

A CLAIM TO FRENCH ROYALTY.

The story of a claim to heirship to the crown of France is revived by the *Daily Telegraph*. "On the 9th of June, 1795," says the *Telegraph*, "in the prison of the Temple, at Paris, died a lad ten years of age, known to the world, first as Duke of Normandy and Dauphin of France; then, after his father's death upon the scaffold, as the boy citizen Louis Capet; and in later years—when the King came to his own again—described by loyal adherents of the monarchy as Louis XVII. of the royal House of Bourbon. So runs the record of history, taught for some three-quarters of a century in every school of Europe. Of all the characters in the bloody drama of the Reign of Terror, that of the child-prince who dragged out the last years of his short life as the drudge and servant of Simon the Jailor, who was forced by blows and cuffs to sing the hideous lays of the Revolution, and who died, done to death by brutal cruelty, is surely the most pitiable. Over the story of his fate generation after generation of children has shed its facile tears. And now, oddly enough, we are asked to believe that the Dauphin died only ten years ago, and that, till long after the birth of the Prince Imperial there lived a man who, according to the law of divine right, should have been the King of France. It is from the other side of the Atlantic that this strange demand is made upon our faith. The story is not altogether new, but certain facts which have recently come out serve to revive the interest in a tale noteworthy by virtue of its very strangeness. In 1858 an Episcopalian clergyman, named Eleazar Williams, died in the State of New York. For 20 years before his death this quiet obscure minister had asserted his claim to be the long lost Louis XVII. Throughout his lifetime he met with few believers, but since his death various attempts have been made in America to vindicate his claims; and within the last few weeks a Clergyman of considerable eminence in the Empire City has brought forward new evidence, which, in his judgment, is conclusive as to the identity of Eleazar Williams and the sometime Dauphin.

What little there is to tell respecting the previous life of the claimant to the throne of France can be told simply enough. According to common fame and report, he was the son of a Canadian backwoods squatter called Williams and an Indian squaw. About the commencement of the century, the lad, being then apparently about 14 years old, was sent—why or wherefore has never been clearly ascertained—to Massachusetts to be educated. Brought up to the ministry, he in 1816 went as a missionary to a tribe of Indians living near Oneida Creek, where Father Noyes and Mr. Dixon's friends of the Perfectionist persuasion have since had their abode. The march of civilisation drove the Indians from their old hunting grounds; and their pastor travelled westward with them as far as Wisconsin. There he lived for many years, married, had children, and to his ministerial functions added the vindication of certain claims put forward by the tribe against the Federal Government. Towards the latter portion of his sojourn in the West he began also to assert the existence of some strange connection between himself and the House of Bourbon. He had, by chance, an interview with the Prince de Joinville, who was then making the tour of the States. He applied for some books to Louis Philippe, which that good-natured

monarch sent him, with a civil letter; and upon this and similar evidence he built a belief that the Royal Family of France took an especial interest in his fortunes. He assorted, possibly with truth, that he recollected nothing whatever of his childhood, and that his life had been a blank till the time when he first left the Indians, when, after sustaining a sudden fall, he seemed to shake off the lethargy which had previously paralysed his mental faculties. It was not, however, till 1848—that is, till he was past sixty—that he brought forward any distinct claim to be of royal birth. In that year he produced a letter, purporting to contain the death bed confession of an old French refugee who had just died at New Orleans. This confession, given in *articulo mortis*, declared that the writer had brought the Dauphin, as a child, to America, had placed him with the Williamses, and had hitherto been compelled to maintain absolute silence on the subject, in consequence of a solemn oath not to divulge the secret until the approach of death. The story was very remarkable, and there were not wanting sceptical persons who affirmed that the whole confession was concocted by the Rev. Eleazar himself. On the strength of this alleged discovery, Williams went to New York, with the view of prevailing upon somebody to take up his claim. But the times were out of joint; the short-lived French Republic was obviously approaching its end; and the reversionary interest of either Bourbons or Orleanists seemed worth so very little that not even Mr. George Francis Train could be persuaded to run Capet-Williams for the throne of France. There was no market for the Protestant claims of Louis XVII.; and Williams, notwithstanding that he signed his letters L. C., could not find a backer. So, failing to assert his royalty, he betook himself again to the ministry, and sought to earn a living once more as an Episcopalian clergyman. From time to time he endeavoured to revive the interest which his story had created, by statements of unsuccessful attempts to poison him, which emissaries of the imperial government had made, and by rumours of mysterious overtures from Trichenham and Frohsdorf. But, in Yankee phrase, he was "played out;" his pastoral fees fell off; he sank into extreme poverty, went back to his old Indian friends, and died, declaring with his last breath his belief that he was in very truth the Dauphin of France.

