

him; but he meant to mention two independent facts. If the crutches had been taken away, the man might still have remained where he was.

"While" is correctly used in the following sentence: "A pan of peas slid from her lap while she nervously pulled at the corner of her apron."

To say that "while" should never be used except in the sense of "during the time that," "at the same time that," or "as long as," would be going too far; but the word is often employed by writers who vaguely feel that some connective is needed, but who either do not know what they mean, or are too lazy to hunt up the word that exactly expresses their meaning. "While," like "as" and "how," is an overworked conjunction.

Use the conjunction which exactly expresses your meaning.

Chapter IX.

MISCELLANEOUS

Double Negatives.—In old English, double negatives abound; but the best modern usage condemns them.

I.

You don't catch me studying
Saturday for anybody.
He won't be chosen, I think.

He didn't eat any dinner, I
think.

II.

You *don't* catch me studying
Saturday for *nobody*.
He *won't* be chosen I *don't*
think.

He *didn't* eat any dinner, I
don't think.

If the order of words in the last two sentences as originally written be changed, — *e. g.*, "I don't think he won't be chosen," "I don't think he did n't eat any dinner," — the double negative becomes apparent.

I.

She had written but once.
If he had been my own brother,
I could have done but one thing.
The references in these letters
can be construed in but one way.
I have seen her but once.

II.

She had *never* written *but* once.
If he had been my own brother
I could *not* do *but* one thing.
The references in these letters
cannot be construed *but* in
one way.
I have *not* seen her *but* once.

"But" does so much work, and in so many ways, that in a given sentence its exact function may be obscure. In these examples, "but" is the equivalent of "only." Few, however, even of those who write "I have not seen her but once," would write "I have not seen her only once."

"Only" seems to bring out the double negative more plainly than "but."

Other examples of double negatives are —

I.

I remember only five novels.

I hardly believe it will rain.

Nor do they do anything but lament.

He crossed the threshold of his chamber, into which no one ever penetrated — any more than into the recesses of his heart.

He had no time or inclination (or, neither time nor inclination) to do the work required of him.

II.

I *don't* remember *only* five novels.

I *don't hardly* believe it will rain.

Nor do they do *nothing* but lament.

He crossed the threshold of his chamber, into which, *no* more than into the recesses of his heart, *no* one ever penetrated.

He had no time *nor* inclination to do the work required of him.

In the last example, "no" belongs with both "time" and "inclination." *Nor* doubles the negative, and is therefore incorrect.

I.

The best writers for children never use a condescending tone, which only irritates, or the tone which just escapes being condescending.

If "either" be inserted before "a condescending tone," it becomes apparent that "or," not *nor*, is the proper conjunction before "the tone."

I.

That did no good either.
That did n't do any good either.

II.

That did *no* good *neither*.

Neither at the end of a negative sentence used to be, but is not now, in good use. It has shared the fate of other

double negatives. "Either" at the end of a negative sentence is good colloquial English. Of the two forms given under I., the second is preferable to the first, because, like a line in Browning's "Before," —

Still one must n't be too much in earnest either, —

it is wholly in colloquial language.

Beware of destroying a negative by doubling it.

Can but and Cannot but. — These expressions, though often used interchangeably, differ in meaning.

If worst comes to worst, I can but die.

The fever is so violent that, without a miracle, he cannot but die.

"I can but die" means that I can only die, that all I can do is to die; "he cannot but die" means that he cannot help dying, that he cannot live.

"Can but," "could but," "cannot but," "could not but" are properly used in the following passages: —

"You can manage to climb over that wall?"

"I can but try."

"Well, I can but do my best for them," said Kate, with a sigh.

He will seem a fit man for the managers to run, if he can but persuade the managers to run him.

If the doctor could but have seen it!

Lucilla could act but according to her own nature.

You cannot but love her.

She could not but appreciate the readiness with which her desires were attended to.

Yet, at the same time, she could not but sigh at the thought of Mr. Cavendish.

"Can but" brings before the mind only one possibility; "cannot but" suggests two opposite courses, but affirms that in the case in hand only one of these is possible.

I.

With all your modesty, you cannot but realize that you are a very welcome guest.

"You cannot but realize that you are" means you cannot help realizing that you are, you cannot believe that you are not. "You *can but* realize that you are" means you can only realize, you cannot do more than realize, that you are. "Cannot but" is, therefore, preferable to *can but*.

I.

I cannot but feel that something is wrong.

I cannot help feeling that something is wrong.

He could not but speak.

He could not help speaking.

"He could not but speak" is equivalent to "He could not help speaking." *Help* in "He could not help but speak" is tautological.

