

whose son, grandsons and great-grandsons were Citizens or Freemen, a privilege which gave them permission to engage in trade and of which they availed themselves accordingly.

John Stow in his survey of London, published 1598, mentions that there was among others a monument to George Stoddard, Merchant, in the parish church of St. Olave, Tower Street Ward—erected about 1585.

[Since writing the above I have come across "Hall's, Society in the Elizabethan Age" wherein is given a very full sketch of the life and character of this George Stoddard. He was an apprentice to Master Thomas Lodge grocer of London, with whom he continued for many years thereafter, as his Manager or agent, traveling to Flanders, Ireland and even Russia. He is depicted as an unprincipled knave, a cunning usurer, turning the opportunities of his master's service to further his own ends, and unblushingly defrauding his employer by allowing balances due him, (by his own accounting) to remain unsettled that he might charge 20 to 25 per cent., and in some instances 100 per cent. interest; compounded annually for many years:—at last having by these means amassed an indebtedness equivalent to nearly 50 thousand dollars, he astonished and alarmed, if he did not nearly ruin his Master, now Alderman Lodge, by demanding payment. He then began business on his own account "with the fairest promise of success." Being deeply versed in all the intricacies of the law, he still retained some of the most skilful counsel of the day, and never let an opportunity slip for securing his own inordinate profits at the cost of the utter ruin if need be of his unfortunate client. Although nominally a grocer and a citizen, he was really a speculator and usurer, loaning money and goods to needy gentlemen and traders and exacting the last penny in payment.

All this to the minutest item is detailed in an account book or journal kept by George Stoddard himself, and which has been preserved to the present time. Any thought of evil in these transactions seems to have been farthest from the usurer's mind, he frankly narrates the circumstances and sets down his profits in the most ingenuous manner, thus a country gentleman whose name occurs for many years on his books was largely his debtor,