

**A SURVEY OF  
LONDON, WRITTEN  
IN THE YEAR 1598**

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A Survey of London, Written in the Year 1598 by John Stow & William J. Thoms

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**JOHN STOW & WILLIAM J. THOMS**

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# SURVEY OF LONDON,

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1598,

BY

JOHN STOW.

A NEW EDITION,

EDITED BY

WILLIAM J. THOMS, ESQ. F.S.A.

SECRETARY OF THE CAMDEN SOCIETY.



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"Plato was used to say, 'that many good laws were made, but still one was wanting; viz. a law to put all those good laws into execution.' Thus the citizens of London have erected many famous monuments to perpetuate their memories; but still there wanted a monument to continue the memory of their monuments (subject by time and otherwise to be defaced), which at last, by JOHN STOW, was industriously performed."—FULLER'S WORTHIES.

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MDCCCXLII.

TO

ANTHONY WHITE, ESQ.

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS,

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS PROFESSIONAL SKILL

AND PRIVATE EXCELLENCE,

*This Volume*

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS ATTACHED AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,

WILLIAM J. THOMS.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE

OF THE

## LIFE AND WRITINGS OF JOHN STOW.

If it were given to the reader to wield for a brief space the staff of Prospero, with power to conjure up a vision of London as it existed in some former period, there can be little doubt but that he would so employ his art that the London of Shakespeare should stand revealed before him. Happily, although Prospero's staff is broken, the conjuration and the mighty magic necessary to call up this busy pageant were lodged in the untiring pen of honest John Stow.

Fortunate indeed was it for the London of that age that one, born and bred within her walls, undertook as a labour of love a Survey which has enabled after generations

"to view the manners of the town,  
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings."

and acquire a knowledge of Queen Elizabeth's capital more intimate than we possess of the same city at any other period, or of any other city in any age of the world. How well, how faithfully, this worthy citizen performed the task his patriotism selected, one glance at his straight-forward, quaint, and most picturesque of narratives will serve to show. In every page of the Survey of London we meet with evidence of an unwearied patience, a devoted love of truth, and a kindly feeling towards his fellow men—qualities which, after the lapse of more than two centuries, have won for its author the honourable and well-deserved epithet of the Venerable Stow.

The merits of our author, and the value of his interesting work, are too well known and too highly appreciated to call for further eulogy upon this occasion; yet it seems but a proper tribute to the memory of John Stow, that the readers of this edition of his Survey of London should be presented with some notice of a life and labours devoted to preserve the memory of every thing which he thought likely to interest posterity.

John Stow was born in London, in the parish of St. Michael, Cornhill, in the year 1525. His father and his grandfather were likewise citizens and residents in that parish.

There can be little doubt of the supposition, that Stow followed the trade of a tailor, being well founded; since we not only find him so described in a letter written by Grindal, then bishop of London, to the Privy Council, but in a complaint made by Stow himself to the magistrates against one William Ditcher and his wife for abusing him, he states that the offenders reflected upon his Chronicles and his trade as a tailor, and called him Prick-louse knave; an epithet exclusively applied to those who follow the calling of honest Robin Starveling, who "played Thisbe's mother".<sup>\*</sup>

Let his calling however have been what it may, his life was devoted not to the busy pursuit of wealth, but to the study of his country's history; and therefore, like that of any other student, it exhibits few incidents calculated to startle or surprise the reader. Indeed, the principal events of it may almost be related in the words of the worthy antiquary himself—from the autobiographical fragments scattered throughout his works.

Thus, after describing the abbey of nuns, of the order of St. Clare, called the Minorites, he furnishes

<sup>\*</sup> Ben Jonson likewise calls him so (see note, page xii.); and if further evidence were necessary, we have that of Sir Henry Spelman, as recorded by Aubrey. "He said to Sir William Dugdale, we are beholden to Mr. Speed and Stowe for stitching up for us our English history. It seems they were both tailors."

us with an anecdote of his boyish days, telling us,—“Near adjoining to this abbey, on the south side thereof, was sometime a farm belonging to the said monastery; at the which farm I myself, in my youth, have fetched many a halfpenny worth of milk, and never had less than three ale pints for a halfpenny in the summer, nor less than one ale quart for a halfpenny in the winter, always hot from the kine, as the same was milked and strained. One Trollop, and afterwards Goodman, were farmers there, and had thirty or forty kine to the pail. Goodman's son, being heir to his father's purchase, let out the ground first for grazing of horses, and then for garden-plots, and lived like a gentleman thereby.”