Distinguish between CAN BUT and CANNOT BUT.

Additional Examples.— Under this head are placed examples similar to those given in the foregoing chapters. Some of them raise more than one question.

I.

The place is very near the house of Mr. Darcy's aunt, whom he visits every year, and with whom he is now staying.

When we had ourselves done eating, the knight called a waiter to him and bade him carry what was left to the watermen.

The highest flood level will probably be reached to-morrow.

II.

With all your modesty you *can but* realize that you are a very welcome guest.

II.

I cannot *help* but feel that something is wrong.

He could not *help* but speak.

II.

The place is very near the house of Mr. Darcy's aunt, whom he visits every year and where he is now stopping.

When we had done eating ourselves the knight called a waiter to him and bid him carry the remainder to the watermen.

The highest flood level will likely be attained to-morrow.

I.

Every time she heard a carriage coming, she thought it was his.

There are two women in the room,—one a mere girl, with fair hair and white face; the other a woman about thirty years old, with coarse features.

The choice can be made only by a comparison with similar characters in real life.

I am continually struck with the difference between our civilization and that of Europe, as regards taste in public buildings.

To my thinking, "The Recluse" is superior to "The Excursion."

From one hand still hung the French novel, the reading of which had been interrupted by my entrance.

The number of girls who keep up their education is as large as the number of boys, and in many places larger.

You feel as if everything were out of joint, and as if the world were going to the dogs.

It is difficult for an untrained person to distinguish between what he himself saw and what he was told by others, unless his attention is specially directed to the distinction.

There was a storm brewing, he said.

II.

Every time she heard a team coming, she thought it was his.

There are two women in the room. The one a mere girl with fair hair and white face; the other about thirty with coarse features.

The choice can be made alone by the analogy of similar characters in real life.

I am continually struck with the difference in our civilization from the European with regard to our taste in public buildings.

"The Recluse" is superior to my thinking than the "Excursion."

From one hand still hung pendent the French novel the perusal of which my advent had interrupted.

The number of girls who continue their education is as large, in many places larger, than that of the boys.

You feel as if everything were out of joint and that the world was going to the dogs.

It is difficult for an untrained person to distinguish between what they themselves saw and what they were told by others, unless their attention is specially directed to the distinction.

There was a storm brewing up, he said.

I.

When the *dénouement* comes, she tells him of her dislike.

After a good deal of bantering, a practice customary with horse-dealers, the horse was sold to the highest bidder.

I never saw more than a few at one time.

His poetry is excellent except when he tries to impress his readers with his love of nature.

A postal card mailed in Louisville in 1884 and addressed to a firm in Chicago reached that city in 1891.

With seeming reluctance, the doctor said that it was necessary for him to send a patient to London, that it was impossible for him to go with her himself, and that he should be thankful if George would consent to take charge of her.

Much as we admire his mental abilities, should we like to live with him?

Wordsworth's ideas about poetry were different from those of any of his predecessors.

It was impossible to raise him from the dead.

Our window looked directly on the piazza.

Wordsworth's two poems to "The Skylark" did not impress me so favorably as they do most people.

II.

When the final denouement arrives she tells him of her dislike.

After quite a good deal of bantering, a fact customary to horse-dealers, the horse was sold to the highest bidder.

I never saw but a few at one time.

His poetry is excellent without he tries to bring before men a love of nature.

A postal card mailed in Louisville in 1884, and addressed to parties in Chicago, reached that city in 1891.

The doctor told with seeming reluctance how it was necessary for him to send a patient to London, how impossible it was for him to go with her himself, and how thankful he would be if George would consent to take care of her.

As much as we admire his mental abilities, would we like to live with him?

Wordsworth held a different idea as to poetry than any of his predecessors.

It was impossible to resurrect him.

Our window looked directly on to the piazza.

Wordsworth's two poems to "The Skylark" did not impress me as favorably as it does most people.

I.

Then hearts beat as warmly as now, hate was fiercer and love stronger.

Between every two chapters of the book there is a digression.

Many call "The White Doe of Rylstone" one of Wordsworth's best poems; and I should agree with them if it were half as long as it is.

She believed that he was in love with her, and he was equally certain that she was in love with him.

The duke and his wife each assumed toward the other a secondary position.

He always had a warm corner behind the stove to sit in.

I do not think that I shall be able to stay long enough to take a degree.

A great fire was kindled, and tea was prepared and drunk.

How different it was from the weird and gloomy lake!

He will bewail his folly in choosing the vocation of a writer of history.

