

ledge of those on board of her. As respects the examination of the bar in boats, this is a thing next to impossible; 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 true, and they are such as I should even now give, so 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 dangers of the bar, rather than subject 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 by 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 furled. 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 hazy and a fog was forming;\* the

\* During the summer, this wind, haze, and fog occur almost every day in the afternoon.