

**THE LIFE OF THOMAS  
CHATTERTON; INCLUDING  
HIS UNPUBLISHED POEMS  
AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649635399

The Life of Thomas Chatterton; Including His Unpublished Poems and Correspondence by  
John Dix

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JOHN DIX**

**THE LIFE OF THOMAS  
CHATTERTON; INCLUDING  
HIS UNPUBLISHED POEMS  
AND CORRESPONDENCE**



## CRITICISMS ON THE FIRST EDITION.

---

"Forty years ago, Mr. Cottle and myself thought nothing more could be gleaned respecting Chatterton. You, however, have struck on a new vein in the mine of Biographical Investigation—your perseverance is most creditable—so is your work."

FROM A LETTER FROM ROBERT SOUTHBY TO THE AUTHOR.

---

"Mr. Dix has so completely written the Life of Chatterton, that the labours of future biographers can well be spared."

JOHN FORSTER.—Vide Works.

---

"Mr. Dix's excellent Biography."

Mrs. S. C. HALL.—(Art Union.)

---

"By far the best Life of the 'Marvellous Boy' which has hitherto appeared."

ATKINSON.

THE LIFE  
OF  
THOMAS CHATTERTON;

INCLUDING HIS  
UNPUBLISHED POEMS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

BY JOHN DIX,

AUTHOR OF "PEN PICTURES OF POPULAR ENGLISH PREACHERS,"  
"PEN AND INK SKETCHES," ETC.

---

LONDON:

PARTRIDGE & OAKLEY, PATERNOSTER BOW.

MDCCCXI.

210. C. 125.



## P R E F A C E.

---

EIGHTY-one years have elapsed since the death of Thomas Chatterton; and his memoirs, which have appeared from several pens, seemed to the author of this biography to have held up the shadowed side of his brief life to public observation, and to have studiously concealed those traits in his character, which should have rescued him from the ill nature of those who neglected him whilst living, and traduced him when dead. Much new information respecting "the marvellous boy" having fallen into the author's hands, he has with pleasure performed a task which has not been altogether devoid of difficulties. These, however, have been considerably lessened by the kind offices



of friends, and it is his pleasing duty to acknowledge the assistance he has received.

To John Matthew Gutch, Esq., the author is especially indebted for the use of his unrivalled "Haslewood" collection of Chatterton papers. To Dr. Southey, and to Joseph Cottle, Esq., for valuable assistance. To George Cumberland, Esq., for his appendix. To W. Tyson, Esq., for his most interesting communication respecting Chatterton's early poems; and to Dr. Dalton for the loan of works connected with the subject.

---

THE LIFE  
OF  
THOMAS CHATTERTON.

---

THOMAS CHATTERTON, the son of Thomas and Sarah Chatterton, was born on the 20th of November, in the year 1752, in a house situated on Redcliff Hill, behind the shop now occupied by Mr. Self, Chemist. Of his family comparatively little is known; indeed, until after his death, from their humble station, few or no inquiries were made respecting them, and after that occurrence, intense grief, or perhaps a feeling of indignation against those who neglected him whilst living, but who sought to spread his fame, from interested motives, when fame was no longer an object of pursuit to its young aspirant, may have deterred them from satisfying the numerous inquiries which poured upon them from various quarters; especially when in some instances the request assumed the character of a menace, and a threat that the name of their gifted relative should be transmitted to posterity with the brand of infamy upon it, unless they gave up all his papers and letters in their possession.

The father of Chatterton was, in the early part of his life, a writing master to a classical school; he afterwards became sub-chaunter of the Cathedral of Bristol, which office he held, together with that of master of the free school in Pyle Street, at the time of his death.

The edition of the works of Chatterton, published in 1803, contains an anecdote of the method the father took, when he was sexton of Redcliff Church, to obtain money from some ladies. This anecdote, it was said, was communicated by a gentleman of Bristol, who was present at the transaction. But it happens, unfortunately for the veracity of the gentleman in question, that Chatterton's father never was sexton of Redcliff Church; his uncle, John Chatterton, having been the last of the family who held that office: he was elected to it, March, 1725, and continued in it till his death, which happened in the year 1748. A catch for three voices is also inserted in the work referred to, communicated by Edward Williams, the Welsh bard; the words and music of which are said to be Mr. Chatterton's, and where he is also perversely called the sexton of St. Mary Redcliff.

If the catch was really composed by him, it ill accords with the character which Mr. Gardner gives of him—"a complete master of the theory and practice of music." That he had made some proficiency in the science is certain, from the situation he held in the choir of the Cathedral.

That he was a man of some talent and shrewdness is evident, from the various testimonials of those who knew him well, but he was inclined to dissipated habits and was of a "brutal disposition."\* The house in which he lived had only two sitting

\* Mr. Edkins. Vide Appendix, for which I am indebted to G. Cumberland, Esq.