

structure in the great foundation and the stone partition walls, of a castle-like thickness. One can easily see that in its early and troublous days the whole establishment could be changed into a fortress, the windows being loop-holed or double-barred ready for a siege. So substantially was it built that it is good for many a year of life yet.

This same Antiquarian Society has set other Canadian cities a further example in placing scores of historical tablets throughout the city—one on the walls of the old seminary of St. Sulpice; one to Dollard, the hero of the "battle of the Ottawa;" another on Fortification Lane; still another, the site of ancient Hochelega, and at many similar spots of great historic interest.

When will Toronto have a historical centre similar to the Museum Chateau de Ramezay? FRANK YEIGH.

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### Concerning Shingles.

MANY years ago, a young man who had spent four years at a Canadian university with credit, graduated with honours in classics and modern languages. Soon after, two brother graduates met, and their conversation fell upon the successful Smithson. "What is he doing now?" asked one. The other replied, "Running a shingle-mill." "What! Is that all the use he can put his learning to?" was the indignant interrogation. "Yes," answered the other calmly, "he is probably the only shingle-miller extant who can pronounce the name of his wares in six languages beside his own, calling them *schigglaï*, *singele*, *chingles*, *schingeln*, *cingeli*, and *zingalas*." The second graduate was badly up in etymology; his imaginary Greek and Latin, French, German, Italian and Spanish names for shingles are ridiculous. So is the English *shingle*, which confounds things that differ. It properly applies to the cutaneous disease so called, which takes its name from the Latin *cingulum* that translates the Greek *zoster*, a belt. But the German *schindel*, which our English tongue has miscalled, is the *scindulum* of the Romans, and originally denoted "a split thing." The Spider may take the writer to task for obtruding the knowledge of a schoolboy upon the learned readers of THE WEEK, and charge him with inconsistency for ranking shingles among the implements with which so far he has been concerned. Should he do so it will only be an evidence that his youthful days were not spent in a lumbering town or village. Had they been thus spent, he would have made personal experience of shingles in place of slipper-soles, and the backs of hair-brushes. The shingle not an implement! Who ever heard of such scepticism?

Cornelius Nepos is a Latin author whose "Lives of Eminent Commanders" have procured canings for many past generations of school-boys. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that he is an authority on shingles. He says that, until the war with Pyrrhus, 280 B.C., shingles constituted the sole material of the roofs of all Roman buildings. Vitruvius also, the architect of Augustus, states that, in his day, the shingled roof disputed the palm with that of thatch in Gaul and Spain. The remarks of the erudite Pliny on shingles are probably known to Smithson, the linguistic miller, since he is a great reader of the classics, but they must have astonished him. To be told that shingles made of resinous woods, pine only excepted, are not durable, and that the best are made of oak and beech, is to meet with a trial of faith. The splitting of birch and hard-oak shingles must have given steady muscular employment to the hand-makers of ancient Europe, until the fire-proof tile and slate arose to take their place. Then the Roman matron, deprived of her ligneous implement of discipline, had to polish her bronze mirror or *speculum* on the offending persons of Caius and Balbus.

Cornelius Nepos, Vitruvius, and Pliny were never in Halifax; let us hope they are not in that region for which Halifax is a euphemism after "Go to," a region that John Kendrick Bangs shews familiarity with in his "House-boat on the Styx." You travel through the streets of Halifax, and run against shingles on every side, until you come to the conclusion that the roofs of the houses have slid to the

sidewalk. They have not. The roofs are in their right place, but the shingling of brick and stone walls is a way the Haligonians have. Stone and brick are so valuable there, that they have to be shielded from the damp sea air, and shingles are their mackintoshes, rigby garments, gum-coats, or whatever else profane persons may choose to call them. This peculiar use of shingles may have inspired the Irish sailor with his description of Quebec, as the place where they copper-bottom the roofs of the houses with tin. Yet Halifax teaches a very useful lesson as regards shingles; to employ the language of a Partingtonian acquaintance, "they are *imprevius* to moisture." Unfortunately, they have not the same antipathy to fire. Few, if any, householders are impervious to their combination in *skoteuabo* or fire-water, even in Halifax. When the effects of it are patent to the ordinary observer, the sufferer is said to have "a shingle off."

Dictionaries give a very imperfect idea of the verb "to shingle," when they define it as "to cover with shingles." The main thing in shingling is to distinguish the thick from the thin end of the wooden lamina, and so arrange the shingles that the thick everywhere overlaps the thin, on a given pitch sufficient to make the falling rain run harmlessly off. The truly shingled roof, no doubt, gave the Romans their notion of the *fastigata testudo*, or sloping tortoise, made by the interlaced shields of besieging ranks, the first standing upright with arms well extended, the next with them not so fully extended, and so graduating to the rear rank on the knee. Off this firm structure even enormous stones rolled to the ground without damage to the human supports below. To pitch stones up upon a shingled roof, and listen to their bump and roll, according to size, is the joy of many a small boy, but the act evokes a different kind of feeling in the heart of the woman who works her sewing machine and the studious man who writes a comic article under that roof. It is strange that the poet has neglected shingles, or has only applied the name, in the singular number, to water-worn stones on the beaches of seas and lakes and rivers. A river is a splitter, and Pliny pretended to know that ancient shingles were made of beech, and the man with a shingle off is half-seas over. Perhaps the spider can define the relation of shingles to lake-fronts.

A learned Glengarrrian divine recently translated an ancient Celtic letter found in Tel el Amarna, and his translation was read before the Canadian Institute. The letter was written by a Babylonian King before Moses was born, and among other things or *inter alia*, it stated that the Babylonian had sent to his Pharaonic father-in-law 100 *ceis sior teallach ase*, or as the divine has translated it, "100 cases of long earthen shingles." Now *ase*, the Irish *ais*, and the Welsh *asdel* do denote a shingle, but the pity of it is that the Babylonian consignment was earthen: in other words, tiles. Clay in Babylonia was more plentiful than trees. As King Tarkhundara's letter was a clay tile inscribed in wedge-shaped characters and then baked, it was virtually an engraved shingle. The writer, being temporarily absent from his summer home, once missed certain distinguished visitors who had left their card-cases behind. A glance at the living-room table showed that they had supplied the deficiency, for clean shingles, inscribed with charcoal from the camp-fire, bore their names and titles. So, in the far north and west, the Canadian *ais* of pine may be found near the door of a log or clap-boarded shanty, bearing the device: "HOTLE: meels at all howres: Komidashun for mann and beeste: lisensd to sel liker." This is what is meant by "hanging out your shingle."

The gardener, whether flowers or vegetables be his care, dearly loves the shingle. He has planted his young plants of balsam and Indian pink, stock, heliotrope dear to Stevenson's Will of the Mill, verbena, salpiglossis, calendula and Browallia, after sundown, knowing that, in spite of the water he has given them, they will find it hard to resist the wilting influence of the next morning's sun. Therefore he calculates the direction in which the orient beams will strike his forced nurslings, and plants good broad shingles at an angle sloping upwards to the west between the two. He does the same kindly office for his cabbages and cauliflowers, tomatoes, peppers and egg plants, and goes to bed with a *mens conscia recti*. He will have to shift his flowers' and vegetables' parasols or sunshades more than once on the morrow, but, if, like the writer's gardener, he is a military man or has been such, he will take a pleasure in each successive