Rentish

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

CITIZENS OF EAST GREENWICH AND VICINITY

ON THE RETURN OF THE

KENTISH GUARDS AND VOLUNTEERS,

FRIDAY, JULY 1, 1842:

AFTER THE SUPPRESSION OF THE

LATE REBELLION IN THIS STATE;

WITH AN ADDRESS.

By Rev. S. A. CRANE.

PROVIDENCE:
BENJAMIN F. MOORE, PRINTER.
1842.

East Greenwich, July 5, 1842.

To the Rev. S. A. Crane:

Sir, — At a meeting of the Citizens of this Town and vicinity, on Monday, July 4, it was unanimously

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of the citizens be presented to the Rev. Silas A. Crane, for his very interesting and impressive address, delivered in St. Luke's Church, on the return of the Kentish Guards and volunteers, on Friday the first instant, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for the press."

"And it was also resolved, that the undersigned be a committee to communicate to you the above resolution, and to carry the same into effect."

We are, dear Sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

L. MARCELLUS WHEELER,
JOHN P. ROBERTS, JR.,
THOMAS H. RHODES,
JOSEPH J. TILLINGHAST,
DAVID PINNIGER.

East Greenwich, July 6, 1842.

Gentlemen:

Believing that the solemn injunction of St. Paul to Titus, "Put them in mind to obey magistrates," is imperatively the rule of duty for a Christian minister, in times like these, I readily consented to deliver the address, a copy of which you have requested for publication. In the same belief, and without further remark, it is now cheerfully submitted to your disposal.

I am, Gentlemen, yours,

truly and respectfully,

S. A. CRANE.

L. M. Wheeler,
John P. Roberts, Jr.,
Thomas H. Rhodes,
Joseph J. Tillinghast,
David Pinniger.

KENTISH GUARDS.

It is believed that the statement of a few facts drawn from the early history of the "Kentish Guards" will be found neither uninteresting nor inappropriate, as a preface to the proceedings of their fellow citizens, on their recent return from the defence of the State. The charter of this Company was granted by the General Assembly, in their October session, 1774. Among the original petitioners for the charter are found the names of several men, who, afterwards, as officers in the Army of the Revolution, were distinguished for their high rank, their courage, and their military talents. Major General Nathaniel Greene, General James Mitchel Varnum, Col. Christopher Greene, Col. Archibald Crary, and others of high reputation, are in this number. Of the original petitioners, also, one is still living in this place, Capt. Wanton Casey. In his advanced age he still retains the spirit of his early and distinguished associates; and his love of country, of law and liberty, is now as fresh and vigorous as when he marched with the company to Massachusetts, on the alarm raised by the battle of Lexington. It has been interesting to notice how keenly he felt for the honor of the company in their recent service; and how proudly he now rejoices in their noble and successful effort to maintain the well-earned and long-established reputation of its original founders.

Besides those already named as *signers* of the petition for the charter, many others of the company held commissions in the armies of the Revolution, in all not less than thirty-two. And what is even more remarkable, all these officers, it is said, acquitted themselves well in their respective stations; many rose to high distinction, and one, in universal estimation, is placed second only to the immortal Washington. From this brief notice, which might be, and perhaps ought to be extended, it will be seen that few companies in our country can claim a more ancient and honorable origin, or have inherited a larger share of well earned glory, than the Kentish Guards. And of the present officers and members, it is but a just and merited tribute, to say that their recent conduct in defence of the State, in their trying position at Pawtucket, has abundantly shown, that as they have succeeded to a heritage of honor, so they mean to transmit the same to their successors, unsullied and undiminished.

The Guards arrived home in the cars on the morning of the first instant. They were met by the Volunteer Company and others at the depot. Thence they were escorted to St. Luke's Church, where a large assemblage was waiting to receive them. After they had taken their places in the Church, religious services were performed.

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A hymn was first sung. The whole assembly then joined in solemn prayer and thanksgiving to God, in the use of appropriate Collects, and other parts of the Church service appointed for such occasions. A portion of Scripture was next read. The following address was then delivered by the Rev. Mr. Crane; after which the Guards were escorted to their armory and dismissed.

