A history of France from the earliest times to the treaty of Versailles

Davis William Stearns
Title: A history of France from the earliest times to the treaty of Versailles

Author: Davis William Stearns

This is an exact replica of a book. The book reprint was manually improved by a team of professionals, as opposed to automatic/OCR processes used by some companies. However, the book may still have imperfections such as missing pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were a part of the original text. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections which can not be improved, and hope you will enjoy reading this book.
A HISTORY OF FRANCE
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES
A HISTORY OF FRANCE

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO
THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

BY
WILLIAM STEARNS DAVIS, Ph.D.
Professor of History in the University of Minnesota

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
TO THE MEMORY OF
HARRY DEIMAN

CHAPLAIN 354th UNITED STATES INFANTRY

KILLED IN ACTION IN FRANCE

FIGHTING FOR THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY

SEPTEMBER 29, 1918
PREFACE

This book was originally intended for members of the American army who naturally would desire to know something of the past of the great French nation on whose soil they expected to do battle for Liberty. The happy but abrupt close of the war vitiated this purpose, but the volume was continued and was extended on a somewhat more ambitious scale to assist in making intelligent Americans in general acquainted with the history of a country with which we have established an ever-deepening friendship.

During the war period, when this task was begun, it seemed possible at first to take some elementary history of France in the French language, translate the same, and present it to new readers in a suitable American dress. This soon appeared impracticable, but certain French manuals were extremely helpful in preparing this work. This is true of the well-known *Histoire de la civilisation française* by M. Alfred Rambaud, and even more particularly of the three admirable volumes of M. Albert Malet’s *Histoire de France*, which, taken consecutively, form a national history for use in secondary schools superior possibly to any similar books wherein English or American students learn the story of their own respective countries. Very specific acknowledgment must be made of M. Malet’s work for material used in Chapters IX, XIII, and XVIII, which utilization in some cases almost amounts to a free translation. The same is true also of the supplemental matter on the acquisition of the French Colonies (Chapter xxv). Of course every competent scholar of French history will recognize the well-known books in the English language which have been frequently laid under contribution. They are listed with other important volumes in
the bibliography of works on French history in English, given in the appendix. Certain sections relating to the Frankish kings, and to life in the Middle Ages, have also been adapted from the present author’s own short *History of Medieval and Modern Europe* (Boston, 1914).

To readers interested in the present-day problems of Europe (and what Americans are not?) the reforms of Napoleon are likely to seem more important than those of Charlemagne, and the policy of Thiers and Gambetta than that of Philip Augustus. The story of France is an extremely long one, and inevitably the narrative is obliged to begin with only a jejune outline, but this has been gradually allowed to broaden and deepen, so that the major fraction of the entire book is devoted to the period since 1789; and the story of the “New Régime,” of its sorrows, reverses, and final vindication and victory in 1918, is told with considerable detail, and one may hope with corresponding clarity and helpfulness.

One limitation must be stated very frankly. No other one nation of Europe has touched so many outside factors as France. A complete history of France would make an almost equally complete history of nearly all the great wars and major diplomatic intrigues that have agitated Europe. To write a short history, therefore, that was not simply to degenerate into a dry epitome, *military and diplomatic annals have perforce been cut to the bone*. The story has been the story of the French people, its progress, setbacks, trials, and victories, and only so far as foreign or military events have contributed to that story have they been mentioned.

Very hearty recognition and thanks are due to my assistant, Miss Gertrude A. Jacobsen, A.M., Fellow in History in the University of Minnesota, who redacted the entire text of this volume, prepared the maps, compiled the chronological and bibliographical tables as well as the appendix on the “States General,” and also did a large amount of the necessary translating. Without her faithful and highly scholarly and efficient