AUDUBON AND THE DAUPHIN

BY FRANCIS H. HERRICK

I

WAS John James Audubon Louis Charles, Dauphin and Duke of Normandy, who by hereditary right became King of France in name, at the moment the head of his father, Louis XVI, fell under the guillotine in Paris, January 21, 1793? Was he the little boy prince, who was "in the way", and "not wanted" by his uncles and many of his countrymen, his potential subjects? Was he that unfortunate child who, orphaned by regicides, was held a close prisoner for three impressionable years of his young life? Was he the boy who, in consequence of such treatment, according to some reports, developed a tendency to scrofula, which we should now call tuberculosis? Finally, was he the ten-year-old boy who was officially declared to have died in the Temple prison, June 7, 1795, a conclusion which many historians accepted, although there is now strong evidence, as some think, that the true prince was spirited out of the Tower, but when or how, or where or how long he may have lived, are questions which have not yet been and perhaps never will be, answered with finality.

When everything is considered, these questions relating to Audubon can receive but one answer,—a decisive negative. I repeat them now only because they have been seriously asked, and incredible as it may seem, have been given a warm welcome by two recent biographers.[1]

Miss Rourke mentions a number of reasons which have led her to favor the fantastic Dauphin idea. The fact that Audubon was first called "Fougère," and later "Jean Rabin," while for a time he used the name "La Forest," is cited with suspicion. When Captain Jean Audubon finally returned from Santo Domingo to France, late in 1789, "how many children," she asks, "did he bring with him?" and, "if he was accompanied by a little boy, there is no certainty," she says, "that this was the same boy who was adopted as Fougère," in 1794. If this were not the same boy, neither she nor Mrs. Tyler know what became of the first, or have any proof that Audubon was a substitute child. There was a long period, says Miss Rourke, between Audubon's birth (April 26, 1785) and his adoption (March 7, 1794) of nearly nine years, and "this gap has never been filled in. Where was this boy during this time? It is well within the range of possibility that after his return to France during the Revolution, a boy was entrusted to the care of Captain Audubon whose identity he was induced to hide. He may have used the approximate birthday and later the name of the little

[1] See "Audubon," by Constance Rourke, New York, 1936, and "I Who Should Command All," by Alice Jaynes Tyler, New Haven, 1937.

boy born in Santo Domingo to cover the history of another child. Some of those closest to Audubon during his lifetime believed implicitly that he was of noble birth."

Miss Maria R. Audubon, the naturalist's granddaughter, stated to me in 1914 that Jean Audubon and his wife settled some property upon "Jean Rabin, créole de Saint-Domingue," which he refused to accept under that name, saying, "My own name I have never been permitted even to speak; accord me that of Audubon, which I revere, as I have cause to do." This reference to property probably has to do with the wills of his father and stepmother, in which the objectionable name occurs many times. Audubon's dislike of the Rabin name does not seem to have persisted, for in view of the settlement of property under those wills, on July 25, 1817, a power of attorney was drawn in favor of his brother-in-law, Gabriel Loyen du Puigaudeau. In this curious document the naturalist refers to himself as "John Audubon," and as "Jean Rabin, husband of Lucy Bakewell," the Jean Rabin *alias* occurring four times in the text over the signature of "John J. Audubon" at the end.

An English reviewer once expressed regret that I had probed the birth and parentage of Audubon, saying that he preferred to take this illustrious man at his word that he "belonged to every country." Such writers forget that a prime duty of every biographer is to make his subject known, and that this is impossible if he comes from nowhere, or as John Neal facetiously remarked, if he is "one of those extraordinary men who are erected,—never born at all." Audubon's father "had other reasons," thinks Miss Rourke, "for sending Fougère to America which he did not disclose. . . They could not have had to do with money. . . . Whatever his reasons were they persisted, and may have had to do with the boy's parentage."

Mrs. Tyler begins her book with a quotation: "History has the inalienable right to be written correctly," to which every honest person will subscribe, but which writers of biography are too prone to forget. Throughout her book she refers to me as "Robert," a praenomen I have never borne, but since names are easily confused, I forgive her. The naturalist's father is usually referred to as "Admiral Audubon," which gives a sense of unreality to her text, as the highest rank which Jean Audubon attained in the navy was lieutenant (*lieutenant de vaisseaux*), one grade below that of captain. In my 'Life of Audubon' I gave a summary of the naval career of his father in the merchant marine and navy of France, as recorded in the official records of the navy department in Paris. Jean Audubon held the rank of lieutenant from October 11, 1797, until his retirement for disability January 1, 1801. Perhaps Mrs. Tyler followed the example of Miss Maria R. Audubon, who was accustomed to give this exalted rank to her grandfather, and perhaps she got it from a letter that Audubon carried with him

when leaving Edinburgh for London, written by Mr. Hay, and addressed, March 15, 1827, to his brother, Robert William Hay, Downing St., West, and in which the following occurs: "Mr. Audubon is a son of the late French Admiral Audubon, but has himself lived from the cradle in the United States, having been born in one of the French colonies." Audubon certainly should have known his father's naval rank, and also that he himself could not have lived from the cradle in the United States, but the last statement is now believed to have been true.

Strong presumptive evidence had led me to conclude that John James Audubon was the illegitimate son of Lieutenant Jean Audubon and Mademoiselle Rabin, a French créole of Santo Domingo. "Rather than tolerate the suggestion of illegitimacy in regard to their grandfather," says Mrs. Tyler, "the old ladies decided to bear the rigors of publicity, if needs be, and to give to the world the information which would disprove this biography.[1] To that end they released me from the promise to withhold publication of their 'secret,' and perhaps the world's secret also." This family secret of Audubon's noble birth, which is revealed in Mrs. Tyler's 'I Who Should Command All', was imparted by the naturalist in letters to his wife, and in his Journals, which were written for her benefit, and for her alone, but with no thought of their publication. The significant passages were copied by his granddaughter, Miss Maria R. Audubon, into a little black notebook, which I was permitted to see in 1914 but, out of respect to her wishes and those of her sister, Miss Florence Audubon, they were only briefly referred to in my 'Life' of their grandfather in 1917. In the course of our conversation Miss Audubon confessed that she had really never known who her grandfather was, but that in the light of these journal entries she had come to think that he might have been the lost Dauphin. In commenting on this question Miss Audubon added that a gentleman, to whom these extracts had been shown, said that possibly they had been written to obscure the unwelcome fact of illegitimacy, a wise remark, as the sequel seems to have shown. I then tried to dissuade Miss Audubon from her expressed intention of destroying the original manuscript, but to no avail.

The entries in this notebook, which form the basis of Mrs. Tyler's 'I Who Should Command All,' have recently been published by Stanley Clisby Arthur[2] in his fair-minded, detailed and altogether excellent biography. Mrs. Tyler says that I have not recorded one biographical event between the year 1794, the year of Audubon's adoption, and 1800, the year of his baptism, and tries to put young Audubon in "Selkirk's Settlements," in

[1] See 'Audubon the Naturalist: A History of his Life and Time'; in two vols., New York, 1917.

