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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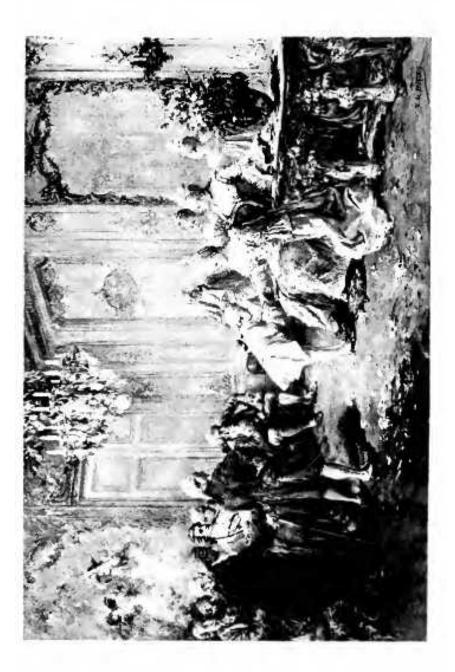
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MADAME DE POMPADOUR Of the Court of Louis XV

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CATHERINE DE MEDICI Queen of France, Wife of Henri II

> With a Special Introduction and Illustrations



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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