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THE CANADIAN

Military Gazette

Successor to the Canadian Militia Gazette.

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MONTREAL, JAN. 15, 1895.

Notes and Comments

All who were at Halifax, including laymen, were much impressed by the magnificent demonstration of discipline afforded by officers and men of the Royal Navy and Imperial land forces, at the simple yet effective ceremony of the landing of the body of the late Sir John Thompson from H.M.S. Blenheim. There was not much to be done; no fuss and feathers, and no straining after effect. There was no bawling of words of command, no screaming of tug whistles afloat, and no mad racing about of orderlies ashore. Everything was done neatly and quietly, sailorly and soldierly. More than one newspaper correspondent remarked that

as far the Blenheim was concerned it was, all through, a splendid exhibition of the unquestionable response to command which has made the Royal navy the ruling power of the seas; and the Halifax garrison fairly divided the honors with the navy's representatives.

One incident in connection with this sad but impressive function deserves to stand on record. On leaving Portsmouth Captain Poe's orders were to reach Halifax at twelve on New Year's day. The good ship was delayed nearly twenty-four hours in leaving, and had head storms to contend with on the Atlantic. She arrived during the prevalence of bad weather, but so imbued is the Royal navy with the spirit of implicit obedience that her arrival corresponded to her orders to the very second, her anchor chains rattling through her hawse-hole as the ship's bell was sounding eight bells. A good practical lesson to those who command as well as to those who obey. Had the good ship not been allowed a round margin of time her captain, with the best intentions in the world, could not have carried out his orders so exactly as he did.

While members of the Canadian militia note with satisfaction the high appreciation of the discipline and personnel of the Imperial forces which the representative Canadians who attended the Halifax obsequies have taken back to their homes throughout the different parts of this broad Dominion, they feel an especial pride in hearing that the local representatives of the force worthily maintained the reputation

of the Canadian militia upon this occasion. The 66th Fusiliers were frequently in evidence during the ceremonies, and always with great credit to themselves and to the force to which they belong. The 66th is a corps typical of the best elements of the national force, well officered, and with an intelligent, well set up lot of men in the ranks. The 63rd Rifles were not seen so much, but what they had to do they did well. They are evidently a good serviceable lot. The Halifax Garrison Artillery was not seen much; but they were heard from, participating with the Royal Artillery in the firing of the salutes, and every one knows what their work at the big guns is like.

The influence of close and constant association with the Imperial troops is clearly apparent in the discipline of the Halifax battalions and the carriage both of officers and men. Probably we have not yet fully appreciated the effect left upon our upper province battalions by their contact with the regular army in those past years when Montreal was the army headquarters for North America, and when Quebec, Kingston, Toronto, and all the other chief militia centres were garrison towns. The best traditions of our historical battalions were derived from the Imperial corps which garrisoned our cities when the militia was being organized. We hang on to traditions, however, with the tenacity of our race, a tenacity which is not always as discriminating as it might be, and as a result we retain many old fogyish ideas which have long since been banished from the Imperial army.