

FIND THE VALUE OF X.

John Stanton, a conductor on the San Guido and California Southern Railroad, was an exceedingly methodical man, and consequently invaluable to the road. It was impossible to delay him. He worked like a machine.

The San Guido and California Southern Railroad was a slow and easy single-track road, operated chiefly for fruit-growers. It extended about 175 miles southward from San Guido to Jasper city. Between these terminal points there were but two stopping places—a flag station and a town called New Babylon.

Two trains a day were run, one from each end of the line; and usually they met at New Babylon. The train from Jasper City ran somewhat slower than the other, as it was apt to have a heavier load. It commonly stopped for about an hour at New Babylon for the purpose of loading with fruit and waiting for an hour to load one car with a few boxes of oranges and peaches, but there was always a certain amount of loafing and joking to be done, and the other train to wait for.

The occasional passenger whose fortune it might be to travel from Jasper City to San Guido always chafed at being obliged to waste so much time in listening to jokes on Jack or Bill, and declared, justly, that a switch ought to have been put where the trains would regularly meet.

To this it was answered that the train had to stop half an hour anyway, and they might as well wait another half hour and take things easy, instead of being in such a tearing hurry. As complaints were few a third switch was never put in.

The down-train, as the one from San Guido to Jasper City was called, seldom carried more than a passenger or two, and the scanty mail. Sometimes it stopped at the flag station and switched off to let the other train pass there; but this happened only when the operator at the flag station got word from New Babylon that the other train had not made a delay there. In this unusual case, the train from San Guido waited at the flag station for a long time.

On the particular morning of which I speak John Stanton's train started from the little station at San Guido at exactly 9 o'clock, and pulled its way steadily southward passing the scrawny telegraph poles or twisted mountain pine at the rate of thirty miles an hour. The flag station was reached in about two hours.

John was passing through the train and did not look for the flag station, but reached the rear platform. When he did look he saw that the flag was out, and a young lady was standing on the station platform. The train was nearly past the station, and as it had not slackened speed, John knew that the engineer had not noticed the signal. He pulled the bell-cord, and the train came to a standstill a few rods beyond the station.

Then Stanton ran back, politely took the young lady's hand-bag, and escorted her to the train, waving his hand to the engineer when she was well up the steps, and swinging up behind her as the train glided forward.

Following her into the car he showed her a seat on the shady side, and out of the blazing California sun. She looked dubiously from the seat, which was sprinkled with alkali dust, to her neat black dress, and then sat down. John turned away.

"Conductor," she said, John turned back.

"The station-master told me to tell you No. 27 had passed New Babylon. He said you would know what that meant."

"Well," said John, "seems to me that's a mighty loose jointed way of running a railroad! Wonder why he didn't tell me himself?"

"He's had an accident, and couldn't," she said. "The doctor's with him. I can't tell you all the right now."

"Oh, yes, I guess it's all right," said he. He saw no reason why he should alarm the young lady. By the way of conversation while she looked for her ticket he asked, "Are you the new school-teacher they're going to have down at Jasper City?"

"Yes," she answered. "Why?"

"Oh," rejoined John, "I thought you looked like a Yankee. Drove over from San Antonio?"

"Yes."

She handed him her ticket, and John retired to the baggage-car.

There he sat down on an orange-box and began to think over the situation. The two trains were steadily running toward each other on the same track. How long before they would meet?

He knew that the up-train usually made about twenty-eight miles an hour, and that they started at the same time. How was he to tell where they would meet?

Suddenly a bright idea illuminated his face. He produced a note book and lead pencil, and wrote:

Let x equal the number of hours before we meet. Then he stopped and thought. It was a good many years since he had studied algebra, and he had had no occasion to use it since he left school.

For a long time he pondered, but could not go on. He pushed his fingers through his hair and twiddled his pencil nervously.

Then he thought, "The school-ma'am'll know!" and he rose and walked decisively toward the passenger-car.

Going directly to the teacher's seat he showed her what he had written and stated the conditions of the problem, asking her if she could make an equation. She took the book, and after a moment's reflection wrote:

30 plus 28 equals rate of approach in miles per hour. Therefore (30 plus 28) x equals no. of miles in x hours.

"Oh, I see," said John. "Can you finish it now?" she asked, offering him the book and pencil.

"I guess so," he replied, and wrote: Hence (30 plus 28) x equals 174 miles, x equals 3 miles.