[2] See Stanley Clisby Arthur; 'Audubon: an Intimate Life of the American Woodsman,' New Orleans, 1937.

Canada, at some time during these early years. All of these questions will be taken up a little later.

II

In 1914, at the very outbreak of the World War, a great flock of documents pertaining to Lieutenant Audubon and his family was discovered at Couëron, the seat of his country villa in France. Outstanding among them was a curious bill of Jean Audubon's family physician, Doctor Sanson, of Les Cayes, Santo Domingo, covering a period of nearly three years, from December 29, 1783, to October 12, 1786. It was accepted and signed by Captain Audubon, and receipted by the doctor, when paid on June 7, 1787. This is particularly remarkable in recording the birth of a child to "Mlle. Rabin" on April 26, 1785. The inference, supported by other documentary testimony, was that this was the identical child, who later became known as John James Audubon, and the preponderance of evidence in favor of this conclusion is even stronger today.

Jean and Anne Moynet Audubon appeared in the town hall at Nantes, on March 7, 1794, and declared that they did "adopt and recognize from this moment as their lawful children to wit: a male child, named Fougère, born since their marriage . . . . to him, Jean Audubon, and a woman living in America, who has been dead about eight years, and a female child, named Muguet, born also since their marriage aforesaid, to him and another woman living in America, named Catharine Bouffard, of whose fate he is ignorant.

"The two children being present, the first aged nine years, that will expire on the 22d of next April, the second aged seven years, that will also expire on the 26th of April next, and both having been born in America, according to the declaration which the witnesses above mentioned have signified as true, I have drawn up the present act, which the natural father and the mother by adoption, as well as their witnesses have signed, together with myself in this said day and year."

Fougère or Jean Rabin was baptized, as Jean Jacques Fougère (Audubon) on October 23, 1800, and the act was signed by Tardiveau, priest of St. Similien Church.

The Jean Rabin alias was used in the six wills drawn by Jean Audubon and his wife between the years 1812–21, and by Audubon himself in the power of attorney to which I have referred. It is these various legal documents bearing upon Audubon's birth and parentage, which Miss Rourke and Mrs. Tyler set aside as "not proven," yet they do not hesitate to place Audubon at the foot of a long list of spurious claimants to being the son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, without a shred of documentary support to such a claim, excepting the family tradition, based upon extracts from letters and journals intended by Audubon for the perusal of his wife alone.

III

It is generally assumed that the person, whose parents are not living, knows more about his early history than anybody else, and this is commonly true, except in the case of a child's early adoption, substitution, or abandonment by its true parents. What Audubon said publicly or privately about his birth, his age, and his parents, forms a mystifying record. According to Vincent Nolte, Audubon, after parrying some prying questions about himself in 1811, admitted that he was a Frenchman by birth and a native of La Rochelle. Joseph Robert Mason, youthful companion of Audubon on his famous journey down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in 1820–21, and who was closely associated with him for twenty-one months, told John Neal fifteen years later that Audubon had repeatedly represented to him that he was born in Santo Domingo.

Audubon's journal record of this journey, which I was permitted to examine rather cursorily twenty years ago, was published in 1929, and is commented on quite profusely by Stanley Clisby Arthur. While fortunate in escaping the fire and general mutilation by injudicious hands, this record has been tampered with at one critical point, in the entry of November 28, 1820, where Audubon spoke of his birth and parentage, and related incidents which he thought that his family in the future might wish to know. The mutilator of his text, however, as Mr. Arthur observed, did not succeed in forever obscuring what it was intended to conceal. In the two lines at this point, which have been blotted out as effectively with a pen as could have been done with an ink-filled brush, we can reasonably infer that Audubon gave his own mother's name, and either stated or implied that he was born out of wedlock, and in Santo Domingo. This inference is justified by the addition through the medium of another's hand and another kind of ink of the prefix "re" to the word "married" in what immediately follows the blotted lines. This, as originally written, reads: "My Mother, who I have been told was an extraordinary beautiful Woman, died shortly after my Birth and my father having married in France I was removed thereto when only Two Years old and received by that Best of Women, raised and cherished by her to the utmost of her Means . . ." Now, it is evident that the person, who obliterated those two lines and changed "married" to "remarried," was determined to make it appear that Captain Audubon had been first married to his boy's mother, but that after her death he took their child to France, where he married again, and this time to the woman who became the boy's stepmother, when the truth, as Audubon had evidently stated it, was quite the opposite.

A few years later, about 1824, when Audubon and his wife were living at 'Beechwoods', a plantation near St. Francisville, Louisiana, the wife of his old friend and former clerk, Dr. Nathaniel Wells Pope, left a record of her

reminiscences, quoted by Mr. Arthur, in which she said that Audubon had often described to her the cottage in which he was born, that was situated on the banks of the Mississippi River in Lower Louisiana and surrounded by orange trees.

At Oxford, in 1828, a lady who wanted his autograph, asked Audubon to write his name and the date of his birth. The latter, he said he could not do, "except approximately," and his hostess "was greatly amused that he should not know."

As I have already noticed, Audubon appears to have told Mr. Hay, of Edinburgh in March, 1827, that he was born in "one of the French colonies." In the introduction to the first volume of the 'Ornithological Biography,' Audubon, who was under no necessity of saying anything about his birth, made the vague affirmation: "I received life and light in the New World," and continues: "When I had hardly yet learned to walk, and to articulate those first words always so endearing to parents, the productions of Nature, that lay spread all around, were constantly pointed out to me"; and in the biographical sketch, "Myself" he wrote that "the first of my recollective powers placed me in the central portion of the city of Nantes, on the Loire River, in France." How do such statements support the theory that J. J. Audubon was the lost Dauphin, or suggest the palace at Versailles, where Louis Charles was born, with forty or more servitors around him with assignments mainly directed to the care of this little boy, not to speak of his later governesses, tutors or teachers?

In the biographical sketch just referred to, supposed to have been written about 1835, and which, though edited by his granddaughter, is replete with palpable errors, he wrote that "the precise period of my birth is yet an enigma to me." He then spoke of his father going from Santo Domingo to Louisiana, and there marrying a Spanish lady of beauty and wealth, and of having three sons born to them, "I being the youngest of the sons, and the only one who survived extreme youth. My mother, soon after my birth [implying that he was born in Louisiana], accompanied my father to the estate (sic) of Aux Cayes, on the island of Santo Domingo, and she was one of the victims of the ever-to-be lamented period of the negro insurrection of that island."

The evidence now available from a variety of sources as already stated, points clearly to the fact that the mother of Audubon was a French créole, Mademoiselle Rabin, native of Santo Domingo, where her children were all born, that she was not married to Audubon's father, who stated under oath in the bill of adoption that the mother of his son had died "about eight years" prior to March 7, 1794 (the date of the signing of the act) that is in 1786, or one year after 1785, the year of the birth of the child born to Mlle. Rabin, as recorded in the Sanson bill, the later entries of which prove her to have been in declining health.