At this age, the practical and imaginative boy alike will discover that girls are not useless.

I take but little room.

The girls all stared at Juliza as she stood in the midst of them.

He succeeds as well as could be expected.

II.

Then hearts beat as warmly, hate was more fierce and love more strong than now.

Between every chapter of the book is a digression.

Many claim that the "White Doe of Rylstone" is one of Wordsworth's best poems, and I would agree with them if it were half as long.

She believed that he was in love with her, and he was equally certain that she was in love with himself.

The duke and his wife mutually assumed to each other a secondary position.

He always had a warm corner to sit in back of the stove.

I do not think that I will be able to stay long enough to take a degree or not.

A great fire was kindled and tea was prepared and drank.

How different it was to the weird and gloomy lake!

He will bewail his folly in choosing the avocation of a writer of history.

At this age the practical and imaginative boy alike will discover that girls are not useless.

I don't take but little room.

The girls all stared at Juliza as she stood in their midst.

He succeeds as well as he could be expected to.

I.

A despatch from New York says that the steamer "Scandinavia" came into collision with the "Thiorva."

This incident is revealed to us in its simplicity, with just the number of accessory circumstances necessary to accomplish the poet's purpose.

He was never easy unless he was pouring his medicines into his patient every few hours.

While they were staying there, it happened that Mrs. Gardner wanted to visit Mr. Darcy's estate.

Little did Darcy think that of those present the very one who, he thought, most deserved to be slighted, would one day be his bride.

The sailors laid the blame on him who had killed the albatross, and they hung the bird round his neck.

In the gathering were Mr. Jones and the Honorable Mr. Smith.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Nicholas became very much attached to Louis, and would often send for him.

The professor and the instructor on the sofa aired afresh their well-known views.

He was a human being.

Neither of the two was a very poetical personage.

II.

A cablegram from New York states that the steamer Scandinavia collided with the Thiorva.

This incident is revealed to us in its simplicity, with just the exact amount of accessory circumstances as are necessary to accomplish the poet's purpose.

He was never easy without he was pouring his medicines into his patient every few hours.

It happened as they were stopping there that Mrs. Gardner wanted to visit Mr. Darcy's estate.

Little did Darcy think that the very one of those present, whom he thought most deserved to be slighted, would one day be his bride.

The sailors laid the blame on the one who had killed the albatross and hung the bird around his neck.

Among the gathering were Mr. Jones and Hon. Smith.

There shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Nicholas became very attached to, and would often send for, Louis.

The professor and instructor on the sofa aired afresh their well-known views.

He was an human being.

Neither of the two were very poetical personages.

I.

Lydgate's marriage was of that peculiarly exasperating kind which permits no outside sympathy.

I shall be very glad to have you accept this invitation, and shall (or, will) do all I can to entertain you.

In the coming presidential election, there is no doubt but that the tariff will (or, the tariff will, no doubt,) play a leading part.

The police were able to discover where it had been placed.

When the crisis was over, she rose calmly and lighted her candle.

I found her lying on her back.

The duty of the society should be to watch for and oppose superfluous organizations.

His rage had got the better of his reason.

It doesn't make much difference whom we nominate.

She was not quite so old or so stiff as he.

I have yet to hear some theme which defines narrative by making distinctions that are real differences.

When he went in bathing, he tied a stick to his glasses, to float them when he dived.

It is distinguished by the enormous space given to reports of racing.

II.

Lydgate's union was of that peculiarly exasperating kind that permitted of no outside sympathy.

I will be very glad to have you accept this invitation and shall do all I can to entertain you.

In the coming presidential election there is no doubt but what the tariff will play a leading part.

The police were able to locate where it had been placed.

When the crisis was over she rose up calmly and lit her candle.

I found her laying on her back.

The duty of the society should be to watch for and antagonize superfluous organizations.

His rage had gotten the better of his reason.

It don't make much difference whom we nominate.

She was not quite so old nor stiff as he.

I have yet to hear some differentiating theme which shall define narrative.

He tied a stick to his glasses, when he went bathing, to float them when he dove.

It is distinguished by the enormity of space accorded to reports of racing.

I.

The United States can obtain all the coffee they want from Brazil and other countries with which they have reciprocal relations.

The author of "Mademoiselle Ixe" has already proved to the world how well she can handle drawing-room gossip.

He sent directions that the bells of the three nearest parish churches should be rung (or, directions to have the bells . . . rung).

Her reception was successful.

"It's a bad pair of scissors (or, They're bad scissors)," replied Nell, hurrying them into a drawer.

He saw a slim figure moving back and forth on the other side of the street.

