

"THE HOURS."

BY J. H. B. J. MONTREAL.

O, twilight hours how peaceful do ye seem,
After the turmoil of the busy day is done;
Clouds then assume such weird fantastic shapes
Fringed with a golden tribute from the setting sun.

Then purple-tinted clouds, with ever changing hue,
In countless myriads march across the sky;
To night with tread so grave and solemn, they pursue
Each other, noiseless as phantoms, hushed as maiden's sigh.

O, silent midnight hour, when darkness shrouds the world,
And deepening shadows cross the watery deep,
As when an ensign, closely round its staff is furled,
So darkness wraps us all in sweet restoring sleep.

All! alas not all! for to what beds of anguish
Sleep comes not like a fragrant and refreshing shower,
There frail humanity, sleepless, is doomed to languish
Thro' all the solemn watches of the midnight hour.

O, brightest hour of all that comes with break of day,
And floods the world with brightness and with light,
May doubts and fears at thy glad presence fly away,
As day-light banishes the shadows of the night.

And saddest hour of all, the hour of parting,
An hour that comes to all, both great and small;
Remember this all ye who on life's race are starting,
That as ye run that race so shall ye stand or fall.

DIVINATION FOR THE DRAWING-ROOM.

AN OLD ART REVIVED.

I trust the reader is not startled by my title. I am not going to initiate him into the secrets of the Black Art, nor lead him into imperiling his soul and body by dabbling in necromantic mysteries. Nor do I propose turning the drawing-room upside down for divining purposes, or introducing into the bosom of the family a spectacled magician with a whole collection of mystic invocations, magic symbols, blue fires and stink-pots. The pupil who places himself under my tutelage will need neither pentacle nor abracadabra, neither magician's wand nor diabolical compact. All that will be necessary for his art in so far as it may be practised by a beginner, will be found within the limits of this article. The divination to which I would introduce him is guided by certain marks on the palms of the hands, and the art practised by these means is variously known as Palmistry, Chiromancy, or Chiroscopy.

I.

Of all the arts of divination, and they are over a hundred in number, Chiromancy, one of the oldest of all, is the only one which at the present day has received any serious attention. It must be borne in mind, however, that the hand is consulted by modern chiromants less as a book on which the future may be read than as an index to character. And, indeed, there is more ground for this practice than an outsider would at first sight be willing to suppose. Let us begin with the highest authority of all, the Bible. In the thirty-seventh chapter of Job there is a passage which runs in the English version: "He sealeth up the hand of every man that all men know his work." The vulgar rendering of the same passage runs: "In manum omnium hominum Deus signa posuit, ut noverint singuli opera sua." "In the hands of all men hath God placed signs, that each one may know his own works."

In every-day life much of a man's character may be judged by the action of his hands. The new born infant whose mind is not formed comes into the world with his fists doubled. The old worn-out man, whose character and individuality are all but effaced, goes out of the world with his fingers shut over the palm. The mean man, as he walks in the streets, passes by with tightly clenched fists; the generous man goes literally open-handed. More striking still are the attitudes assumed by the honest man and the liar. The latter, in his eagerness to deceive, clasps his hands to his breast—palms inwards—and calls Heaven to witness that he is telling the truth. The honest man frankly holds out his hands—palms upwards—as he says "It is so." He is fearless, though unconsciously so, of what his tell-tale palm may reveal, while the untruthful man, equally unconsciously, hides the palm that gives the reflection of his false character.

Space does not allow of my dwelling any longer on such examples of the correctness of the palmist's theory, though they might be multiplied indefinitely. So I will proceed at once with the instructions necessary to enable the tyro to set up in business as a Drawing-Room Diviner.

II.

For the present, it will be sufficient to devote attention mainly to pure palmistry, that is, divination by the palm alone. Where necessary, however, we may allude to the signs on other portions of the hand. Within the limits of the space at my disposal I shall only be able to touch very lightly on the main features of the science. Readers who may be so far interested in the matter as to desire further information will find all that they want in Desbarrolles's "Mystères de la Main" and Craik's "Book of the Hand."

The primary signs used by the true palmist in the exercise of his art, are three in number, namely, lines, mounts, and points. The latter, however, are less important than the two first, and will not enter in the limits of this paper.

