

who are not touched and softened by kindness and courtesy. A civil word, a friendly remark, a generous compliment, an affable bow of recognition—all have an influence—while surliness, incivility, harshness and ill-temper, naturally enough, produce an effect exactly the reverse. The American people, as a whole, are perhaps not remarkable for courtesy. They are so actively employed in the bustle of life, in the onward movements of commerce and trade, that they have little leisure to cultivate and practise these polished refinements, which are the results of education, of travel, and of enlarged intercourse with society. Nevertheless, we are not a discourteous people, and in the great cities the proprieties of a manner, and the civilities of form are attended to with a commendable degree of exactness. Still, we are bound to confess that we are deficient in many of the little courtesies of life—courtesies that are admirably calculated to sweeten the intercourse of society, the interchange of friendly feeling, and the general communion that takes place from day to day, between neighbors and companions. The excuse with many is, that they have not time to practise the civilities to which we refer—that they are too much engaged in more important matters. Thus a friendly visit will not be repaid, a polite note will be left unanswered, a neighborly call will be disregarded, a pleasant smile will be met with a cold look of indifference, and a cordial grasp of the hand will be responded to with reluctance, if not surprise. All this may mean nothing, and yet the effect upon the mind and the heart is chilling and painful.—*Phila. Enquirer.*

**POWER OF MUSIC.**—One stormy night, a few weeks since we were wending our way homeward near midnight. The storm raged violently, and the streets were almost deserted. Occupied with our thoughts, we plodded on, when the sound of music from a brilliantly illuminated mansion, for a moment arrested our footsteps. A voice of surpassing sweetness and brilliancy commenced a well-known air.—We listened to a few strains, and were turning away when a roughly-dressed, miserable-looking man, brushed rudely past us.—But as the music reached his ears, he stopped and listened intently, as if drinking in the melody, and as the last sound died away burst into tears.

We inquired the cause of his grief.

For a moment, emotion forbade utterance, when he said :—

“Thirty years ago, my mother sang me to sleep with that song—she has long been dead, and I, once innocent and happy, am—an outcast—a drunkard——”

“I know it is unmanly,” he continued, after a pause, in which he endeavored to wipe away with his sleeve the fastly-gathering tears, “I know it is unmanly thus to give way, but that sweet tune brought back vividly the thought of childhood. Her form seemed once more before me—I—I can’t stand it—I——”

And before we could stop him, he rushed on, and entered a tavern near by, to drown remembrance in the intoxicating bowl. While filled with sorrow for the unfortunate man, we could not help reflecting upon the wonderful power of music. That simple strain, coming, perchance from some gypsy, thoughtless girl, and sung to others equally as thoughtless, still had its gentle mission, for it stirred up deep feelings in an outcast’s heart, bringing back happy hours long gone by.—*Albany Knickerbocker.*

## What is Life ?

(From the Herald and Journal.)

When I came and sported by my side,  
A little child, with a winning grace;  
Our eyes were full of innocence,  
An angel’s look upon her face;  
I asked her while she gaily smiled,  
“O what is life, thou fairy child?”  
Then soft and sweet her accents fell,  
She answered me, “I cannot tell,  
It seems to me a holiday  
Which I must sing and sport away.”

A youthful maiden passed me by  
With sunny brow and golden tress;  
No shadowy sin nor guilty thought  
Ere yet had stained her loveliness;  
And thus I asked of her the while,  
She answered with a joyous smile,  
And raised her eyes so bright with bliss,  
“’Tis but a scene of happiness,  
All filled with sunshine and with song,  
And thus I hope ’twill linger long.”

I met a mourner, lone and sad,  
Her heart’s pure joy forever fled;  
Gone was the brightness of her life,  
Her hopes were buried with the dead:  
I asked her ere I passed her by,  
She answered with a bitter sigh,  
“A few bright hours, yet these are brief,  
And then long days of lonely grief;  
They cheat who say that life is fair,  
To me ’tis naught but dark despair.”

With faltering step another came,  
In whom life’s pulse was beating low;  
A slave was he—a gray haired man,  
Careworn and bowed with toil and woe;  
Ah! he was one of those who feel  
The grinding of oppression’s heel,  
Whose lives—whose very souls are bought  
And sold as though they were but nought;  
I asked him with a shrinking fear,  
“A curse!” fell on my fastening ear.

I met with one whose eager eye  
Told of a restless heart within;  
And in his glance and on his brow  
I read a tale of crime and sin;  
No peaceful thought nor quiet rest  
Could dwell within his guilty breast:  
But yet I asked of him the same,  
And trembled while his answer came:  
He whispered as he hurried by,  
“A dream, a fearful mockery.”

I saw, with awe, the dying year,  
An old and feeble man come near;  
And soon I knew the midnight bell  
Would toll for him with solemn knell;  
I asked of him, “O what is life?”  
He answered, “’Tis a bitter strife  
Between false hopes and maddening fears,  
A time of sorrow and of tears;  
’Tis filled with darkness and with gloom,  
And ends but with the shadowy tomb.”

An angel came to me in dreams,  
A beautiful angel, pure and bright;  
She wore a crown of shining gold,  
Her form was clothed in heavenly light;  
And then in tones of melody  
She spake sweet words of love to me,  
And whispered, ere she took her flight  
Back to that world of radiant light,  
“Life is a space to mortals given,  
To fit their souls for yon pure heaven.”