In various extracts from Audubon's journals, written for the benefit of his wife, but not for the public, at various times from 1826 to 1828, chiefly at Edinburgh and Paris, he records a visit from the Countess of Selkirk, speaks of his high birth, of walking the streets of Paris like a common man, when he "should command all," of his hated uncle, "Audubon of La Rochelle," and speaks of the oath under which he was bound not to reveal his identity. The name of the Dauphin, or of Louis XVII, does not appear in any of these excerpts, but the reference seems to be clear.

It should be remembered that when the Dauphin and his mother were separated in the Temple prison on July 3, 1793, Louis Charles was in his ninth year, and that the boy was nearly eight years old when his father was executed, so that their son had the memory of several years of both his parents, to whom, according to the testimony of all who had known them, he was devotedly attached.

Mr. Arthur speaks of Miss Harriet Bachman Audubon, daughter of John Woodhouse Audubon by his first wife, telling how she had read in her grandfather's journal one significant sentence: he made reference to "my father, meaning Jean Audubon,—and in the next sentence said 'my *own* father whom I saw shot.' He said 'shot' because he was only eight years old and the word 'to guillotine' was not then invented." Miss Audubon was evidently promoting the idea that the naturalist's 'own father' was Louis XVI, and that her grandfather was, or had been, the Dauphin, but if there is any truth in the quotation it would definitely prove that J. J. Audubon could never have been the Dauphin, because the execution of Louis XVI was not witnessed by any member of the royal family.

When writing to Bachman in 1832, Audubon gave his own age as forty-seven, which would imply that he was born in 1785, and this would agree with the date of the child born to Mlle. Rabin, as noticed in Dr. Sanson's bill. In writing to Bachman again six years later, on April 14, 1838, Audubon speaks of his being then fifty-three years old, which would again point to the same birth date.

In a letter to his wife, written from New Orleans, in 1837, as noticed by Mr. Arthur, he spoke of that town as "my natal city"; and the local newspapers of that time hailed Audubon as a native of Louisiana. Moreover, Cuvier, in his report on 'The Birds of America' to the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, September 22, 1828, made the same statement, which in this case could have come only from Audubon himself; and when Audubon sailed for the United States with Rozier in 1806 his passport indicated that he was born in New Orleans.

Those committed to the Dauphin theory see in Audubon's features a strong Bourbon likeness, but such fancied resemblances never carry much

weight. Rev. John Halloway Hanson,[1] the biographer and protagonist of Eleazar Williams, was certain that this half-breed Indian was an aristocrat for he had the Bourbon features from top to toe. To many, perhaps, it would seem strange that J. J. Audubon should have found so close a resemblance between himself and Jean Audubon unless his father by adoption were his "real father." When writing in 1820, Audubon said that "Major Croghan of Kentucky told me often that he [Jean Audubon] looked much like me [and he] was particularly well acquainted with him". In the "Myself" sketch he also said: "In personal appearance my father and I were of the same height and stature, being about five feet, ten inches, erect and with muscles of steel. . . . In temper we much resembled each other also."

One day in October, 1826, when Audubon returned to his rooms in Edinburgh, and looked into a mirror, he saw not only his own face, but "such a strong resemblance to that of my venerated father that I almost imagined that it was he that I saw; the thoughts of my mother came to me, my sister, and my young days,—all was at hand, yet how far away." This does not sound like a Dauphin speaking; and it is doubtless true that comparisons drawn between the living or memories of the living are more significant than those based upon engravings or reproductions of old paintings.

In writing to young Spencer F. Baird in 1842, Audubon expressed the curious, if purely fanciful, idea that his mother once lived at "Mill Grove," near Morristown in Pennsylvania.

The foregoing record probably does not exhaust all the possibilities, but it is amazing enough, and partly explains why John Neal so often taunted Audubon for having had as many birthplaces as the poet Homer. A remarkable fact about most of these statements is that they come to us secondhand, that is from private letters and edited journals, the quotations from the 'Ornithological Biography' being the only ones that were published under Audubon's own signature. It would seem to be obvious that Audubon was determined that the facts concerning his birth and parentage should not be made public, and that to achieve this end he resorted to enigma, as the best available smoke-screen. If he thought that public knowledge of those facts would have been a stumbling block in his own career, and in that of his two sons, whom he once said he hoped might rise to eminence, he was indubitably right, for strange as it may seem, and unjust as it certainly is, the stigma of illegitimacy has always been a penalty which the public is ever ready to place on the head of the innocent. What strangers or what his intimates knew about those family matters is what Audubon was willing to

[1] Author of 'The Lost Prince,' New York, 1854. With this book, said William W. Wight, the habit began of referring to Louis XVII as "lost" as if he had been mislaid or hidden. "He was 'lost' only in the sense that he died." Hanson's mother was a daughter of a younger brother of Oliver Goldsmith, the poet.

tell them, and his own record seems to show plainly enough that he preferred to bear the taunts of the uncharitable than to face the reality.

IV

"One of the great miracles of history would have occurred," writes Miss Rourke, "if Audubon were the lost Dauphin, but this is nothing against the idea." True enough, but the same could be said of Eleazar Williams, or any one of the numerous pretenders. If there were solid, unmistakable evidence to support this conclusion, I would be only too glad to accept it, but the presumptive evidence is all the other way. The theory is too weak to stand on its own feet.

"Some of those," says Miss Rourke, "closest to Audubon during his lifetime, believed implicitly that he was of noble birth." This is, no doubt, very true, but Audubon said many things at different times to different persons that contradict any such idea, as that he was born in the New World, that his first memories were of Nantes, or that the only mother he had ever known was his stepmother. Thus in forming a judgment, independent of all domestic partiality, we seem to be thrown back upon those legal, family documents, which were drawn up before the youth was grown to man's estate and was obliged to fight his way in a hostile world.

"There was a gap," Miss Rourke thinks, "of nine years between Audubon's birth (April 26, 1785) and his adoption (March 7, 1794), which has not been filled in. Where was the boy during this time?" The evidence is fairly conclusive that Jean Audubon took his son to France late in 1789, so that this "gap" is reduced to about five years, and it seems to me that in his 'Ornithological Biography' and the "Myself" sketch he has filled this interval quite well enough himself. In the latter he spoke of "being constantly attended by two black servants, who had followed my father from Santo Domingo to New Orleans and afterwards to Nantes." Mrs. Tyler says that "it can be only mental inertia which has allowed hundreds of intelligent people to read this sentence, and not press the inquiry why the illegitimate son of a common, seafaring captain of Nantes should have been *constantly attended* by one or two black servants." But what shall be said of the mental condition of the people who read the opening sentence of the same paragraph about Audubon's first recollective powers placing him in the central part of the city of Nantes? If that statement was literally true no one could ever contend that Audubon was the lost Dauphin. Moreover, one would think that a household with an active boy rising five years (in 1790), and a girl rising three, could keep any two black servants on their toes for a good long time. Audubon did not mention his little sister Rosa, but there is no reason to suppose that he monopolized all the attention of those black servants.

