Honest Abe, U. S. Mail

When I got along to Uncle Zeb Scott's on my route the other day, he was at the gate and looking so downhearted that I asked him if any of the family were ill.

"It's wuss than that, Abe, a heap wuss," he solemnly replied. "You know I was married about six months ago."

"Yes."

"Sixty years old and went and married a gal of 22! Folks said I was an old fool, but I went right ahead. They told me that the gal had a bad temper, but I didn't mind it. I thought I could baby her up if she got mad."

"And has anything happened, Uncle Zeb?"

"Heaps of things, Abe, and I want your advice. I've tried love and kindness and all that, but it don't do no good. Only an hour ago my wife flung a stick of wood at my head. She's a regular wildcat, Abe. She flies mad about the least little thing, and it's no use for me to say a word. If I started to jaw back, she'd set the house afire. Lord, but what an old fool I was!"

"And what do you want my advice about?" I asked.

"She's got one of her tantrums on now, and I believe I ought to go in and box her ears, same as if she was a silly child. I've heard that some wives jest ached to be bossed and they all the better for being cuffed around. What do you think about it?"

"You might try it for a change."

"I believe I'll do it. I believe the best way is to mingle love and cuffs together. Yes, I'll go in and tell her she's got to walk chalk or take a cuffin', and you might hang around few minits and see how it turns out."

I waited, but not for long. Uncle Zeb hadn't been in the house five minutes before I heard screeching, and next minute he banged the door open and jumped out and made for the barn. His young wife, having a rawhide jack in her hand, was close after him, and from the sounds of thumps and whacks I think she overhauled him in the barn and let him know that she was still boss of the roost.

Two miles farther on, at White's corners, I found Jim Blackburn, White's hired man, and the old man Wilkins, jawing away at a lively rate. Both of 'em wanted to tell me all about it as soon as I came along. It was a case of jealousy. Both of 'em were paying attention to the widow Skinner, and she hadn't decided which she would marry.

"Jest think," yells Jim as he kicks the frozen mud about—"jest think of an old codger who's had three wives and has one foot in the grave wantin' to marry agin!"

"And think of the impudence of a likes of him darin' to look at the widow Skinner!" howls the old man as he dances around.

"Why, he's got 'leven children!"

"And he couldn't buy shoes for a year!"

"Go home and take catnip tea!"

"I'd had you go to grass!"

By and by, when they had calmed down a little, I suggested that the widow was the one to decide between them, and that they had better walk up to her house in company and get it over with.

"I'll go, of course," says Jim, "for I know she'd never marry no such bait like him."

"And she'll set the dog on you!" says the old man Wilkins as he pulls off his coat for about the eleventh time.

They didn't have to take a walk. As they were still jawing at each other the widow came driving along in a one-horse wagon, and it was agreed that I should state the case to her.

"Widow Skinner," says I, as I met her a few rods away, "here's two men who is ready to die for love of you."

"How beautiful!" laughs the widow.

"Each loves you with all his soul, and if you marry one the other will jump into a mud puddle deep enough to drown himself."

"How really romantic!" she laughs again.

"But what are you going to do about it? 'Pears to me you ought to decide it one way or the other."

"I will," she says, and she looks 'em both forward and smilingly told 'em she'd been married to a wheeler two weeks and was just sorry to out the news. Then she bid them good day and drove away to look over her shoulder and laugh, and after a long time the old Wolkins leans over the fence and says:

"Well, by thunder!"

Then Jim Blackburn gets a brace on his wobbling knees and whispers:

"Who'd 'a' thunk it?"

As I heard later on that they stood there looking at each other without speaking a word for a full hour. I drove on, thinking of various things connected with the postal laws, and had just turned into the Two-Mile road when I overtook Ben Thompson's wife and offered her a lift. I saw that she had been weeping, but I asked no questions, and she presently said:

"Abe, I've left my old man."

"Shoo!" says I.

"Yes, I've left him at last, and I'm going to stop with my sister Polly for a few days."

"What's the matter this time?"

"Same thing, Abe—same thing that's been the matter for twenty long years. I've stood it, but my patience is gone at last. I don't believe any other woman on earth would have stood it half as long as I have."

"But what burden have you been called upon to bear?" I asked, not having ever heard of any trouble between them.

"Jonah and the Whale, Abe—Jonah and the whale," she solemnly replies. "The day we were married Ben asked me if I believed the whale swallowed Jonah. I told him I didn't. He said he did, and that I ought to believe with him. He's kept it up ever since. He's got up in the morning and asked me, and he's come in at noon and night and asked me, and there have bin days at a time when he wouldn't speak to me. I'm a determined woman, Abe, and I never took in that the whale swallowed Jonah."

