

from "Verses to reckon with:
The Fun-damentals of Mathematics"
by Sidney R. Levine

The world is rife with problems,
That beg for sharp solution.
Inflation, war, to name a few,
Disease and air pollution.

Now wouldn't we all be happy if,
--in fact, we'd be ecstatic--
If all our woes were subject to
Solutions mathematic.

#1

One Dress Short

Two mothers, each with her daughter,
Went out on a shopping spree;
Each of them bought a dress she liked
Yet all they bought were three!

No! There's no discrepancy here!
I've told my tale--no lies!
So give my story some earnest thought
And you'll find a wee surprise.

Answer: A grandmother, mother, and daughter went shopping
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#2

Archeo-logical Fallacy

On Sumatra isle, a Java man
Was dug up and put together;
And in Egypt land, some scientists found
A throne made all of leather.

More recently some coins were found
That bore the date 50 B. C.
One statement is clearly false:
Can you spot the fallacy?

Answer: Since B.C. means Before the Christian Era (or Before the Common Era), the letters B.C. could not conceivably appear on any coin.

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#3

No Change

Your pocket's filled with coins and coins
They total \$1.09.
Yet isn't it passing strange
You cannot change a dime?

No! No matter how you try
Can you change a dollar, or half;
Or a quarter, or even a nickel. Oh my!
What coins do you actually have?

Answer: One half dollar, 1 quarter, 3 dimes, and 4 pennies.

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#4

A Timely Wage

The chores were done so very well
By Mary and Marlene

That father a reward bestowed
To one a dime to one fifteen.
Avoid much computation would merely lead astray!
Please tell the time it was when Dad
Gave both the girls their pay.

Answer: A quarter to two.

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This remarkable 20th century
With all its works and woes
In just about a score of years
Will surely reach its close.

So here is what I'd like to query:

When that year 2000 does burst

Will it be the last year of the 20th century
Or the first of the twenty-first?

Answer: The year 2000 is the last year of the 20th century. Since 100 years of the first century must have included the year 100 the 100 years of the 20th century must run from 1901 through and including the year 2000.

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Thanks Bob

#6 Your Apple or Mine?

Two boys were gathering apples and
Neither worked too long
They liked to barter with each other
So listen to their song

If you'll but give me one of yours
I'll have as many as you.

Uh uh replied his friend. Perhaps!
But that's not what I'll do.
But if you to me one apple gave
I'll be overcome with joy
For twice your apples then I'd have.

How many had each boy?

Answer:

The first boy had 5 apples and the second boy had 7 apples.

Let x equal the number of apples the first boy had.
Let y equal the number of apples the second boy had.
Then: $x + 1 = 3y$ and $y = 2(x - 1)$

Solve the first equation for y :

$$y = 3x + 2$$

And substitute into the second equation:

$X + 2 + 1 = 3D 2x - 2$
 $X = 3D 5$
 $Y = 3D 5 + 2$ or $y = 3D 7$
.....

#7 Measure to Scale

To solve a problem in all dispatch
Have all the facts at hand.
And here is an example which
Will help you understand.

If a butcher's height is five foot six
And his eyes are bluish gray
And if he wears a size ten shoe
What does that butcher weigh?

Answer: Meat
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#8 Progressive Thinking

Let' s exercise our brain power in
A little thinking session:
Numbers in a series call
For logical progression.

In the series: 2, 4, 6, and 8,
The progression is quite clear.
But take the series 1, 3, 6, 10,
What number should next appear?

Answer: The next number in the series is 15. In each progression, the interval increases by one: the difference between the first two numbers of the series is 2; the difference between the second and third numbers is 3; between the third and fourth numbers, 4. It follows that the difference between the fourth and fifth numbers is 5; $10 + 5 = 15$.

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#9 Hi-ho the Merry O!

The farmer in the dell

Was singing merrily.
Working in the hayfield where
The wind was blowing free.

The autumn scene was picturesque,
The hay stacked row on row.
The farmer worked from early dawn
Until the sun sank low.

He came to $1\frac{1}{4}$ haystacks,
And nearby, $1\frac{1}{4}$ again.
He added them together, so
What was the total then?

Answer: 1 haystack. The farmer added them physically, thus making one large haystack out of the two smaller ones.

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10 The Age of a Sage
Phlebitis the Greek philosopher
Thus spoke one day to his friend:
Every man sure wants to live
No one seeks his end.

Phleb lived from May 1 thirty-five B.C.
To same date in A.D. thirty-five.
How long did that philosopher Phlebitis stay alive?

Answer: Phlebitis was 69 years old when he died. He was one year old in 34 B.C. two years in 33 B.C and 34 years old in the 1 B.C.
In the following year 1 A.D. Phlebitis was 35, in 2 A.D. he was 36 and in 35 A.D. when he died the sage was 69 years old.

#11 Two by Four
Six coins is all that you will need
This problem to defuse.
Just form two rows of four coins each
But watch out there's a ruse!

Don't sigh and say impossible!
Just try it one time more.
And soon you'll cry Oh! Why didn't I

Think of that before!=94

Answer: Place one coin on top of another at the point of intersection

Diagram didn't go through...but just draw three circles down like numbering 1 2 3 and then at #3 draw a circle on top of it and then draw 2 more to the right.
thus solution. (Looks like letter L when finished.)

2 coins

Making four coins in the horizontal row and four coins in the vertical

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#12 A Matched Equation

A man with superior qualities
Could be called a matchless guy;
To one who has no matches,
The term might also apply.

Here's a match-ematical equation which
Is clearly falsified.
Make it true by moving
One match to the other side.

Answer: Move the match as indicated in the diagram. The resulting equation is $1 = 1$

Draw the number 1 to the left. Then place an equal sign to the right of that.
To the right of the equal sign, draw the V part of a division (square root) sign or diagram.
Next, take the 1 on the far left, copy it, and place it on top right of the division V (square root sign) to display the completed division diagram.

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#13 Rope Ladder

The night was bright and balmy,
The sea was at low tide.
The yacht, it lay at anchor with

A rope ladder on its side.
 The rungs of that ladder were
 A full foot apart, you see:
 And the ladder had nine rungs which showed
 Above the shimm'ring sea.
 The tide rose 6" per hour, and
 The question I propose:
 How long until the top rung alone
 Above the water shows?
 Answer: The top rung alone will never show above the water level,
 since the boat rises with the tide.

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#14 Horsey

All the King's horses—
 They numbered ten;
 Sought shelter one night,
 At a roadside den.
 A problem arose:
 Of stalls, there were nine.
 No two could share one
 Without whinny or whine.
 With pencil and paper,
 Are you able to show
 How to get ten horses
 In nine stalls in a row?

Answer: Draw 9 boxes connected in a row (stalls) and place one of these letters in a box:

TEN HORSES ; thus, ten horses in 9 stalls!

T E N H O R S E S

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#15 The Funny Pages

It's black and white and read all over,
 And filled with joy and with despair;
 You see it on plane, on bus, on train,
 And even at home in your easy chair.

It tells me just what's going on,
My greatest source of news.
There are 24 full pages in
The newspaper that I use.
But today, I found a flaw—
Page five went up the flue!
If this is so, what other pages
Must be missing, too?

Answer: Pages 6, 19, and 20

Pages 5 and 20 are on the same printed sheet. Page 6 is on the reverse side of 5.
Page 19 is on the reverse side of 20.