

land, consigning its tens of thousands to shame and wretchedness, and impeding the progress of science and religion!

*Launcester.*

W. C. Muxson.

### The Ballad Singer.

The ballad singer is not the creature of imagination, he is a *bona fide* piece of flesh and blood, about five feet seven inches high, with a pock marked face, small twinkling grey eyes, and a fair development of forehead; was born in England, and emigrated to the United States upwards of a dozen years since, where his mirthful and musical abilities were appreciated by the admirers of voluptuous songs and reckless hilarity. Shortly after his arrival on the shores of the new world, he was called to the bar, not to practice law, but to drink the health of others at the expense of his own. He became a notorious inebriate, neglected his business, impoverished his family, debilitated his body, and rendered himself a nuisance in the neighbourhood where he lived. He would without funds in his scrip or shoes on his feet tramp from town to town, sing songs, crack jokes, and chop logic, and become a laughing stock to the thoughtless multitude. So far had he descended the down-hill road to rags and ruin, that he would rob scare-crows to procure clothing to cover his bloated body. He was an adept at cracking lieus, shuffling cards, playing chequers, handling dice, but a novice in the art of living soberly and righteously in this evil world. At one time he returned home in a state of brutal intoxication and fell like a sack of sand upon the floor: his wife left the house for a short time, during her absence their youngest child fell into the fire, and this unhappy man heard its heart-rending shrieks, and saw it perish in the flames, he was so steeped in liquor he could not snatch it as a brand from the burning. Language cannot describe, imagination can scarcely conceive what were the feelings of that affectionate mother when she saw the companion of her bosom wallowing in filth on the floor, and the remains of her innocent and beautiful child in cinders on the hearth. But there is a sunnier side to this picture, and the reader as well as the writer will undoubtedly prefer the pleasant to the repulsive view. The ballad singer's talents brought him into notice and led him into the society of those who spend their money for that which is not bread. He became a common and to all human appearance an irreclaimable sot and remained such for many years. One Saturday night after a hard weeks work and a harder weeks drinking he began to examine his pockets in order to ascertain the condition of his financial affairs; he soon discovered that as his debts were unpaid, he was the possessor of three shillings and six-pence cash, a part of this he resolved to spend for the staff of life, and the remainder for his favourite beverage. He put on his crownless hat, and the rim went flip flap about his face, whilst he hastened to the bake shop; when the baker handed the loaves from the shelf, he said, "friend, I pity you." "What right have you to pity me," he enquired, "I pity you because you are now what I once was an unfortunate drunkard." "How do you know I am intemperate," "I know the soldiers that serve Bacchus by the rugged regimentals they wear," "I do not class myself with drunkards, and I pay for what I drink and its nobody's business." "Accept of this bread," said the baker, "and regard it as a proof of my sincerity, and call on me on Monday night if you can conveniently, as I do not drink another drop until you see me again." This appropriate gift was accompanied by a tear, which told the poor drunkard he had at least one friend in the world beside his careworn heart-broken, but faithful wife. He took the bread home to his hungry family, and visited the baker on Monday evening. The Washingtonian

baker ushered him into a neat parlor, and after introducing him to his amiable family, he pointed to a pledge that hung in a neat frame against the wall, and said, "there is our family total abstinence pledge, my wife is president, and I am secretary of this domestic association, will you sign our fireside pledge and become a member of our family society." "No, no, no!" said he, "I will not sign away my freedom, Britons never will be slaves, I can take care of myself." After much persuasion he appended his signature to the pledge, but in consequence of his previous habits of intemperance he had beggared his family, so that his children were frequently seen soliciting the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table. One day his eldest girl a pretty child about eleven years of age, was passing through the streets of B——, with a basket on her arm, when she was hailed by a young lady, a teacher in the seminary who inquired of her if her mother was living, "yes," was the reply. "Is your father living, yes Miss." "My dear child, is your father a sober man." "He signed the pledge the other day, but he cannot get work," said the child. "The ballad singer was shamefully treated even by temperance men after he signed the pledge. During his drunken career he had been kicked and cuffed, and driven and dragged from pillar to post, and now when he reformed, no person except the baker encouraged him." Take this basket of provision home to your mother, and tell your father to come to the seminary and we will furnish him with employment," said the generous hearted young lady. The bare footed rosy checked little creature ran home with tears in her eyes and told the glad news. Her father went to work and at the end of the month he received twelve hard dollars for his services, he had not owned such a large sum at one time before for nearly as many years, and he was pleased as a child with a handful of buttons. He put the cash in his pocket, then pulled it out and counted it over and over again, then placing one dollar on the extreme point of his middle finger he arranged the other eleven on his hand, wrist and arm, tossed them in the air and caught them in both hands. He was elated with golden dreams and lofty anticipations when the idea came in his mind that his family never could endure such prosperity, and that it would be injudicious to take home such a large amount of cash at one time, he therefore determined to purchase some provisions and take his wife and children by surprise. So after pulling up his shirt collar half an inch higher than usual, he walked into a store and said, "I want a barrel of flour." "Who do you want it for," inquired the merchant. "None of your business," said the singer, "you will not get a barrel of flour here, unless you tell me who it is for." "Well sir, it is for myself." "Your credit is not good." "My cash is," said he, and he laid his fortune down upon the counter. "Oh, oh," exclaimed the merchant. "You usually patronized our establishment, but you generally purchased three pounds of flour at a time, I am happy to serve," said the obsequious merchant, who had so often sold him liquor. "I want a barrel of flour and no blarney." "You shall have it sir." "I want to borrow a wheelbarrow." "Mine is at your service." The ballad singer lived nearly opposite the store, but instead of taking the flour directly home, he trundled it through almost every street in B——, so that the inhabitants might see how rich he was. Sometime after sunset he reached his own residence he rapped at the door, "Who is there," inquired his wife, "your husband" was the reply. "Why you are so proud and polite since you signed the pledge you cannot enter your own house without knocking at the door." "Open the door quick, wife," said he, and in came the one-wheeled carriage with its welcome load. "You have come to the wrong house with the flour, and pork, and groceries I