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Extracts from Wilkes' Exploring Expedition.

[Continued.]

COLUMBIA RIVER.—1842.

I am well aware that many opinions have been, and probably still are, entertained, relative to the probability of venturing up the ship before the channel had been explored and examined by the tender and boats. This is not natural to one unacquainted with the bar of the Columbia river and its dangers. After having paid much attention to this subject, and having been engaged there with the tender and boats in the survey, I feel well enabled to give an opinion as to the course pursued by Captain Hudson, and think it altogether correct, on every ground of expediency, as well as the only proper one for him to have followed under these circumstances. It will be recollected that he had been detained nearly three months beyond his appointed time, and that he was well aware that this would occasion much inconvenience to the progress of our duties; his anxiety to prevent any further delay, even of a few hours, can readily be imagined. The time was, to all appearance, propitious, and hesitation then might have rendered it impossible to have entered for a week. The tender, going in there would have been little or no security, for she would undoubtedly have pursued the same course, and have been, in all probability, lost; and thus the Peacock would have been obliged at last to trust to the knowledge of those on board of her. As respects the examination of the bar in boats, this is a thing not to be imagined; for the tides are so strong as to be beyond the power of oars to contend with. To wait until a thorough knowledge could be had of the bar from survey, would have been equally impossible at that time; all were uninformed, or incapable of judging of the accuracy of the directions; but, so far as appearances went, they seemed to be, and they are such as I should even now give, as far as compass bearings are concerned. But there is one difficulty that will ever exist in passing over the bar, and this nothing but an intimate acquaintance with the locality will remove. I allude to the cross-tides, which are changing every half-hour. These tides are at times so rapid, that it is impossible to steer a ship by her compass, or maintain her position; and no sailing directions can possibly embrace the various effects produced by them upon a vessel. A singular fact in illustration of this remark is, that the safest time to cross the bar is when both the tide and wind are adverse; and this is the only port, within my knowledge, where this is the case. Captain Hudson, in venturing the attempt to enter the Columbia, manifested the strongest desire to accomplish his orders and forward the objects of the Expedition. Disregarding the well-known perils of the navigation, he did not hesitate, when in his judgment the time was propitious, to incur the service to a further delay, which might have proved as disastrous to the Expedition as the loss of the vessel.

There are no pilots for the entrance of the Columbia river, or rather, none that could be relied upon. Neither old Ramsey nor George deserve the name, nor were there any other persons known who had any pretensions to be considered as pilots.

Having set this matter at rest, I shall proceed to give the details of the loss of the Peacock.

On the ship striking, the helm was immediately put a-lee, and every practicable effort was made to bring her to the wind, and

haul off. These efforts were not successful, and the ship, which hung by the keel, began to thump heavily. Every sea forced her further upon the shoal, and as she had now become completely unmanageable, the sails were full. The stream cable and anchor were got ready, and the first cutter was hoisted out. Lieutenant Emmons was sent to sound around the ship in various directions, in one of the waist boats.

At this time, the wind having veered to the northward and westward, was freshening; the air was lazy and a fog was forming; the ebb tide had begun to run strong, and meeting not only the cross waves, but an opposing wind, in a short time formed breakers which completely enveloped the ship. These breakers soon stove in the first cutter, and rendered her useless. Such was the fury of the sea, that it was with great difficulty Lieutenant Emmons reached the ship, and the boat was secured.

With every sea the ship lifted and struck heavily, and much solicitude was therefore felt lest it should be impracticable to get the launch afloat; but no boat could have lived alongside of the vessel for more than a few moments.

The lighter spars were now sent down, and the pumps were rigged; every exertion was made to save the masts and lower yards, by which the launch might be hoisted out as soon as the sea would permit it.

Captain Hudson, finding that the ship was leaking badly, ordered the watches in gangs to the pumps, which were thenceforward kept in action until the vessel was abandoned. Every possible exertion was made to bring the ship's head to the sea, but without much effect, for the rudder was soon disabled in consequence of the iron tiller being broken off. The rudder was thus left to thresh about with such violence as to threaten to tear away the stern-frame.

At last, by heaving the shot overboard, and stating the water, the ship was so much lightened that, by means of the larboard anchor, which had been cast free of the ship, she was hove round with her head to the sea. At low water, which occurred about dark, there was only nine feet depth of water alongside. At 45 minutes past 8 the chain-cable parted, the ship was again thrown broadside to the sea, and began again to strike heavily.