Fellow Citizens: — We are assembled in this house of prayer and praise, to acknowledge our dependence upon Almighty God, as the Sovereign Ruler of nations. We come here as Christian men, to give thanks unto our God for the signal and merciful deliverance which he has wrought for our State; and especially to pour out on this his sacred altar our tribute of gratitude, that he has defended and preserved in every danger these our brave and worthy friends, members and volunteers of the Kentish Guards, who promptly responded to their country's call, and exposed their lives amid the fury of lawless mobs, and in the strife of blood. The occasion demands our thanksgiving and our songs of praise.

On Sunday we heard the call to arms. We saw our fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, mustering for the field of blood. Sorrowfully, yet firmly, did they do it. In this house we then commended them to the God of battles. At home was the short but earnest prayer — the hasty parting blessing, — and they were gone. And whither? — Not to face an open foe. It was so meet undefined and undefinable danger. It was against the plottings of treason — dark and fearful conspiracy, the full design and extent of which no man could tell, and which, therefore, cast suspicion between neighbor and neighbor, and made friend look sternly in the face of friend. It was to meet the rage and phrenzy of disappointed leaders and misguided men among ourselves, and the merciless weapons of hired ruffians, and murderous mobs, gathered in from neighboring States and cities. In short, all the horrors of civil war were reasonably to be apprehended, — law prostrate, violence triumphant, houses, villages, and our lovely city, plundered and destroyed.

Such were then our dangers; and to meet them, these our brave defenders hastened. As they went on with our blessing, as we followed them with our prayers, so now we welcome them back with thanksgiving unto God. God preserved them. God gave them victory. And to God be the glory, the honor, and the praise.

But while we thus ascribe *all* to God, we forget not by whose hands he has wrought our deliverance. It has been by the hands, with the blood, and with the peril of the lives of these true and generous men, and others like them. To them we owe it that the noise of war, and note of dreadful preparation have ceased throughout our borders, that peace is restored, and we are safe. To them our lasting gratitude is due; — and specially to these our fellow townsmen, whom we now receive to their homes with warmest welcome, and just and noble feelings of pride and pleasure. God, who assigns to every man

his place and daily duty in life, saw fit to assign to you, members and volunteers of the Kentish Guards, the post of danger and trial. He also gave you courage and skill to fulfil your duty with honor to yourselves, and with triumph to the laws. While all was done that mercy in the name of humanity could ask, that also was done which the laws of God and man for the well-being, nay, for the very being of society, in the name of the same humanity, approve and demand. We lament the fatal necessity. We thank God that your firmness was found equal to the awful crisis. And now in the name of these, your friends and neighbors, gathered here to rejoice with you on your safe return, and to testify their approbatton of your noble conduct, I lay before you their united tribute of praise and admiration. In the hour of your country's need you have nobly done your duty. For it we thank and honor you. For it your country will delight to thank and honor you. For it the grateful blessings of those whom you protected from lawless violence and plunder will descend and rest upon you.

And, now, fellow citizens, a word to you all, and I shall have done. As to the result, this is a proud day for Rhode Island. Her government is sustained, her laws are triumphant. Her citizens have gained for her a brighter lustre among the sister stars upon the banner of our Union; and for themselves wreaths of honor and grateful acclamations from every intelligent lover of regulated liberty and social order and human happiness, for the promptness and unanimity and patriotic sacrifice of all minor and party political differences with which in the hour of her peril they hastened to the rescue. This danger is now passed. In our progress through it, all those virtues, which do honor alike to rulers and people, have been nobly displayed. We feel a generous and worthy pride in the wisdom and firmness and patriotism, which this trying occasion has brought out and employed in vigorous and successful action. We feel more safe, we breathe more freely, when we know that such virtues dwell in the men of our state; and well may we look upon them with conscious pride, as we call them our husbands, our fathers, our brothers, our neighbors, our fellow citizens.

