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ANNEX

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"We have made one mistake," remarked the  
duke, playing with his dagger.

*(About Catherine de' Medici, page 101)*



W. J. ... ..  
... ..  
... ..



Library Edition

ABOUT CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

SERAPHITA

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

With Introductions by

GEORGE SAINTSBURY



THE THOMPSON PUBLISHING COMPANY  
SAINT LOUIS AND PHILADELPHIA .

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(Translators, CLARA BELL AND JAMES WARING)

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ABOUT CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

AND

GAMBARA





## INTRODUCTION

THIS book (as to which it is important to remember the *Sur* if injustice is not to be done to the intentions of the author) has plenty of interest of more kinds than one; but it is perhaps more interesting because of the place it holds in Balzac's work than for itself. He had always considerable hankerings after the historical novel: his early and lifelong devotion to Scott would sufficiently account for that. More than one of the *Œuvres de Jeunesse* attempts the form in a more or less conscious way: the *Chouans*, the first successful book, definitely attempts it; but by far the most ambitious attempt is to be found in the book before us. It is most probable that it was of this, if of anything of his own, that Balzac was thinking when, in 1846, he wrote disdainfully to Madame Hanska about Dumas, and expressed himself towards *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (which had whiled him through a day of cold and inability to work) nearly as ungratefully as Carlyle did towards Captain Marryat. And though it is, let it be repeated, a mistake, and a rather unfair mistake, to give such a title to the book as might induce readers to regard it as a single and definite novel, of which Catherine is the heroine, though it is made up of three parts written at very different times, it has a unity which the introduction shows to some extent, and which a rejected preface given by M. de Lovenjoul shows still better.

To understand this, we must remember that Balzac, though not exactly an historical scholar, was a considerable

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