

OUR FUTURES AND OUR FORTUNES

By Mrs. A. G. Lewis

LATER in the evening the hostess, at her dainty tea-table, brewed tea so that the girls might have their fortunes told by one of the gentlemen present, who claimed to be able to tell fortunes by the grounds left in the teacups. The hostess was invited to lay aside the tea-strainer in order to give the required tea "grounds." One of the gentlemen directed the study of teacups.

"Drink," said he, "your tea, all but a few drops—just enough for carrying the 'grounds.' Then pause a moment and 'wish a wish'—something that may happen within a few days, if you please. Say the wish over to yourself three times, then whirl your teacup around vigorously, also three times, to throw the 'grounds' as much as possible into the upper part of the cup. After this turn the cup over into the saucer, and turn it again three times around to 'settle the affairs of the future.' Pass the cup, thus placed, to the fortune-teller, who picks it up and begins reading at the point where one naturally drinks from the cup.

"There are two ways of reading: to begin at the bottom of the cup (the past) and read to the right around and around, spiral fashion, until the top (the present or near future) is reached; or there may be three cups turned, the first for the past, the second the present, the third the future.

"THERE is no complete formula for reading, but a few combinations of 'grounds' I will give you and you can read your own cups. Let us begin at the bottom of the cup.

"Figures of men or women are designated thus: A long, hard leaf, often more clearly defined by the shape of a hat, cane and boots, indicates a man.

"Women appear in the light-colored leaf which spreads to indicate gown, bonnet, muff, shoes. If these people are surrounded by many fine 'grounds' they are enemies. If the cup is clear around them they are friends.

"A large group of dots with one figure standing in it alone may be interpreted as a lover or sweetheart; with two side by side an engagement, and three as a prospective marriage. A figure in kneeling posture indicates an offer of marriage either made or received. If there are one or more groups of dots (three in a row) there is prospect of acceptance. If these are absent the suit will probably be rejected. Four dots forming a square indicate a letter of importance. If near the top of the cup it is to be received within a day or two. An extra dot within the square or just outside of it means money or very good news in the letter. If there are many small specks in or about the letter bad news may come. Three well-defined dots in the form of a triangle indicate the fulfillment of the 'wish,' also good news, good luck or money; if in the form of a parallelogram sickness and bad news, and it may be loss of money.

"FINE dots in a long line reaching halfway around the cup mean a journey to be taken. A very large group of dots and figures in a compact cluster at the end of a 'journey line' of dots may mean that one is to attend a large gathering or visit a large town or city.

"A succession of large dots in a line indicates many difficulties to overcome. If there are many fine dots interspersed, confusion and unfriendliness may be expected.

"Drops of tea in the bottom of the cup mean tears to be shed. If the rim of the cup is clear the future of the person whose fortune is being read will be prosperous and happy. If by chance a leaf folds over the rim something unpleasant will probably occur."

"But do you believe all this?" inquires one of the party.

"By no means. I neither believe nor disbelieve. I merely give you the formula that has been handed down in my family for several generations. One thing is sure: you can help along your hostess many a time when a meal hangs heavily upon her hands; for, silly as it may seem, the subject is one that interests everybody. Learn the art of reading fortunes in teacups for the sake of the help you can give by entertaining others, if for no other reason."

The following "jingle" is a transcription of an old Chinese *chia* (tea) song, which answers well for present use:

One "ground" alone, alone you'll be;
Two together, the priest you'll see;
Three in groups, your wish you'll gain;
Four, a letter from loving swain;
Five, good news the letter'll bring;
Six in a row, a song you'll sing;
Seven together, great fortune waits
For you, so say the teacup Fates.
Tea leaves short and tea leaves tall
Bring you company, great and small.
Tea leaves many and dotted fine
Are of bad luck the surest sign,
Tea leaves few and clean the rim,
Your cup with joy o'erflows the brim.

The revival of telling fortunes by the grounds in one's teacup must, however, only be considered in the light of an amusement. Sensible young people need no word of warning against placing dependence upon any form of fortune-telling.

"UNDER the thumb is the mount of

Venus. People who have this in full development are always charming. They love beauty, grace, pleasure, music and luxury. Lines on this mount indicate strong affections. Beneath the first finger is the mount of Jupiter. In full development it means ambition, honor, gayety, love of pomp and ceremony. Such people choose the best for their friends, and hold themselves up to their highest estate. A cross on this mount means a happy marriage. The second finger, mount of Saturn, carries caution, prudence, love of quiet, punctiliousness and morbid fancy. Under the third is the mount of the Sun. This augurs love of art, success, wealth, glory, good fortune and a brilliant life. The fourth, the mount of Mercury, tells of a quick and clever mind, eloquence, commercial capacity, hospitality—everybody's good fellow, and a really good fellow, indeed. Lines crossing upon it mean many love affairs. The number of parallel lines easily counted number the offers of marriage made or received. The fullness noticed along the outer edge of the palm indicates an excess of mental activity.

The most important line in the hand is the life line, which surrounds the mount of Venus at the base of the thumb. Clearly defined and well colored with rays crossing it indicates a happy, prosperous life. The shorter the line the shorter the life; a break in it a severe illness. A full length line reaching to the wrist means a long life, even to one hundred years. Important events are indicated by rays crossing the life line. The reckoning of years is made toward the wrist. One crossing it half way along the line occurs at forty-five or fifty years of age if the line is full length.

