

when the naval action had begun, but that he had been disappointed. On the following morning, however, Downie carried out his plan. 'On the morning of the 11th,' ran Prevost's dispatch, 'our flotilla was seen over the isthmus which joins Cumberland Head with the mainland, steering for Plattsburg bay.'

The fight
in Platts-
burg bay.

Plattsburg bay looks east and south-east over Lake Champlain. Its entrance is between the peninsula of Cumberland Head running down to the south-east on the northern side, and, on the southern side, shoals with a small island, known as Crab Island, where the American commodore Macdonough had established his hospital. It was a little before eight o'clock in the morning when Downie's squadron rounded Cumberland Head and, forming line of battle, sailed for the entrance of the bay, Downie leading the van in the half-finished *Confiance*, manned, to quote Captain Pring's report, by 'an unorganized crew,' 'totally unknown either to the officers or to each other.' Commodore Macdonough, who commanded the American ships, for some days apprised of Downie's coming, had prepared to receive him. His line was drawn up covering Plattsburg, within and across the entrance of the bay. It was apparently beyond the reach of effective fire from Plattsburg¹, but the southern end of the line was, it would seem, to some extent covered by a small battery on Crab Island. The larger vessels of the squadron were anchored with their bows pointing north. At the northern end of the line was the brig *Eagle*, corresponding to the *Linnet*, next to which was the flag-ship *Saratoga*, answering to but not as large as the *Confiance*. The squadron contained also the schooner *Ticonderoga* and the cutter *Preble*, equivalent to the two sloops on the British side, the *Chubb* and the *Finch*, and there were ten galleys or gunboats. The

that my expectations have been frustrated by no other cause,' have been absurdly taken to be an innuendo against Downie's personal bravery.

¹ This was Prevost's account, and he was corroborated by both American commanders, Macdonough and Maccomb. His critics, including Yeo, maintained the contrary.