

PERVERTED PROVERBS

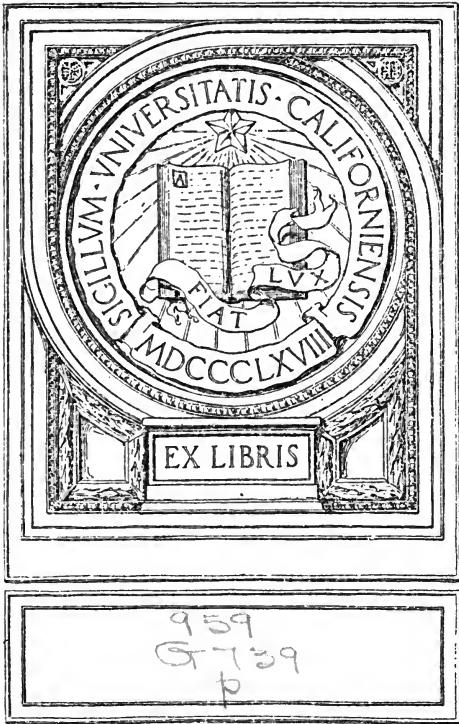
BY COL. D. STREAMER

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**P E R V E R T E D  
P R O V E R B S**

*A MANUAL OF IMMORALS  
FOR THE MANY*

BY

**COL. D. STREAMER**

Author of "Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless  
Homes" "Ballads of the Boer War"  
"The Baby's Baedeker"



NEW YORK  
R. H. RUSSELL  
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PERVERTED PROVERBS

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## *Perverted Proverbs*

*Dedicated to*

*Helen Whitney*

DO you recall those bygone days,  
When you received with kindly praise  
My bantling book of Rhyme?  
Praise undeserved, alas! and yet  
How sweet! For, tho' we had not met,  
(Ah! what a waste of time!)  
I could the more enjoy such mercies  
Since I delighted in *your* verses.

And when a Poet stoops to smile  
On some one of the rank and file,  
(Inglorious—if not mute,)  
Some groundling bard who craves to  
climb,

TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMISSION

## PERVERTED PROVERBS

Like me, the dizzy rungs of Rhyme,  
To reach the Golden Fruit;  
For one in such a situation  
The faintest praise is no damnation.

Parnassus heights must surely pall;  
For simpler diet do you call,  
Of nectar growing tired?  
These verses to your feet I bring,  
Drawn from an unassuming spring,  
Well-meant—if not inspired;  
O charming Poet's charming daughter,  
Descend and taste my toast and water!

For you alone these lines I write,  
That, reading them, your brow may  
light  
Beneath its crown of bays;  
Your eyes may sparkle like a star,  
With friendship, that is dearer far  
Than any breath of praise;



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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The which a lucky man possessing  
Can ask no higher human blessing.

And, though the "salt estranging sea"  
Be widely spread 'twixt you and me,

    We have what makes amends ;

And since I am so glad of you,

Be glad of me a little, too,

    Because of being friends.

And, if I earn your approbation,

Accept my humble dedication.

H. G.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



### *Foreword*

THE Press may pass my Verses by  
With sentiments of indignation,  
And say, like Greeks of old, that I  
Corrupt the Youthful Generation;  
I am unmoved by taunts like these—  
(And so, I think, was Socrates).

Howe'er the Critics may revile,  
I pick no journalistic quarrels,  
Quite realizing that my Style  
Makes up for any lack of Morals;  
For which I feel no shred of shame—  
(And Byron would have felt the same).

I don't intend a Child to read  
These lines, which are not for the  
Young;  
For, if I did, I should indeed  
Feel fully worthy to be hung.