"That's it," she said, "but why have you written 'we' in the first line?"

"Because that's what it means," answered John, taking out his watch. "You see, we started from San Guido at nine o'clock, and they passed the switch at New Babylon, and now we'll meet at three hours from nine o'clock, which is twelve. If we don't stop," he added as an after-thought.

"Why didn't you wait back there?" she asked, her eyes beginning to open as she grasped the situation.

"Well, I didn't get word in time, you know, he rejoined. "The regular rule is

to pass at New Babylon. No good in breaking rules."

"And there's no other switch?"

"None."

"What time is it now?" she asked, excitedly.

"Eleven forty-one."

"Well, why don't you stop the train now?" she asked, anxiously, catching his sleeve.

"Why, there's lots of time," he replied, thoughtfully, rubbing his watch crystal with his thumb. "There's nineteen minutes."

"But you may be wrong!" she said, beginning to rise and talk loud. "Maybe the other train has been going faster than twenty-eight miles an hour. Perhaps you lost time stopping for me. Perhaps—"

John laid his hand restrainingly on her sleeve, glancing at the car as he did so. Following his glance, she saw she was beginning to attract the attention of the other two passengers, one a placid Chinaman and the other a sun-browned prospector. Mabel, but for the first time in her young life she turned away her baby-face from me, in evident dislike. This was a repulse, it anything, more cruel than my wife's.

We left our humble home to live in a great mansion, surrounded by every luxury. But it was a period of the greatest misery my life has ever known.

We were, indeed, husband and wife in name only, and Mary's weary indifference for me was crushing me down, and deadening every better feeling of my nature. I could see that she was not happy either, but she had her wish, but I could not alter matters now.

At length wearied of every endeavor to approach her heart, I resolved upon a desperate expedient—to try what absence would do. She gladly assented.

"The separation might as well be final, as far as I can see," she said.

"Ah, do not say that!" I exclaimed, my heart chilling with dismay. "Surely you have everything you can desire?"

"Yes. I know you are very generous, but—but I can hardly understand myself. It has all come too late—too late to efface the memory of my past misery and privation."

I took a house for her in the country, a place which she had always loved, and where she had many friends.

During my negotiations, feeling the necessity of advice and sympathy, I called upon my oldest and dearest friend, Robert Carson, who was now a prosperous lawyer, but I knew his heart was in the right place.

"Well," he said, bluntly, when I had told my tale, "you can't get on with Mrs. Vincent? You want to separate for a time? You want our firm to do business between you? Is that it? Life's too short for sentiment."

I rose, hurt and indignant, but suddenly remembered the terms of my bargain. I had forfeited the love of all men and of all women; and, turn which way I might I could hope to find sympathy or affection nowhere.

A new existence now began for me: an existence without friends, in the heart of the metropolis; and, even for the wealthy, that is the greatest solitude of all, to be alone in the midst of a multitude.

I lay prostrated on my bed of sickness. I had the best advice in the city, for money was now no object to me; but I think my disorder puzzled the physicians. They often are puzzled, only it is unprofessional to admit it, for then sensible people would believe in them less than they do, and that is needless.

My nerves were completely shattered. Every bone in my body ached and pained, and tortured me. At times I preserved a moody, miserable silence; while at others I raved and wandered in my mind, until it took four strong arms to hold me down. But there was no touch of love in them else would have quieted me far more easily.

Every comfort that money could procure was mine, but that which I now so bitterly knew to be beyond all price was no longer for me, and the words of my wife's song returned to me with redoubled meaning.

One day the doctor, finding me in one of my gloomy and hopeless moods, asked: "Have you no one who would come to you?"

He seemed at last to understand my real needs.

"I have no one."

"You have a wife?"

"Yes. I have written to her. But why should she come? She does not love me," I moaned hopelessly.

He turned away indifferently, and left the room shrugging his shoulders, as though this were one of those problems the solution of which did not enter into his province.

That night as I lay alone (for my paid attendants gave me no more attention than they were obliged to) the elderly gentleman appeared to me again, and seated himself by my bedside.

"Well, are you tired?" he said, with a heartless laugh; indeed, how should any member of his firm have a heart? "Are you weary of your altered conditions already? Do you repent your bargain? You are as rich as Rothschild, what can any man want more? Are you anxious to have back this love that you esteem so precious?"

"I was about to eagerly cry 'Yes,' but he said, 'Remember that means poverty,' and I betwought me it meant privation again for Mary. So I rose up, and shouted 'No!' with all my strength; and the nurses rushed in to hold me down, for they could not see that I had a visitor.