In 1789, Jean Audubon had jumped from the frying pan of Santo Domingo into the revolutionary fires that were then sweeping France. At Nantes he became an ardent revolutionist when his city was entering the most terrible years of its history. It withstood a determined siege by the loyalists of La Vendée under Charette, and a reign of terror under Jean Baptiste Carrier, whose recall on February 14, 1794, just twenty-one days before the act of the adoption of his children was signed, had given him and his fellow citizens the first respite they had enjoyed in a considerable time. At Nantes, Captain Audubon had occupied a number of different houses during an interrupted residence of many years; and he continued to live there with his family until his retirement from the navy for disability, January 1, 1801, when he settled at his country villa, "La Gerbetière," at Couëron, on the right bank of the Loire, nine miles down the river.

During this earlier time, up to his sixteenth year, young Audubon had received little regular schooling, but had enjoyed a good deal of desultory experience in natural history and drawing. Thereafter, from 1801 to 1803, when he first returned to America, and for a part of a year, 1805–06, when he was at Couëron, aside from slight digressions, he was roaming the countryside and making a collection of his own drawings of the native birds. According to his own account of these formative years, he received a plenty of good advice, criticism and admonition from his father, and it was at Couëron that Fougère first met Dr. Charles d'Orbigny, who might be called his father in natural history. For my part I do not see the need of doubting the identity of the youth, whose life we have briefly followed from 1789 to 1803. If this was Audubon, who up to his eighteenth year had spent nearly five years in Santo Domingo, eleven years in Nantes, and parts of two years at Couëron, where does the Bourbon prince enter the picture?

Miss Rourke thinks that Lieutenant Audubon did not tell all of his reasons for sending his son to the United States, and that "whatever his reasons were they persisted, and may have had to do with the boy's parentage." This may be true, but what the father did not tell, the son apparently did. In writing to Miers Fisher in 1803, and to Francis Da Costa in the winter of 1804–05, Lieutenant Audubon expressly said that the compelling reasons for sending his son to America at that time were to enable him to learn English and enter trade. "Remember, my dear Sir," the elder Audubon wrote, "I expect that if your plan [with the lead mine] succeeds, my son will find a place in the works, which will enable him to provide for himself, in order to spare me from expenses which I can with difficulty support." If young Audubon had been the Dauphin or the legal king of France, is it at all probable that Lieutenant Jean Audubon, but recently known as such an ardent revolutionist, would have been selected to guard this scion of royalty, and then out of his own slender purse be expected to meet all the costs of sending him to America and of keeping him there?

There was, to be sure, another reason why the retired sailor and soldier wanted to get his son, Fougère, out of France at that time, though he may not have wished to write it. The young man was eligible for conscription. The need for "cannon fodder" was soon to become acute all over France, for Napoleon became emperor in 1804. Audubon told the secret at a much later time when on the Ohio River, November 26, 1820. "The conscription," he wrote, "determined my father on sending me to America," and he added, "a young man of seventeen [eighteen], sent to America to make money, for such was my father's wish."

V

In his journal of March 15, 1827, at Edinburgh, Audubon recorded a visit from the Countess of Selkirk, when he thought it strange that she should call upon him. "Did she know, I wonder, who I am positively; or does she think that it is John J. Audubon, of Louisiana, to whom she spoke?"

On October 9, 1828, according to Mrs. Tyler, Audubon wrote: "How often I thought that I might once more see Audubon of La Rochelle without being known by him, and try to discover if my father was still in his recollection, if he had entirely forgotten Selkirk's Settlements." In my version of this entry there is no '*s*' at the end of the last word. The vagueness which the plural number seems to impart, makes a difference in our interpretation, but not a whit with reference to the Dauphin question. This entry concludes: "and if . . . if I say a few words more I must put an end to my existence, having forfeited my word of honor and my oath." This reference to Lord Selkirk, who had been much in the public eye in England for nearly ten years prior to his death, and for many years thereafter, is the tenuous thread on which Mrs. Tyler builds an amazing superstructure. "It would appear," she says, "that John James Audubon was, at sometime a member of Selkirk's Settlements in Canada." She writes: "The long suspense is over! At last we know the reason for Admiral Jean Audubon's abnormal solicitude, which took the form of the constant attendance of those black servants, who guarded John James Audubon, the supposedly illegitimate son of the rough sea captain of Nantes! That little nine year old boy, adopted by Jean Audubon on March 7, 1794, was a personage whose real identity might presumably be recognized by the wife of the Earl of Selkirk. The wife of the Earl of Selkirk had apparently known him personally when he was a settler in Selkirk's Settlements. It is not likely that the Earl's wife habitually met the rough colonists sent out to the wilds of North America, unless by chance one of those colonists was not a real settler, but was a personage emigrating under this guise in order to hide his identity, and to seek the protection of the Earl's remote colony. If the Earl of Selkirk were hiding a person of importance in his Settlements

in the Hudson Bay country, very probably the Earl's wife met that person before embarkation; or perhaps she gave him hospitality in her home, as was common in those days when England was the first destination of terror stricken French refugees.

"And that other *Audubon of La Rochelle,* who apparently had been with him in Selkirk's Settlements, was he the person who had been entrusted to convey and guard that little boy of eleven years, on the long perilous journey to Hudson Bay?" Mrs. Tyler seems to have confused Hudson Bay with the Hudson's Bay Company, which drew its furs from a vast region, but none of Selkirk's Settlements was anywhere near Hudson Bay.

Audubon's claim that he was bound under a solemn oath to his father not to reveal his own identity, Mrs. Tyler thinks, explains many things about the early history of Audubon the naturalist. "Does it not explain why the wily old sea captain, Jean Audubon, adopted *two* children on the same day, to give a semblance of paternity to both acts? And does it not suggest why he registered the name of the mother of the girl, and omitted to register the name of the mother of the boy, whose recorded age almost paralleled that of Marie Antoinette's son, who had vanished from The Temple just forty odd days before the date of this adoption?"

It is my opinion that Jean Audubon, who was only *fifty* years old in 1794, and was then just getting a breathing spell after perilous times, knew what he was talking about, that he was no perjuror, and was perfectly honest in every statement sworn to and witnessed in this act of adoption. That he was a few days out in his memory of birth dates is not important. There is positively no evidence that he failed to mention the mother of his son in order to conceal the woman's name. The surest way of doing this would have been to use a fictitious one.

Mrs. Tyler reproduces the title of a book on the Red River colony, which she says "serves to prove that Selkirk's Settlements were preeminently suited for the purpose of hiding the little King of France far from a world on fire with his pursuit. . . . And the by-products of this place of concealment were to exceed in importance to the world, even his physical survival. The germinating genius of this growing boy, which straight through life seemed to flower under adversity, was born of this forest life and intimacy with primeval nature.

