



A History of France from the Earliest Times to the Treaty of Versailles

William Stearns Davis

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This is a comprehensive history of France from the beginning to the end of World War I. From the 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 Medioeval 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."

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Marie Miles:

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