Note that all four possibilities have been used: add vs. subtract, modify the answer by 26 vs. let the answer stand as is.

There are three more ways that the answer 13 can be achieved, by selecting letter values of non-corresponding letters in THIRTEEN and SEVEN. Add the value of the fourth letter of SEVEN (5) to the value of the second letter of THIRTEEN (8); subtract the value of the fourth letter of THIRTEEN (18) from the value of the second letter of SEVEN (5); and add the value of the first letter of SEVEN (19) to the value of the fifth letter of THIRTEEN (20). All three equations lead to 13, and in fact there are seven (and only seven) such equations possible!

In contrast, there is only one way to produce the answer 7: add 19, the value of the first letter in SEVEN, to 14, the value of the last letter in THIRTEEN, to obtain 19 + 14 which, reduced by 26, equals 7. I've never found such a strange, delicate and complex occurrence of numerical wordplay as the seven equations whose mod-26 sums or differences equal 13.

ODES FROM THE ODD TOPICS SOCIETY

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*Butler's Odd Topics Society meets every now and then to discuss Odd Topics of any nature. Professor Baetzhold is the Poet Laureate Odd Topics Society.*

Ode to Otis the Dodo

A marvelous bird is the Dodo;
He looks something like Quasimodo.
But though clumsy and ugly, he's true blue,
And probably knows more than you do.

Fit mascot for our Society,
Our Otis is not known for piety,
He favors all knowledge impractical,
And scorns what is largely syntactical.

So praise and all hail to you, Otis!
If you walked down the street who would notice?
We would, that's who would, as you know,
P'raps 'cause we all are part dodo!

H.G.B. P.L.O.T.S
Poet Laureate Odd Topics Society