The principal lines are seven in number, viz., the Line of Life, or of the Heart, which commences midway between the thumb and forefinger and runs downwards toward the wrist; the Middle Natural Line or Line of Health, which begins with or near the Line of Life, and runs straight across the hand; the Table Line, or Line

of Fortune, which runs from below the little finger towards the base of the forefinger; the Line of the Liver, from the wrist towards the base of the little finger; the Line of Saturn, from the wrist up towards the base of the second finger; and the Wrist Line, dividing the lower arm from the hand.

The mounts are also seven in number, as follows: The mount of Venus, between the base of the thumb and the line of life; the mount of Jupiter, at the base of the forefinger; of Saturn, base of the middle finger; of Apollo, base of the third or annular finger; of Mercury, base of the little or auricular finger; the mount of the Moon at the wrist end of the outside edge of the hand opposite the mount of Venus; and the mount of Mars, between the mounts of Mercury and the Moon.

In examining the hand it is well to take the left hand, as it is generally of less use than the right, and consequently less liable to be unduly and unnaturally creased. The hand should be freshly washed and at perfect rest, in order that the true colour of the lines and mounts may be easily distinguished.

The Line of Life, as its name implies, indicates the duration of the life. The age at which death will take place is said to be marked by the first decided break in the continuity of the line. A smaller break denotes sickness in the past or the future. For the purpose of fixing the dates of sickness or death, the line is divided into ages. A line is drawn from the middle of the base of the third finger towards the second joint of the thumb, and the point at which it intersects the line of life will mark the age of ten. If the breakage occurs in a grown person's hand at that point, it shows that that person was ill, or met with an accident, when ten years old. If the fault in the line is a little before the point which marks ten years old, then the illness came at the age of nine or eight, and so on, according to the distance from the point. A line parallel to this one, starting from between the third and last finger, will touch the line of the life at the point called twenty. Another parallel line, starting from the middle of the base of the little finger, takes you to thirty. The next line goes from the outer edge of the same finger, and gives forty. The line to find fifty starts from a little above the line of the heart. All lines crossing the Line of Life denote afflictions, past or present. Smaller lines springing from it into the centre of the palm denote wounds. A circle, with two cross lines through it on the life line, portends the loss of an eye. Ramifications at the base of the line denote so many journeys, made or yet to be made. To indicate a long life and good health, the line should be long and clearly cut.

The Natural Line comes next in importance after the line of life. The following are its principal characteristics; long and well defined, it denotes intellectual power; when it is joined at the commencement with the Line of Life, it is an unmistakable sign of intellectuality. The separation of the two lines, according to some authorities, is a sign of profligacy. Where the lines are separated and a cross occupies the space between the two, the individual possesses an unamiable temperament: he is the man who squabbles with his wife, and his relations and friends. Joined at its commencement with the Table Line, it is a sign of mental estrangement. If it runs with that line for any distance it denotes impiety; curved away from the line it betokens probity; if it runs into the Mount of Venus it is significant of a brutal disposition. The natural line should cross the palm horizontally and gradually melt away below the third finger. Too short, it indicates stupidity; too long, an excess of calculation, meanness. Pale-ness of this line denotes indecision; a formation consisting of a series of small interlacing lines, want of the faculty of concentration. A curve downwards towards the wrist indicates an over imaginative mind; and terminating in a fork it signifies deceit.

The Line of the Heart, when well formed, indicates high mental qualities, a good memory, and an affectionate disposition. When broad and interrupted it also foreshadows happiness and contentment; doubled and disconnected it signifies a meddlesome nature, eagerness to undertake, and incapacity to carry through. The greater the number of its ramifications, the greater the subjects of scientific, literary, and artistic tastes. A line broken in many places betokens inconstancy. Short lines running downwards denote well-judged affection; running upwards, impulsive affection.

The Line of the Liver is the indicator of the health. When it entirely crosses the palm and terminates at the base of the middle finger, on the mount of Saturn, it indicates consumption. Several other indications may be gathered from its appearance, of which space will not allow a résumé.

The Line of Saturn is of lesser importance. When very long it is a sign of a life of hardships.

III.

We now come to the mounts, each of which has its peculiar significance.

A well-developed Mount of Venus, i. e. the hill at the base of the thumb, on the palm, denotes beauty, grace, the love of the beautiful, taste for music and the dance, gallantry, a desire of being loved, benevolence, charity and tenderness. If the mount is depressed it shows the want of these qualities. Its absence betokens coldness, egotism, want of energy, of tenderness, of action, and of soul in the arts. In excess it is debauchery, licentiousness, coquetry, vanity, light-headedness, inconstancy and idleness.