At 30 minutes past 11 it was high water; at 1 P. M. the sea was rapidly increasing; and at 2 P. M. the breakers were making a continued breach over the vessel, by which the bulwarks were stove in, and the spar-deck flooded. The water was knee-deep on the gun-deck, and the shot-lockers were buried in it. The night passed heavily, with little hope of the ship's holding together till morning. At 4 A. M. the day dawned, and the coming light, and at the extreme fall of the tide, the sea providentially abated.

At six o'clock in the morning, a large canoe loaded the vessel, manned by a crew of Chinook Indians, and having on board old Ramsey, the pilot, with a colored boy belonging to the Vincennes, of the name of John Dean. The latter, who had been left by me with Mr. Walden at Astoria, had persuaded Ramsey and the Indians to come off, for the purpose of rendering assistance. The launch and boats were also hoisted out, and a few provisions put in them, and a part of the men and officers embarked, with as little delay as possible, and just as they stood, for fear of overloading the boat and thus causing the loss of all. In these Lieutenant Perry, with Purser Spiden, the sick, the naturalists, and the charts, books, and ship's papers, were sent off, to be landed in Baker's Bay. The boats landed all not necessary to row them in, safety; and succeeded in making a second trip, in which all who had remained on board were taken to the shore, except Captain Hudson, Lieutenant Walker, the boatwain, the carpenter, and about thirty men.

Towards noon, the breakers again increased; and the sea was making a breach in all directions over the ship, which was filling fast, the water having risen above the level of the berth-deck. The masts were cut away, and the vessel lay a complete wreck, with nothing standing but the stump of the mizen-mast.

Lieutenant Emmons, who had charge of the boat, was, during this time, using every possible exertion to make a third trip, but without success; and the crews of the boats were the anxious witnesses of the condition of the ship, without being able to relieve those on board from their perilous situation. They persevered, however, in their fruitless and laborious endeavor, until one of the boats, in charge of Mr. Lewis, the gunner, was thrown end over end, and the gunner was engulfed. Lieutenant De Haven was fortunately close at hand, and succeeded in saving those on board; all of whom were injured, and one of them severely, by the heaving of his hipbone.

The intense excitement both of those in the vessel and in the boats at this moment, may be readily imagined. The accident was seen from the ship: Captain Hudson was satisfied that any immediate attempt to relieve him and his companions must be fruitless; and that the only chance that remained, was to preserve the boats for a future occasion.

He therefore ordered the engine to be hoisted on the stump of the mizen mast, as a signal for the boats to return to the land; which was obeyed by them, although with

the feeling that they were abandoning their commander and those with him to his fate. These on board, on the other hand, were relieved by their anxiety for the boats, on which alone they could depend for their relief, if the wreck should remain together for a few hours. Of this, however, the prospect was far from promising, and the struggle between the waters of the great river and those of the mighty ocean, when every surge seemed to forbid the utter dissolution of the fabric of the ship.

The light articles were now removed to the spar-deck, to give them a chance of reaching the shore by the action of the waves and winds, should the ship go to pieces.

In the midst of this trying scene, the ordinary routine of ship's duty was carried on, even to the piping to dinner. It is needless for me to say any thing in praise of the conduct of Captain Hudson, and I have simply to refer to the letters I received from the officers and naturalists, in reply to a call I made upon them, for the aspect in which the transactions presented themselves to those present, and more particularly to those of the latter gentlemen, who, as spectators, had an opportunity of witnessing the whole proceedings.

By three o'clock, Lieutenant Emmons, with the boats, was again approaching the ship; but as she was still too rough to venture near her, and it was not till five o'clock that he succeeded in getting alongside the remaining men were distributed among the boats, and embarked in good order, Captain Hudson being the last to leave the ship. After a pull of two miles, they landed in Baker's Bay, when Captain Hudson was received by the other officers and men with three hearty cheers, the spontaneous expression of their admiration and gratitude for the courage and conduct he had exhibited in his efforts for the preservation of the ship, and in finally preserving the lives of all.

The exertions of the officers and men were not yet at an end; for some faint hopes were entertained that a portion of the property might still be saved from the wreck, as a relief in their state of utter destitution; and, in consequence, the boats were despatched the next morning at day break to the bar. But nothing was there to be seen of the Peacock, except the cap of her bowsprit; for her upper deck had been separated, and the pieces scattered for many miles along the coast.

Captain Hudson passed the highest encomiums on his officers and crew, for the faithful manner in which they continued to perform their duties and carry out his orders to the very last.

