modesto, Cal., says: "I have canvassed one day and took 22 orders." In same letter he ordered two gross. Wm. McKim, of Grand Haven, Mich., says: "I took 12 orders in 10 hours." Front on Bell, \$2.50. In our EXTRAORDINARY OFFER to Agents we agree to take back all Bells unsold. If the Agent fails to clear \$125.00 in 30 days, Illustrated Catalogue Free. Address BRENNER MANUFACTURING CO., Pittsburg, Pa.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER is printed and published at Nos. 321 and 323 St. James street, Montreal, by JOHN DUGGALL & SON, composed of John Duggall, and J. D. Duggall, of New York, and John Reilpath Duggall, of Montreal.