PAT AND THE KING.—Frederick the Great of Prussia had a great mania for enlisting gigantic soldiers into the Royal Guards, and paid an enormous bounty to his recruiting officers for getting them.

One day a recruiting sergeant chanced to spy an Hibernian who was at least seven feet high, and supposing he had a good subject made an offer, when the following scene took place.—

"But unless you can speak German, the King will not give you so much."

"Oh," said Pat, "sure it's I that don't know a word of German."

"But," said the sergeant three words will be sufficient, and these you can learn in a short time. The king knows every man in the Guards. As soon as he sees you he will ride up and ask you how old are you? you will say twenty seven. Next how long you have been in the service? you must say three weeks. Finally if you are provided with clothes and rations? you answer both."

Pat learned to pronounce his answers, but never dreamt of learning the questions. In three weeks he appeared before the king, His Majesty rode up to him and said—

"How old are you?"
"Three weeks," said the Irishman,
"How long have you been in the service?"
"Twenty seven years."
"Am I or you a fool?" roared the king
"Both!" replied Patrick, who was ^{seated} in the Guard room, but pardoned by the King after he understood the facts of the case.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE ABYSSINIAN MEDALS.—On Saturday the whole of the officers and men in the corps of Royal Engineers now at Chatham, were drawn up to witness the presentation of silver medals for services rendered during the Abyssinian campaign. The medals were distributed by Major-General Simmons.

It is reported that Marshal Niel will receive a title of nobility in recompense for the energy and skill he has displayed in reorganising the army, and the question is asked whether "the Duke of Chassepot" would not sound well, and be a particularly appropriate recompense for his services.

A circular has been issued from the War Office to the Lord-Lieutenants of Counties, reminding them that Volunteers in uniform are prohibited from taking part in any political demonstration or party meeting; and further, that Volunteers are not to assemble their corps for drill, or for any other purpose, between the issue of the writ and the termination of the election in any county or borough near their head quarters.

A SENTINEL SHOOTING HIS SERGEANT AND CORPORAL WITH ONE SHOT.—The *Independent Bells* reports the following fatal occurrence.—At the Camp of Beverloo the sentinel on duty on Saturday last, seeing three men approaching him, cried out "*Qui vive?*" and received no answer. He fired at a distance of 75 paces, and with the one shot killed the sergeant and corporal, who were going their rounds. The third soldier ran and reported what had occurred. In a few minutes it was found that the Albini rifle "did wonders."

EMPLOYMENT OF EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNS.—The Paris correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* says,—"Whilst the King of Prussia is inspecting iron turrets destined to defend Cologne, Mayence, and other towns on the Rhine, in case of an attack by French gunboats, the French Emperor has determined to prolong his stay at Châlons, and is busy studying modified Chassepots and Mortier cavalry pistols. The *Gaulois* says that these persons who believe in a durable peace must be very simple."

THE REDUCTION OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY.—The Prussian note, by which the French Government was made aware of reductions in the Prussian army to the extent of 150,000 men, is obtaining a reception which deserves and will continue to deserve, attention. The semi-official journals correctly undertook it as a challenge to the French Government to follow so good an example, and take a very ill part. The extraordinary objection is made that the King of Prussia is reducing his army to save expense, and that were not a desirable object alike to France and Prussia. Motives apart, however, any reduction in the effective of the great armies of Europe gives an assurance that peace will not be disturbed without some little warning. It is remarkable that in these days great European wars are almost invariably preceded by a dispute about intentions, and by mutual challenges to disarm.—*Daily News*.