In another passage we are presented with an instance of overbearing conduct on the part of Cromwell, —W. Isey's “good Cromwell”—towards Stow's father, which it is impossible to read without indignation:

“On the south side, and at the west end of this church [of the Augustine Friars] many fair houses are built; namely, in Throgmorton street, one very large and spacious, built in the place of old and small tenements by Thomas Cromwell, master of the king's jewel-house, after that master of the rolls, then Lord Cromwell, knight, lord privy seal, vicar-general, Earl of Essex, high chamberlain of England, &c. This house being finished, and having some reasonable plot of ground left for a garden, he caused the pales of the gardens adjoining to the north part thereof on a sudden to be taken down; twenty-two feet to be measured forth right into the north of every man's ground; a line there to be drawn, a trench to be cast, a foundation laid, and a high brick wall to be built. My father had a garden there, and a house standing close to his south pale; this house they loosed from the ground, and bare upon rollers into my father's garden twenty-two feet, ere my father heard thereof; no warning was given him, nor other answer, when he spake to the surveyors of that work, but that their master Sir Thomas commanded them so to do; no man durst go to argue the matter, but each man lost his land, and my father paid his whole rent, which was 6*l.* the year, for that half which was left. Thus much of mine own knowledge have I thought good to note, that the sudden rising of some men causeth them to forget themselves.”

From a third (vide page 65), we learn that in 1549 he was dwelling near the well within Aldgate; the bailiff of Roperford, who there suffered the penalty of the law, having, to use Stow's words, been “executed upon the pavement of my door where I then kept house.”

He afterwards removed to Lime street ward, where he continued to reside until his death; and where, in the year 1585, when the city furnished Elizabeth with four thousand men and their arms, Stow acted as one of the collectors of the charges for the same. This appointment, which was probably bestowed upon him in return for those exertions in resisting the encroachments of Billingsgate ward, which he relates at page 61 of this volume, affords at least satisfactory proof that he was esteemed by his neighbours to be trustworthy.

From other passages scattered throughout his works, it is evident that he suffered from the charges of false and perjured enemies; and his indignation against such slanderers is vented whenever an opportunity of alluding to their malice and wickedness presents itself.

In 1544 he appears, according to Strype, to have been greatly endangered by a false accusation made against him by a priest, who, upon the discovery of his perjury, was adjudged in the Star chamber to stand upon the pillory, and to have the letters F. A. (for False Accuser) branded on his cheek.

In 1568 he being, to use the words of Strype, “an admirer of antiquity in religion, as well as in history,” was reported to the queen's council as a suspicious person, with many dangerous and superstitious books in his possession. Upon this Grindal, bishop of London, caused Waits his chaplain, Bedel, clerk to the Ecclesiastical commission, and a divine, named Williams, to search our antiquary's study\*. Whether Stow was subjected to any other inconvenience upon this occasion is not known; but two years afterwards, namely, in 1570, he was again accused before the Ecclesiastical commission by one

\* The following is Strype's Account of the Report which they made to the Bishop, as the result of their search:—

“That he had great collections of his own for the English Chronicles, wherein, as Waits signified to the bishop, he seemed to have bestowed much travel. They found also a great sort of old books printed; some fabulous, as of Sir Gregory Trimmour, &c., and a great parcel of old MS. Chronicles, both in parchment and paper. And that besides he had Miscellaneous Tracts touching Physick, Surgery, and Herbs, and Medical Receipts; and also fantastical Popish books, printed in old time; and also others written in old English, in parchment. But another sort of books he had more modern; of which the said searchers thought fit to take an inventory, as likely meet to touch him; and they were books lately set forth in the realm or beyond sea in defence of Popistry. Which books, as the Chaplain said, declared him a great sutor of that religion. Some of these books, the lists whereof so taken and sent to the bishop, were these:—*A Parliament of Christ*, made by Thomas Heskyas; *The Hatchel of Heresy*, set out by Shacklock; *Explication of the Creed, Ten Commandments, Paternoster and Ave Maria*, by Bishop Bonner; *Certain Sermons*, set forth in print by Edgworth, D.D.; *The Manner of the List of Saints*, an old printed book; *Five Homilies*, made by Leonard Pollard, Prebendary of Worcester; *A Proof of certain Articles of Religion devised by W. Juell*; *A Book made by Dorman (? Dohman)*; with a great many more of that kind.



who, when in his service, had despoiled him of his goods, and, what must have added to the bitterness of his grief, was his own brother. Stow escaped the danger which upon this occasion threatened to deprive him of liberty, perhaps of life; but the impression it made upon his mind was too great for him to avoid frequent allusion to it\*.

