

DURUY'S GENERAL HISTORY

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GENERAL HISTORY  
OF THE  
WORLD

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# GENERAL HISTORY OF THE WORLD

BY

VICTOR DURUY

FORMERLY MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION AND MEMBER  
OF THE ACADEMY

*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH*

THOROUGHLY REVISED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND A SUMMARY OF  
CONTEMPORANEOUS HISTORY (1848-1898)

BY

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NEW YORK: 46 EAST 14TH STREET  
THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY  
BOSTON: 100 PURCHASE STREET

13369





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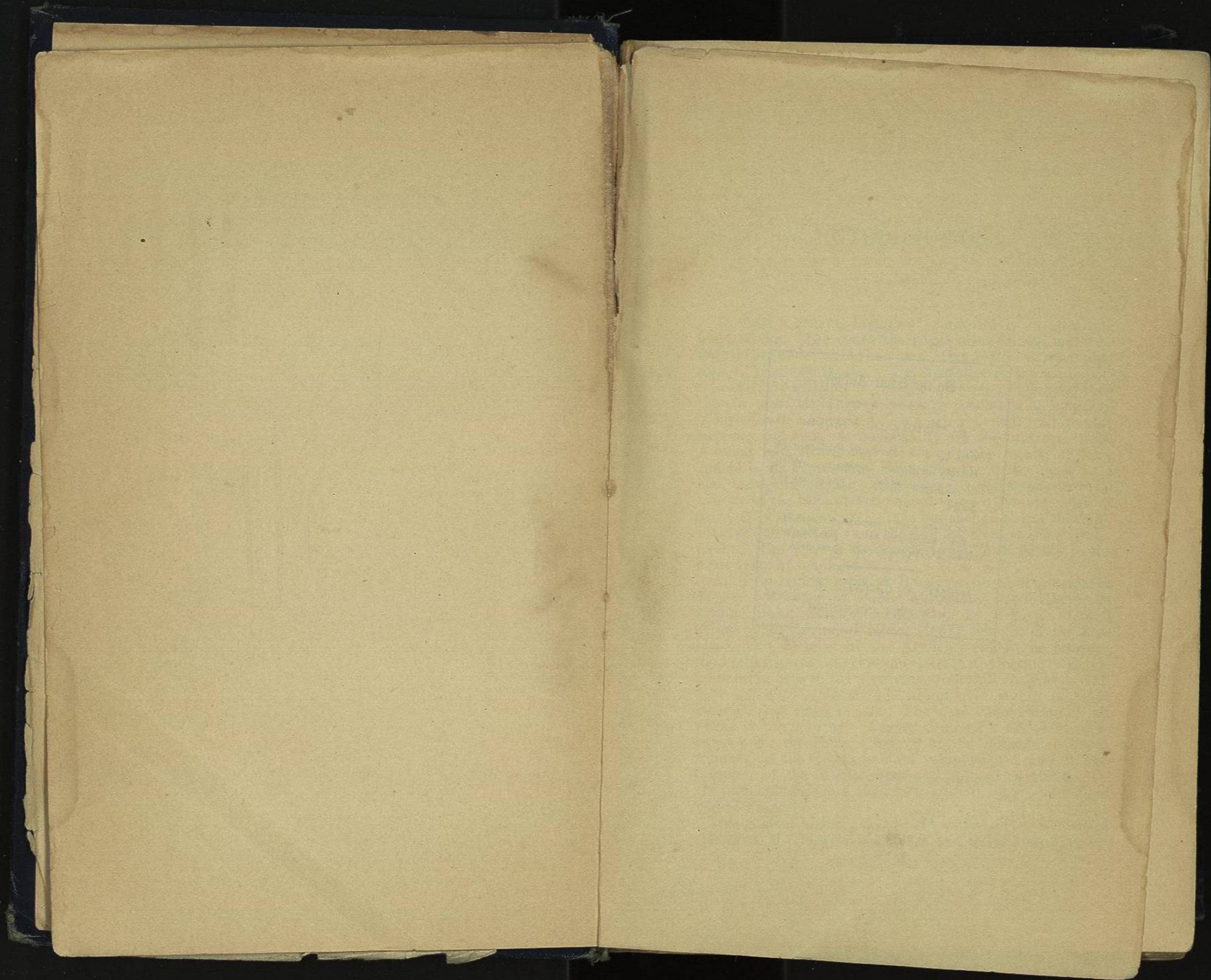
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Norwood Press

J. S. Cushing & Co. - Berwick & Smith  
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By the Same Author.

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## INTRODUCTION

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To write a general history of the world is an appalling undertaking. The fewer the pages allowed, the more intricate that undertaking becomes. Out of the overwhelming mass of past events, the writer must discern the all-important and imperishable in the life of each people, and then flash it upon the page in language concise as an epigram. Comprehensive learning, keen discernment, philosophic accuracy and stainless impartiality are absolute essentials. Another requisite is that divine gift, the faculty of terse and pleasing expression. Moreover, the writer must be a man living among men. No recluse is competent to write history in the highest and noblest sense. Events must be marshalled like an army. It is not enough to line them up, soulless and listless, as in the dull sequence of the encyclopædia. The heart of the true historian must pulsate to the heart-beats of mankind.

All these requirements M. Duruy possessed in preëminent degree. Minister of Public Instruction (1863-1869), he revolutionized historical education in France. Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor (1867), Senator of the Empire (1869), Member of the Academy (1884), he attained the highest grades of civic and literary distinction. But as a historian he won his permanent renown. A tireless student and author, during his life of over eighty years he knew no such thing as rest. The mere enumeration of his works is bewildering. Among them are a sacred history, based upon the Bible, a history of the Romans in seven volumes, of the Greeks in three volumes, of France in two volumes, of the Middle Ages and of modern times. Of his publications more than two million copies have been sold in France.

This general history, up to 1848, embodies the condensed results of M. Duruy's researches and reflections. Never-



theless, for two reasons thorough revision has been necessary. At times M. Duruy dwells on events, connected with France, at greater length than is desirable for us. Furthermore, history, like science, is progressive and never standing still. Not rarely does she change her verdicts in consequence of later light. In her domain, however often travelled over, discoveries are constant. Therefore I have abridged, enlarged or modified as I deemed best. Some few chapters I have entirely recast, among them that on "The Three Eastern Questions." But, except with a careful and a reverent hand, I have touched no word which the great master wrote.

The work of M. Duruy ends with the year 1848. The last quarter of the book — that devoted to "Contemporary History" and covering the last fifty years — is wholly my own. To write the story of to-day has been difficult. It has been none the less arduous because a delightful task. For aid in its treatment I have been indebted to many friends, and specially to Professor H. B. Adams, LL.D. of Johns Hopkins University. I have sought to continue the same system which, in the earlier portion of the volume, the French author follows so successfully and well. I have endeavored to avoid the mistakes consequent upon nearness, wherein the recent is prone to fill the sky, and have striven to observe just proportion between related facts. But the eye of a hundred years hence will mark and gauge the closing events of this century with clearer and wiser vision than can we.

EDWIN A. GROSVENOR.

AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A.

September 7, 1898.

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