

HERO STORIES OF FRANCE

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Hero stories of France by Eva March Tappan

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EVA MARCH TAPPAN

**HERO STORIES
OF FRANCE**



FERDINAND FOCH, MARSIAL OF FRANCE

HERO STORIES OF FRANCE

BY
EVA MARCH TAPPAN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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HERO STORIES OF FRANCE

CHAPTER I

VERCINGETORIX, THE HERO PATRIOT

Two thousand years ago no one had ever heard the word "France," for the country that we call by that name was then known as "Gaul." It was larger than the France of to-day, for it extended to the Alps and the Rhine River.

On the sunny plains and in the pleasant valleys there were many little villages, mere groups of round huts made of poles bound together at the top, and probably plastered with clay to keep out the wind and cold. On the hills, however, there were often towns with streets of houses framed of stout timbers. There were workshops, too, and in these the Gauls made pottery, different sorts of weapons, and beautifully enameled jewelry.

The Gauls wore tunics of bright-colored plaids and, what seemed queerest to the Romans, they also wore trousers instead of the loosely draped robes or togas of Rome. The Romans actually spoke of the part of Gaul nearest to their own country as "the province that wears trousers." They were an enterprising people, these Gauls. They built roads from town to town, they laid bridges across the rivers, their heavily laden barges floated down the streams, and

the largest vessels on the Mediterranean Sea belonged to Gallic owners. They had valuable mines, and they knew how to work them. They knew a good horse when they saw one, and whenever there was a well-bred steed for sale, there was always a Gaul ready to pay a high price for him.

Many different tribes lived in Gaul, and often there was warfare among them. Then the warriors put on their chain armor, their golden rings and armlets, and their helmets, each made in the shape of the head of some wild beast. They seized their pikes and swords and shields, mounted their prancing horses, and galloped off to battle, great plumes nodding over their helmets as they dashed onward.

In Italy, southeast of Gaul, lived the Romans, the most powerful nation of the age. They ruled nearly all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. Their capital city was Rome, and there, as in many more of their cities, they had handsome buildings, statues, gardens, robes of silk and the finest wool, jeweled cups, and all sorts of luxuries. Powerful as they were, the Romans felt uneasy when they thought of their Gallic neighbors. Three hundred years earlier, the Gauls had dashed down upon them and had burned their capital. The invaders had finally been driven away, but there was no knowing when they might come again. The Romans already controlled part of Gaul—including the province that wore trousers—and if they could only rule the whole country, they would sleep better nights.