But there is yet more in our case. We have been in a fearful crisis. In our progress to it, crimes uncounted, at the time unthought of, and even yet, I fear, unrepented, have been committed. All the customary corrupting engines of party strife have been at work among us. Wilful misrepresentation, personal abuse, angry passions, revengeful feelings, have been sadly apparent. Many have allowed themselves to think and speak of law and government with contempt. Others have shown a spirit of lawless violence and boastful defiance; and some have stained their hearts and hands with treason and open rebellion. And last, though by no means least in God's account, there rests a fearful amount of guilt on men of education and influence, who, while they have managed to keep out of the indignant grasp of human law, have counselled and encouraged others

in doing what they would not, or dared not do themselves. All these things are crimes against God and man. In whomsoever any of them are found, that man I solemnly call to repentance and amendment of life. The overhanging clouds of God's righteous displeasure have rolled away. Let the sunshine of mercy, which now beams upon us, melt every heart to penitence and prayer.

We have been, as I said, in a fearful crisis. That crisis we reached through a long and fierce struggle, — a struggle rather social than political; for however it may have been begun and led on to its present termination by political leaders, still it has all along derived its terrible power mainly from the fact that it has gone to the very heart of the community — has throbbed in every pulse, and quivered in every nerve of the social system. By some means or other, the people of this State have been brought to a grave discussion of fundamental questions in government. In the progress of this discussion a principle was adopted, false in theory and unsafe in practice. Rash and unwise counsels prevailed. The wrong path was taken, and, as it might have been foreseen, it led to rebellion. That rebellion is now effectually put down. In doing it, our State has won laurels of lasting glory. But she has yet a nobler victory to achieve. Angry passions, suspicions, mutual criminations, and vindictive feelings, almost of necessity, grow out of such a conflict as that through which we have passed. In this state of things, it will require great wisdom and firmness in the rulers, and great forbearance and respect for law in the people, so to temper justice with mercy, that the end of all government, public safety, shall be attained, while at the same time the voice of humanity, which demands the abstaining from all needless severity, shall be fully heard and obeyed.

Add to this, that the questions first brought into discussion are still unsettled. The adjustment of them has in itself become more difficult. The cause of those who seek certain changes in the government has, it is true, suffered from the rash and reckless temper of its leaders, and from the extremity to which it has been pushed. On the other hand, it requires to be remembered, that few only, and those mostly men of profligate habits and ruined fortunes, were found willing to follow their leader in his desperate and bloody attempts. Of those who desire to change fundamental principles in our government, the great body are true and noble-hearted men. They love their state. They hate treason and rebellion. They have, with a nobleness worthy of all praise, helped to oppose and defeat them. From this their cause will eventually gain stength. They still think these changes ought to be made. Their opinion must be respected. Their request must be fairly met. If unreasonable, it must be shown so. If reasonable and just it must be granted. In this work it is gratifying to know that the Legislature has already made a good beginning, and one which promises to be satisfactory to all. They have done this, too, at a time and under circum-

stances, which entitle their wisdom and magnanimity to all confidence. Let the people follow in the same path of moderation, forbearance, and mutual concession. Already have we had enough, and far too much of public discussion and mass meetings on the subject in question. Let every man now take the matter quietly and alone to his conscience and his Bible. From these let him learn what is a Christian man's duty in respect to the government under which he lives; in what manner he may innocently seek to change its principles or its practices. The times demand sober reflection. Men of all parties should look well to the ultimate tendencies of the principles they have adopted. The cause of liberty has ever been most in danger from the visionary measures of its ill-advised and overheated advocates. Strength and stability are elements essential to a free government. Any political principles which tend to introduce perpetual change, will inevitably lead to misrule, anarchy, and despotism. These may be mere truisms; but many there are among us who will do well to give them a more serious consideration. Let something also be pardoned to our love of equal privileges,—something to our free institutions,—something to the intrinsic difficulties of the subject which has been agitated,—and more than all, to a generous confidence in our neighbors and fellow citizens. In this spirit let the people meet and act as a band of brothers. In this way all will be obtained which can be reasonably desired, and upon a principle at once safe to the stability of government and the rights of the governed. When this shall have been accomplished, as I doubt not it speedily will be, then may every Rhode Islander well be proud of his state, her rulers, and her people.