They had to cut off the rest of his arm.

It would have been worth while for the Mexicans to make almost any effort in order to cut off or embarrass the formidable reinforcement.

Simply to make suggestions is to shoot blindly into the air.

A fatal fall from an electric car.

A very little strength and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point, — not a perfect point either.

II.

The United States can obtain all the coffee she wants from Brazil and other countries with whom she has reciprocal relations.

The authoress of "Mademoiselle Ixe" has already proven to the world how deft and skilful is her manipulation of drawing-room gossip.

He sent directions that the bells of the three nearest parish churches should be rang.

Her reception was a success.

"It's a bad scissors," replied Nell, hurrying them into a drawer.

He saw a slim shape going back and forth on the street's other side.

They had to take the balance of his arm off.

It would have been worth while for the Mexicans to have made almost any effort to have cut off or embarrassed the formidable reinforcement.

To simply make suggestions is to shoot blindly into the air.

A fatal fall off of an electric.

A very little strength and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point, — not a perfect point neither.

I.

The garrison was besieged, and was making a brave defence.

Some time after this an event occurred which led most people to Dane's way of thinking.

He was made commander of almost all of the English forces.

To the graduate, however strongly prepossessed, a few doubts occur.

Boston Common invites everybody to avail himself of its delightful walks.

She had forgotten all about the baby's being asleep at her side.

The duty will amount to a million a year.

I would carry you up the mountain if it were four hundred feet high.

Marianne has the idea fixed in her mind that nobody can love more than once in his life.

His aim will be the enforcement of the laws against every one who is found violating them.

The inhabitants use upon every occasion a floating bridge, which has been built across the mouth of the harbor.

Max is a clever dog.

The duke suspects that he is a herald for this occasion only.

Shelley and Byron were diametrically opposed to Wordsworth, and differed in many respects from each other.

II.

The garrison were besieged and making a brave defence.

Some time after this an event transpired which led most people to Dane's way of thinking.

He was made commander of most all the English forces.

To the graduate, however favorably prejudiced a few doubts arise.

Boston Common invites everybody to avail of its delightful walks.

She had forgotten all about the baby being asleep at her side.

The duty will aggregate a million a year.

I would carry you up the mountain if it was four hundred feet high.

Marianne has the idea fixed in her mind that nobody can love but once in their lives.

His aim will be the enforcement of the laws against whomsoever is found violating them.

The inhabitants patronize upon every occasion a floating bridge which has been built across the harbor's mouth.

Max is a clever canine.

The duke suspects that he is not a herald except for this occasion only.

Shelley and Byron were both very opposite from Wordsworth and they also have many points of difference between each other.

I.

"Fish!" they shouted, in musical voices which were far from being in accord with the occasional toots of their horns.

When the emergency came she was not equal to it, as she expected to be.

When the emergency came she was not so well prepared for it as she expected to be.

He had thought that the fact that the next day would be Sunday would neutralize any harm he could be supposed to have done.

No other game is so popular as base ball.

I had all the time been imagining that these were like the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

She records facts which masculine writers would ignore, and which they have ignored.

II.

They shouted "fish" in musical voices, which discorded harshly with the occasional toots of their horns.

When the emergency came she was not as equal to it as she expected to be.

He had thought that the fact of to-morrow being Sunday would neutralize any harm he could have been supposed to have done.

No other game is so popular with the people as base ball.

I had all the time been picturing to myself that these ones were like the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

She records facts that masculine writers would and have ignored.

Book II.

WORDS TO CHOOSE

Chapter I.

A WORKING VOCABULARY

OTHER things being equal, it is obvious that the writer who has most words to choose from is most likely to find in his assortment just the word which he needs at a given moment. It is therefore worth while for a young writer to keep his ears open while conversation is going on about him, and his eyes open while he is reading, and to note and remember every word that is new to him in itself or in the meaning given to it. He may thus, while avoiding vulgarisms on the one hand and high-flown expressions on the other, enrich his diction from the racy speech of plain people and the best utterances of great authors, — the two sources of what is most alive in language. If he is a student of other tongues, whether ancient or modern, he has at hand a third means of adding to his stock of English. "Translation," as Rufus Choate is reported to have said, "should be pursued to bring to mind and to employ all the words you already own, and to tax and torment invention and discovery and the very deepest memory for additional, rich, and admirably expressive words."

It would, of course, be absurd for a boy to have the desirableness of enlarging his vocabulary constantly on his mind; but if he avails himself of all his opportunities, in the school-room or out of it, he will be surprised to find how rapidly his vocabulary grows.