## PERVERTED PROVERBS



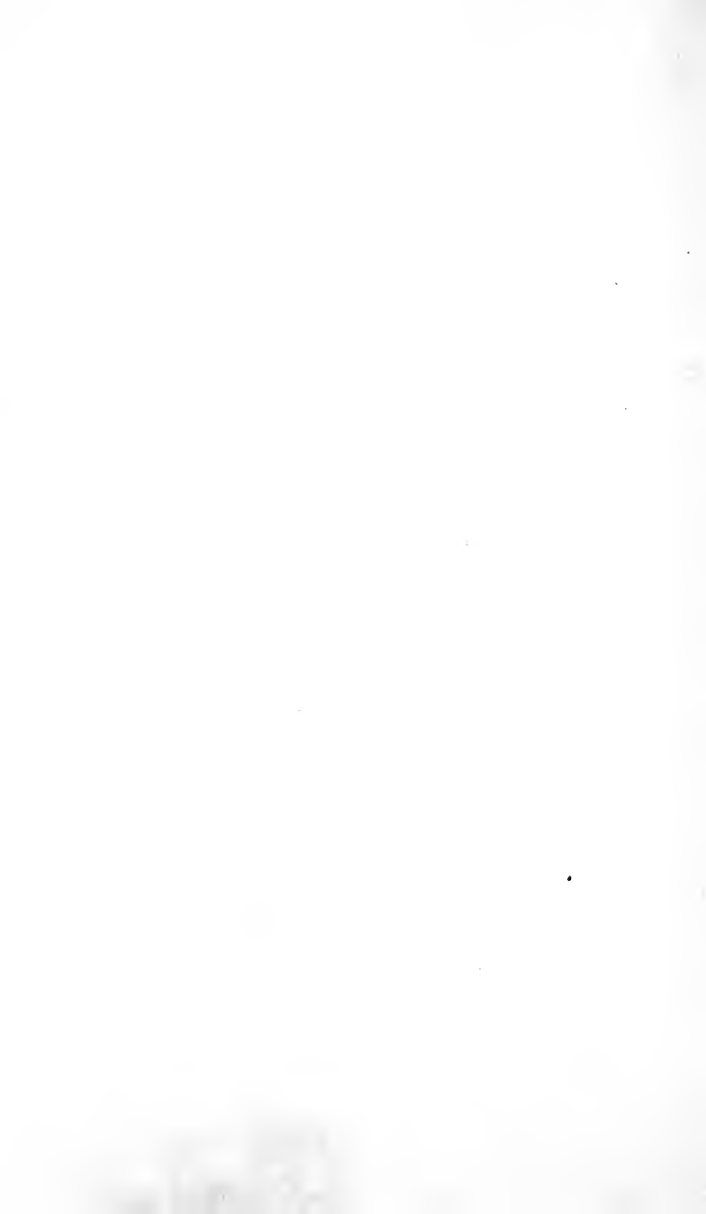
(Is “hanged” the perfect tense of  
“hang”?)

Correct me, Mr. Andrew Lang!)

O Young of Heart, tho' in your prime,  
By you these Verses may be seen!  
Accept the Moral with the Rhyme,  
And try to gather what I mean.  
But, if you can't, it won't hurt me!  
(And Browning would, I know, agree.)

Be reassured, I have not got  
The style of Stephen Phillips' heroes,  
Nor Henry Jones's pow'r of Plot,  
Nor wit like Arthur Wing Pinero's!  
(If so, I should not waste my time  
In writing you this sort of rhyme.)

I strive to paint things as they Are,  
Of Realism the true Apostle;  
All flow'ry metaphors I bar,



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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Nor call the homely thrush a  
“throstle.”

Such synonyms would make me smile.  
(And so they would have made Carlyle.)

My Style may be at times, I own,  
A trifle cryptic or abstruse;  
In this I do not stand alone,  
And need but mention, in excuse,  
A thousand world-familiar names,  
From Meredith to Henry James.

From these my fruitless fancy roams  
To seek the Ade of Modern Fable,  
From Doyle's or Hemans' "Stately  
Ho(l)mes,"  
To t'other of The Breakfast Table;  
Like Galahad, I wish (in vain)  
“My wit were as the wit of Twain!”

Had I but Whitman's rugged skill,  
(And managed to escape the Censor),



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



The Accuracy of a Mill,  
The Reason of a Herbert Spencer,  
The literary talents even  
Of Sidney Lee or Leslie Stephen.

The pow'r of Patmore's placid pen,  
Or Watson's gift of execration,  
The sugar of Le Gallienne,  
Or Algernon's Alliteration.  
One post there is I'd not be lost in,  
—Tho' I might find it most ex-austin'!

Some day, if I but study hard,  
The public, vanquished by my pen'll  
Acclaim me as a Minor Bard,  
Like Norman Gale or Mrs. Meynell,  
And listen to my lyre a-rippling  
Imperial banjo-spasms like Kipling.

