

provisions for the garrison.¹ Harrison, however, writing for Washington the same day, from White Plains, tells Hancock that there "are about 1400 men at Mount Washington and 600 at Kingsbridge."² But Colonel Lasher, the officer in command at the latter post, wrote General Heath on the 26th that he only had 400 men and 6 artillery men.³ On the 27th Lasher had orders from Heath to quit the post, burn the barracks, and join the army at White Plains, and either do this himself, or communicate with Magaw, as he pleased. He obeyed and executed the orders himself.⁴

The same day, which was Sunday, an attack was made by Lord Percy on Mount Washington by land, at the same time that two men-of-war attempted to pass it and go up the river. The latter were severely cut up by Magaw's artillery, and one of them, badly crippled, had to retire.⁵ The British troops moved down from their lines at McGowan's Pass to Harlem Plains and began a fire with field pieces, which the Americans returned from their fortified lines and batteries. It was a mere artillery duel, had no effect, and was apparently intended as a feint.⁶ The cannonade was heard at White Plains.⁷ This affair was probably one great cause of Greene's confidence in Fort Washington, and of his desire a fortnight later to hold it. He was present in the fort, and with Magaw, during the firing on the ships. The whole contest was over by three o'clock in the afternoon, when he returned to Fort Lee and wrote an account of it to General Mifflin,⁸ and the next day sent another to the President of Congress. "From the Sunday affair," he wrote Washington on the 29th, "I am more fully convinced that we can prevent any ships from stopping the communication."⁹

Two days afterwards, Greene asked Washington's opinion as to holding, not the fort only, but all Mount Washington, in these words: "I should be glad to know your excellency's mind about holding all the ground from the Kingsbridge to the lower lines. If we attempt to hold the ground, the garrison must still be re-inforced, but if the garrison is to draw into Mount (Fort) Washington, and only keep that, the num-

¹Force 5th series vol. ii, pp. 1202, 1203, 1221.

²Ibid. 1239.

³Ibid. 1263.

⁴Ibid. vol. ii, p. 1264.

⁵Ibid. vol. ii, pp. 1263, 1265.

⁶Ibid. 1266.

⁷MS. Letter of General Silliman to his wife.

⁸Force 5th series, 1263, 1269.

⁹Ibid. 1281.