Chopsticks.

I wonder how the young folks of the United States would get on at dinner if they were to try to eat boiled rice with chopsticks instead of a spoon, or a knife and fork! I should like to see you attempt it, my young friends. But in imagination I hear you all asking this question, "What are chopsticks?" Well, they are small sticks little longer than a pen-holder and about as large. Those used by poor people in China are made of bamboo, while the wealthy people use those manufactured from ebony or ivory, or of silver and gold. They hold them very adroitly between the first and third fingers of the right hand,—separated by the thumb. If you wish to gratify your curiosity in the manner, just whittle out two sticks, ten inches long and as large as a pen-holder, and the next time you have boiled rice for dinner see how you will get on; or you may pick up kernels of wheat for practice.

The Chinese handle them just as easily as we our knives and forks. They would laugh to see our maneuvring with the sticks, but we should have the fun on our side if they were to sit down to our dinner table; they would make awkward work of it. "Don't they use knives?" Not to eat with. In preparing their food they whip a knife from their pocket and use it for cutting up a chicken or puppy. "A puppy!" I don't wonder you stare to hear it. It is well for your pet, who looks up into your face, licks your hand and wags his tail when you speak to him, that his master lives on this side of the globe, instead of on the other side, for he would not be permitted to enjoy long life in barking at the hens, in chewing his teeth and putting on airs, but he would come to an inglorious end in a stew pan! A Chinaman, though, might think it glorious. You would see some strange things were you to visit the land beneath your feet, especially in the eating line. Eating houses and hotels in great cities are more numerous than they are in New York or Philadelphia. They have traveling eating establishments. The peddler of puppy stew walks through the street with a broad, shallow basin filled with the food already cooked, on the top of his head. He carries a small sheet-iron furnace on his back, and his big umbrella on his shoulder. He finds a place to suit him where customers are plenty, sets up his umbrella, lights a charcoal fire in his furnace and in a few minutes the piece of fish, chicken or dog, mixed with rice, is warming and steaming in the pan. He takes his bowls and chopsticks from a basket, and in a few minutes is ready to serve the hungry crowd. For a cent you can get a bowl full of nice hot dog stew!

We are not to think that all Chinamen live on puppies, cats and kitten, it is only the poorest people who are obliged to live on such food. You would not be able to obtain much beef in China; but in the provision shops are excellent hams—also, ducks, chickens and fish; and in the vegetable markets you can always find a supply of potatoes, beans, peas, and likely you find all of those in the bowl of stew which the peddler sell.

To eat after the common manner you must hold the bowl to your lips and poke the food into your mouth; but if you would be genteel, you must pick up the bits of meat, the beans and the kernels of rice with the chopsticks and carry them steadily to your mouth, and then drink the broth. If you want some fun you can have it without going to China in search of it, but in your own house, eating dinner with chopsticks. Try it.

If we were to go into the house of a wealthy Chinaman, and were invited to dinner, we should be three or four hours at the table, and have at least three hundred different dishes containing food placed before us! I dined one day with a mandarin—or rather we had only a lunch—and there were so many dishes, and such a variety of food, that I lost all reckoning of the number. First we had roasted pumpkin seeds, then drank some cherry cordial; then ate some sweet cakes and drank several cups of delicious tea—not such meadow-hay stuff as we get in the United States—but the very best China affords. Then the waiters brought in a great variety of dishes. Some of the food was sweet to the taste and good, and of other dishes a smell satisfied us. We should have had an uncomfortable time if we had undertaken to eat heartily of every dish. To be genteel in China you must only taste and nibble a little of every thing brought on by the waiters. That is the light affair at a great dinner where three hundred kinds are served for the guests. The Chinese drink a great deal of tea at their dinner parties, but do not have wines or liquors. You hear no popping of champagne corks. The guests are able to walk straight, and talk straight as well, which some people in this country are not able to do after dinner. We think of the Chinese as uncivilized; but they do not make beasts of themselves by getting drunk, and then in their drunkenness, commit horrible crimes by beating their wives and children, or shooting their best friends."—*Children's Friend.*

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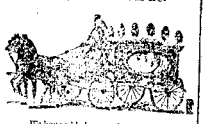

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