"But why not?"

"I dunno, but jest wouldn't."

"But I'd do it if I were you."

"Do you believe that Jonah was swallowed?"

"Can't say, but I wouldn't dispute about it and break up my home. I'd go right back and cave in."

"It would never do, Abe," she says, with a decided shake of her head.

"But why? If you give in, he'd say no more about it."

"That's the trouble, Abe—that's where the whole thing lies. If I gave up about Jonah, Ben would laugh and cackle for about half an hour, and then he'd come at me with the children of Israel crossing the Red sea and with Daniel in the lion's den, and I'd never have another minute's peace. I might as well go now on Jonah's account as to wait and go on Daniel's. This is the house, and there's my sister, and I know she'll say I've done right. Good-by, Abe!"

"And shall I say anything to Ben if I meet him?" I asks.

"No—yes. You might say that I'm willing to admit that Jonah was thrown overboard, and that a whale made a grab at him, but as for anything more, I'll stick out if I die for it, and he can get somebody else to make his soft soap this spring."

M. QUAD.

Big Salmon Notes.

(Whitehorse Star, April 12.)

Mr. Chas. Anderson, manager of the Johansen properties, arrived out Monday and started on his return the same day. Mr. Anderson now has a sawmill in operation, and has a large number of men at work. He is getting everything in readiness to start up hydraulic machinery as soon as the frost is out of the ground.

Mr. C. Geo. Johansen made a flying trip to the Big Salmon last week, returning to Whitehorse Monday. He reports everything in fine condition on the creeks and says he was much pleased with the way everyone interested had taken hold and were pushing things for early spring work. Mr. Johansen will shortly leave for Dawson, but will return to the Big Salmon upon the opening of navigation.

Mr. W. H. Wiesdepp, the freighter, started in on Monday with the plant of the Moose Creek Hydraulic Mining Co. The outfit, consisting of machinery and provisions, furnished full loads for two of Mr. Wiesdepp's largest teams. The Moose Creek Hydraulic Mining Co.'s plant will be one of the largest in the district. It has 1200 feet of 24 inch hose for use in the place of flumes to bring water onto its claims. This company expects to have its plant in operation early in the season. Messrs. North, Elliott and Hubbard, of Victoria, members of the company, left for the mines Wednesday.

"Sourdough" Jim Salee came out Wednesday. He reports a placer strike on the cutoff between the head of Lake LeBarge and the Hootalinqua. Mr. J. H. Russell, formerly manager of the Whitehorse Hotel, is the discoverer. As to the richness of the find Mr. Salee does not say, not having stopped to investigate. He intends, however, on his return to take a run over to the new diggings.

Mr. T. R. Carpenter will leave on Monday for the Big Salmon. It is his intention to visit the scene of the reported strike on the cutoff.

The Eureka Landing hotel is completed and furnished. From the plans shown us of this building it appears to be one of the largest and most comfortably arranged hostelries in the Yukon territory.

Four men are now at work on the Eureka Landing wharf and warehouse. The wharf and warehouse when completed will furnish the best of facilities for the handling and storing of freight, etc.

Last year there were two hydraulic plants operating in the Big Salmon district. Nine more have been taken in over the ice this spring and four others are now on the road. This will make a total of fifteen for this season when they are ready to commence work.

Mr. C. C. Runner came in Thursday with a large outfit and five men to work on his placer claims on Lake creek, Big Salmon district. On his arrival he made arrangements with Wiesdepp for the transportation of his goods and the entire outfit is now on the road to the interior.

WAGE RATE IS FIXED

By Engineers Plying on Yukon Steamers

Between Bennett and St. Michael—Chiefs Must Have $1,500 for the Season.

The scale of wages and term of service for all union engineers plying on Yukon steamers from Bennett to St. Michael, agreed upon between councils No. 6 and 7 of the Association of Marine Engineers for the season of 1902 are set forth in full in the following circular issued over the names of the officers of the association:

"No engineer shall engage in the Yukon service for less than six months; except that, engineers contracting for hire at Dawson or Whitehorse may engage for a period of not less than five months at a salary of not less than $300 per month for chiefs, and $200 per month for second.

"An engineer engaged as chief shall demand of employers $1,500 for the season of six months, and for every month's service beyond that period of time he shall demand payment per month pro rata, viz., $250 per month, and shall refuse to accept service at a lower rate, unless with the consent of this council or of a committee appointed by it duly authorized to adjudicate upon the matter.

"Wages shall in all cases, except as provided in Clause 1 of this schedule, commence from the date of leaving Vancouver or Victoria, the fare and expenses each way to be borne by the employers.