"It would be natural for Admiral Audubon to turn his eyes to those North American outbounds of civilization, which he had so extensively traversed, were he casting about to find asylum for his adopted son after Charette's death. . . Something had to be done to get that little boy out of danger, and so completely out of reach of Carrier's followers that pursuit would be absolutely impossible. Nor would distance alone provide sufficient protection. Secrecy must again be invoked, and masquerading

under some impenetrable guise. Selkirk's Settlements provided both requirements."

Mrs. Tyler even charts the course which she thinks Louis XVII, masquerading as John James Audubon, had taken in travelling from Nantes to the wilds of Canada: to England "the first destination of so many French refugees, Saint-Domingue, Admiral Audubon's former home; and probably from there to New Orleans, and up the Mississippi to the Settlements."

"The name La Forêt, [or La Forest,] which Audubon assumed, and which has never had any explanation, probably dates from this period. It may be the name under which John James Audubon was known as a Selkirk Colonist. . . This name was probably dear to her [Mrs. Audubon], because she was the only person in Audubon's life, who knew about his Canadian sojourn.

"This thesis, if true, provides the explanation for so many inexplicable elements in the life of John James Audubon, that it is with a distinct sense of relief that I offer it as a working hypothesis, in the light of these letters. For, as I have said, no amount of wandering around the countryside of Couëron could have fitted this adolescent boy, John James Audubon, for his future life, and transformed him into one of the most powerful, resourceful woodsmen the new world possessed.

"And yet when John James Audubon came to the United States in 1803, when he was barely eighteen years of age, he could traverse the continent alone like an Indian, find his way through trackless forests, swim swollen rivers, shoot with the marksmanship of the wilderness, and he could survive with his naked fists in the primeval forest of North America. His contacts with the Indians had the sure touch of easy familiarity; his knowledge of wild life knew no bounds.

"Where had John James Audubon acquired this forest training? It is my belief that John James Audubon acquired all his forest training in the Selkirk's Settlements, somewhere between 1796 and 1800."

What an extraordinary picture we have here of the boy 'king,' whose sister once said that if he had actually escaped from the Tower prison, he could not have lived long on account of his weakened condition; hidden for a time in the heart of Nantes, under the roof of one who was, or had been, an ardent revolutionist, adopted by this very man, Jean Audubon, in place of his own son,—about whose fate no one of the writers quoted seems to have thought it necessary to inquire,—taken secretly to England, where Mrs. Thomas Douglas, later to become the Countess of Selkirk, opens her heart and home to him. Then a mysterious uncle takes him to Santo Domingo, thence to New Orleans, and up the Mississippi River to that vague destination called "Selkirk's Settlements" where the boy 'king' first learned his Indian lore and woodcraft. It is sad to relate that this ingenious picture

bears no resemblance whatsoever to reality. As a "working hypothesis" it fails to work. There is not an essential line or word of truth in it, not one! It cannot be true in any particular, since in the period of 1796 to 1800, which Mrs. Tyler is endeavoring to fill, there were no Selkirk's Settlements in existence, and none indeed before 1803, when young Audubon was leaving France and heading for his father's "Mill Grove" farm in Pennsylvania.

The Scottish nobleman, Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk, did not come into his title and fortune until the death of his father in 1799. He was a patriot who gave his fortune and himself for the development of the British Empire by laudable means, his great aim being to turn the flow of Scottish colonists from the Carolinas and New England to Canada. He sponsored three settlements, the first in 1803 on Prince Edward Island, which was eventually fairly successful. The second, named "Baldoon" after a village on his ancestral acres, was situated in the western peninsula of western Canada, between Lakes Huron and Erie, and never became more than a straggling pioneer village before it was finally plundered by Americans in the War of 1812.

"The Selkirk Settlement" of the Red River was undoubtedly the one to which Audubon referred, and about which every reader of newspapers in England must have heard in the second decade of the last century. Its notoriety was due to its vast area, the money at stake, and the numbers of people involved. The legal battles fought over it in the courts, which lasted for upwards of ten years, with their strain and worry, caused, as many believed, the premature death of Lord Selkirk at forty-nine in 1820. The directors of the Hudson's Bay Company had granted Selkirk an area of 116,000 square miles, comprising parts of what are now Manitoba, North Dakota and Minnesota, and regarded as about the most fertile district in the whole North American continent. By the deed of January 12, 1811, Selkirk became the owner in fee simple of a tract five times the size of his native Scotland. This brought Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Company in deadly conflict with the Northwest Fur Company, whose directors were more interested in their fat dividends than in philanthropy. They gave Lord Selkirk no peace in the courts until, on the verge of financial ruin, his health broke. In 1821, the year after Lord Selkirk's death, the rival companies combined and later made a financial settlement with the Selkirk heirs. In 1869 the purchase of the territorial rights of the consolidated Company by the Dominion Government led to Riel's rebellion, which was dispersed by British regulars under Colonel (later Lord) Wolsely. Lord Selkirk seems to have lived about fifty years ahead of his time. Sir Walter Scott is reported to have said of him: "I never knew in my life a man of

more generous and disinterested disposition." A town and county in Manitoba bear his name.[1]

Why did Audubon refer to Lord Selkirk in 1828, and why was he curious to know if "Audubon of La Rochelle remembered Selkirk's Settlement?" For no better reason, apparently, than why he should wish to know if this same Audubon of La Rochelle, whom we have supposed all along was the naturalist's uncle, remembered his own brother, Jean, with whom we are told that he had quarreled.

Lord Selkirk's active colonial work lasted seventeen years, 1803 to 1820, during which time Audubon,—with the exception of about a year, 1805–06, when he was at Couëron,—was in the United States, mostly engaged in various business enterprises. On July 26, 1817, Audubon, as already noticed, executed a power of attorney in favor of his brother-in-law, Gabriel Loyen du Puigaudeau, a little more than a year after their father had drawn up his last will and but little over six months before his death. This will was at once contested in the courts of Nantes, on the ground that Lieutenant Audubon's natural children, J. J. F. Audubon and Rose du Puigaudeau, could not inherit property under French law. When this litigation became known, Audubon seemingly broke off relations with his father's family at Couëron, and in June, 1820, after the lawsuit had been settled by compromise, we find his brother-in-law writing him an appealing letter, saying that no word had come from him in two years, and that Madam Audubon "does not cease to speak of you." Audubon did not ignore this appeal, and as recorded in his journal, on January 10, 1821, at New Orleans, he wrote letters to his brother-in-law and to his foster mother at Couëron, a long neglected duty as he acknowledged.

Audubon, in his European journal, spoke of "my mother, the only one I can truly remember; and no one ever had a better, nor a more loving one. Let no one speak of her as my stepmother. I was ever to her a son of her own flesh and blood, and she was to me a true mother." If such apparently spontaneous statements are taken to mean what they say, they would be fatal to the theory that Audubon was the son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. In spite of such protestations, on the other hand, on August 6, 1826, Audubon writes in his journal, of plans for going to "Nantes to see my venerable stepmother," who had died on October 18, 1821; again in 1828, he spoke of this estimable woman as if she were then alive, although she had been dead seven years! This seems to show pretty conclusively that Audubon had for a long time been out of touch with his father's family, although one must think that he had been notified of his stepmother's death since he was a beneficiary under her will.