And, now, members and volunteers of the Kentish Guards, I will detain you no longer. Go to your families and friends. There earnest prayers have been offered for your safety—glad hearts are waiting to receive you. Wives and children, mothers and sisters will love you better. Friends and neighbors will honor you more. Remember that God who has shielded your heads in the hour of danger. Serve him with the residue of your lives. Go, and may the blessing of God Almighty be with you, now and forever.

From the Providence Journal.

Having heard and seen several accounts of the encounter at Pawtucket, on Monday night the 27th of June, between the military and the self-styled People, which accounts not only essentially differ, but some of which, it is believed, were designed to convey a false impression, prejudicial both to the military and the well-disposed citizens of that village, the following account has been carefully drawn up by one who witnessed the whole scene, from the entrance of the troops into the village until its termination.

On Monday afternoon, the Kentish Guards, from East Greenwich, under the command of Col. G. W. T. Allen, consisting of about

fifty men, were ordered to repair to Pawtucket, and guard the bridge over the Blackstone river at that village.

On their arrival, multitudes were assembled in the streets as they supposed, to witness a military parade; but it was soon apparent that mere curiosity was not their sole object, as language of the most insolent and irritating character was heard amid the din of hisses, shouts, and yells, as the troops marched down to the hotel on the corner of Main and Mill streets. All of which failed, however, of its intended effect, as the men had positive orders to observe the strictest military discipline and decorum, let their treatment from the mob be ever so rude.

Arrived at the hotel, they were received by the Pawtucket and Central Falls volunteers, under command of Capt. Potter, and conducted to their quarters in the hall, and immediately placed a guard at the main entrance to the hotel, with the intention of partaking of some refreshments before they took command of the pass across the bridge.

The officers had scarcely reached the hall, before a shout from without announced an attack upon the guard at the entrance in Mill street; and on looking out, one of the sovereigns was seen brandishing a bayonet, which he had wrested from the musket of one of the guard, but which was soon recovered, the guard at the door strengthened, and a file of men placed across Main street from the old market to the corner of Main and Mill streets.

To this point from as far as could be seen on the Massachusetts side, the streets and bridge presented one dense mass of human beings, male and female, old and young, even nursing infants at their mothers' breasts, and the streets around the hotel fast filling up.

The guard maintained their position in the rain, standing at "secure arms" or "charge bayonet" for about an hour, while the Pawtucket and Central Falls volunteers (twenty-five only of whom were armed) organized and loaded their guns from the supplies of the Kentish Guards, as they were entirely without ammunition, organization, or discipline; when it was deemed necessary to strengthen it, and a file of men formed across Main, opposite the middle of Mill, at its junction with Main street, about ten or twelve paces in the rear of the front line, and another under the piazza in front of the hotel, in Main street, in order to keep their guns dry, in case it became necessary to fire.

These preparations for defence, instead of dispersing the mob, only tended to increase the excitement which had risen almost to frenzy, and in a few minutes the guards on every line were as closely surrounded as their arms would allow, by friend and foe undistinguishable, and as some demonstrations were made to disarm them, the front line was now marched into the rear of the rear line, under cover of that on the side of the hotel, and faced from the bridge two paces from that facing the bridge.

This retrogade movement, however necessary for their own safety, had a bad effect, as it proved; for the mob, thinking that it was a signal for a retreat of the whole force, followed up the advantage which the movement gave them, and closed in on all sides, so that it was with great difficulty they could be kept from rushing between the lines at the short distance between them.

