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**HACHETTE**

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Charles de Gaulle was born on November 22nd, 1890, in Lille, one of the biggest factory towns of the mining district of France, close to the Belgian border, close to the way through which the Barbarians had for centuries been threatening the rich plains of Northern France and — too often alas! — succeeded in invading the country.

As a child, little Charles heard the story of his town and his country. At home, during the long winter evenings, he heard his grandfather and his father speak of the war of 1870 and of the battles they had fought against the Prussians. It was as early as then that the little boy realised what a beautiful and peaceful country France is, and what a deadly peril the proximity of as greedy and ruthless a people as the Germans constitutes for her.

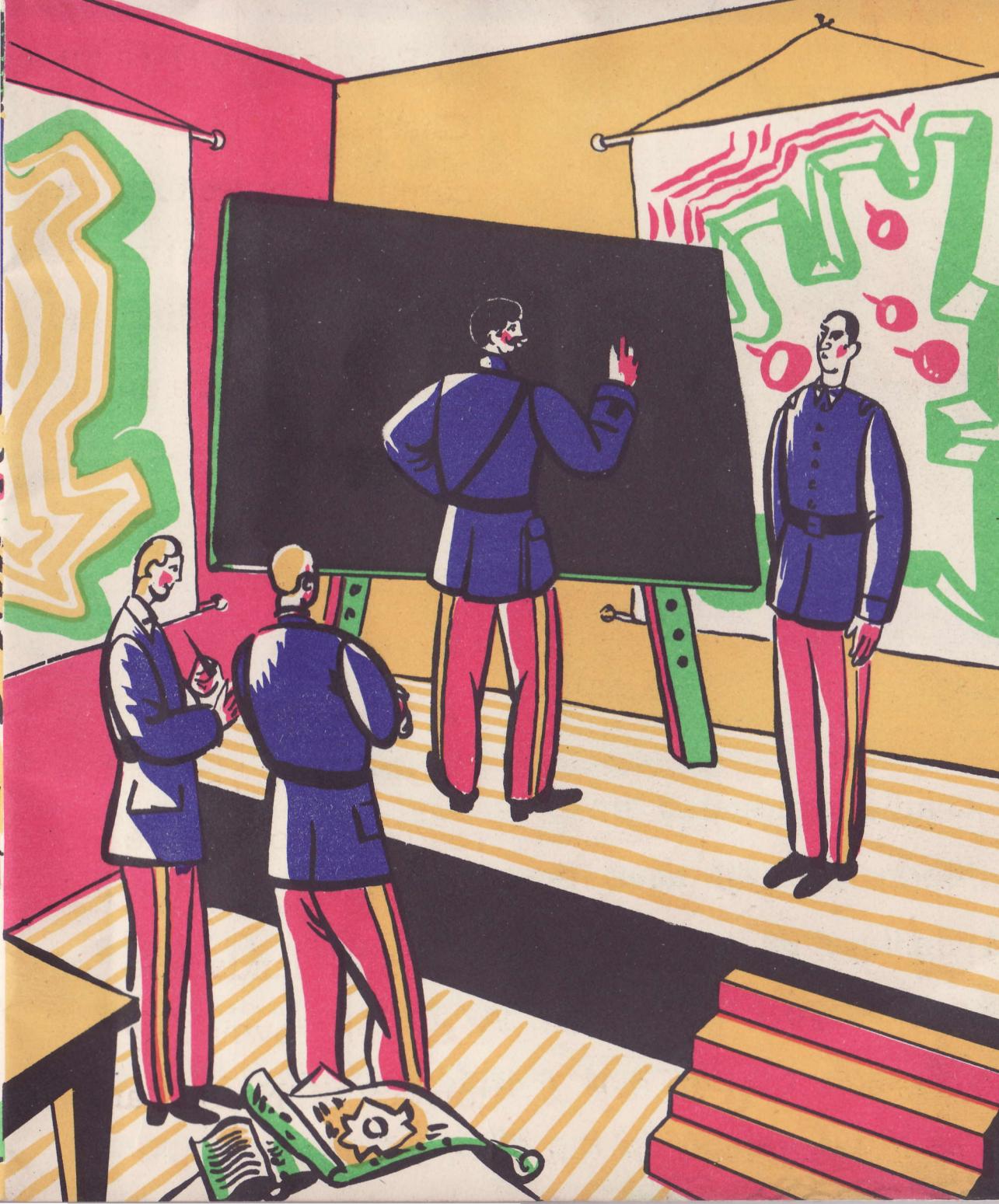


Charles de Gaulle was still in his 'teens when his father, a professor, became a don at the University of Paris. The whole family went to live in the capital, and there, young Charles, like thousands of other schoolboys, was taught history, geography, and the Fables of La Fontaine.





Eager to learn, Charles de Gaulle became a student at the Paris University. He was fond of reading and spent long hours on the banks of the Seine where the second-hand booksellers display their treasures. There he looked through fine old books, breaking his reading from time to time to glance at the beautiful landscape of the river crowned by the towers of Notre-Dame.



Prompted by his love for his country and the desire to lead a grim and adventurous life, Charles de Gaulle decided to become a soldier. He entered the military school of St. Cyr where he learned everything—from drill to mathematics—in order to become a perfect officer.



In 1911, Charles de Gaulle graduates from St. Cyr with the rank of Second Lieutenant. Soon he will have the opportunity of trying out his freshly acquired military knowledge on the battlefield; three years later, on the 1st of August, 1914, war is declared. German troops have crossed the French border and march onwards. Charles de Gaulle goes to war as a Lieutenant in the 33rd Infantry Regiment.



The Germans have invaded Belgium, a neutral country. The French army rushes to her rescue. Lieutenant de Gaulle is wounded in the Belgian town of Dinant. Scarcely recovered, he returns to the front and is wounded for the second time, at Mesnil-les-Hurles in Champagne, in March, 1915.



During the heroic defence of Verdun he is mentioned in Army despatches in the following terms: "Officer renowned for his high moral and intellectual qualities. On March 2nd, 1916, in the village of Douaumont, where, after a terrific bombardment, the battalion was attacked by the enemy on all sides, he spurred his company on to counter-attack in a furious combat and a ferocious hand-to-hand struggle, the only solution he deemed compatible with military honour . . ."



While leading his company against the enemy, amidst the frightful hell of Douaumont, this gallant officer is thrown to the ground by the explosion of a heavy shell. Again he is mentioned in despatches as an "officer unequalled in every respect."



Unconscious and badly wounded, he is picked up by a patrol. Unfortunately, it is a German patrol and it is in a German ambulance that he awakens some time afterwards—a prisoner. When he has recovered from his wounds, he is taken to a camp in Germany.



Charles de Gaulle is not a man to resign himself to the fate of a captive. Behind the barbed wire he has but one thought, one aim: to return to the battle. Five times he attempts to escape, five times he is caught by his jailers, taken back to camp and severely punished.

At last, after four years of bitter fighting, the allied nations are victorious. On November 11, 1918, Germany is compelled to ask for an armistice. The ringing of bells, the display of flags tell the whole world of the victory of civilisation over barbarism. Joy and relief fill every heart. Fighting has ceased, prisoners are returning home. Charles de Gaulle sees France again.



Charles de Gaulle is the first military man in the world who understood to the full the importance of the motor in modern warfare, that is, the importance of tanks, mechanised units, armoured divisions and aeroplanes. He wrote several books to make these ideas clear to the French High Command, who nevertheless remained deaf to his advice. Not so the Germans who copied all his discoveries.





Back in his country, Captain de Gaulle feels anxious to pass on to the younger generations the experience he himself has acquired during the war. He is appointed Professor of Military History at his old school of St. Cyr. There he gains the affection and admiration of his pupils and attracts the attention of his superiors by his excellent teaching.



In 1929 he is sent on a mission to the Near East. He travels through Iraq, Persia, Egypt and spends three years at Aleppo, Damascus and Baghdad, where he keeps in close touch with British Headquarters as well as with Chiefs of the French Army of the Levant, stationed in Syria.



September 1939! . . . War breaks out once more. Once more the Germans threaten France and the whole world. Once more the French soldiers rush to the frontier, eager to defend their country. They are heroic but inadequately equipped. . . . Where are the mechanised forces so urgently demanded by General de Gaulle?



The French army has not enough tanks, the German army possesses a tremendous number of them. However, thanks to his military genius, de Gaulle succeeds in pushing them back at Abbeville and is promoted on the battlefield to the rank of General—the youngest in the French Army. General de Gaulle is then appointed Under-Secretary for War in the French Government and hastily recalled to Paris. But, alas! it is too late for him to reorganise the French army according to his own plans.

A TOUS LES FRANÇAIS

La France a perdu une bataille!  
Mais la France n'a pas perdu la guerre!