"THE line of head, clear and well colored, extending across the palm from the beginning of the life line, gives domination, self-control and a well-poised character. The heart line, when well traced and of good color, extends clear across the hand from the mount of Jupiter to the outer edge of the palm and denotes excessive affection, a happy marriage and long life. One or more breaks in it indicate loss of life companions, and the full wrinkles between the heart line and little finger are said to indicate more than one marriage. The fourth great line is that of fortune. Everybody is interested in this. When it is marked throughout the whole hand from the wrist to base of second finger it shows that one's fortune is good and deserves to be so. If the line stops at the line of the head it shows that the judgment has been at fault. Twisted it denotes ill luck. Forked at the base the life is a conflict between ambition and love. An island in the line of fortune indicates domestic misfortunes.

"Many hands are lacking in the line of success or brilliancy, which is intended to run parallel (though shorter) with the fortune line from the base of the third finger in nearly a straight line toward the wrist. Whenever it is present we find success in business, art, oratory or any other department of endeavor suited to the shape and lines of the hand. The health line crosses the hand from the end of life line at the wrist to the end of heart line at the edge of the outer palm. When clearly traced it is a sign of good health, gayety and success. Twisted, criss-crossed or broken it shows uneven health.

"On the wrist are found *rascettes* or life bracelets. There are usually three of them, *i. e.*, if one is to live to a good old age. Clearly traced they denote good health. A star in the centre of the *rascettes* indicates unexpected good fortune; crossed they denote a laborious life."

Benefactor paused as though the lesson were finished.

One of the class inquired how much she believed in palmistry.

"Just as much and no more than I believe in phrenology, graphology and face reading. All may be, under the eye of the skilled reader, books full of interest and instruction. The love of the marvelous, or rather the unknowable, seems to be a growing passion among the most intelligent classes.

"No one need be ashamed to become a student of palmistry," she added, "since Aristotle, away back in the fourth century, B. C., gave the hand precedence before all other organs as an indicator of character.

"Another significant item I may mention: It is said that after the murder of Cicero at Formia his hands, as well as his head, were sent to the Roman Forum as the means whereby he had cajoled and deceived the Roman citizens."

A GROUP of girls was seated one bright afternoon, about a dainty tea-table where each one sipped the tea and nibbled teacakes upon her plate. The conversation ran rapidly from tea to fortune-telling by tea leaves, and from this to palmistry by a natural digression. One of the older girls, who was known by the charming sobriquet of Benefactor, confessed to a knowledge of the science. When it was discovered that she understood palm-reading the entire party held up their hands, insisting that there was time for a lesson before dinner. Their teacher was asked to give the rules, and they, the scholars, would apply them to their own hands.

"But I can't tell you all I know about palmistry. It is classed as one of the sciences, and there are many and large volumes written about it," said Benefactor.

"All we ask," said Miss K, "is for you to give us a few of the fundamentals. Just tell us about the fingers, the mounts and the lines of the palms, so that we can amuse ourselves and others. We are not equal to anything profound."

"All right," said Benefactor, "the lesson begins: If your hand is narrow and skinny you are timid, and lack moral and intellectual force. A deep palm means misery and ill luck; a full even palm the opposite.

"Fingers with knotty joints indicate good taste and inclination to be orderly. If the upper joint is large it denotes an administrative disposition, well-ordered, philosophic mind ruled by reason. The lower joint denotes the material and worldly mind, a knack at business, the ability to make money and to become a financial success.

"Smooth fingers denote artistic tendencies, love of poetry and music, also creative genius.

"PEOPLE with short fingers are quick, impulsive, jump at conclusions, and are apt to be cruel and lack tact. Long fingers belong to people who are orderly, attentive to details, inclined to be distrustful and seek the inner meaning of things. When they speak or write their attention to detail is often burdensome and distracting. Minute workers always have large hands, whereas the constructors of colossal works have small ones. Only the medium hand can apprehend great schemes and details at one time. Thick fingers at the base denote love of luxury, love of eating and leisure.

"Large spaces between the fingers when the hand is fully opened indicate great interest in other people's affairs. Fleshy protuberances at the ends of the fingers bespeak a sensitive nature, easily wrought into anger. Broad fingers (at the tips) indicate love of manual exercise, action, activity, utilitarian tastes, exactitude and good reasoning; can do work well, are intellectual, logical, philosophical, and, if musical, will execute brilliantly.

"Conic fingers denote artistic instincts, love of the beautiful. Very long and pointed ones denote religious zeal and indifference to worldly interests.

"It must be remembered that the development of the finger joints modifies the above analysis.

"Now let us study the palm," said Benefactor, "and let us be very careful not to get confused over it, even though we state the simple, rudimentary facts of palmistry. First note whether the palm be soft or hard. Soft hands incline to laziness, while hard palms denote a love of hard manual labor. An artist with hard hands will depict scenes of action, battles, physical tension and high spirit. The soft hand deals with quiet landscapes, tender sentiment and true love. The same is true of writers. Hard hands are apt to be superstitious, but remain true in their affections. Soft hands love deeply, but are less apt to be true and abiding in their affections.

"To keep the hands always closed denotes secretiveness and often untruthfulness. The person who tells a lie usually closes the hand while doing it. Quiet hands are self-conscious and secretive. Short, broad, thick and stubby nails belong to fidgety, meddlesome people. Women with short nails are generally termagants. Long, curved nails indicate cruelty. Fine, delicate nails denote a sensitive, artistic, beautiful, noble nature. The five digits have usually well-defined mounds at their bases—sometimes they are called palm cushions. They are as follows: