CONCEALED PUNS.

James Russell Lowell Cleverly Hid One In a Review.

QUAINT HUMOR IN A SNEEZE.

The Story That Is Told of the Witty Cleric, Sydney Smith, and the Wager He Won While In the Pulpit—A Buried Pun by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Horace E. Scudder in some reminiscences of James Russell Lowell pointed out that the poet critic even in his soberest essays would sometimes bide away a jest for the delectation of specially discerning readers. Thus in a review of Richard Grant White's edition of Shakespeare, Lowell remarked incidentally:

"To every commentator who has wantonly tampered with the text or obscured it with his inky cloud of paraphrase we feel inclined to apply the quadrisyllabic name of the brother of Agis, king of Sparta."

Professor Felton of Harvard, we are told, was the first to remember or discover that the name of Agis' brother was Eudamidas.

A more opaque mystification is contained in a passage in the first chapter of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Our Old Home"—opaque only because he purposely seeks to conceal every clew to the fact that a pun is buried beneath the surface.

The chapter is headed "Consular Experiences." Speaking of the lights and shadows of the consul's office at Liverpool, where he was stationed during the presidency of Franklin Pierce, Hawthorne dwells with special pleasure on the visits of a young English friend, "a scholar and literary amateur, between whom and myself there sprang up an affectionate and, I trust, not transitory regard."

This friend used to come and sit or stand by the Hawthorne fireside, "with such kind endurance of the many rough republicanisms wherewith I assailed him and such frank and amiable assertion of all sorts of English prejudices and mistakes, that I understood his countrymen infinitely the better for him and was almost prepared to love the intensest Englishman of them all for his sake. It would gratify my cherished remembrance of this dear friend if I could remind him without offending him, or letting the public know it, to introduce his name upon my page. Bright was the illumination of my dusky little apartment as often as he made his appearance there."

The casual reader never suspects that Hawthorne has deftly accomplished his purpose. It does not occur to him that Bright, the apparent adjective that so cunningly begins a sentence and therefore achieves the right to a capital initial, may be alternatively read as a proper noun.

Henry A. Bright was, in fact, Hawthorne's only intimate friend in Liverpool. He was a man of wealth and position in that town, a dilettante who had published for his own amusement a botanical manual, "The English Flower Garden." With Hawthorne he would frequently call upon the local bookseller, Henry Young, making use of a little nook in the rear of the shop to examine and discuss the recent publications. This came to be known as Hawthorne's corner.

There is a story told about Sydney Smith that represents him as carrying a concealed pun into the pulpit with him. The most familiar version is that which Lord Houghton used to tell. When settled at his small living in Yorkshire, Sydney willingly assisted his brethren in that neighborhood in their clerical duties. On one occasion he dined with the incumbent on the preceding Saturday. The evening passed in great hilarity, the squire, Kershaw by name, being conspicuous by his loud enjoyment of the visitor's jokes.

"I am very glad that I have amused you," said Sydney Smith at parting, "but you must not laugh at my sermon tomorrow."

"I should hope I know the difference between here and a church," remarked the squire a little tartly perhaps.

"I'm not so sure of that."

"I'll bet you a guinea on it."

"Take you," said the divine.

Next day the preacher ascended the steps of the pulpit apparently suffering from a severe cold, with his handkerchief to his face, and at once sneezed out the name "Kershaw!" several times in various intonations. This ingenious assumption of the readiness with which a man would recognize his own name in sounds unintelligible to the ears of others proved accurate. The poor squire burst into guffaw, to the scandal of the congregation. The minister after looking at him with stern reproach proceeded with his discourse and won the bet.

Another version makes the victim of Sydney's jest a certain Sir Archibald Macdonald, equerry to the Duke of Sussex. Sir Archibald said to the prelate, who was then a canon at St. Paul's cathedral:

"I will come some Sunday to hear you preach."

"If you do I shall name you from the pulpit," was the reply.

Undaunted by this threat, Sir Archibald went to St. Paul's.

Sydney entered the pulpit, looked hard at the baronet and was seized with a vociferous fit of sneezing.

"Ar-chie, Ar-chie, Ar-chie!" was how it sounded in Sir Archibald's ears, and he could not help a sudden laugh of recognition.—William S. Walsh in Boston Post.

MONSTER HEADDRESSES.

Women at One Time Wore Fleets of Vessels In Their Hair.

Marie Antoinette had a passion for extraordinary headdresses. One structure that she invented was forty-five inches in height and was composed of many yards of gauze and ribbon. From the folds sprang bunches of roses, and the entire edifice was surmounted by a waving plume of white feathers. It is recorded that when Maria Theresa received a portrait of her daughter wearing this headdress she exclaimed: "This is no daughter of mine! It is the portrait of an actress!"

The Duchess de Chartres determined to surpass the queen, designed a headdress two inches higher. It was made up of many plumes waving at the top of a tower. Two waxen figures, representing the little Comte de Beaujolais (the brother of Louis Philippe) in his nurse's arms, were worn as ornaments. Beside them a parrot picked at a plate of cherries, and the wax figure of a black boy reclined at the nurse's feet. On different parts of the tower were the initials of the duchesse's husband, her father and her father-in-law, made from her own hair.

At this time France and England were at war. In a naval engagement the French frigate Licorne struck her flag, but the Belle Poule, another French vessel, crippled the Hector, an English man-of-war. As the Frenchmen were about to board two English vessels bore down to their consort's assistance, and the Belle Poule sailed away. The English fleet returned to Plymouth with two prizes, the Licorne and a French lugger.

The French, although they had lost a frigate, proclaimed a victory. The queen and her women wore headdresses that represented the Belle Poule under full sail plowing a sea of green gauze in pursuit of the English frigate. This construction was known as the "coiffure Belle Poule."

The wife of an English officer living in Paris deemed the headdress an insult to the English navy and determined to resent it. At the next public occasion therefore she appeared carrying on her head five English line of battle ships, a French frigate and a lugger. An arrangement of silk and gauze represented Plymouth harbor, which the English ships, with their prizes, were entering. Each vessel carried a streamer that bore its name, and on the edifice at the back the word "Plymouth" appeared in glittering beads.

The audacity of the spirited English-woman struck every one dumb except the chief of police, who invited her to cross the frontier at her earliest convenience.—Youth's Companion.

MEANING OF "POTLUCK."

One Plunge of the Ladle, and Take What You Get.

The real origin of the word "potluck" is unknown to most of the people who use it. In Limoges, France, however, one runs into potluck itself. In a certain corner of that quaint city of jostling roofs there is still segregated, much as if in a ghetto, a Saracen population, probably a remnant of the wave of Saracens that swept over Europe hundreds of years ago. Here they live in their crooked, narrow streets, following old customs handed down from generation to generation. There are many butcher shops in the quarter, and outside of each steams a great pot of soup over a glowing brazier. In each pot stands a ladle as ancient as the pot.

When a customer comes with a penny, in goes the ladle and comes up full of savory broth and chunks of meat, odds and ends that the butcher has had left over. And what comes up the customer has to take. One can imagine how anxiously the hungry urchin or the mother of seven must eye the inexorable ladle and how a pretty girl might get another draw from the butcher's boy.

At any rate, "to take potluck" means to take what you get and say nothing, whether the pot is in Limoges or in the flat of the man who eagerly invites a friend of his youth to dinner.—New York Sun.

Gives Warning of a Storm.

In the bay of Biscay frequently during the autumn and winter in calm weather a heavy sea gets up and rolls in on the coast four and twenty hours before the gale which causes it arrives and of which it is the prelude. In this case the wave action, generated on the other side of the Atlantic by the wind, travels at a much greater rate than that of the body of disturbed air and thus gives warning of the coming storm.

So Unreasonable.

"She's been very busy telling me how to rear my baby."

"Well?"

"But she got into a perfect panic when I asked her to take care of the child for a couple of days. You know I was suddenly called out of town."—Washington Herald.

A Frank Admission.

"I suppose you are interested in reform," said the conscientious citizen.

"No," replied Farmer Corntossel; "I approve of it. But I can't say that it's generally expressed in a way that makes it as interesting as the continued stories."—Washington Star.

Would He?

Cashleigh—You wouldn't marry Miss Roxy for her money, would you, Upson? Upson Downes—How else can I get it?—London Answers.

He who despises small things never becomes rich.—Danish Proverb.

THE LITERARY RIVALS.

A Serio-Comic Scene Between Victor Hugo and the Two Dumases.

It is perhaps only natural that Mr. A. F. Davidson, the latest biographer of Victor Hugo, annoyed by the extravagant eulogies of the poet that his predecessors had written, should lay a good deal of stress on the great Frenchman's faults and failings. Of these the chief was undoubtedly vanity. Victor Hugo was inordinately vain—vain at one moment with a superb assurance that almost dignified vanity itself, at another with an uneasy jealousy at once petty and absurd.

Some years ago in a review of the work of the two Dumases, father and son, an anecdote was related that well illustrates this trait. Both of the Dumases, Victor Hugo and several others were chatting together when a foreign gentleman was presented, who made an excellent impression on every one until the moment of his departure. As he bowed in taking leave he addressed himself to the most celebrated members of the group and assured them of his pride and satisfaction in having met "the greatest poet, the greatest romancer and the greatest dramatist of France."

"A little unthinking of our friend to address his parting compliment entirely to me, was it not?" remarked Victor Hugo complacently.

The others looked at each other, and he caught the look.

"The dramatist—that was you, then, you think, Dumas?" he inquired of Dumas the younger in an ominous voice. Then a thought even more appalling occurred to him, and without waiting for a reply he turned to Dumas the elder.

"The romancer, monsieur—the romancer! Do I understand you to suppose that by 'the greatest romancer' it was you who was designated? Reply, monsieur!" he demanded. His brow was thunderous, and the company held their breath, but the elder Dumas, who never found himself at a loss, answered with an easy laugh:

"But certainly it was I, and the dramatist was my son. How should it be otherwise? You did not invite the gentleman to dine, and I did. You are not a cook—a good cook, a veritable prince among cooking amateurs—and I am! His compliments, such as they are, are for us, his prospective hosts. But they are only payment in advance for the salade marseillaise of peppers stuffed with minced crab meat which I have promised to prepare for him and which I invite you to share also."

The great and only Hugo shrugged a tolerantly contemptuous shoulder.

"No; I have had enough of the society of this gentleman who speaks from the stomach, not the head," he stated grandly. "You may appreciate it, Dumas, but I do not. It is true—I am not a cook."

A Cheap Marine Telescope.

Make an oblong narrow box out of four pieces of quarter inch board about two feet long by sixteen inches wide, and fit a piece of clear, clean glass across one end, held in place by brass headed tacks driven into the wood and overlapping the glass. Fill all the cracks with sealing wax to keep out the light. Then plunge the glass end two or three inches into the water and look through the open end. This simple marine telescope is made on the principle of the more elaborate glasses through which to look at the famous gardens under the sea near the Catalina Islands.—Christian Herald.

Soaking Salt Fish.

There is a wrong as well as a right way to freshen salt mackerel and other salt fish. Those who are familiar with evaporation processes know that salt falls to the bottom. Now, if you place your mackerel with the skin side down in the pan the salt falls to the skin and remains there. If placed with the flesh side down the salt falls to the bottom of the pan, and the mackerel is freshened by the soaking in water, as it should be.

The Scholar.

Dr. Evans, a witty member of the parliament at Melbourne, was an old man, and the other members jokingly spoke of him as belonging to the era of Queen Anne.

Once while making a speech he referred to Queen Anne and was greeted with cries of "Did you know her?" "What was she like?"

"Yes, sir," retorted the doctor, "I did know her. The scholar is contemporary with all time."

Going to an Expert.

When the butcher answered the telephone the shrill voice of a little girl greeted him:

"Hello! Is this Mr. Wilson?"

"Yes, Bessie," he answered kindly. "What can I do for you?"

"Oh, Mr. Wilson, please tell me where grandpa's liver is!—The folks are out and I've got to put a hot flannel on it, and I don't know where it is."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Putting It Up to Him.

"Patience is a virtue," said the man, philosophically.

"True," replied his wife, who thought he ought to be earning more money. "And I'll provide the patience for this family if you'll only provide the bustle."—Detroit Free Press.

Borrowing Trouble.

"Ever since his wife has brought suit for divorce he has looked terribly worried."

"He oughtn't to worry; she'll probably get it."—Houston Post.

A judicious silence is always better than truth spoken without charity.—De Sales.

WHAT IS SOLUBLE?

Everything In the Universe Is, Say the Scientists.

GLASS DISSOLVES IN WATER.

And if a Bar of Gold Be Placed Upon a Bar of Lead Each In Time Will Absorb Particles of the Other—Solid Matter a Mass of Whirling Atoms.

What is soluble? Sugar in water? That's easy, although you have to be born in Kentucky to perform the trick in the mint julep trade.

Is glass soluble in water? Offhand we say no. We are wrong. It is. You can try it yourself.

Take an ordinary eight ounce water glass, a glass that holds eight ounces, grind it up to a powder and pour the powder into another glass full of water and stir it up. Then analyze it, or, if this is above you, take it around the corner to a man who can, and he will tell you, and with truth, that the water in that glass had actually dissolved 3 per cent of the glass powder.

Glass is soluble, nearly as soluble as bichloride of mercury.

Everything is soluble in water. Furthermore, everything in the universe is soluble in everything else in the universe. That is what they are telling us now, and the men who tell us can perform an astonishing experiment right before your eyes to make you more than half believe them.

They take a bar of gold and a bar of lead. They lay one bar on top of the other. Then they sit around and smoke cigars and wait, say a year. Then they take the two bars and analyze them chemically. In the gold bar they find lead. In the lead bar they find gold. Gold and lead are soluble in each other.

If you haven't time to wait a year to find out, the trick can be performed in much shorter time. All that has to be done is to raise the temperature of the two bars to a very ordinary heat—say 300 or 400 degrees F. With this added heat the same results are reached overnight. Traces of gold are found all the way through the lead bar and vice versa.

The theory is that all substances, whether gold or butter or leather, are really composed of the smallest kind of small particles—about the size of the particles making up the tail of the late lamented comet, which were described as the elemental essence of nothingness. These particles, which are as much bigger than an atom as a mountain compared to a mouse, are in motion, revolving round each other faster than thought, much the same as the planets revolve round the sun.

If our microscopes were big enough a chunk of gold would appear to our eyes much the same as a fly hopper full of flies (the kind of hoppers they keep in the cheese department of a country grocery store in August). The particles are buzzing and jumping much the same as these flies.

When a bar of gold comes in contact with a bar of lead their respective revolving buzzing particles get together and get acquainted. They go exploring and are lost, and before long, instead of having a bar of pure lead and a bar of pure gold we have two bars of alloyed metals.

This discovery has upset all sorts of scientific calculations. If everything is soluble in everything else—and scientists can go on duplicating the gold-lead example without end—how can anything exist in a pure state? It can't. Chemists dispense chemicals under the label "C. P." or "chemically pure," but if a Dr. Wiley got after them on the strict letter of the new theory he would send them all to jail, because the chances are that all alleged pure chemicals have absorbed a little of everything they came in contact with in the process of their manufacture.

Analytical chemists of this day have to take into account the amount of glass any given solution contains, when they are testing that solution in a test tube. Otherwise their results wouldn't count for anything.

This discovery suggests an explanation of that mysterious element in outdoor life, scent. How can a hound trace his quarry? Everything a man touches dissolves a little of him. When his foot falls on the ground he leaves a trace of himself. In warm weather or in wet weather he leaves a bigger trace than in cold or dry weather. A hound follows a damp trail. Usually his sense of smell is not acute enough to follow a dry trail.

The suggestion that a fugitive pursued by a bloodhound actually dissolves a few particles of himself every time his foot touches the ground, just as though he were a lump of sugar in water, sounds fanciful, but it is appearing more and more reasonable in the light of recent researches.—F. I. Anderson in Chicago Record-Herald.

His Mistake.

"On my way to church I picked up a button and put it in my change pocket, where I had a quarter."

"Gracious, my dear! And you dropped it into the collection basket by mistake?"

"No, confound it! I put in the quarter."—Judge.

Calm Before Storm.

"Why this hush in the house, this elaborate tiptoeing about?"

"Sh! Mother is getting ready to ask father for a little extra money."—Pittsburgh Post.

If thou takest time into thy affairs it will allay and arrange all things.—Apollodorus.

A BADLY ABUSED WORD.

Many Base Uses to Which "Infinite" Is Put Nowadays.

What is happening to the word "infinite"? It used to have great and rare associations and serve great needs.

Now I meet it everywhere and with every possible application. One bonnet is infinitely more beautiful than another, one brand of wine infinitely preferable to the next. He has an infinite desire to see her; she would infinitely prefer a hobble skirt to one with gores. One novel is infinitely superior to its predecessor; a character in it infinitely prefers game to domestic fowl. There is no association too trivial for it, no use too petty. Our books and our newspapers alike bristle with misused "infinites." The word, like Laurence Sterne and Lord Byron, has become a social literary success, and no worse fate can befall a great author or a great word. It is taken up by the fashion papers and by society journals, and this season's styles are usually infinitely prettier than the last.

Infinitely pretty!

Not only careless journalistic folk who like to produce an emphatic effect—at any cost—are guilty. My learned friends put it to common use. So do I when I forget. We are infinitely obliged nowadays to one who gives us a lift of a few blocks and infinitely grateful for our Christmas presents. Our greatest and best authors vie with one another in bringing this great word down from its high estate, and it is only a few days since I heard a most fastidious man of letters lecturing in Boston say that the Sunday supplements would be infinitely more diverting if something—I forget what—were different. The robin's note in "Fiona Macleod" is "infinitely winsome." Even as critical a writer as Mrs. Anne Douglas Sedgwick speaks of a heroine "infinitely malleable" through love and of a fat young German musician as feeling "infinite compassion." That, to be sure, is better than Arnold Bennett's description of a woman as "infinitely stylish."—Scribner's.

ALPINE CURLING.

Almost Surgical Skill Used on the Ice to Make It Perfect.

Scotch players regard the conditions of Alpine curling as somewhat too luxurious. The ice is almost too perfect, and the tactics that proved successful on the rough ice of a Scottish pond have to be abandoned in favor of more subtle methods.

The ordinary visitor to the Alps has very little idea of the science and work which are necessary to insure a good rink, and the Scotch curler who has been accustomed to the rough ice formed by a few nights' frost is somewhat startled when he sees an army of icemen working through the night. A rink in the Alps is a costly business. The ground is carefully leveled in the spring, and after the first fall of snow a squad of icemen tramp the snow down as evenly as possible. The flooding is done in a series of elaborate stages, which can be carried out only when the sun is shining.

The secret of good ice is to go slowly. This was proved by a clever experiment. The discovery of this was due to Rudolph Bauman, perhaps the best iceman in the Alps. He filled two wooden tubs with water, and the first froze hard in a night. The second was allowed to fill gradually, drop by drop, throughout a fortnight. The two blocks of ice were then put in the sunshine, and whereas the ice that had been formed in a single night disappeared within a week, the other block survived for three weeks.

The ice is carefully doctored every night with the skill of a first class surgeon. Small holes are trimmed and scooped out with a knife. They are then filled with finely powdered ice and sprinkled with boiling water. The result is an absolutely even surface of good ice.—London Times.

A Handy Measure.

If you have a pint jug and wish to measure off half a pint with tolerable accuracy it is useless to try and do so by guessing when the jug is half full. A better way is to tilt the jug until the contents just reach to the upper end of the bottom of the vessel and just touch the lip at the lower end of the mouth. In this way the space in the pint jug is practically cut into two equal portions, each half representing the space taken by half a pint.

Observations of the Caddie.

The caddie's chastening influence on the conceit of players has numberless anecdotal examples. One of the best of these is the following:

"What sort of game does Mr. Jones play?"

"He canna play nane."

"I'm going out with him tomorrow. I suppose I shall beat him?"

"Na, ye will no'."—Windsor Magazine.

Wisdom.

"Do you notice that your son has really learned anything in college?"

"Yes. He has learned that my ideas are those of an old fogy and that he will be false to his trust if he did not do his best to bring me to a realization of my pitiable condition."—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Subtle Jab.

"This piece of lace on my dress is over fifty years old."

"It's beautiful! Did you make it yourself?"—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

He Remembered.

She—You brute! When I consented to marry you I can't think where my head was. He—On my shoulder, dear.—London Opinion.

THEIR MOTHER TONGUE.

As It Was Spoken by the Englishman and the American.

An American in London, living in a private hotel, inquired of an English acquaintance how it was that every one in the house immediately recognized his nationality. In "Vagabond Journeys" Mr. Percival Pollard records the conversation.

The Englishman looked at our American friend for a moment and then ventured this definite explanation:

"Oh, of course, don't you see, they would know you, you see, like a shot. I mean to say, you see, that it's quite odds on, don't you see, that you are, you see! Eh?"

The American chewed on this a little and then remarked, apropos of nothing:

"Say, ain't it a fine thing we speak the same language? Yes, sir! That's what keeps the two countries so close together—the language. Still, as I was saying, I can't make up my mind whether it's my feet or my language. I'd like to have a real heart to heart talk with you about some of these little details of the language that binds us together, tongues across the sea, as it were. Come and have lunch with me at the Cecil."

"Quite sorry! I just went and had a bone an hour ago."

"Beg pardon?"

"Oh, I mean to say, of course, don't you see, I had a grilled bone at the club."

"Well, there's another thing I'd like to talk to you about when you have time some day. That's the exact definition of the week end. I've noticed that when your lawyer or stockbroker, and so forth, says he's going away for the week end it means that he's leaving Thursday evening and not showing up again until Tuesday morning. There goes a boy from E-ton; I can tell him by his clothes."

"From where?"

"E-ton," repeated the Yankee. "Accents on the 'ton,' doesn't it?"

"No; don't you see, it's just Eton."

"Oh, rimes with 'meetin',' eh, dropping the 'g' carefully at the same time as the voice and otherwise concealing the alphabet as much as possible? Well, well!" and the American pulled up his horse. "Ain't it great we speak the same language?"

THE EMPEROR'S STAR.

It Simply Had to Be Put on the Cross on the Church Spire.

Emperor William is the busiest man in Germany. He revises or approves all decisions in public matters, supervises all art and architecture and lectures everybody. In illustration of the deference paid to his whims in even the smallest details, they tell in Berlin, writes Mr. Samuel G. Blythe in Everybody's Magazine, the story of the star above the cross on the spire of the Emperor William Memorial church.

Of course the kaiser insisted on revising the plans of the church. The architect brought the plans to him, and the kaiser scratched out what he did not like and made such additions as he fancied before he gave them the imperial O. K. The church was built. There was to be a big gilt cross on the spire, and it appeared in its proper place. But, much to the general astonishment, when the cross was put up a large, many pointed star was raised above it on a heavy rod. The Berliners could not understand the star. They inquired. The architect said the kaiser had added the star to the plans.

The plans were examined. Then it was found that in revising them the kaiser had let fall a drop of ink from his pen, which hit the paper just above the cross. The architect studied a long time over this blot of ink. There could be no appeal, no inquiries. He finally decided that the blot of ink signified a star above the cross, and he put the star there, making it to correspond as nearly as possible with the outline of the blot. The star is still there.

The First Hinge.

The first hinge was probably that of the oyster. The thorny oyster of the Pacific coast has its two shells joined together by a hinge as good as any found in any hardware shop of the country. There are other hinges found in nature, but that of the oyster reaches the highest perfection. We have made little advance upon this device in all of our years of patenting and inventing.—St. Nicholas.

An Expert.

"I never have any trouble with my gowns."

"How is that?"

"You see, my husband belongs to the fire department."

"Well?"

"And he can hook me up in forty-five seconds."—Washington Herald.

She Had.

"Have you any unmarried daughters, Mrs. De Willoughby?" asked the visitor.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Vanderbloom. My daughter Minnie was unmarried last week by Judge Cuttem," replied the lady.—Harper's.

A Query.

Fair Patron—The papers say you handle mail here by the ton. Postmaster—Yes, indeed. Fair Patron—Well, my fiance is going away for a couple of days. What kind of a rate will you give me per ton?—Woman's Home Companion.

Good For an Occasional Bouquet.

"He offers me a platonic friendship."

"Take it," advised her girl chum, "until something better comes along."—Louisville Courier-Journal.