Jupiter is that which orders, threatens, points. Jupiter gives fervid religion, noble ambition, honours, gaiety, love of nature, happy marriages, love unions. In excess he gives superstition, excessive pride, love of power for itself, a desire to shine. In absence it causes indolence, egotism, irreligion, want of dignity, want of nobleness, vulgar tendencies.

Saturn is gloomy. He is the fallen king from heaven; he is Time, who devours after twelve months his own child, the Year-Time charged to execute the work of the Fates; Saturn is Fate. When he smiles he gives wisdom, prudence, success; but he also gives extreme misfortune. In excess he gives sadness, love of solitude, rigid religion, fear of a second life of punishment, asceticism, remorse, and often a desire for suicide. His absence is an insignificant life.

Apollo gives a taste for the arts, as of literature, poetry, music, painting; success, glory, intelligence, celebrity, genius, light—all that which shines and causes to shine. He gives hope, the conviction of an immortal name, serenity of soul, the beauty which causes love, the grace which charms the heart; he gives religion, loveable and tolerant riches. In excess he gives the love of gold, pride, haughtiness, extravagance, a taste for rich garments, celebrity at any cost. If absent, it is material existence, careless for art, monotonous life, like a day without the sun.

Mercury gives science, knowledge of a higher world, mental labour, enchanting eloquence, commerce, speculation honourable and intelligent, fortune, industry, invention, promptitude in action and in thought, activity, love of labour, an aptitude for the occult sciences. In excess he is the god of thieves, cunning, lying, perjury, pretentious ignorance. His absence is inaptitude for science or commerce, a useless life.

Mars gives courage, calmness, coolness in danger, resignation, self-government and noble pride, devotion, resolution, strength of resistance, impetuosity.

The Moon gives imagination, sweet melancholy, chastity, sentimental poetry, elegy, love of mystery, solitude and silence, dreams, vague desires, meditation, harmony in music, aspirations after another world. In excess she gives caprice, unregulated fancies, constant irritation and causeless despair, discontent, restlessness, sadness, superstition, fanaticism, brain sickness. Absent—want of ideas of poetry, barrenness of thought.

IV.

Thus far I have treated of pure palmistry. The chiromant, however, can draw no little assistance from the kindred art of chiromnomy, invented by M. d'Arpentigny. By this system the palmist takes observations of the form of the hands and fingers.

The different kinds of hands are, in M. d'Arpentigny's system, divided into six principal classes of kinds, of which, however, there are numerous modifications and combinations. These six classes are, the elementary, the spatulated, the artist, the useful, the philosophical, and the psychical.

The characteristics of the elementary hand are thick unpliant fingers, a truncated thumb, and a large, thick, and excessively hard palm. To this class belong those employments for which the mere light of instinct is sufficient. Such beings are shut up in a material world of their own, and have little contact with the spirit of political and social life, except as regards their bodily wants and desires. They are the antitheses to the silken dwellers of the boudoir; strangers to refinement, with dull and sluggish feelings—unimaginative, soulless and careless.

The spatulated hand has thick, square-ended fingers, with a pad of flesh at each side of the nail. This hand has confidence in itself. Abundance is its end, but not, as in the elementary hand, the only necessary. It possesses instinct, and in a higher degree, the feeling of positive life, and subjugates by its intelligence all the material world. Devoted to manual labour and action, and consequently endowed with more active than delicate senses, constancy in love is more natural to it than to hearts turned to poetry, and it is swayed more by habit and duty than by the charms of youth and beauty. To men of this class manual labour, far from being disagreeable, is pleasing, as in it they find the necessary exercise of their bodily aptitudes. Accustomed, as they are, to rely solely upon themselves, they fear no solitude. In short, they are apt for all the sciences that tend to aid their physical wants, and prefer only in life what is constant and immovable. This type is also very nearly insensible to poetry, and bears within it few germs of emotional excitement.

With certain modifications in form the artist's hand has three different tendencies. With pliancy, a small thumb, and moderately developed palm, the fingers bulky at the third phalange, taper gradually from thence to the extremity, which presents the form of a cone more or less obtuse.

Whoever has a hand thus formed will instinctively attach himself, and without reflection, to the picturesque side of ideas and things. He will be swayed by the shape, entirely exclusive of the substance. He prefers what pleases to what feeds; as Montaigne says, he will conceive truth under beauty; fond of leisure, novelty, and liberty, at once ardent and timid—humble and vain, he will have more impetuosity and dash than force and power. He will pass at once from excitement to abasement. Unskilled in

* The space between two joints of the finger is a phalange.

command, and still less capable of obedience, impulse will seem to him a surer guide than duty. Inclined to enthusiasm, he will want an overflow of emotion, and the restlessness of his mind will render burdensome to him the regular monotony of daily life. In a word he will possess more sentiment than thought, more colour than feature. Fickle in character, he will have simplicity and recklessness—a fancy of fire, and too often a heart of ice.