Were I a syndicate like K.  
Or flippant scholar like Augustine;



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



Had I the style of Pater, say,  
Which ev'ryone would put their  
trust in,  
I'd love (as busy as a squirrel)  
To pate, to kipple, and to birrel.

So don't ignore me. If you should,  
'Twill touch me to the very heart oh!  
To be as much misunderstood  
As once was Andrea del Sarto;  
Unrecognized to toil away,  
Like Millet—not, of course, *Millais*.

And, pray, for Morals do not look  
In this unique agglomeration,  
—This unpretentious little book  
Of Infelicitous Quotation.  
I deem you foolish if you do,  
(And Mr. Russell thinks so, too).





## PERVERTED PROVERBS

“*Virtue is Its Own Reward*”

VIRTUE its own reward? Alas!  
And what a poor one as a rule!  
Be Virtuous and Life will pass  
Like one long term of Sunday-School.  
(No prospect, truly, could one find  
More unalluring to the mind.)

You may imagine that it pays  
To practise Goodness. Not a bit!  
You cease receiving any praise  
When people have got used to it;  
'Tis generally understood  
You find it *easy* to be good.

The Model Child has got to keep  
His fingers and his garments white;  
In church he may not go to sleep,  
Nor ask to stop up late at night.  
In fact he must not ever do  
A single thing he wishes to.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

He may not paddle in his boots,  
Like naughty children, at the Sea;  
The sweetness of Forbidden Fruits  
Is not, alas! for such as he.  
He watches, with pathetic eyes,  
His weaker brethren make mud-pies.

He must not answer back, oh no!  
However rude grown-ups may be,  
But keep politely silent, tho'  
He brim with scathing repartee;  
For nothing is considered worse  
Than scoring off Mamma or Nurse.

He must not eat too much at meals,  
Nor scatter crumbs upon the floor;  
However vacuous he feels,  
He may not pass his plate for more;  
—Not tho' his ev'ry organ ache  
For further slabs of Christmas cake.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



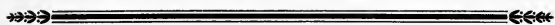
He is enjoined to choose his food  
From what is easy to digest;  
A choice which in itself is good,  
But never what *he* likes the best.  
(At times how madly he must wish  
For just *one* real unwholesome dish!)

And, when the wretched urchin plays  
With other little girls and boys,  
He has to show unselfish ways  
By giving them his choicest toys;  
His ears he lets them freely box,  
Or pull his lubricated locks.

His face is always being washed,  
His hair perpetually brushed,  
And thus his brighter side is squashed,  
His human instincts warped and  
crushed;  
Small wonder that his early years  
Are filled with "thoughts too deep for  
tears."



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



He is commanded not to waste  
The fleeting hours of childhood's  
days

By giving way to any taste  
For circuses or matinées ;  
For him the entertainments planned  
Are "Lectures on the Holy Land."

He never reads a story book  
By Rider H. or Winston C.,  
In vain upon his desk you'd look  
For tales by Richard Harding D. ;  
Nor could you find upon his shelf  
The works of Rudyard—or myself !

He always fears that he may do  
Some action that is *infra dig.*,  
And so he lives his short life through  
In the most noxious rôle of Prig.  
(“Short life ” I say, for it's agreed  
The Good die very young indeed.)





## PERVERTED PROVERBS

Ah me! How sad it is to think  
He could have lived like me—or  
you!

With practice and a taste for drink,  
Our joys he might have known, he  
too!

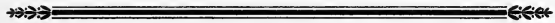
And shared the pleasure *we* have had  
In being gloriously bad!

The Naughty Boy gets much delight  
From doing what he should not do;  
But, as such conduct isn't Right,  
He sometimes suffers for it, too.  
Yet, what's a spanking to the fun  
Of leaving vital things Undone?

If he's notoriously bad,  
But for a day should change his ways,  
His parents will be all so glad,  
They'll shower him with gifts and  
praise!



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



(It pays a connoisseur in crimes  
To be a perfect saint at times.)

Of course there always lies the chance  
That he is charged with being ill,  
And all his innocent romance  
Is ruined by a rhubarb pill.  
(Alas! 'Tis not alone the Good  
That are so much misunderstood.)

But, as a rule, when he behaves  
(Evincing no malarial signs),  
His friends are all his faithful slaves,  
Until he once again declines  
With easy conscience, more or less,  
To undiluted wickedness.

The Wicked flourish like the bay,  
At Cards or Love they always win,  
Good Fortune dogs their steps all day,  
They fatten while the Good grow  
thin.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

The Righteous Man has much to  
bear;

The Bad becomes a Bullionaire!

For, though he be the greatest sham,  
Luck favours him his whole life  
through;

At "Bridge" he always makes a Slam  
After declaring "Sans atout";

With ev'ry deal his fate has planned  
A hundred Aces in his hand.

And it is always just the same;

He somehow manages to win,  
By mere good fortune, any game

That he may be competing in.  
At Golf no bunker breaks his club,  
For him the green provides no "rub."

At Billiards, too, he flukes away  
(With quite unnecessary "side");



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

No matter what he tries to play,  
For him the pockets open wide;  
He never finds both balls in baulk,  
Or makes miss-cues for want of chalk.

He swears; he very likely bets;  
He even wears a flaming necktie;  
Inhales Egyptian cigarettes  
And has a "Mens Inconscia Recti";  
Yet, spite of all, one must confess  
That naught succeeds like his excess.

There's no occasion to be Just,  
No need for motives that are fine,  
To be Director of a Trust,  
Or Manager of a Combine;  
Your corner is a public curse,  
Perhaps; but it will fill your purse.

Then stride across the Public's bones,  
Crush all opponents under you,





## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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Until you “rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves”; and, when  
you do,

The widow’s and the orphan’s tears  
Shall comfort your declining years!

But having had your boom in oil,  
And made your millions out of it,  
Would you propose to cease from toil?  
Great Vanderfeller! Not a bit!  
You’ve *got* to labour, day and night,  
Until you die—and serve you right!

Then, when you stop this frenzied race,  
And others in your office sit,  
You’ll leave the world a better place,  
—The better for your leaving it!  
For there’s a chance perhaps your heir  
May spend what you’ve collected there.

Myself, how lucky I must be,  
That need not fear so gross an end;



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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Since Fortune has not favoured me  
    With many million pounds to spend.  
(Still, did that fickle Dame relent,  
I'd show you how they *should* be  
    spent!)

I am not saint enough to feel  
    My shoulder ripen to a wing,  
Nor have I wits enough to steal  
    His title from the Copper King;  
And there's a vasty gulf between  
The Man I Am and Might Have Been;

But tho' at dinner I may take  
    Too much of Heidsick (extra dry),  
And underneath the table make  
    My simple couch just where I lie,  
My mode of roosting on the floor  
Is just a trick and nothing more.

And when, not Wisely but too Well,  
    My thirst I have contrived to quench,



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

The stories I am apt to tell  
    May be, perhaps, a trifle French;  
(For 'tis in anecdote, no doubt,  
That what's Bred in the Beaune comes  
    out.)

It does not render me unfit  
    To give advice, both wise and right,  
Because I do not follow it  
    Myself as closely as I might;  
There's nothing that I wouldn't do  
To point the proper road to *you*.

And this I'm sure of, more or less,  
    And trust that you will all agree,  
The Elements of Happiness  
    Consist in being—just like Me;  
No sinner, nor a saint perhaps,  
But—well, the very best of chaps.

Share the Experience I have had,  
    Consider all I've known and seen,



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



And Don't be Good, and Don't be  
Bad,

But cultivate a Golden Mean.

. . . . .

What makes Existence *really* nice  
Is Virtue—with a dash of Vice.





## PERVERTED PROVERBS

“*Enough is as Good as a Feast.*”

WHAT is Enough? An idle dream!  
One cannot have enough, I swear,  
Of Ices or Meringues-and-Cream,  
Nougat or Chocolate Eclairs,  
Of Oysters or of Caviar,  
Of Prawns or Paté de Foie *Grar!*

Who would not willingly forsake  
Kindred and Home, without a fuss,  
For Icing from a Birthday Cake,  
Or juicy fat Asparagus,  
And journey over countless seas  
For New Potatoes and Green Peas?

They say that a Contented Mind  
Is a Continual Feast;—but where  
The mental frame, and how to find,  
Which can with Turtle Soup com-  
pare?



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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No mind, however full of Ease,  
Could be Continual Toasted Cheese.

For dinner have a sole to eat,  
    (Some Perrier Jouet, '92,)  
An Entrée then (and, with the meat,  
    A bottle of Lafitte will do),  
A quail, a glass of port (just one),  
Liqueurs and coffee, and you've done.

But should you want a hearty meal,  
    And not this gourmet's lightsome  
    snack,  
Fill up with terrapin and teal,  
    Clam chowder, crabs and canvas-  
    back;  
With all varieties of sauce,  
And diff'rent wines for ev'ry course.

Your tastes may be of simpler type;—  
    A homely glass of "half-and-half,"



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

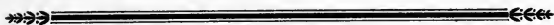
An onion and a dish of tripe,  
Or headpiece of the kindly calf.  
(Cruel perhaps, but then, you know,  
“’*Faut tout souffrir pour être veau!*”)

’Tis a mistake to eat too much  
Of any dishes but the best;  
And you, of course, should never touch  
A thing you *know* you can’t digest;  
For instance, lobster;—if you *do*,  
Well,—I’m amayonnaised at you!

Let this be your heraldic crest,  
A bottle (chargé) of Champagne,  
A chicken (gorged) with salad (dress’d),  
Below, this motto to explain—  
“Enough is Very Good, may be;  
Too Much is Good Enough for Me!”



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



*“Don't Buy a Pig in a Poke.”*

UNSCRUPULOUS Pigmongers will  
Attempt to wheedle and to coax  
The ignorant young housewife till  
She purchases her pigs in pokes;  
Beasts that have got a Lurid Past,  
Or else are far Too Good to Last.

So, should you not desire to be  
The victim of a cruel hoax,  
Then promise me, ah! promise me,  
You will not purchase pigs in pokes!  
(’Twould be an error just as big  
To poke your purchase in a pig.)

Too well I know the bitter cost,  
To turn this subject off with jokes;  
How many a fortune has been lost  
By men who purchased pigs in pokes.





## PERVERTED PROVERBS



(Ah! think on such when you would  
talk

With mouths that are replete with  
pork!)

And, after dinner, round the fire,  
Astride of Grandpa's rugged knee,  
Implore your bored but patient sire  
To tell you what a Poke may be.  
The fact he might disclose to you—  
Which is far more than *I* can do.

. . . . .

The Moral of The Pigs and Pokes  
Is not to make your choice too  
quick.

In purchasing a Book of Jokes,  
Pray poke around and take your  
pick.

Who knows how rich a mental meal  
The covers of *this* book conceal?



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



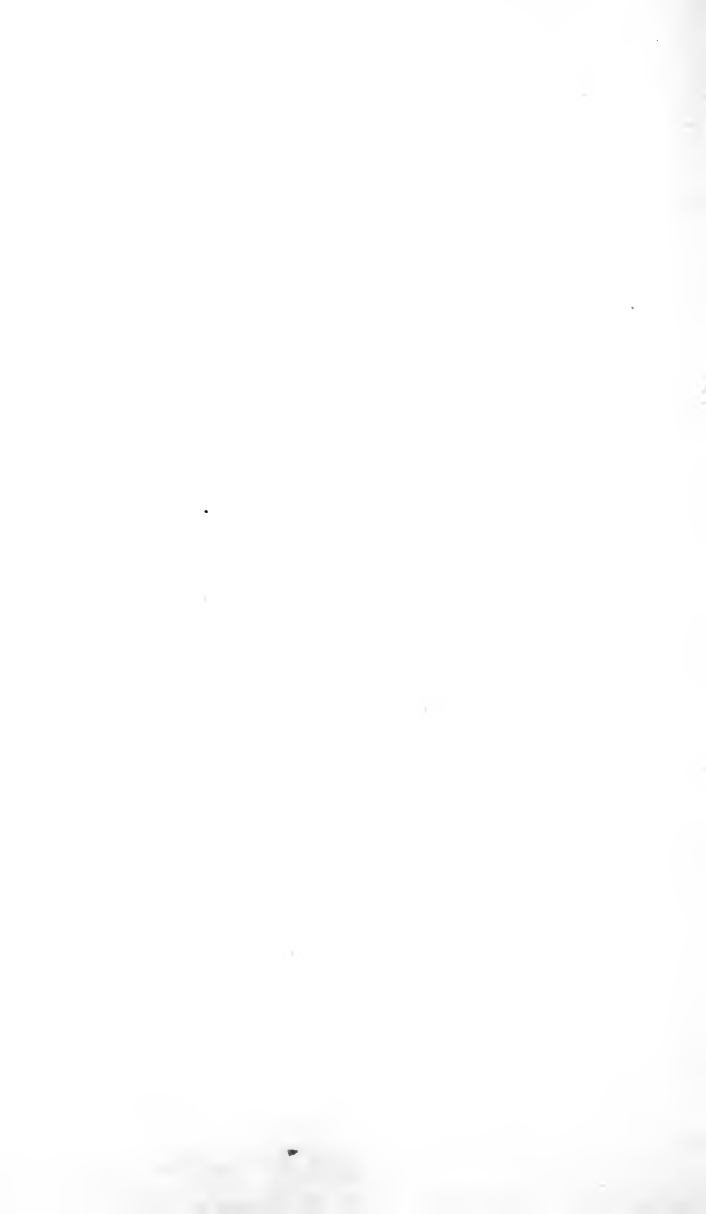
*“ Learn to Take Things Easily.”*

TO these few words, it seems to me,  
A wealth of sound instruction clings;  
O Learn to Take things easily—  
Espeshly Other People’s Things;  
And Time will make your fingers deft  
At what is known as Petty Theft.

Your precious moments do not waste;  
Take Ev’rything that isn’t tied!  
Who knows but you may have a Taste,  
A Gift perhaps, for Homicide,—  
(A Mania which, encouraged, thrives  
On Taking Other People’s Lives).

“ Fools and Their Money soon must  
part!”

And you can help this on, may be,  
If, in the kindness of your Heart,  
You Learn to Take things easily;  
And be, with little education,  
A Prince of Misappropriation.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



“ *A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss.*”

I NEVER understood, I own,  
What anybody (with a soul)  
Could mean by offering a Stone  
This needless warning not to Roll;  
And what inducement there can be  
To gather Moss I fail to see.

I'd sooner gather anything,  
Like primroses, or news perhaps,  
Or even wool (when suffering  
A momentary mental lapse);  
But could forego my share of moss,  
Nor ever realize the loss.

'Tis a botanical disease,  
And worthy of remark as such;  
Lending a dignity to trees,  
To ruins a romantic touch.  
A timely adjunct, I've no doubt,  
But not worth writing home about.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

Of all the Stones I ever met,  
In calm repose upon the ground,  
I really never found one yet  
With a desire to roll around;  
Theirs is a stationary rôle,—  
(A joke,—and feeble on the whole).

But, if I were a stone, I swear  
I'd sooner move and view the World  
Than sit and grow the greenest hair  
That ever Nature combed and curled.  
I see no single saving grace  
In being known as "Mossyface!"

Instead, I might prove useful for  
A weapon in the hand of Crime,  
A paperweight, a milestone, or  
A missile at Election time;  
In each capacity I could  
Do quite incalculable good.





## PERVERTED PROVERBS

When well directed from the Pit,  
I might promote a welcome death,  
If fortunate enough to hit  
Some budding Hamlet or Macbeth,  
Who twice each day the playhouse  
fills,—  
(For further Notice See Small Bills).

At concerts, too, if you prefer,  
I could prevent your growing deaf,  
By silencing the amateur  
Before she reached that upper F.;  
Or else, in lieu of half-a-brick,  
Restrain some local Kubelik.

Then, human stones, take my advice,  
(As you should always do, indeed);  
This proverb may be very nice,  
But don't you pay it any heed,  
And, tho' you make the critics cross,  
Roll on, and never mind the moss.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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“*After Dinner Sit a While; After  
Supper Walk a Mile.*”

AFTER luncheon sit awhile,

’Tis an admirable plan;

After dinner walk a mile—

But make certain that you *can*.

(Were you not this maxim taught;—

“Good is Wrought by want of Port.”)

After dinner think on this;

Join the ladies with a smile,

And remember that a Miss

Is as good as any mile.

(Thus you may be led to feel

What Amis felt for Amile.)

Never fear of being shy

At the houses where you dine;

You’ll recover by-and-bye,

With the second glass of wine;

And can recognize with bliss

That a Meal is not amiss.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

“*It is Never Too Late to Mend.*”

SINCE it can never be too late  
To change your life, or else renew it,  
Let the unpleasant process wait  
Until you are *compelled* to do it.  
The State provides (and gratis too)  
Establishments for such as you.