[1] For the facts concerning Lord Selkirk's life I am mainly indebted to 'Lord Selkirk's Work in Canada,' Oxford Historical and Literary Studies, vol. 7. By Chester Martin, Oxford, 1916.

VI

For some time I have been in correspondence with Stéphane Antoine Fougère, at one time mayor, and now a judge in the civil courts of Les Cayes, a city having at the present time a population of twenty thousand souls, and one of the most important seaports of the Republic of Haiti. By perpetuation of a cartographical blunder it is still sometimes designated "Aux Cayes," which means literally "at the keys" or Cays.

In a recent letter Dr. D. F. Rafferty says: "At the beginning of the World War I was ordered to Haiti, and stationed at Les Cayes, in charge of a French hospital. A friend sent me your book on Audubon . . . , and after reading it . . . I loaned the book to Mr. Uriah Cardozo, who returned it to me with the comment that the author had not mentioned the fact that Audubon was actually born aboard a schooner in the roadstead of Les Cayes. Apparently the story had some foundation in fact as it was common knowledge among the intelligentsia of Les Cayes."

The following information relating to Mademoiselle Rabin, Audubon's mother, to her parents, in whom were united the Rabin and Fougère families, and to Belony Fougère, the reputed brother of Jean Jacques Fougère Audubon, I give on the authority of Judge Fougère, who considers himself a great-grand-nephew of Audubon, in direct descent from Belony Fougère. His knowledge of his family history comes from his grandfather, Oxilus Fougère, who died at Les Cayes in 1908, at the age of eighty-five, and who had often spoken of his famous uncle, who lived in the United States, referring of course to J. J. F. Audubon. If the naturalist were correct in speaking of having had two (or three) older brothers, he was mistaken in thinking that all of them had been "killed in the wars," for Belony survived and his descendants are living in Les Cayes today.

Audubon's mother, according to this account, came from two well-known, land-owning families, the Rabins and the Fougères, who held estates respectively in the northern and southern parts of what is now the Haitian Republic. These tracts still bear these family names, in accord with the French custom of naming sections of the public domain after the principal land-owners, and are so marked on the maps today. Judge Fougère, who has kindly investigated this matter for me, found that in S. Rouzier's 'Geographical and Administrative Guide Book of Haiti,' the Rabin division in the north is situated in the fourth rural section of the Commune of Port-de-Paix, and the Fougère section in the district of Miragoâne in the southern part of the country. Her father, M. Rabin, is said to have objected so strenuously to his daughter's consorting with Captain Jean Audubon, a married man, that she insisted on having her children by him bear the patronym, not of that irate parent, but of her mother, who was presumably

more complacent. Perhaps Audubon's early dislike of the Rabin name may be traced to the opposition expressed by his mother, but this is purely speculative.

Mr. Arthur, in his careful biography, has reversed the names of the parents of Audubon's mother, giving Fougère as the father's name. Since both of us have derived our information from the same source, I have recently appealed to Judge Fougère to settle this question if possible, and he has written me under date of May 22, 1937, as follows: "If I have written to Mr. Arthur that Mlle. Rabin was probably Rabin by her *mother*, and Fougère by her father, it may have been due to a *lapsus calami* . . . nevertheless this false belief has been practiced by the Fougère family for a good long time. I have been lately positively convinced of the fact that Mlle. Rabin was *Fougère* by her mother, through explanations received from a near relative. As to whether the Mademoiselle was Fougère by her mother or her father is, in my opinion, a matter of no real importance. What is of the utmost consequence to know is that the Fougère of Audubon's baptismal name came from one of the grandparents on his mother's side."

Belony Fougère, Audubon's older brother and Judge Fougère's great-grandfather, according to the family records which I am now following, married Francine d'Obcent (or d'Opsant) Dumont, who was the owner of the large rural section of 'Dumont' in the district of Les Cayes. He worked as a planter, at one time taught school, and also set up as a shoemaker. Belony had two sons, Ozilus and Tibère, and four daughters, Bélomine, Telcila, Dulcinette and Elmirène. Louis Joseph Simon, a son of Telcila, and now living at Les Cayes, was at one time General Haitien Consul at New York. Belony spent his early life at Les Cayes, but later lived at Jérémie where he died.

Oxilus Fougère, nephew of Audubon, and grandfather of Judge Fougère, to continue this account, was a physician and also had a pharmacy at Les Cayes. He had three sons, Antoine, father of Judge Fougère, Fenimore and Marc, and a daughter, Marie. Antoine was a pharmacist of the first class at the University of Paris, and a former house surgeon in that city, with the degree of licentiate in medicine. Fenimore was a physician and assistant surgeon in the French army in 1870. Both Antoine and Fenimore were in Paris seventeen years. Some have thought that the name of La Forêt, or La Forest, which Audubon adopted and used for a time in his early life was a fanciful one, but according to Judge Fougère, as noticed by Mr. Arthur, Mlle. d'Obcent-Dumont, who became the wife of Belony Fougère, was a descendant of a family bearing that name, and having plantations at Jérémie. The Laforests living there today all have colored blood.

VII

If Audubon had been the son of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, is it possible to believe that he would have been sent to Paris, presumably in 1802, when the world had been "on fire with his pursuit," to study under Jacques Louis David, famous artist and Conventional regicide, who had voted to send his father to the guillotine, who had visited him when a prisoner in the Tower, presumably with the intention of painting or drawing his portrait, and who had actually sketched the pathetic figure of his own brave mother when on her way to the scaffold? This reference to Marie Antoinette suggests another critical scene in the life of this young queen, who had grown old while still in her thirties. On that desolate winter's morning of January 21, 1793, in Paris, in an upper room of the Templars' Tower, were gathered a stricken mother, the Princess Elizabeth, familiarly known as "aunt Babet," the two royal children, Marie Thérèse Charlotte, and Monsieur Charles, the Dauphin of France, in the presence only of their two watchdogs, the commissioners who were daily detailed from the Convention, and their faithful pantry boy, Turgy. In a set of significant questions which this same youth, in later years when grown to manhood, had sent to the spurious pretender, "Charles de Navarre," in 1817, was this: "What took place on January 21, when the cannon were heard in that upper room? What did your aunt say at that instant, and what unusual thing was done for you?" No answer to these questions was ever received, and it is safe to say that not one of the numerous claimants to having been that little boy,—no more than John James Audubon, who at that very time, according to his own written statements, was living at Nantes, under the roof of his father and devoted stepmother,—could have met this test with any better success. Audubon was not Louis Charles!

As far as anyone now knows, Turgy never answered his own query, but we may surmise that the mother and aunt embraced the child, and said perhaps the traditional thing: "Louis Charles, the King, your father, is dead: long live the new king, his son!" Very likely they tried to explain to him the new position in which he and they were now placed. The Dauphin was then not quite eight years old, having been born on Easter Day, March 27, 1785, and Audubon was about a month younger.