At this juncture, the mob east of the bridge receded right and left, until they had opened up to the front line, when a horse in a carriage, containing two persons in male, and one in female attire, was driven up to the line, and the driver demanded a pass through. The officer in command asked him to pass round the left of his line, in Mill street, but he persisted in his right to pass through his ranks, and would have done so, had not his horse been seized by the bridle and wheeled off, when he passed up Main street a short distance, wheeled about, and drove down furiously upon the other line. Again he was frustrated, passed round the lines, and disappeared east of the bridge for a few moments, when he returned to the assault; and as it was now evident that he was intent on breaking the lines of the guard, the officer in command, ordering his men to stand firm, again exhorted him to desist, and pass round, as he had done before; but the mob cheered him on with exclamations of "Break up their ranks — run down the damned Algerines — maintain your rights," &c. At this crisis, finding argument and expostulation unavailing, the men were now ordered to rush upon the horse, rather than spill the blood of the driver; which so exasperated the horse that it was necessary to give orders to fire, which were followed by the discharge of only three or four pieces, owing to the wet state of the priming; sufficient, however, to drive him from the assault.

This fire separated the mob from the guard sufficiently to allow the mob to assail them, with stones, bricks, and bottles of glass and stone, weapons, the contents of which had tended, probably, to elevate their courage to such a frenzied pitch, and four of the guard were carried in wounded. The female among the mob fell and was carried off for dead; but finding that neither she nor others were hurt, they concluded that blank cartridges had been fired, and now commenced a scene, of which an actual opening of the bottomless pit alone can convey an adequate idea. Every exclamation that could be expected to irritate men, such as "Where 's the man that shot the cow?"—"Fire away your blank cartridges, you damned Algerines!"—"Give it to the damned rebels!" &c., with all the dismal bowlings, yells and groans that human beings ever uttered, arose in one universal strain, until all distinguishable sounds were drowned in the terrific din. As soon as Col. Allen could be heard, he advanced in front of his lines, and ordered the mob to disperse at their peril, assuring them that his muskets were loaded with ball cartridges, and that however reluctant to shed human blood, unless they dispersed, he should give orders to fire. Again the air was rent

with "Fire away your blank cartridges, you damned Algerines!" and the assault, with stones, &c., renewed.

A detachment of men reloaded and primed, now advanced to the front, and again they were ordered to disperse with the same effect, and unable longer to withstand the assault the men were ordered to fire, when some five or six pieces were discharged, none of which took effect, as, owing to the reluctance of the troops to shed blood, they elevated their pieces above the mob. It had the effect, however, to disperse them in some measure, as they receded back to about the middle of the bridge, where they again made a stand and renewed the assault, and were again fired upon, and one, the ringleader, fell dead or mortally wounded, and the rest receded back upon the Massachusetts side, and sought cover behind the buildings, from which they would occasionally sally and throw their missiles at the guard who now advanced to the middle of the bridge, which post was maintained until the guard was relieved by the arrival of the R. I. Carbineers, about two o'clock, Tuesday morning. It is due to the Kentish Guards and Pawtucket and Central Falls volunteers, to say, that the lawless insolence was endured and forbearance exercised, until their own safety demanded a lawful resistance and performance of their military duty. It was fortunate for the cause of humanity, that it was dark and rainy, for had the weather been dry and the night bright, hundreds of lives would in all probability have been sacrificed. Happily, but one was killed, and, so far as we know, but six or eight wounded on both sides. Thus terminated an encounter which, while it quelled the violence of a lawless and desperate mob, failed in reaching and bringing to summary justice, the cowardly villains by whom the comparatively innocent and ignorant dupes of their treachery were incited to rebellion.

Some of the worthy Sovereigns of Pawtucket having industriously but falsely circulated a report that Col. Allen detailed a body of his men, who passed the Massachusetts line to search for men and arms, contrary to orders, and that a requisition will be made by Governor Davis on their Commander-in-chief to have them delivered up to the proper authorities of that State for trial, the Kentish Guards wish it to be distinctly understood, that should such requisition be made, it is their desire that it might be promply granted, as they court the strictest scrutiny and investigation of their military conduct while stationed at that village, and are as ready to be tried by the laws of which they claim protection as they are to support them.