Des gouvernements de rencontre ont pu capituler, céder à la pression, céder à la volonté. Puis, ils se sont battus à la seconde. Cependant, rien n'est perdu!

Rien n'est perdu, parce que cette guerre est une guerre mondiale, une guerre de l'Univers Libre, des forces immenses n'ont pas encore donné. Un seul combat a été perdu, mais pas perdu tout. Que la France, ce jour-là, soit présente à la victoire. Alors, elle retrouvera sa liberté et sa grande place dans l'Europe et dans le monde.

Voilà pourquoi je convie tous les Français, où qu'ils se trouvent, à s'attacher à moi dans l'action, dans la sacralisation de l'espérance.

Notre patrie est en peril de mort.  
Luttons tous pour la sauver!

VIVE LA FRANCE !

J. de Gaulle  
GENERAL DE GAULLE

18-6-40



On the 16th of June, 1940, a makeshift Government, acting falsely in the name of France, capitulates, delivering its country to the Germans. From London, General de Gaulle broadcasts an appeal to all Frenchmen, awakening their hope again and urging them to resist the enemy by every means.



The Fighting French Forces proudly play their part in the war. Under the Cross of Lorraine they win many a battle on the sea and in the air. Their ships sweep the oceans, wrecking German U-boats, their planes protect British convoys and bomb German towns.



Everywhere in France courageous citizens are working in underground movements against the Germans. They print clandestine papers to tell their countrymen of their resistance and of the heroic deeds of the Fighting French. The Germans fear their indomitable spirit; whenever they can catch one of them they shoot him. For every act of sabotage or attack against a single German soldier, hundreds of French patriots must die. But thousands rise and carry on the task.

The  
people  
of France  
have heard  
General de  
Gaulle's voice.  
Crushed, dis-  
armed, starving,  
they do not yield to  
the conqueror. French  
patriots place bombs in  
the factories working for  
the Germans, they re-  
move rails where German  
trains are expected to pass, and  
so destroy as many enemy lives  
and enemy arms as in a real battle.





From every port of France little boats smuggle themselves out in the night and risk the dangerous journey to Britain. Young French boys, mere children sometimes, try to escape in order to join General de Gaulle. They do it at the risk of losing their lives, for the enemy watches the coast with his battleships and his fighter planes. The Germans fear the help these courageous boys are going to give to their enemy and try hard to prevent them from getting over to England.

In the first Libyan campaign the Italians—who, like cowards, had stabbed France in the back in June, 1940, while she was struggling desperately against overwhelming German forces—learn to their own cost that the French fighting spirit is still alive and as fierce as ever. At the beginning of 1941 a French corps crosses the desert on camels and, under the command of Colonel Colonna d'Ornano, successfully raids the Italian fort of Mourzouk, causing heavy losses to the enemy.



Colonel Colonna d'Ornano, a member of an old French military family and one of the first officers to join the Free French, is killed at Mourzouk while leading his men against the Italians. Of him, General de Gaulle says: "His death was the worthy consummation of a soldier's life."





A few weeks later, after encircling the fort of Koufra and laying siege to it, Colonel Leclerc, in command of a French force, compels the Italian garrison to capitulate.

A great part of the French Empire has put itself at the disposal of General de Gaulle, asking him to become its leader and make use of its tremendous resources in men and raw materials for the common good of the United Nations. Brazzaville, in French Equatorial Africa, is the capital of the Fighting French Empire.



In the summer of 1941  
the Vichy Government  
allows the Germans to  
use bases in French  
Syria. General de Gaulle  
feels obliged to act.  
After bitter fighting his  
troops are victorious and  
see to it that the country  
remains under French  
influence and plays its  
part in the defence of  
the world against the  
evil Axis forces.





In June, 1942, a handful of Fighting French form the pivot of the British defence in Libya. For sixteen days this brigade, under the command of General Koenig, holds out at Bir Hakeim, destroying seventy Axis tanks and inflicting heavy losses in men and material on the German and Italian forces, completely upsets Rommel's plans. A special announcement from G.H.Q. in Cairo reads: "The United Nations owe a very great debt of gratitude and admiration to the First Free French Brigade and its gallant commander."

# CHARLES de GAULLE

par

Philippe Barrès

Crown 8vo. Paper Covers

A penetrating study, in the original French, of the Life of the great leader of the Fighting French Movement, and his original ideas on the use of mechanised forces in modern war.

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