"All contracts must stipulate that wages be paid monthly.

"In cases where an employer employs a superintending engineer, chiefs shall be responsible to the said superintending engineer only, for the proper discharge of their duties.

"This schedule is in no way to affect the bonus due any member who was in the employ of the B. Y. N. Co. last season, and who may again take service with the same company this year.

"Whereas, The necessity of an executive committee of the allied Councils Nos. 6 and 7, to adjudicate matters on the Yukon during the season has been demonstrated, and

"Whereas, The Home Councils are too remote to deal with matters that require immediate action, therefore be it

"Resolved, by the Councils No. 6 and 7 that a committee be appointed consisting of two members from each of the above councils, and a fifth member to be chosen by the four so appointed after their arrival at Whitehorse. The said committee to have full power to adjudicate upon any question of grievance which may arise between members, or between members and other persons, company or corporations touching matters over which the association has jurisdiction, subject to the bylaws of the association; the committee's jurisdiction to extend and apply to all British steamers plying on the Yukon river or its tributaries, from Bennett, B. C., to St. Michael, Alaska. This committee shall have power to add to its members at its discretion.

"Whereas, Considerable annoyance was caused by the B. Y. N. Co. requiring engineers to sign a document in the customs house at Whitehorse, other than their regular agreement, for the express purpose of coercing other members of the crew, and

"Whereas it is contrary to unionism to assist corporations to coerce any other class of labor, therefore be it

"Resolved. That no member shall sign any document other than that required by the association or the regular articles printed by the government of Canada.

"If no communication be received from the B. Y. N. Co. or other Yukon companies by councils 6 and 7 of this association before March 31st, the secreatry of the council shall be instructed to furnish application forms, typewritten on association printed letter heads, to any of the members who wish to apply to any of the companies for a position. Recommendations may be enclosed with the application and forwarded to the office of the companies. Any member receiving overtures fram a person or a company to submit same to the council, or to a committee appointed by it, to act in its stead, 'unless the terms offered are above or the same as those agreed upon and specified in this schedule. But in no case shall an agreement for employment in the Yukon service be made except in writing, and in all cases members will be required to exhibit such contracts after their execution, to an investigation committee appointed by their council.'

"That no applications as provided in clause 10 for services on the Yukon either in writing or verbally shall be made by any member of either council to the said companies desiring to hire any member before March 31. But in the event of either or any of the said companies desiring to hire any member before that time, and who shall make a proposal to any member personally, or by letter, or by application at the office of the association, it is agreed that such member may make a contract with such employer upon the terms agreed upon in this schedule; but he shall not be at liberty to do so until after the date of the signing of this schedule by both councils.

"A copy of this schedule shall be given or forwarded to all Yukon engineers who are members of the association."—Whitehorse Star.

Kills a Neighbor.

Colville, April 2.—Ernest Lutz, a German farmer living near the town of Northport, on March 31 shot and instantly killed his neighbor, Thomas Kane, and by a rifle shot in the hip seriously wounded another neighbor, John LaCasse. The latter will recover.

The quarrel arose over the boundary line of Lutz's ranch. Kane and LaCasse were running out the line, when Lutz came out, accused them of trespassing on his property and ordered them off, but the men refused to leave; whereupon Lutz returned to the house to get his rifle and enforce his command. He returned just as Kane was in the act of driving a stake. Kane looked up, saw Lutz with his gun and said: "You certainly would not shoot a man for so trivial a thing as driving a stake, would you?" No sooner had the last word fallen from his lips than Lutz raised the weapon and fired at Kane, the ball striking him in the left breast with the above-stated result. LaCasse started to run, but was brought down by a ball in the hip.

Lutz then took to the mountains. The sheriff's office was notified as quickly as possible, and Sheriff Ledgerwood immediately started on the trail of the fugitive. This step proved to be unnecessary, for yesterday afternoon Lutz had made his way to the county seat, entered the sheriff's office and gave himself up to Deputy Graham, who placed him in the county jail.

Feeling against the murderer runs high, especially in Northport, where his victim seems to have a host of friends, and fears are entertained of his being lynched.

Lutz has a wife and ten children.

Goes Into Liquidation.

St. Paul, Minn., April 4. — The United States Savings & Loan Company, with business covering this and several adjoining states, has gone into liquidation. The step was taken at the request of Public Examiner Johnson, who sent a letter to John Douglas, the director in charge. The public examiner is in charge of the association, with Mr. Douglas acting manager. The assets are given at $800,000, and the liabilities at an equal figure. The expenses of liquidation are expected to cause a sufficient shrinkage to give the creditors about 80 cents on the dollar.

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