

THE PEOPLE OF PARLIAMENT HILL.

By Charles Lewis Shaw.

"CAN I go this way to the Astor House?" inquired Thackeray, slightly bewildered, one afternoon by the maze and mesh of New York's East Side.

"Well, I dunno," answered the Bowery boy, as he eyed the figure of the great novelist reflectively, "but"—he tilted his cigar to a more acute angle—"I guess ye kin if ye behave yourself."

A considerable knocking about had convinced the Bone and Sinew and myself that a man can go anywhere if he behaves himself, and we went to the gallery of the House of Commons. I called him—this off-and-on comrade of many years—the Bone and Sinew. He had been accustomed to it in political speeches and editorials, and never even wondered why "brains" hadn't been added. One week of the Commons gallery explained. The men below him didn't proceed on the hypothesis that he was endowed that way. That is why there is a change of Government occasionally, and Lincoln's epigram, that "You cannot fool all the people all the time," requires to be verified.

The night of his arrival, Jack—that was the Bone and Sinew's name—and I had a discussion about political economy, constitutional government, the British Constitution, and, incidentally, the Canadian House of Commons. This was the Bone and Sinew's first visit to Ottawa when the House was sitting, and he seemed to think that his conversation should harmonize with the legislative atmosphere. He had been worrying through a long Canadian winter on a few trivial questions like Free Trade and Protection, Bi-metallism, Imperial Federation, and a Differential tariff, and he came down to Ottawa to get them settled. He feared to be alone with them for another twelve months—and he came

to the fountain-head of the political wisdom of his country. When I bade him good-bye after he had drunk deeply at the said fountain-head for one solid week, he had a hunted, troubled look in his eyes. Instead of the fearless specimen of stalwart Canadian manhood, who looked his fellows proudly in the eye as if he gloried in being at least a part of a government "of a people, by a people, for a people," there was something in his face, as he clambered on the rear platform of the train, that boded trouble in several back townships at the next general elections. For his idols had been shattered.

When the Bone and Sinew winced a little that first night at a general reference in the orthodox Canadian way to His Excellency the Governor-General as "a nice gentlemanly figure-head whom it was convenient to have in the neighbourhood to open Parliament with a certain amount of frills, sign the Bills, advertise the country and sort of emphasize the tie with the dear old Motherland," I knew he would be worth trotting around with. I thought I might find out something more about the innate sense of Canadians on men and things political in one week of the Bone and Sinew than a year's *Globe* and *Mail* and *Empire* editorials; and I did. The Bone and Sinew started out with quaint, jumbled-up political ideas, which can be found in no other country but our own—a mixture of sentimental, loyal Toryism that almost died with the last hope of the Stuarts at Culloden, flickered into life at the American revolution, and yet smoulders in the hearts of the Canadian descendants of the United Empire Loyalists, and a radicalism born of the sturdy independence of life in field, forest and prairie, untrammelled by the prejudices of centuries and false ideas