I then fell into a deep slumber; and when I awoke I saw a letter, with a narrow black border, lying on my counterpane. With trembling fingers I opened it, for I recognized my wife's handwriting. It had neither beginning nor ending. It was a cold, brief epistle of only three lines:

My uncle has just died, leaving me all his fortune, so you need not send me any more money. MARY.

As I fell back upon my pillow after reading these lines, a strange sense of peace and gladness fell over me. Mentally I called to the elderly gentleman, and for the third time he appeared to me.

"Well, what do you want now?" he said, in an irritable tone; he could feel he had been playing a losing game.

"I want this horrible spell taken from me."

"I am afraid you have compelled us to remove it," the representative of Mephistopheles & Co., Limited, answered. "You have done us, after all. You entered into the bargain from pure selfishness, and that does not suit our book."

That was the last I saw or heard of the elderly gentleman. I dropped into another heavy sleep, from which I was awak-

ened by the opening of my door. It was Mary.

"Oh, my love!" she cried, throwing herself down by the side of my bed, and flinging her arms around me. "I've only just heard that you were ill. Your letter most unaccountably miscarried. Oh, what must you have thought of me to keep away from you at such a time? I have been mad, I think; but I do love you more than words can tell."

"Ah, you don't know what it means to me to hear you say that. Remember, dear, I have no money now. The fortune that came so strangely has as strangely gone. But I will work for myself; I will never be a burden upon your fortune."

Mary stopped my further utterance by a kiss. In a very few days her tender care brought me back to perfect health. And I never had, and never want to have, any further dealings with the firm of Mephistopheles and Co., Limited.

TOADSTOOLS AND MUSHROOMS.

W. Hamilton Gibson, the Artist-Writer, Talks About Them.

Walking in the woods, recently, with a country friend, we were discussing this "toadstool" topic, when we came upon a cluster of fungi at the base of a tree trunk, their broad expanded tops apparently up-holed in fawn-colored, undressed kid, their under surfaces being stuffed and tufted in pale greenish hue.

"What would you call these?" I inquired. "These are toadstools, unmistakably," was his reply.

"Well, toadstools or not, you see there about five pounds of delicious vegetable meat, for it is the common species of edible Boletus—Boletus edulis."

A few moments later we paused before a beautiful specimen, lifting its parasol of pure white above the black leaf mould.

"And what is this?" I inquired.

"I would certainly call that a mushroom," was his instant reply.

This mushroom proved to be a fine, tempting specimen of the Agaricus Amanita bulbosa, the deadliest of all the mushrooms, and one of the most violent and fatal of all known vegetable poisons, whose attractive graces and insidious wiles are doubtless continually responsible for those numerous fatalities usually dismissed with the epithet, "Died from eating toadstools in mistake for mushrooms."

Nor are the other popular traditions and tests worthy of any more consideration; tests, for instance, such as the following: "Pleasant taste and odor; boiling with a silver spoon, the staining of the silver indicating danger; peeling of the cap; change of color in fracture," etc.

I once knew an aged dame who was a village oracle on this as well as other topics, and who ate and dispensed toadstools on the above rules. Strange to say, she lived to a good old age, and no increased mortality chanced as a result of her generosity.

How are these popular notions sustained by the facts?

Many, indeed a majority of the most delicious species will not "peel" at all; others change color, turning blue or green or tawny almost instantly on being broken, while the most deadly Amanita peels with a certain degree of accommodation which would at once settle its claim as a "mushroom," and moreover, to many, an inviting odor and a pleasant taste when raw, and when cooked giving no token of its fatal resources until from six to eight hours after being eaten, when its unfortunate victim is usually past hope—absolutely so, in the absence of the proper medical treatment; in the administration of atropine in hypodermic injection in 1-60 grain doses, this deadly drug having been only recently discovered to be an effective antidote to the amantine, the poisonous principle of the Amanita fungus.

Tennyson and His Illustrators.