Remember this, and pluck up heart,  
That, be you publican or parson,  
Your ev'ry art must have a start,  
From petty larceny to arson ;  
And even in the burglar's trade,  
The cracksman is not born, but made.

So, if in your career of crime,  
You fail to carry out some “coup”,  
Then try again a second time,  
And yet again, until you *do* ;  
And don't despair, or fear the worst,  
Because you get found out at first.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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Perhaps the battle will not go,  
On all occasions, to the strongest ;  
You may be fairly certain tho'  
That He Laughs Last who laughs  
the Longest.

So keep a good reserve of laughter,  
Which may be found of use hereafter.

Believe me that, howe'er well meant,  
A Good Resolve is always brief ;  
Don't let your precious hours be spent  
In turning over a new leaf.  
Such leaves, like Nature's, soon decay,  
And then are only in the way.

The Road to—well, a certain spot,  
(A Road of very fair dimensions),  
Has, so the proverb tells us, got  
A parquet-floor of Good Intentions.  
Take care, in your desire to please,  
You do not add a brick to these.





## PERVERTED PROVERBS

For there may come a moment when  
    You shall be mended willy-nilly,  
With many more misguided men,  
    Whose skill is undermined with  
    skilly.

Till then procrastinate, my friend ;  
“ It *Never* is Too Late to Mend ! ”

28  
82



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

“ *A Bad Workman Complains of his  
Tools.*”

THIS Pen of mine is simply grand,  
I never loved a pen so much ;  
This Paper (underneath my hand)  
Is really a delight to touch ;  
And never in my life, I think,  
Did I make use of finer ink.

The Subject upon which I write  
Is everything that I could choose ;  
I seldom knew my Wits more bright,  
More cosmopolitan my Views ;  
Nor ever did my Head contain  
So surplus a supply of Brain !



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



### *Potpourri.*

THERE are many more Maxims to  
which

I would like to accord a front place,  
But alas! I have got  
To omit a whole lot,

For the lack of available space;  
And the rest I am forced to boil down  
and condense

To the following Essence of Sound  
without Sense:

Now the Pitcher that journeys too oft  
To the Well will get broken at last.  
But you'll find it a fact  
That, by using some tact,

Such a danger as this can be past.  
(There's an obvious way, and a simple,  
you'll own,  
Which is, if you're a Pitcher, to Let  
Well alone.)



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

Half a loafer is never well-bred,  
And Self-Praise is a Dangerous Thing.  
And the Mice are at play  
When the Cat is away,  
For a moment, inspecting a King.  
(Tho' if Care kills a Cat, as the Pro-  
verbs declare,  
It is right to suppose that the King will  
take care.)

Don't Halloo till you're out of the  
Wood,  
When a Stitch in Good Time will  
save nine,  
While a Bird in the Hand  
Is worth Two, understand,  
In the Bush that Needs no Good Wine.  
(Tho' the two, if they *Can* sing but  
Won't, have been known,  
By an accurate aim to be killed with  
one Stone.)





## PERVERTED PROVERBS

Never Harness the Cart to the Horse;  
Since the latter should be *à la carte*.  
And Birds of a Feather  
Come Flocking Together,  
Because they can't well Flock Apart.  
(You may cast any Bread on the Waters,  
I think,  
But, unless I'm mistaken, you can't  
make it Sink.)

It is only the Fool who remarks  
That there Can't be a Fire without  
Smoke;  
Has he never yet learned  
How the gas can be turned  
On the best incombustible coke?  
(Would you value a man by the checks  
on his suits,  
And forget "*que c'est le premier passbook  
qui Coutts?*")



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

Now “*De Mortuis Nil Nisi Bonum,*” is Latin, as ev’ryone owns ;

If your domicile be

Near a Mortuaree,

You should always avoid throwing  
bones.

(I would further remark, if I could,  
—but I couldn’t—

That People Residing in Glasshouses  
shouldn’t.)

You have heard of the Punctual Bird,

Who was First in presenting his Bill ;

But I pray you’ll be firm,

And remember the Worm

Had to get up much earlier still ;

(So that, if you *can’t* rise in the morn-  
ing, then Don’t ;

And be certain that Where there’s a  
Will there’s a Won’t.)



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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You can give a bad name to a Dog,  
And hang him by way of excuse ;  
Whereas Hunger, of course,  
Is by far the Best Sauce  
For the Gander as well as the Goose.  
(But you shouldn't judge anyone just  
by his looks,  
For a Surfeit of Broth ruins too many  
Cooks.)

With the fact that Necessity knows  
Nine Points of the Law, you'll agree.  
There are just as Good Fish  
To be found on a Dish  
As you ever could catch in the Sea.  
(You should Look ere you Leap on a  
Weasel Asleep,  
And I've also remarked That Still  
Daughters Run Cheap.)



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



The much trodden-on Lane *will* Turn,  
And a Friend is in Need of a Friend;  
But the Wisest of Saws,  
Like the Camel's Last Straws,  
Or the Longest of Worms, have an  
end.

So, before out of Patience a Virtue you  
make,  
A decisive farewell of these maxims  
we'll take.





## PERVERTED PROVERBS



### *Envoi.*

“*Don't Look a Gifthorse in the Mouth*”

I KNEW a man, who lived down South;  
He thought this maxim to defy;  
He looked a Gifthorse in the Mouth;  
The Gifthorse bit him in the Eye!  
And, while the steed enjoyed his bite,  
My Southern friend mislaid his sight.

Now, had this foolish man, that day,  
Observed the Gifthorse in the *Heel*,  
It might have kicked his brains away,  
But that's a loss he would not feel;  
Because you see (need I explain?)  
My Southern friend had got no brain.

When anyone to you presents  
A poodle, or a pocketknife,



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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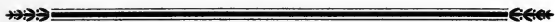
A set of Ping-pong instruments,  
A banjo or a Lady-wife,  
'Tis churlish, as I understand,  
To grumble that they're second-hand.

And he who termed Ingratitude  
As "worser nor a servant's tooth"  
Was evidently well imbued  
With all the elements of Truth;  
(While he who said "Uneasy lies  
The tooth that wears a crown" was  
wise).

"One must be poor," George Eliot  
said,  
"To know the luxury of giving;"  
So too one really should be dead  
To realize the joy of living.  
(I'd sooner be—I don't know which—  
I'd *like* to be alive and rich!)



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



*This* book may be a Gifthorse too,  
And one you surely ought to prize;  
If so, I beg you, read it through  
With kindly and uncaptious eyes,  
Not grumbling because this particular  
line doesn't happen to scan,  
And this one doesn't rhyme!



## PERVERTED PROVERBS



*Aftword.*

'TIS done! We reach the final page,  
With feelings of relief, I'm certain;  
And there arrives at such a stage,  
The moment to ring down the curtain.

(This metaphor is freely taken  
From Shakespeare—or perhaps from  
Bacon.)

The Book perused, our Future brings  
A plethora of blank to-morrows,  
When memories of Happier Things  
Will be our Sorrow's Crown of Sorrows.

(I trust you recognize this line  
As being Tennyson's, not mine.)





## PERVERTED PROVERBS



My verses may indeed be few,  
But are they not, to quote the poet,  
“The sweetest things that ever grew  
Beside a human door”? I know it.  
(What an *inhuman* door would be,  
Enquire of Wordsworth, please, not  
me.)

’Twas one of my most cherished dreams  
To write a Moral Book some day;  
What says the Bard? “The best laid  
schemes  
Of Mice and Men gang aft agley!”  
(The Bard here mentioned, by the bye,  
Is Robbie Burns, of course—not I.)

And tho’ my pen records each thought  
As swift as the phonetic Pitman,  
Morality is not my “forte,”  
O Camarados! (*vide* Whitman)



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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And, like the Porcupine, I still  
Am forced to ply a fretful quill.

We may be Master of our Fate,  
    (As Henley was inspired to mention)  
Yet am I but the Second Mate  
    Upon the ss. "Good Intention";  
For me the course direct is lacking—  
I have to do a deal of tacking.

To seek for Morals here's a task  
    Of which you well may be despair-  
    ing;  
"What has become of them?" you ask,  
    They've given us the slip—like War-  
    ing.  
"Look East!" said Browning once,  
    and I  
Would make a similar reply.



## PERVERTED PROVERBS

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Look East, where in a garret drear,  
The Author works, without cessa-  
tion,  
Composing verses for a mere-  
ly nominal remuneration ;  
And, while he has the strength to  
write 'em,  
Will do so still—*ad infinitum*.

FINIS.











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