But great as these troubles must have been, and seriously as they must have interrupted the quiet tenor of his studies, they did not induce him to abandon the useful and honourable career which he had proposed to himself; nor prevent the publication of those various works which have secured for him the affectionate remembrance of all lovers of English history, and of which we now propose to render some account to our readers.

His first publication was his *Summary of English Chronicles*, published originally in 1561; but of which there is a long series of editions, probably one for every year, all now however of exceeding rarity.

A copy of the first edition, supposed to be unique, is in the valuable library of the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville; while the British Museum possesses copies of five editions, namely, those of 1567, 1573, 1587, 1598, and 1604. These all differ somewhat from one another, and are severally dedicated to the Lord Mayor of London for the time being (by name †), to the aldermen his brethren, and to the commoers of the same city. The following dedication, which is prefixed to the edition of 1567, and addressed to Roger Martin ‡, is here reprinted, as being one of the earliest specimens of Stow's writing §:—

*"Although, right honorable and worshipful, I was myself very ready to dedicate this my small treatise of English Chronicles unto you, to the intent that through your protection it might pass the enarings of the malicious, which are always ready to hinder the good meanings of laborious men and studious writers; yet considering the occasions necessarily unto me offered, and dutifully to be considered, I thought good to begin with the right honorable the Earl of Leicester. For speaking nothing of my own duty, the commoditie of my own countrymen moved me herunto, seeing they were deceived through his authority by the furnishing of a frivolous abridgment in the fronture with his noble name, I thought good, and that after amendment promised and not performed, at vacant times, to take me to my old delectable studies, and after a Summary of English Chronicles, faithfully collected, to acquire his Lordship's authority to the defence of that, wherein another had both abused his lordship and deceived the expectation of the common people. But now, at the request of the Printer and other of my loving friends, having brought the same into a new forme, such as may both ease the purse and the carriage, and yet nothing omitted convenient to be known; and besides all this, having example before my face to change my Patron (reserving still my Printer, as careful of his advantage rather than mine own), I am bold to submit it unto your honour and worship's protections together, that through the thundering noise of empty tonnes and unfruitful graftes of Momus' offspring it be not (as it is pretended), defaced, and overthrowne. Truth's quarrel it is, I lay before you, the which hath been (if not hitherto wholly pretermitted) truly miserably handled, mangled I should say, and such an hecche putte made of truth and lies together, that of the ignorant in histories the one could not be discerned of the other. A strange case it is, and negligence shall I call it, in the Epistle or ignorance, that he, that was moved to write even for pity's sake, to restore the truth to her integrity, should commit so great errors, and so many, that he himself had need of a cor-*

\* Vide his *Annals* under the years 1558 and 1578, and *Survey of London*, pages 96, 143, and 169, of this edition.

† Thus the edition of 1567 is dedicated to Roger Martin; that of 1573 to Lionel Duckett; that of 1587 to Sir George Barne; that of 1598 to Sir Richard Baltinshaw; and that of 1604 to Sir Thomas Bennet, knight.

‡ The following is the title of this edition:—*The Summary of English Chronicles (lately collected and published), abridged and continued till this present Month of November, in the years of our Lord God 1567, by J. S. Imprinted at London in Fleet Street, neare to St. Dunstons Church, by Thomas Marbe.*

§ From these addresses we may get an insight into Stow's study, and gather many little hints as to his literary history.

Thus in the edition of 1573, after stating that those who "to their great costes and charges have brought hidden histories from dusky darkness to the sight of the world," &c., "deserve at least thanks for their paines, and to be misreported of none, seeing they have laboured for all," he proceeds, "I write not this to complaine of some men's ingratitude towards me, although Justice I mighte;" adding, "It is now eight yeares since I, seeing the confused order of our late English Chronicles, and the ignorant handling of ancient affaires (leaving mine own peculiar gaires), consecrated myself to the search of our famous antiquities," &c.

