

**FOUR OXFORD LECTURES, 1887:  
FIFTY YEARS OF EUROPEAN  
HISTORY. TEUTONIC CONQUEST  
IN GAUL AND BRITAIN**

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**EDWARD A. FREEMAN**

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# FOUR OXFORD LECTURES

1887

FIFTY YEARS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY  
TEUTONIC CONQUEST IN GAUL AND BRITAIN

BY

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## P R E F A C E.

Of these four lectures, suggested by recent events, the first two stand quite independent of any of the courses, past and present, spoken of in the preface to my "Chief Periods of European History." They simply set forth the thoughts suggested by the Jubilee year from an historical point of view. The latter part of the second lecture has been somewhat expanded, but only expanded, since its reading in the schools. It was impossible to get all the matter into the time allowed for a single lecture. The second pair of lectures, I may say, have been forced upon me by late discussions. I should have been much better pleased to say nothing more about Teutonic Conquest in Britain till I had reached the subject by the path which I had chalked out. But there has been so much controversy on the matter, I find myself so constantly taken to be the representative of doctrines which neither I nor, as far as I know, anybody else ever maintained, that I was in a manner driven both to speak and to publish. I hope that these two lectures may be taken as a kind of summary beforehand of what I hope to do for the whole subject, if life and strength are spared me.

OXFORD, *February 10th, 1888.*



**FIFTY YEARS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY.**

**TWO LECTURES.**





## LECTURE I.

(NOVEMBER 3, 1887.)

THE immediate Jubilee fever may be supposed by this time to have passed away; but it may not be useless to take advantage of a point of time which has caused so many to look back, in order to call up some memories of the state of things half a century ago. The point to which we must look back for such a purpose, and the point from which we must look back, may both seem to be purely arbitrary. The fifty years between 1837 and 1887 have been marked by some of the most memorable events in European history; they truly show that our own time is as well worthy of the heed of the historical student as any time that ever went before it. But the period of fifty years, as a period, is not clearly marked off, either at its beginning or at its end, by any of the great turning-points of history. We cannot say that the year 1837 was one of the marked historic years of all time or of our own time. Points a few years before and a few years later have far greater claim to reckon among the epoch-making years. The year 1830 was a memorable year; we might say that 1848 was a yet more memorable year, were it not that 1848 is so clearly a second step in a career in which 1830 was the first step. The events of 1830 were by no means the first revolt against the arrangements of 1814-5; but they were the first great and successful revolt, the first assertion on a great scale of the doctrine that it is not for certain sovereigns or diplomatists to meet together and settle the destinies of nations, but that it was for the nations to settle their

destinies for themselves. The events of 1848 were the fresh assertion of this doctrine on a still greater scale; they were the strivings—strivings for the most part stifled and blighted at the time, but destined to bear fruit in season—after the results which were won in 1859 and 1860, in 1866 and 1871. We cannot say that the year 1837 is marked by any events on at all the same scale as the events either of seven years before or of eleven years after. Yet things are recorded in its annals which look both backward and forward. To refresh my memory as to its story, I looked to the well-known book called *Annals of our Time*. It takes in only the latter half of the year, the months that followed Her Majesty's accession. That is, it starts from the date from which our fifty years must be held to begin. That second half-year of 1837 was a stirring time in Canada, a time not only stirring but specially instructive. It was a stirring time on the Afghan border, a border to which the parochial European mind is less kindly drawn than it is to the fates of the younger France and the younger England in the West. Africa too has its contribution; the wars of France in Algeria were going on. But on the continent of Europe little was recorded, beyond one event, not of the first scale in point of magnitude, but whose significance, as we look either backwards or forwards, is not small. For the entry runs thus; "November 1st. Decree of the King of Hanover, annulling the constitution of 1833."

That entry, and yet more another which follows it in the next month, is of special interest to professors who venture to open their mouths on current affairs. How many of us here are ready, if need be, to share the confessorship of Ewald, Dahlmann, Gervinus, and the brothers Grimm? But over these smaller personal questions we must not tarry. Still the fact that there was, exactly fifty years back, a separate King of Hanover to grant or to annul constitutions, though not one of the facts which stir the general heart of the world, is a fact which is well worth our looking at. It is