I am satisfied that every thing that seamanship could devise to save the vessel, was resorted to; and I am quite confident that had the facts as all known and fully weighed by the community, the conduct of Captain Hudson, and that of his officers and crew, in this perilous and trying scene, will be considered as redounding to the credit of the service.

Mr. Birnie, the agent of the Hudson Bay Company at Astoria, Messrs. Frost and Knox, who had been on board the ship, came promptly to the aid of the shipwrecked crew, with provisions, tents, cooking utensils, and clothing, all lying with each other in affording assistance.

When all hopes of getting any thing from the wreck were at an end, Captain Hudson sent the crew to Astoria, in the boats, with the facts as all known and fully weighed by the community, the conduct of Captain Hudson, and that of his officers and crew, in this perilous and trying scene, will be considered as redounding to the credit of the service.

As soon as I learned the exact state of affairs in the morning, I determined to make such disposition of the squadron as would be most advantageous, in the performance, under the new circumstances, of the duties which remained to be accomplished.

With this intent, I resolved to shift my pennant to the Porpoise, and with that vessel, the Flying Fish, and the boats of the Peacock, to survey the Columbia river to its extreme navigable point. This force would be amply sufficient to perform this survey in the shortest possible time, and yet enable me to despatch a party, as I had before intended, through the southern section of Oregon Territory to San Francisco. The Vincennes, to which I ordered Lieutenant Commandant Ringgold, I resolved to send to San Francisco, to make a survey of the Sacramento river, while I was engaged upon that of the Columbia.

In conformity with this plan, I directed the Vincennes to be off and on at the mouth of the river, while I proceeded in with the Porpoise to make the necessary changes and transfers. Taking Mr. Knox, and Ramsey the pilot, on board the latter vessel, we passed the bar and stood towards Astoria, but were compelled by the tide to anchor before reaching that place. On the morning of the 7th, we anchored in front of Astoria, where all necessary arrangements were completed; and Lieutenant Commandant Ringgold, on the next day, proceeded in the Flying Fish, with the transferred officers, to join the Vincennes. As soon as this was effected, that for San Francisco, and the tender, returned to the river.

As it became absolutely necessary to recon-

omize our time as much as possible, every disposition was now made of the men and boat. I soon, however, found that although I had sent a number of men to the Vincennes, there would be many that could not be well accommodated in the smaller vessel, and I was desirous of procuring some extra accommodation. Fortunately, the American brig, the Thomas H. Perkins, Captain Vanary, was lying at Astoria; and a reasonable agreement was entered into for her purchase. Dr. McLaughlin, who had enlisted into a charter party, readily agreed to surrender it for a small consideration, if the goods he had on board were delivered at Vancouver. This there was no difficulty in, as it was found necessary to make some alterations in her accommodations, and it would be necessary to resort to Vancouver for many articles; and these repairs could be easily effected during the time we were engaged in the survey of the river, and better at Vancouver than elsewhere. It was, therefore, determined to proceed up with both vessels, at the time of making the survey.

FRANKLIN'S PAPER IN PHILADELPHIA.—This paper, published and edited by Benjamin Franklin, first made its appearance on December 24th, 1728. It was first called somewhat pompously, "The Universal Instructor in all the Arts and Sciences," which title was afterwards changed to the running motto, "Containing the freshest advices, foreign and domestic." Franklin continued the paper weekly until 1755, when it passed necessarily into several other hands, and finally expired in 1801, in the 76th year of its age. The paper changed much in all these years, in size, paper, and editorials. Its size, at first, was that of an eight by ten window frame. The paper was thin, yellowish, and coarse. Its price was ten dollars a year, and in matter there was little variety. Tales, poems, fables, with little foreign news, several months old, were all it could set forth. The advertisements now seem old and out of date, and no one could find the places to which they refer. Persons leaving for Europe, are spoken of as "intending" for Europe, and a cargo of negroes, just arrived, are duly advertised, and persons wanted to look at the cargo. Altogether the sheet in its best estate, would not equal any village sheet, which our country now produces.