I have stated a number of facts and circumstances which weigh strongly against the idea that Jean Jacques Fougère Audubon was Louis Charles, the Dauphin, and later, by right of inheritance, Louis XVII, King of France; but there is another consideration, that of physical marks upon the body, that is even more important, and ought definitely to settle the question.

Those closest to the Dauphin knew of certain marks upon his body which taken together could identify him with absolute certainty. These were (1) vaccination marks on both arms, (2) a scar over the left eye, and another

on the right side of the nose, and (3) a deformed right ear, which had its lower lobe excessively enlarged. The first two were unimportant because they could be easily produced. Eleazar Williams or any other spurious pretender might, and sometimes did, point to such scars in the right places, but the deformed ear was a physical character which could not be imitated. There was then no plastic surgery in France of that day which could either remove or produce such a blemish without trace. This defect was never generally known, and probably actually known to but very few, if any, outside the royal family; and no wonder since the boy Dauphin, as seen in life and in his portraits, had always appeared with long locks, banged and hanging down over his ears, which they completely concealed; and no doubt his fond parents were quite willing that his tresses should hide such an abnormality. It was a bodily mark that tripped many a brazen pretender in the eyes of the knowing.

Did anyone ever notice that John James Audubon had a deformed right ear? Not so far as is known, and his numerous portraits give no suggestion of it. If Audubon's right ear was normal, as he and other artists represented it to be, he was not Louis XVII. Had Audubon possessed such a deformity would he have consented to the sacrifice of his 'ambrosial' locks in Edinburgh, on March 19, 1827?

VIII

There is probably no parallel in history to the Dauphin 'racket,' which began in France shortly after the reputed death of Louis Charles, lasted for the better part of a century, and the reverberations of it are felt even to this day. The causes which led to such an extraordinary succession of events do not seem to have ever been duplicated in either ancient or modern times.

Within five years after the death of the Dauphin, as recorded in the Temple's archives, seven boys, all claiming to have been Louis XVII, had already come to the attention of the French police. Soon they kept bobbing up overnight, here, there, and everywhere, and sometimes two were circulating in the country at the same time. Three who made such fraudulent claims, were living at one time or another in the United States or Canada. One of these, Eleazar Williams, I shall speak of later. The Dauphin's sister once remarked, when the number of those claiming to be her lost brother, had reached twenty-seven, that she believed every one of them to be false. Fifty years after the reported death of Louis Charles, the number of those claiming to be, or who believed, or who imagined themselves to be, that prince, had risen to forty, and some have estimated that the roll of dishonest claimants has by now touched the seventieth mark! They were an assorted collection of near lunatics, unstable persons with insistent

ideas such as delusions of grandeur or plain monomaniacs, mendacious liars, clever forgers, general swindlers or adventurers, and pious hypocrites. What did they expect to gain by such fraudulent claims? Probably not a diadem or kingly crown in most cases, but money and gifts of various sorts from the credulous, a share perhaps of the large private fortune of the sister of the Dauphin, and above all public acclaim and notoriety. The shrewdest forgers or the most consistent and accomplished liars did often obtain some of these things, such as jewels, coin of the realm, and a chance to live for a time at least in luxury. Several wrote fictitious memoirs, and many figured in the law courts, when they often drew fines and prison sentences. Their claims were usually thrown out of court, but if they were banished from the country they were certain to turn up again in the same rôle somewhere else.

Probably no boy in the world's history, whose life, or that part of it about which anything is definitely known, extended to only ten years, two months and two days, to follow the Tower record again, has had so many biographers, so many impersonators, or who has been pronounced dead and buried so many times, and in so many different places. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the bibliography[1] of this unfortunate prince has extended to extraordinary proportions. Over a hundred years after the reported death of the Dauphin a monthly publication, 'Revue Historique de la Question Louis XVII,' was started in Paris, and its editor began his address to his prospective readers with a quotation from Renan: "I fear," said Renan, "that the work of the twentieth century will but consist of retrieving from the waste basket a multitude of excellent ideas which the nineteenth century had heedlessly thrown away. The survival of Louis XVII, after leaving the prison of the Temple, is one of these ideas." This journal lasted until 1911 when six volumes had been completed. Moreover, this was published to continue the work of another periodical, Bulletin de la 'Société d'Etudes sur la Question Louis XVII,' which had a life of twenty-three years.

There was a shrewd adventurer, who suddenly appeared in 1830, coming apparently from nowhere, and passing under the German name of Karl Wilhelm Naundorff, in recent times identified, though not with complete certainty, as Carl Benjamin Werg. After a long and checkered career, he was thrown out of France, and went to England, where he invented a bomb that was operated by clockwork. Failing to interest the English in his invention, he started for Holland in 1845 with a passport bearing the name of "Charles Louis de Bourbon." Being detained at Rotterdam, the question of admitting him soon became one of international diplomacy

[1] William W. Wight, in his 'Louis XVII: A Bibliography,' Boston, 1915, lists 478 titles, and these were strictly limited to material found in his own library.

between France and Holland. The Dutch appear to have wanted his bomb, and having little liking for Charles X, the French king, the matter dragged over five months and ended in a compromise. The French were willing to have the name "Charles Louis" appear in the document,—the Dauphin's name being "Louis Charles,"—and for all they cared the bomb could be called "the Bourbon bomb," but they would not go a step farther. This was held, but on insufficient grounds, as a tacit admission that the Naundorff family was entitled to use the Bourbon name. The agreement was signed on June 20, 1845, and Naundorff, who had gone to Delft, was dead of typhoid fever less than two months later.

In 1851, the Naundorff family tried to get from the French Government an acknowledgment of their claim to the use of the Bourbon name, but without success, and they appealed against this verdict in 1874, but lost again. Finally in 1911, the Naundorff descendants made a third attempt at having their claim of being scions of Louis XVI acknowledged in France, but were again denied, and there the matter now stands. Naundorff had neither the physiognomy nor the physical marks of the Dauphin, but many believed that he was rather better than the average run of pretenders. Minnigerode,[1] whom I have followed in this statement of the Naundorff case, is undoubtedly right in saying that the admission, wrung from France by the Dutch in 1845, was one which no French court for a moment would have allowed. Nevertheless, Naundorff was buried with honors of royalty at Delft, and his monument there bears this inscription: "Louis XVII, roi de France et de Navarre (Charles Louis duc de Normandie)."

