

THE KEYS OF THE OLD BASTILLE OF PARIS.



BOUT seven years ago—I think it was in October, 1879—I noticed an editorial paragraph in the *Toronto Mail*, stating that the keys of the celebrated Bastille of Paris were in the possession of a St.

Louis locksmith, he having purchased them of a young emigrant named Lechastel. It appears that when the great prison-fortress fell, in 1789, the Governor—the old Marquis de Launay—was dragged out into the street and there despatched ; while the mob surged into the building to put an end to the Swiss Guard and the Invalides, (had they not surrendered) and to search for trophies. Among the first who entered the courtyard of the Bastille was one Carwin Lechastel by name, and when the draw-bridge fell he secured a bunch of keys from one of the fleeing gaulers. These he stuck on the end of his pike and carried through the streets. Those who took part in this event were considered heroes by the Parisians at that time, and Lechastel kept the keys in his possession as a great trophy of the Revolution ; and they remained in the family until 1859, when a descendant of his emigrated to America, taking the old keys with him. Not long afterwards he found himself in very reduced circumstances in the city of St. Louis, Mo., and having gone through what little money he had he resolved to sell the old heirloom. At first he was unsuccessful ; few believed his story, and he could speak but little English, but one day his attention was