FIFTEEN HUNDRED MILES IN TEN HUNDRED HOURS.—The arduous task of walking one thousand five hundred miles in one thousand successive hours is now being attempted on the grounds adjoining Mr. Coghan's, Hamlet Inn, Bickenhead. The champion for pedestrian honors is a young man, named William Gale, who performed the feat of walking a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours some time ago, on the Walton turnpike road, on the completion of which he was presented by his admirers with a silver belt. Gale (who is a native of London) commenced his present task on Tuesday, the 10th ult., and at 12 o'clock last night had completed eight hundred and fifty-eight miles. Doubts have been entertained as to whether this trial of physical strength is really a bona fide affair; but, on enquiry, we have been assured that the young man has not misused an hour's task since he commenced, and that it is a fair and honorable transaction. The pedestrian is slightly built, but his rapidity of walking is astonishing, and the title of the "Flying Eagle," which he has assumed, is certainly not inappropriate. Yesterday he walked a mile and a half in fifteen minutes, which was looked upon as somewhat extraordinary, particularly if the great fatigue to which he has already been subjected is taken into consideration. He starts at the commencement of every hour, and when the pedestrian's mile and a half are finished, he betrays no symptoms of distress. A large number of persons have already visited the grounds.—*Liverpool Mercury.*

NAVIGATING THE AIR.—Another Frenchman has recently attempted to solve the problem of aerial navigation. He ascended with a balloon from the Paris hippodrome, in a parachute which was to be cut from the balloon at the height of three thousand feet, (something over half a mile) and the inventor was then to set his wings in motion, by which he hoped to impress any direction pleased upon his ascent. At the height of about half a mile the balloon was observed to collapse, and it and the parachute began to fall rapidly. When they were within three hundred feet of the ground the car was cut, and the boasted discoverer of aerial navigation came down to the ground with frightful rapidity, his wings proving of no use whatever. He was not disconcerted, however; the fault was laid to the balloon, and he would repeat the experiment.

PROPHETIC.—Washington predicted the growth and importance of the great West, as long ago as 1770. At that time he urged upon the Governor of Maryland the importance of connecting the Ohio river with the Atlantic, "as a means," to use his own words, "of becoming the channel of conveyance of the extensive and valuable trade of a rising empire." Were words ever more prophetic?

More credit can be thrown down in a moment than can be built in an age.

The Future Destiny of the United States.

There is an innate desire in every mind to penetrate, as far as human sagacity is capable, the secrets of futurity. Perhaps the first intellectual passion developed in boyhood, is that which yearns to know the condition of the man. The future is to every mind, a fairy land teeming with wonders, and from the infancy of our race, to its present period of mature adolescence, human ingenuity has been racked in the vain endeavor to overleap the limits which Providence has assigned to the intellectual vision of man, and to know the secrets of the coming as of the past time. Prophets, sorcerers, conjurers, astrologists, wizards, witches, fortune-tellers and spirit-rappers, have in all ages and among people of every grade of civilization, met with welcome acceptance, and been followed by hosts of worshippers.

Nations, no less than individuals, are subject to the universal passion. Perhaps, from the first moment an English footstep pressed the soil of this continent, no instant of time has flown which has not given birth to some brain to conjecture of the ultimate destiny of the nation, which on the rock of Plymouth, first breathed the breath of life. With each increase of strength, of territory and of prosperity, the desire has grown in intensity, and at no period of our history, has it been so strong and so all pervading, as at the present moment. The "manifest destiny" principle has perhaps in secret, become paramount in almost every mind, to all other political ideas; and politicians have never found so popular a hobby as that which dazzles the public imagination with vague, and glittering visions of universal empire in the West, and its unequalled power and splendor.

There is perhaps no task more difficult, than to form positive and definite ideas of the future condition of a country, from the aspect of the present. Time, in its ceaseless revolutions, is continually turning up so many strange and unforeseen events, to control the course of affairs, that the most comprehensive abilities are incompetent to foresee with certainty the events of even ten years. History is so full of examples of the vanity of all political predictions, and of the fatality of the most well grounded expectations, that we have long since ceased to place much reliance upon the vaticinations of the weather-wise, even when the most plausible. Providence holds the fate of men and of nations in the hollow of its hand, and can, and frequently does, change its aspect in the twinkling of an eye. Who could have foreseen twenty years ago, that in 1853 the territories of this Republic would stretch from sea to sea, and its banner be fanned at once by the breezes of the Atlantic and Pacific? Did the present reality at that time enter the dreams of the most enthusiastic visionary? Certainly not.

When, therefore, we undertake to form conjectures of the future destiny of the United States, we always do it with large reservations, and with a consciousness of the uncertainty of all hypothesis furnished upon so frail a foundation. Even while we write, events may be brewing which will blast the brightest hopes of the patriot and disappoint the best matured expectations of the statesman. A single false step in policy may be the beginning link in a chain of events which will dissolve the glorious and splendid fabric of the Republic, as a palace of clouds scatter before the winds of heaven.

