

**MEMOIRS OF MARGUERITE DE VALOIS,  
QUEEN OF FRANCE, WIFE OF HENRI IV;  
OF MADAME DE  
POMPADOUR OF THE COURT OF LOUIS  
XV; AND OF CATHERINE DE MEDICI,  
QUEEN OF FRANCE, WIFE OF HENRI II**

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Memoirs of Marguerite de Valois, Queen of France, Wife of Henri IV; of Madame de Pompadour of the Court of Louis XV; and of Catherine de Medici, Queen of France, Wife of Henri II by Marguerite de Valois & Madame de Pompadour

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OF  
MADAME DE POMPADOUR  
*Of the Court of Louis XV*  
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*Queen of France, Wife of Henri II*

*With a Special Introduction  
and Illustrations*



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## CONTENTS

### LETTER I

	PAGE
Introduction.—Anecdotes of Marguerite's Infancy.—Endeavours Used to Convert Her to the New Religion.—She Is Confirmed in Catholicism.—The Court on a Progress.—A Grand Festivity Suddenly Interrupted.—The Confusion in Consequence . . . . .	13

### LETTER II

Message from the Duc d'Anjou, Afterwards Henri III., to King Charles His Brother and the Queen-mother.—Her Fondness for Her Children.—Their Interview.—Anjou's Eloquent Harangue.—The Queen-mother's Character.—Discourse of the Duc d'Anjou with Marguerite.—She Discovers Her Own Importance.—Engages to Serve Her Brother Anjou.—Is in High Favour with the Queen-mother . . . . .	21
---	----

### LETTER III

Le Guast.—His Character.—Anjou Affects to Be Jealous of the Guises.—Dissuades the Queen-mother from Reposing Confidence in Marguerite.—She Loses the Favour of the Queen-mother and Falls Sick.—Anjou's Hypocrisy.—He Introduces De Guise into Marguerite's Sick Chamber.—Marguerite Demanded in Marriage by the King of Portugal.—Made Uneasy on That Account.—Contrives to Relieve Herself.—The Match with Portugal Broken off.	27
---	----

### LETTER IV

Death of the Queen of Navarre.—Marguerite's Marriage with Her Son, the King of Navarre, Afterwards Henri IV. of France.—The Preparations for That Solemnisation Described.—The Circumstances Which Led to the Massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day . . .	33
--	----

## CONTENTS

## LETTER V

	PAGE
The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day . . . . .	39

## LETTER VI

Henri, Duc d'Anjou, Elected King of Poland, Leaves France.—Huguenot Plots to Withdraw the Duc d'Alençon and the King of Navarre from Court.—Discovered and Defeated by Marguerite's Vigilance.—She Draws Up an Eloquent Defence, Which Her Husband Delivers before a Committee from the Court of Parliament.—Alençon and Her Husband, under a Close Arrest, Regain Their Liberty by the Death of Charles IX. . . . .	44
--	----

## LETTER VII

Accession of Henri III.—A Journey to Lyons.—Marguerite's Faith in Supernatural Intelligence . . . . .	48
---	----

## LETTER VIII

What Happened at Lyons . . . . .	52
----------------------------------	----

## LETTER IX

Fresh Intrigues.—Marriage of Henri III.—Bussi Arrives at Court and Narrowly Escapes Assassination . . . . .	58
---	----

## LETTER X

Bussi Is Sent from Court.—Marguerite's Husband Attacked with a Fit of Epilepsy.—Her Great Care of Him.—Torigni Dismissed from Marguerite's Service.—The King of Navarre and the Duc d'Alençon Secretly Leave the Court . . . . .	64
--	----

## LETTER XI

Queen Marguerite under Arrest.—Attempt on Torigni's Life.—Her Fortunate Deliverance . . . . .	71
---	----

## LETTER XII

The Peace of Sens betwixt Henri III. and the Huguenots . . . . .	76
--	----



## CONTENTS

5

### LETTER XIII

- The League.—War Declared against the Huguenots.—Queen  
Marguerite Sets out for Spa . . . . . PAGE  
83

### LETTER XIV

- Description of Queen Marguerite's Equipage.—Her Journey  
to Liège Described.—She Enters with Success upon Her  
Mission.—Striking Instance of Maternal Duty and Affec-  
tion in a Great Lady.—Disasters near the Close of the  
Journey . . . . . 92

### LETTER XV

- The City of Liège Described.—Affecting Story of Made-  
moiselle de Tournon.—Fatal Effects of Suppressed  
Anguish of Mind . . . . . 107

### LETTER XVI

- Queen Marguerite, on Her Return from Liège, Is in Danger  
of Being Made a Prisoner.—She Arrives, after Some  
Narrow Escapes, at La Fère . . . . . 113

### LETTER XVII

- Good Effects of Queen Marguerite's Negotiations in Flan-  
ders.—She Obtains Leave to Go to the King of Navarre  
Her Husband, but Her Journey Is Delayed.—Court In-  
trigues and Plots.—The Duc d'Alençon Again Put under  
Arrest . . . . . 125

### LETTER XVIII

- The Brothers Reconciled.—Alençon Restored to His Liberty. 134

### LETTER XIX

- The Duc d'Alençon Makes His Escape from Court.—Queen  
Marguerite's Fidelity Put to a Severe Trial . . . . . 143

### LETTER XX

- Queen Marguerite Permitted to Go to the King Her Hus-  
band.—Is Accompanied by the Queen-mother.—Mar-

	PAGE
Marguerite Insulted by Her Husband's Secretary.—She Harbours Jealousy.—Her Attention to the King Her Husband during an Indisposition.—Their Reconciliation.—The War Breaks Out Afresh.—Affront Received from Maréchal de Biron . . . . .	151

## LETTER XXI

Situation of Affairs in Flanders.—Peace Brought About by Duc d'Alençon's Negotiation.—Maréchal de Biron Apologises for Firing on Nérac.—Henri Desperately in Love with Fosseuse.—Queen Marguerite Discovers Fosseuse to Be Pregnant, Which She Denies.—Fosseuse in Labour.—Marguerite's Generous Behaviour to Her.—Marguerite's Return to Paris . . . . .	163
---	-----

## INTRODUCTION

THE *Secret Memoirs* of Henry of Navarre's famous queen possess a value which the passage of time seems but to heighten. Emanating as they undoubtedly do from one of the chief actors in a momentous crisis in French history, and in the religious history of Europe as well, their importance as first-hand documents can hardly be overestimated. While the interest which attaches to their intimate discussions of people and manners of the day will appeal to the reader at the outset.

Marguerite de Valois was the French contemporary of Queen Elizabeth of England, and their careers furnish several curious points of parallel. Marguerite was the daughter of the famous Catherine de Médicis, and was given in marriage by her scheming mother to Henry of Navarre, whose ascendant Bourbon star threatened to eclipse (as afterwards it did) the waning house of Valois. Catherine had four sons, three of whom successively mounted the throne of France, but all were childless. Although the king of the petty state of Navarre was a Protestant, and Catherine was the most fanatical of Catholics, she made this marriage a pretext for welding the two houses; but actually it seems to have been a snare to lure him to Paris, for it was at this precise time that the bloody Massacre of St. Bartholomew's day was ordered. Henry himself escaped—it is said, through the protection of Marguerite, his bride,—but his adherents in the Protestant party were slain by the thousands. A wedded life begun under such sanguinary auspices was