In 1587, he speaks of its "being now fully twenty-three yeares" since he so consecrated himself, and in 1598 of its being "now 26 yeares;" while in the edition of 1604 the passage runs as follows:—"It is now nigh 45 yeares since I seeing the confused order of our late English Chronicles, and the ignorant handling of ancient affaires, as also (by occasion being perswaded by the Earle of Leicester)" and in a side-note he adds, "I gave him a booke compiled by his grandfather Edmond Dudley" "(leaving mine owne peculiar gaires), consecrated myself to the search of our famous antiquities. What I have done in them, the former editions of my Summaries, Chronicles, and Annals, with my Survey of the Cities of London, Westminster, and Borough of Southwarke, may well testify," &c.

rector, and truth of a new labourer. For me a heap of old monuments, witnesses of times, and bright beams of the truth, can testify that I have not swerved from the truth; the which, as I am ready at all times to show for mine own safe conduct against the adversaries, so am I most certain that he that pretendeth most hath had very small store of authors for himself before time, and now hath fraught his mannerly Manuell with such merchandize (as to you it shall be most manifest at your conference), that by the buying of my Summary he scoured newly, or cleanly altered his old Abridgment. What pre-occupation or what insolence is it then to transfer that unto me that am farthest from such dealing. And yet having much better precedents before mine eyes (even that excellent learned Dr. Cooper, that I name no ancienter, whose order and dole privately he condemneth, and yet openly transformeth into his own Abridgment), he accuseth of counterfeiting his volume and order, whereas it might be well said unto him, "What hast thou that thou hast not received of me."

But that I be not against my nature angry with my undervalued adversary, I will here successe to trouble you any further at this time, most earnestly requiring your honour and worshipps all, once again to take the tuition of this little book upon you. The which, if I may perceive to be taken thankfully, and fruitfully used to the amendment of such gross errors as hitherto have been in The Great Abridgments, and presently are in the Mannell of the Chronicles of Englande, in The abridged Abridgement, in The briefe Col-  
*Teo many names* tion of Historica committed, I shall be encouraged to perfect that labour I have begun, and partly performed in *M. Choucer* and other, I shall be much increased by your gentleness to publish to the commodity of all the Queen's Majesty's loving subjects.

"Your most humble,

"JOHN STOW."

By the "thundering noise of empty tomes and unfruitful graffes of Momus' offspring," in the foregoing Dedication, Stow alludes to the labours of his contemporary, Richard Grafton, whose *Abridgement*, published in 1563, or *Manuel*, as it was called in the edition of 1567, was a rival work to the Summary of our author.

Grafton was no less ready than Stow at a punning and slighting allusion to the work of his brother chronicler, and accordingly sneered at "the maneries of superstitious foundations fables, and lyes foolishly Stowed together." As may be supposed, the quarrel was "a very pretty quarrel," and how hot it waxed may be gathered from the following address "To the Reader," inscribed by Stow in the edition of his Summary, published in 1573:—

"TO THE READER.

"*Calling to memory (gentle reader) with what diligence (to my great cost and charges) I have travailed in my late Summary of the Chronicles, as also the unkindest dealings of somebody towards me (whereof I have long since sufficiently written and exhibited to the learned and honorable), I persuaded with myself to have setting (as it were) successe from this kind of travail wherein another hath used to reap the fruit of my labors. But now for divers causes thereto moving me, I have once again briefly run over this small abridgment, placing the years of our Lord, the years of the Kings, with the Sheriffs and Mayors of London, in a far more perfect and plain order than heretofore hath been published.*

"*Touching Mr. Grafton his slanderous Epistle, though the same with other his abusing of me was answered by the learned and honorable, and by them forbidden to be reprinted, he hath since that time in his second impression placed his former lying preface, wherein he hath these words:—Gentle reader, this one thing offendeth me so much, that I am enforced to purge myself thereof, and show my simple and plain dealing therein. One John Stow, of whom I will say none evil on, hath published a booke, and therein hath charged mee bitterly, but chiefly with two things. The one that I have made E. Hall's Chronicle my Chronicle, but not without mangling, and (as he saith) without any ingenuous and plain declaration thereof. The other thing that he chargeth me withal is, that a Chronicle of Harding which he hath, doth much differ from the Chronicle which under the said Harding's name was printed by me, as though I had falsified Harding's Chronicle, &c.*

"*I leave his simple and plain dealing to the judgment of others. In commending mine authors.*