But in all human probability the destiny which is reserved for the United States is more splendid than has ever before belonged to any nation of ancient or modern times. That destiny we think will be, that the United States will become the great center of arts, of civilization, refinement, wealth, power and liberty; the sea among the nations of the earth; the point from whence will radiate the beams of knowledge, of freedom, of religion, of empire, to the remotest parts of the globe—the great center of vitality to the racial and political systems of the world.

We do not look upon this as any wild dream of the imagination, but as the sober conclusions of reason, drawn from premises of fact. Our belief is founded upon four things:

1st. The enterprise, intelligence, and sagacity of our people.
2nd. Upon the popular character of our institutions, giving the widest scope to individual energy, and the greatest impulse to national enterprise.

3rd. Upon the vast natural resources of the country.

4th. Upon our geographical position on the globe.

The intelligence, enterprise and sagacity of our people has already placed us far ahead of any other nation, except England, in those pacific arts which in modern times contribute more than all else to the greatness, happiness, power and prosperity of a nation. The popular character of our institutions, and the condition of equality enjoyed by those living under them, attracts neither much of the intelligence and enterprise which in other countries finds itself shut out from a career by the old iron-bound systems of an age which has passed away. The same cause generates and perpetuates a ceaseless activity, physical and intellectual, in all classes of our population, and spurs them even onward in the race of improvement. We have here the moral elements and influences which made Greece the most intellectual, and Rome the most powerful State of antiquity.

We possess greater natural resources than any other nation. Our mineral wealth is inexhaustible. Our agricultural resources are boundless. Our rivers are the most magnificent in the world, and admirably placed to facilitate the improvement of the country. The climate is in all parts salubrious, and renders our country a delightful place for the residence of men. We have thus all the materials and elements necessary to form the nucleus of the richest and most productive commerce which has ever been enjoyed by any nation.

Finally, our geographical position on the surface of the globe, is more central than that of any other nation or power. It gives us the two great Oceans of the earth, the Atlantic and the Pacific. They open to us all the riches of Asia and Europe, and if we are wise we will render both tributary to our prosperity. Our position places us right in the track of intercourse and communication between the two extremities of the earth—and we form a central ground upon which the inhabitants of both must meet and mingle, to buy and sell and interchange the produce of their industry and the treasures of their intellect.

It seems to us, when we take these things into consideration, that it is clear that the United States must become more and more the centre of the commerce, business, ingenuity, politeness and civilization of the earth.

There is only one thing wanting to make this possibility a reality, and that is the Pacific Railroad. This, however, is a subject too extensive to be introduced at the end of an article. This we consider the greatest question of the age.—[Cincinnati Commercial.

The Printer.

"I pity the printer," said uncle Toby.

"He's a poor creature," replied Trim.

"How so," said my uncle.

"Because, in the first place," continued the corporal, looking full upon my uncle, "because he must endeavor to please every body. In the negligence of a moment, perhaps a small paragraph pops upon him; he hastily throws it to the compositor; it is inserted, and he is ruined to all intents and purposes."

"Too much the case, Trim," said my uncle.

"With a deep sigh, "Too much the case."

"Go on, Trim," said my uncle.

"The printer, sometimes," pursued the corporal, "hits upon a piece that pleases him mightily, and he thinks it cannot but go down with his subscribers. But alas! no, who can calculate the human mind? He inserts it, and all is over with him! They forgive others, but they cannot forgive the printer. He has a host to paint for, and every one sits up for a critic. The pretty Miss exclaims, 'Why don't you give us more poetry, marriages, and love stories! away with these stale pieces.' The corporal elips his speech over his nose, and reads it over in search of violent invective; he finds none, takes his speech off, folds them, sticks them in his pocket, declares the paper 'good for nothing but to burn.' So it goes. Every one thinks it ought to be printed expressly for himself, as he is a subscriber; and yet after all this complaining, would you believe it, he said the corporal, clasping his hands beseechingly, 'would you believe it, sir, there are some subscribers who do not hesitate to cheat the printer out of his pay? Our army swore terribly in Flanders, but they never did any thing so bad as that.'

"Never," said my uncle Toby, with the strongest kind of emphasis, "never will I believe it."

"An exchange paper has this advertisement: 'Two sisters want washing.' We hope they may get it."