

**THE REGISTERS OF
STRATFORD-ON-AVON, IN
THE COUNTY OF WARWICK.
BAPTISMS, 1558-1652**

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The Registers of Stratford-On-Avon, in the County of Warwick. Baptisms, 1558-1652 by The Parish Register Society

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THE PARISH REGISTER SOCIETY

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THE COUNTY OF WARWICK.
BAPTISMS, 1558-1652**

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The Registers

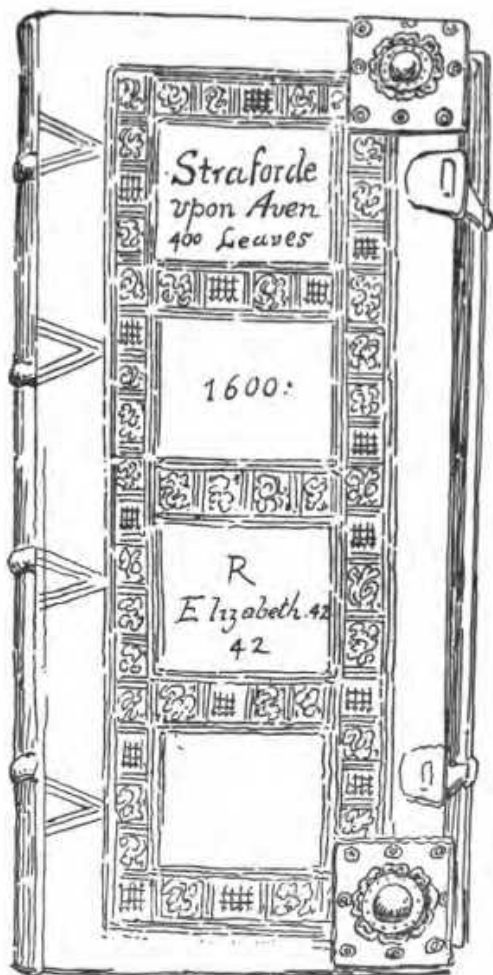
OF

Stratford-on-Avon,

Co. Warwick.

Issued by
THE PARISH REGISTER SOCIETY.
(VI.)





The old Register of Stratford on Avon, containing the Shakespeare entries. The leaves are of parchment, the binding of stamped leather in which the particulars are written of paper. The covers at the corners and the clasp are of brass. It has been now backed. The inscriptions are written in the leather.

The Registers

OF

Stratford-on-Avon,

In the County of Warwick.

BAPTISMS, 1558—1652.

TRANSCRIBED BY

RICHARD SAVAGE,

Secretary and Librarian of Shakespeare's Birthplace and Trust,

AND

Deputy Keeper of the Records of the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon.

WITH THE PERMISSION OF

THE REV. GEORGE ARBUTHNOT, M.A.,

VICAR OF STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

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LONDON:

PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR THE PARISH REGISTER SOCIETY.

1897.

P R E F A C E.

The Registers of Stratford-on-Avon from 1558 to 1812 are contained in five volumes, of which the first two record Baptisms from March 1558 to June 1776; Burials from March 1558 to November 1776; and Marriages from April 1558 to March 1754.

The portion now printed is a verbatim copy of Baptisms from March 1558 to March 1652-3.

The Frontispiece, taken from a sketch in the Fairholt collection in Shakespeare's Birthplace, gives a good idea of the outside of the first, or oldest, volume, which is bound in brown leather, and has brass corner pieces, ornamented with the Tudor rose, and brass clasps, mutilated. It measures $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and 3 inches thick. An inscription upon the front cover reads, "No. 1. Stratforde-vpon-Aven.—400 leaues.*—1600.—R. Elizabeth 42." Upon the back cover, traced in ink on one of the panels, is a Tudor rose, in the centre of which is written,—“Strat-ford.—1600.” In the ornamental border, a portcullis frequently occurs.

The back of the volume is modern, having been

* It now contains 331 full-sized leaves and two portions, upon which entries are made, and three blank ones. A small square piece has been cut away from the bottom corner of the page upon which the entry of the Poet's baptism appears.

substituted for the old one in 1844, by the then Parish Clerk, Mr. Thomas Kite,* a printer and bookbinder by profession. The old back was presented by Mr. Kite to Shakespeare's Birthplace Museum, 21st March, 1891.

It may be mentioned that Parish Registers were first instituted in 1538, by a mandate issued by Thomas Cromwell (afterwards Earl of Essex), the Vicar General, for the keeping of registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials, in each parish. This order was renewed in the reign of Edward the Sixth (1547) and in that of Queen Elizabeth it was further enjoined that every minister, at his institution, should subscribe to the following protestation—"I shall keepe the register booke according to the Queene's Majesties injunction." Still registers were not so regularly entered and preserved as they should have been, for by a constitution made by the Archbishop and Clergy of Canterbury, 25th October, 1597, it was ordained and approved by the Queen, under the Great Seal of England, and ordered to be observed in both provinces of Canterbury and York, that parchment register books should be purchased at the expense of each parish, and that there should be transcribed, at the same parish cost, from the paper books then in use, into the parchment registers, not only the names of those who had been baptized, married or buried, during the reign of the then Queen (which commenced in 1558, a period of thirty-nine years prior to the mandate), but also the names of those who henceforth should be baptized, married or buried. Such transcripts to be examined, and their correctness certified at the bottom of each page, by the clergyman and churchwardens. Copies of the registers were to be

* Born 30th June, 1809, and still living in Stratford-on-Avon.

forwarded annually, within one month of Easter, by the respective churchwardens, to the registrar of the diocese, that they might be faithfully preserved in the episcopal archives. These regulations were confirmed by the 70th Ecclesiastical Canon of 1603.

That the injunctions of 1597 were carried out by the Vicar and Churchwardens of Stratford-on-Avon is evident, from the particular handwriting of the copyist in the oldest existing register, the copy of Baptisms ending 14th September, that of Marriages the 15th September, and Burials the 16th September, 1600.

An ordinance of 1644 does not appear to have altered the order of things in Stratford Parish Register, but that of 1653 established a new volume; it contains entries from 1653 to the end of March, 1686-7, when the old Register was again used and entries continued therein until 1776.*

The particular interest in the Registers of Stratford-on-Avon, centres in the entries of the baptism and burial of William Shakespeare. The form of the entry of his baptism appears on page 9 of this volume; that of his burial will appear in a later one.

The printing of these Registers is undoubtedly the crowning work undertaken in connection with the study of the life and times of the great poet. That the late Mr. J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, the eminent Shakespearean scholar, considered it would be so is evident from a letter,

* With regard to the words "nothus" and "notha," to be met with in several places in this volume, Thomas Ridley in his "View of the Civile and Ecclesiastical Law," published at Oxford by Leonard Lichfield, in 1636, says: "Those which were begotten of married women were called *Nothi*, because they seem to be his children, whom the marriage doth shew, but are not *Pater i est quem nuptia demonstrant.*"