"*For answer, I say*" the offence by me committed requireth no such forced purification. I have not so bitterly charged him as he hath plainly accused himself. + My words be these. Some body (without any ingenuous and plain declaration (thereof) hathe published, but not without mangling, Master Halles booke for his own.' I named not Grafton. This is the first. The second is thus:—

I say not I have such a Chronicle as *John Harding, &c. exhibited a Chronicle of England, with a Map or Description of Scotland, to King Henry the Sixth, which Chronicle doth almost altogether differ from that which under his name was imprinted by Ri. Grafton.*

"After this, in the same preface, he braggeth to have a Chronicle of John Harding's, written in the Latin tongue, which he assured himself I never saw, and doubteth whether I understand. If he have any such book, it is like he would allege it, as he hath done many other authors, whereof I am better assured he hath never seen so much as the outside of their books†. If there be no such Chronicle of John Harding's, as he braggeth on, it is like I have not seen it, and must needs be hard to understand it.

† Ri. Grafton never saw Robert de Avesbury, Tho. Walsingham, H. of Leicester, Register of Berge, and many other which he allegeth, for that he findeth them alleged in my Summary.

"Then he saith my latter Summary differeth cleare from the rest. To this I answer, I have not changed either work or title, but have corrected my first book as I have found better authors. But he himself hath made his last abridgement not only cleare contrary to his first, but the two impressions contrary the one to the other, and every one contrary to his meer history. For his true alleging of authors let men judge by those which are common in our vulgar tongue, as Polieriscion, H. Fabian, Ed. Hall, Doctor Cooper. Look these authors in those years, and peradventure you shall find no such matter. Try, and then trust."

But as the limits assigned to us will not admit of our entering into many such details as these, we must content ourselves by referring those desirous of becoming acquainted with the history of this literary squabble, to the pages of Ames' *Typographical Dictionary*, wherein it will be found duly set forth at pages 422—427 of the third volume of Dibdin's edition, and proceed to notice Stow's other claims to the gratitude of posterity.

Of his "*Annales*" Stow published four editions, viz. in 1586, 1592, 1601, and 1605; the last, which in the same as that of 1601, having only one sheet (Q2r) reprinted, and the rest added being continued down to the 26th of March, 1606, only ten days before the author's death; thus proving how he persevered in his labours even in the midst of poverty, sickness, and old age. The "*Annales*" are now generally known by the name of *Stow's Chronicle*, having been re-edited under that title by Edmund Howes in folio, 1615 and 1631.

In addition to these publications illustrative of the general history of England, for which we are indebted to John Stow, it must be remembered that he caused the *Flora Historiarum*, compiled by Matthew of Westminster, to be printed in 1587, the *Chronicle of Matthew Paris in 1571*, and that of Thomas Walsingham in 1574, being strongly encouraged to this good work by the liberal patronage of Archbishop Parker; and, lastly, that he himself had compiled "a farre larger volume," which as we learn from his continuator Howes, he "purposed if lico had lived but one yeare longer to have put in print, but being prevented by death, left the same in his studie orderly written, readie for the press, but it came to nothing."

Of this unpublished Chronicle, described in his *Annales* (edit. 1592, p. 1295.) as a "larger volume and historie of this iland," "readie for the presse," he thus speaks, at the conclusion of the edition of that work published in 1605, and which, as we have already observed, is continued down to within ten days of his death.

"Thus, good reader, I desire thee to take these and other my labours in good part, like as I have painfully (to my great cost and charges) out of old hidden histories and records of antiquitie brought the same to light, and for thy great commoditie bestowed them upon thee; so shalt thou encourage me (if God permit me life) to publish or leave to posterity a farre larger volume, long since by me laboured, at the request and commandment of the Reverend Father, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury; but he then deceasing, my works was prevented, by printing and reprinting (without warrant or walliking) of *Rolands Wolfe's* Collection, and other late comers, by the name of *Raphaell Hotwashed* his Chronicle."

The manuscript of this work, which, as we have seen, was "orderly written," is not known to be now in existence; but it has been suggested that the book entitled, "*The Successions of the History of England*," by John Stow, folio, 1638, and of which an account will be found in *Lowndes' Bibliographer's Manual*, was a portion of this work.

Among those works indirectly illustrative of English history, which owed their appearance to Stow's talents, industry, and good judgment, the *Works of Chaucer* must not be forgotten; nor can the good service he rendered to the Father of English Poetry be better described than in his own words:—"His