

off more than one ship to chase the *Levant*, though the position of the *Leander* in the fog, so far to leeward and astern, did not give the senior officer the best opportunities for observing the course of events. There was certainly every prospect of the *Acasta's* bringing the *Constitution* to action in the course of the night, though the other vessels might have been left so far astern, as still to render the result doubtful.

Whatever may be thought of the management of the enemy, there can be but one opinion as to that of Captain Stewart. The promptitude with which he decided on his course, the judgment with which he ordered the prizes to vary their courses, and the steadiness with which the *Constitution* was commanded, aided in elevating a professional reputation that was already very high.

This terminated the exploits of the gallant *Constitution*, or *Old Ironsides*, as she was affectionately called in the navy; Captain Stewart, after landing his prisoners at Maranham, and learning at Porto Rico, that peace had been made, carried her into New York, about the middle of May. In the course of two years and nine months, this ship had been in three actions, had been twice critically chased, and had captured five vessels of war, two of which were frigates, and a third frigate-built. In all her service, as well before Tripoli, as in this war, her good fortune was remarkable. She never was dismasted, never got ashore, or scarcely ever suffered any of the usual accidents of the sea. Though so often in battle, no very serious slaughter ever took place on board her. One of her commanders was wounded, and four of her lieutenants had been killed; two on her own decks, and two in the *Intrepid*; but, on the whole, her entire career had been that of what is usually called a "lucky ship." Her fortune, however, may perhaps be explained in the simple fact, that she had always been well commanded. In her two last cruises she had probably possessed as fine a crew as ever manned a frigate. They were principally New England men, and it has been said of them, that they were almost qualified to fight the ship without her officers.