Tennyson exercised no direct guidance over his illustrators and he must frequently have been astonished at their interpretation of his ideas. In the poem of "The Lady of Shalott," for example, the lady's hair is never mentioned. Holman Hunt, however, represents her with flying masses of crimped hair spreading over her like a veil. "My dear Hunt," said Tennyson, when he first saw this illustration—we quote from "Tennyson and His Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators"—"I never said that the young woman's hair was flying all over the shop." "No," said Hunt, "but you never said it wasn't," and after a time the poet came to be wholly reconciled to the design. He never quite forgave the same artist, however, for giving King Cophetua a long flight of steps to descend to meet the Beggar Maid. "I never said," he complained, "that there were a lot of steps; I only meant one or two." "Well, but," retorted Hunt, "the flight of steps doesn't contradict your account; you merely said, 'In robe and crown the king stepped down.'" But Tennyson was not to be appeased, and kept on declaring that he never meant more than two steps at the outside.

In Holland the peasant girl who is without a beau at fair time hires a young man for the occasion. As good dancers command a high price, two maidens sometimes club together to employ the same swain.

BORN.

Truro, Aug. 10, to the wife of A. B. Purdy, a son.

Truro, Aug. 11, to the wife of James Spears, a son.

Alma, Aug. 7, to the wife of John A. Douglas, a son.

Pictou, Aug. 9, to the wife of W. G. Blair, a daughter.

Chester, Aug. 9, to the wife of L. G. Blair, a daughter.

Halifax, Aug. 6, to the wife of John H. Betram, a son.

Lower Laing, N. S., to the wife of D. Graham, a son.

Halifax, Aug. 9, to the wife of Robert Theakston, a son.

Halifax, Aug. 6, to the wife of G. H. Bridge, two sons.

Kingston, Aug. 10, to the wife of W. W. Patterson, a son.

Salem, Aug. 11, to the wife of Bismark Steeves, a daughter.

Hawkesbury, Aug. 7, to the wife of W. M. Tufts, a daughter.

Amherst, July 30, to the wife of Aaron Palmer, a daughter.

Digby, Aug. 8, to the wife of A. B. Strickland, a daughter.

Windsor, Aug. 3, to the wife of D. N. Slack, a daughter.

Falmouth, Aug. 8, to the wife of Edward Lunn, a daughter.

St. John, Aug. 14, to the wife of W. A. Simonds, a daughter.

St. John, Aug. 13, to the wife of J. M. Perry, a daughter.

Hillsboro, Aug. 11, to the wife of Isaiah B. Steeves, a daughter.

Hantsport, Aug. 2, to the wife of Isaac Crombie, a daughter.

Parishboro, Aug. 2, to the wife of Beverly Robinson, a daughter.

Parishboro, Aug. 8, to the wife of Eurias Willagar, a daughter.

New Glasgow, July 30, to the wife of Robert Murray, a daughter.

Halifax, Aug. 9, to the wife of John R. Forbes, a daughter.

Grand Falls, Aug. 7, to the wife of John R. Graham, a daughter.

Campbellton, Aug. 3, to the wife of Charles Kennedy, a son.

Forest Glen, N. S., Aug. 5, to the wife of Edson Ryan, a son.

Murray Road, N. S., Aug. 2, to the wife of M. E. Murray, a son.

Jacksonville, Aug. 1, to the wife of Ernest Puddington, a daughter.

Maitland, N. S., Aug. 8, to the wife of Duncan Cameron, a son.

New Glasgow, Aug. 7, to the wife of Henry Skinner, a daughter.

Alma, Aug. 23, to the wife of Captain William Cleveland, a son.

Lawrencetown, Aug. 1, to the wife of J. A. White, a daughter.

Yarmouth, Aug. 5, to the wife of Councillor B. B. Law, a daughter.

Lockeport, Aug. 8, to the wife of T. C. Lockwood, a daughter.

Bridgeport, N. S., July 27, to the wife of Rev. R. S. Stevens, a son.

New Germany, N. S., July 25, to the wife of J. H. McClelland, a son.

St. John, Aug. 15, to the wife of Captain A. H. Nobles, a daughter.

Cariboo River, Aug. 8, to the wife of Alexander Roberts, a daughter.

Fredericton, Aug. 3, to the wife of James Clifford Roberts, a daughter.

New Glasgow, Aug. 6, to the wife of Henry Toward, Jr., a daughter.

Parishboro, Aug. 8, to the wife of Captain C. A. Morrison, a daughter.

New Glasgow, Aug. 5, to the wife of T. Frederick J. Armstrong, a daughter.

Sussex, by Rev. E. J. Grant, James Orr to Josie M. Watson.

Woodstock, by Rev. A. F. Baker, Harry Pickard to Ada Clowes.

