The story of Louis XVII. of France

Evans Elizabeth Edson
THE STORY OF

LOUIS XVII. OF FRANCE
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Crown 8vo, cloth neat, 4s. 6d.

THE STORY OF KASPAR HAUSER.
From Authentic Records.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Mrs. Evans has done well to tell once more the story of the mysterious foundling of Nuremberg, for undoubtedly there is at present a large circle of readers to whom it will be new; and as told in this small volume it has all the freshness and excitement of a novel."—Literary World.

"If this were a novel, it would contain as good a plot as you shall find. It is stimulating to the lover of romance, interesting to the student of human nature, an engrossing exercise for the legal intelligence."—National Observer.

"Mystery lends an enthralling charm to the subject which has been most forcibly put before us in this little book."—Westminster Review.

"She has undoubtedly succeeded in producing a book which is extremely interesting."—Pall Mall Gazette.

"Mrs. Evans has evidently done her best, and her bibliography is good."—Athenæum.
The original of this book is in the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in the United States on the use of the text.
Eleazer Williams.
From his portrait painted by Fagnani in 1853.
Butler & Tanner,
The Selwood Printing Works,
Frome, and London.
PREFACE.

My sole object in writing The Story of Louis XVII. is to make a useful contribution to authentic history.

I firmly believe that Eleazer Williams was the Dauphin, and to establish this fact is to explain many historical mysteries, and also to clear the character of an honest man who suffered greatly during his life, and died "under a cloud," as an impostor.

I never saw Eleazer Williams, nor any of his descendants. I am a member of the Williams family; and Eleazer, as a supposed relative, often visited at my grandfather's house, and was intimate with two of my uncles.

But that was before my day, and I never heard of the man until the publication of the article, "Have we a Bourbon among us?" in 1853. I happened then to be with one of the uncles alluded to, and on reading the statement, he exclaimed:—

"Now I understand! That explains it!"

Afterwards he told me that when they were both young, Eleazer used to tell him about wonderful visions of beautiful scenes and splendidly-dressed people which haunted him, and which seemed to be fleeting reminiscences of what had really happened in his childhood. Those extravagant descriptions were laughed at by his companion as the sentimental dreams of an excited brain; but in the light of Mr.
Hanson’s revelation the matter appeared entirely different, and my uncle expressed his conviction that Eleazer Williams was really the Dauphin of France.

The unexpected testimony of this relative, who was a lawyer, and a man of remarkably sound judgment, probably increased my interest in the story, and from that day to this I have kept the subject in mind, collecting gradually a mass of information which justifies me in offering to the public the results of my investigations up to the present time.

My reason for devoting a part of my book to an examination of the Naundorff imposture is that, owing to the unwearied exertions of his descendants and his partisans, his claims have been kept before the world; while the absurdity of his assertions is in danger of being forgotten, scarcely anybody nowadays taking the trouble to read the voluminous and incongruous narrative of his fanatical biographer, to whose efforts the continued agitation of his pretensions is chiefly due.

My condensed statement of the case contains all that is worth knowing of the matter.

In order to make the narrative readable and interesting, I have written it as a consecutive story, instead of interrupting its course continually by the addition of notes and references. But the material is entirely authentic, and my conclusions from the given premises are the result of careful and earnest investigation.

I have also appended a list of the principal sources of information, and these are accessible to any person desirous of making a thorough study of the subject.