IX

A much more difficult subject to understand than the Hervagaults, the Richemonts or the Naundorffs, is the psychology of an American pretender to royalty, Eleazar Williams, one-time missionary to the Indians. It is a pity that Gamaliel Bradford never psychoanalyzed him. He had no criminal record, but was a teacher among the Indians for many years, and Bishop Hobart, of New York, ordained him to the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and baptised his Indian wife, giving her the name of Mary Hobart. Williams translated the Book of Common Prayer and numerous hymns into the Iroquois language, and at Green Bay, Wisconsin, started a school for half-breed Indian children. This was maintained until 1823, when he married one of his pupils. In 1839, Williams is said to have confided to a Buffalo editor that he was the real Dauphin of France, and ten years later an article, supposed to have been written or inspired by Williams himself, appeared in the 'United States Democratic Review' in

[1] See Meade Minnigerode: 'The Son of Marie Antoinette: the Mystery of the Temple Tower,' New York, 1934.

which his definite claim to royalty was made public. Meantime Williams repeated his story to anyone who would listen, but the widespread notoriety, after which he had evidently been striving, came with the publication in 'Putnam's Monthly Magazine' for February, 1853, of an article entitled "Have we a Bourbon among us?" by the Rev. John H. Hanson. Hanson corresponded with Williams, visited him, travelled with him, and became such an enthusiastic supporter of his cause that he wrote his biography, a volume of nearly five hundred pages, published in 1854. Hanson was an idealist, without a particle of critical judgment, and believing in the unimpeachable integrity of his hero, he accepted without question all of his yarns however amazing or impossible. I can relate but one of these which came out in a conversation with Hanson, who said in effect: "Before you left the Temple, at the age of ten you must have stored up in your mind many vivid memory pictures of extraordinary events, some of which you will be able to recall. Now I wish you would describe some of them." "A most remarkable fact," replied the self-styled Louis XVII, "is that up to the age of thirteen or fourteen my mind is like a blank page; nothing is written on it. Consciousness seems to have been imperfect or entirely lacking, and at that early period I was practically an idiot. Then, this strange thing happened: one summer's day, when I was bathing with a number of Indian boys, my friends, in the waters of Lake George, in my foolish way I climbed a high rock over the water and dived. The shock rendered me unconscious, but my boy friends dragged me out, and when I was gradually restored to consciousness, I was a changed person. My mind was given back to me, and the events which had happened in my earlier years in Paris were recalled. Pictures of soldiers and great personages were there, and there was a hard, cruel face, which I seemed to recognize with a start, as I suddenly came upon it when on a steamboat, or upon entering a train. I think what startles me must be the resemblance to my evil guardian of an early day, Simon, the cobbler!" Intelligent people probably knew as well then as they know now that a sharp blow upon the head is not conducive to an improvement in mentality. The Rev. Mr. Hanson should have remembered the Old Testament proverb: "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him."

Williams told Hanson that the Prince de Joinville, son of Louis Philippe, came to Green Bay and tried to get him to sign an abdication of his rights to the French throne. When this was denounced in France as a pure fabrication, Williams said to Hanson: "I do not trouble myself much about the matter. . . . My story is on the wings of heaven, and will work its way without me. . . . God in His providence must have some mysterious ends to answer, or He would never have brought me so low from

such a height. . . . I do not want a crown. I am convinced of my regal descent; so are my family. The idea of royalty is in our minds, and we will not relinquish it. You have been talking to a king to-night." They were then on a steamboat, approaching Burlington, Vermont.

In concluding his article on "The Bourbon Question," a sequel to the one to which I have referred, Hanson said: "To those who have charitably attributed to me the origination of a moon hoax[1] to sell a magazine, or the credulity of adopting the baseless tale of a monomaniac I reply . . . that I am content to leave the case to speak for itself, quite satisfied with the approbation of those, neither few, nor stupid, nor credulous, who entertain with me the strongest conviction of the high probability that beneath the romance of incidence there is here the rocky substratum of indestructible fact."

Eleazar Williams said that his story would work its way without him. It has, but has taken a different course from what he would have chosen, especially since the historians of the University of Wisconsin made it their business to investigate his life history. It has been definitely established that Eleazar Williams was a half-breed Indian, son of Thomas Williams and Mary Ann Kenewatsenri. Thomas was a grandson of Eunice Williams, who was a daughter of John Williams, minister at Deerfield, Massachusetts. She was captured in 1784 in a French and Indian raid, was married to an Indian chief of Caughnawaga, and her descendents all bore the Williams name. In 1824 Eleazar gave Sault St. Louis (Caughnawaga, Canada), as his birthplace, but he publicly maintained the fiction of being Louis XVII up to his death in 1858.

Eleazar Williams stands in a class by himself among the better-known pretenders to royalty in relation to Louis Charles. Why did this minister and missionary worker choose to lead a life of duplicity? His dishonesty brought him no monetary rewards. His greatest weakness seems to have been an inordinate vanity. His bold claims and those of his credulous friends, who did not know him any too well, made him a marked man and wherever he went interest in him was aroused. If he preached in a country church, that was an event to be remembered. In a recently published work on 'Old Historic Churches of America' there is pictured a church at Longmeadow, Massachusetts, "with which," it was stated "is associated the romantic story of Eleazar Williams, believed by many to have been Louis XVII, of France."

X

What shall be said of the conjectures of Mrs. Tyler on this crude Williams hoax? "There is a persistent rumor in Canada," says Mrs. Tyler, "that

[1] Referring to the story in 'The (New York) Sun,' of August 25, 1835, sometimes called the greatest scientific fraud ever perpetrated, purporting to have been written by Sir John Herschel, but now believed to be the work of a clever reporter, Richard Adams Locke.

the Dauphin lived there. When a legend of this kind lives through a century, it usually has some basis in fact, as is now seen [the basis being that Audubon was Louis XVII, and as such had lived in Canada]. And this may even account for the story of the 'mythical Williams boy,' who was missionary to the Indians, for Audubon's religious life was deeply spiritual, and he may have used his stay in Canada to this end; and the Williams boy's mother, Mrs. Williams, is reputed to be the indomitable and indefatigable Lady Atkyns, who gave Marie Antoinette her pledge that she would never stop till she had saved her son, Louis 17th. It may be that Lady Atkyns's pledge was thus fulfilled."

What a strange denouemont! Audubon, at the age of eleven, giving spiritual comfort to North American Indians, whom he had never seen, in 'Selkirk's Settlements,' which did not then exist, and in a country which he had never visited! What, I wonder, would Lady Atkyns have thought, Walpole born, whose husband had been a Norfolk baronet, after all her money had been thrown to the winds in a vain, if worthy, cause, of being the reputed mother of a half-breed American Indian, and a pious imposter at that? Would not the ardent biographer of that "Williams boy," who protested that he was not starting a moon hoax, be equally surprised to know how much moonshine there was in his whole story?

Audubon's life was romantic enough. He does not need any false halo of royalty. He can stand on his own feet.

AFTERWORD.—When we consider the fierce partisanship engendered during the Revolution, and the wide breach between what contemporaries spoke or wrote, and what they really thought or believed, the testimony of eye-witnesses to events in or about the Temple must be considered most untrustworthy. Moreover, the failure after one hundred and forty years of hot debate to throw any clear light on the ultimate fate of the Dauphin tends more and more to convince us that he was "lost" only in the sense that he had died. If this be the hard truth, what could be more vain than refuting the claims of pretenders or their descendants?

Cleveland Heights
Ohio