St. John, Aug. 7, by Rev. T. Casey, James Clarkin to Bertha Dunson.

Woodstock, by Rev. A. F. Baker, John T. Ritchie to Bertha Prosser.

St. John, Aug. 7, by Rev. Dr. Carey, Stephen Logan to Gladie Doucay.

St. John, Aug. 8, by Rev. J. E. Teasdale, Isaac Ray to Adeline Lockhart.

Pugwash, Aug. 8, by Rev. J. C. MacKenzie, John Grue to Maria Perrin.

Chatham, Aug. 8, by Rev. N. MacKay, Robert McEwen to Alice Kerr.

Chester, Aug. 1, by Rev. H. N. Parry, Creighton Brown to Sophie Erins.

St. Stephen, Aug. 1, by Rev. Thomas Allen, Ernest Graham to Emma Dyer.

Chatham, Aug. 4, by Rev. N. MacKay, John McKenzie to Maud Trevors.

Annapolis, Aug. 2, by Rev. J. C. White, Henry L. Rees to Bessie M. Spurr.

Yarmouth, Aug. 15, by Rev. Mr. Goucher, Walter Laing to Annie Dodge.

Quispamsis, July 30, by Rev. D. Fraser, E. T. A. Laver to Margaret Duncan.

St. John, Aug. 14, by Rev. Dr. Bennett, Samuel Walker to Elizabeth Smyth.

Halifax, Aug. 8, by Rev. Mr. Mathews, Beverly Coates to Jennie Cummings.

Nashwaak, Aug. 8, by Rev. J. Henderson, Jeremiah Staples to Sarah Smith.

Gibson, Aug. 7, by Rev. F. D. Davidson, Thomas Snider to Gertrude Hartgrove.

St. Stephen, July 30, by Rev. Mr. Newham, Thomas Carson to Etta May Gould.

Sackville, Aug. 8, by Rev. W. Harrison, William E. W. Moore to Edith Sears.

St. John, Aug. 15, by Rev. Father Casey, Thomas F. Foley to Annie Fitzgerald.

Halifax, Aug. 15, by Rev. Dr. Partridge, David Johnson to Laura Mary Tracey.

Yarmouth, Aug. 8, by Rev. E. G. Goucher, Charles S. Churchill to Melissa Battis.

Acton, N. B., Aug. 6, by Rev. J. A. McLean, James J. Moody to Martha E. Lyons.

Dartmouth, Aug. 2, by Rev. T. Stewart, Alexander Ross to Rachael A. Tait.

Kings, Aug. 8, by Rev. Neil McLaughlin, Samuel Silvester to Mary M. Howland.

Long Reach, Aug. 8, by Rev. E. M. Saunders, Frank A. Good to Mary E. Gilmor.

St. John, Aug. 2, by Rev. J. W. McMillan, Rufus B. Hoar to Elizabeth C. Dalzell.

Blissfield, Aug. 1, by Rev. James Porter, Maxey M. Stewart to Charlotte L. H. Betts.

Middleton, Aug. 8, by Rev. E. E. Locke, Herbert L. Elliott to Laura May Delahay.

Bridgewater, Aug. 8, by Rev. R. S. Stevens, John A. Cummings to Lottie J. Veinot.

Newport, N. S., Aug. 6, by Rev. J. W. Falconer, Richard G. Gough to Gertrude Gale.

Amherst, Aug. 7, by Rev. J. H. McDonald, Leonard Canning to Anna Y. McDonald.

Westville, N. S., Aug. 2, by Rev. Thomas D. Stewart, Angus Cameron to Annie Gray.

Fredericton, Aug. 8, by Rev. E. M. Saunders, Frank A. Good to Mary E. Gilmor.

Greenfield, Aug. 7, by Rev. J. E. Flewelling, George N. Estey to Sarah A. Ritchie.

Weymouth Bridge, N. S., July 28, by Rev. J. W. Sheperdson, Iva Tild to Ida Raymond.

Barnes Brook, July 24, by Rev. A. R. Dickie, Benjamin Green to Annie McGillivray.

Westville, Aug. 7, by Rev. Thomas D. Stewart, John Hennessey to Maggie B. Matheson.

Upper Hainesville, Aug. 1, by Rev. W. H. Sherwood, William B. Nason to Amelia Knox.

Cumberland Bay, Aug. 9, by Rev. S. D. Ervine, Ernest G. Elkin to Mabel M. Branscombe.

Elmendale, N