The modification of the artist hand with a moderately large palm, smooth fingers, a feeble thumb, rather conical phalanges, is strong passions without sufficient moral restraint,—a mind wanting in power to subjugate the senses, and based on a groundwork of moderately intellectual ideas. This hand has neither for the just, the unjust, the good nor the useful, the same ideas the other types entertain. It has only to esteem a thing to love it. It suits itself with a faith, because it dispenses with reason, without preventing its feelings; but agrees not with political despotism, which is uniform and cold, so much as with aristocratic government, which has its resting-place in luxury and pleasure, magnificence, show, cost, high birth. The defects of this type are sensuality, idleness, egotism, singularity, cynicism, dissipation, mental inaptitude, astuteness, an inclination to prevarication and falsehood.

The useful hand is of mean size, rather large than small, fingers knotted, the exterior phalange square—that is, the two sides prolonged in a parallel direction. The thumb is large, with a developed root, the palm middling, hollow, and tolerably firm. The spirit of order, perseverance, foresight, abound in dispositions represented by the square phalanges. To organize, to classify, to methodize, to symmetrize, such is the mission, such the mandate to hands useful. They conceive neither the beautiful nor the true, apart from the limits of theory and harmony. They have the same tendencies towards similitude and fitness as the artistic have for the contrary. They know in what things differ, and in what they resemble. One law among others is dear to them, the law of continuity; and it is especially by that—namely, tradition, that their expansion exists. These dispositions, otherwise strong, have wings which they may extend, but by which they cannot rise. Earth is their only domain—man in social life—their views extend not beyond. They know nothing of the intellectual world but what the naked eye may know of the stars of the firmament. Besides, always ready to deny what they cannot feel or comprehend, and to give as limits to nature only those of their own imagination. Architects under the sway of the useful hand would never rise to poetry and the pleasures of fancy, but only to symmetry and usefulness.

The philosophical hand—that of the rationalist and sensualist has a palm moderately large and elastic, with knotty fingers, the end-phalange partly square, partly conical, and forming, by reason of the two knots, a kind of ovoid spatule; the thumb large, and indicating as much logic as decision—that is, formed of two phalanges of equal length, or nearly so. The genius attached to the phalanges partly square, partly conical, is characterized by a love and desire for the absolutely true. By their knots the philosophical hands have calculation, more or less rigid induction, method; by the partly conic phalange they have comparatively the poetic instinct, and by the whole, including the thumb, the instinct of metaphysics. They dive into the external and internal world, but they seek there less beauty than truth, less form than essence: more than all the others, they show an unquenchable desire after the deep moral, experimental, and philosophical sciences. A philosopher, with this hand, will experience the desire of accounting for his own sensations; the secret of his well-being engrosses his thoughts, as well as that of the origin of things. He will not adopt his creed, his thoughts, his opinions, from another, but only after having examined them deeply, and on every side. Reason seems to him a purer guide than instinct, faith even than love. It is by this test, and not by custom, education, or law, that everything is tried. The order which others see in the material world in symmetry, he sees in its relations. He aspires after liberty because he feels that God has endowed him with a knowledge of the just and unjust. He knows not vain scruples, superstitions, terrors, and uses pleasure with moderation.

The hand psychical is small and fine, relatively to the person, medium palm, the fingers without knots, or very moderately undulated, the thumb small and elegant. Large, and with knots, it has strength and combination, but it wants simplicity. The psychical hands are to the philosophical what the artistic are to the hands in spatule; they attach and add to the works of the thinker, as the artist to the work of the artisan, beauty and fancy; they gild them with a sun ray; they raise them upon a pedestal, and open to them the door of the heart. The soul, forgotten and left behind by the philosophical hands, is their guide; truth, in love and sublimity, their end, and expansion their means. Psychical hands would see the divine reason everywhere. Their genius is essentially religious, contemplative, and poetical; their respect is for maxims, while they disdain methods; they give their preference to virtue, the source of repose; to science, the source of progress.

V.

Beside the shape of the hands, and the lines and mounts of the palm there is another great index to character, viz: the thumb. The thumb