

**FROM THE ANGLE
OF SEVENTEEN**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649176205

From the angle of seventeen by Eden Phillpotts

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

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

**FROM THE ANGLE
OF SEVENTEEN**

FROM THE ANGLE OF SEVENTEEN

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS

AUTHOR OF
"THE HUMAN BOY," "THE HUMAN BOY AGAIN," ETC.

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1912

TO
HUGHES MASSIE
IN ALL FRIENDSHIP

628532

FROM THE ANGLE OF SEVENTEEN

I

WHEN the Doctor sent for me to his study, I hoped it was about the fireworks, because I was head boy that term, and, in a great position like that, there were advantages to make up for the anxiety. You bossed the fireworks on the fifth of November and many other such-like things.

But the Doctor had nothing to say about fireworks. In fact, a critical moment had come in my life : I was to leave.

“ Sit down, Corkey,” said the Doctor ; and that in itself was a startler, because he never asked anybody to sit down except parents or guardians.

I sat and he looked at me with a friendly and regretful expression, the same as he did when he had to tell me my father was dead.

“ Corkey,” he began, “ this morning brings

a missive from your maternal aunt, Miss Augusta Medwin. As you know, she is your trustee until you come of age, four years hence. Your Aunt Augusta, mindful that the time was at hand when you would be called to take your place in the ranks of action, has for some time been on the lookout for you; and to-day I learn that her efforts have been crowned with success. It is my custom to require a term's notice; but such is my regard for your Aunt Augusta that I have decided to waive that rule in your case. A clerkship in London has been secured for you—a nomination to the staff of that famous institution, the Apollo Fire Office. The necessary examination, to one who has risen to be head boy of Merivale, should prove but a trifle. And yet, since nothing can be left to chance, we must see that you are guarded at all points. In a fortnight, Corkey Major, you will be required to show that your mathematics are sound, your knowledge of grammatical construction above suspicion, and your general average of intellectual attainment all that the world of business—the great industrial centres of finance—have a right to demand from their neophytes. I do not fear for you: the

appointment and its requirements are not such as to demand a standard of accomplishment beyond your powers ; but, at the same time, remember that this modest beginning may lead the way to name and fame. The first step can never be too humble if we look upward to the next. I, myself, as all the world knows, was once engaged in the avocation of a bookseller's assistant. I have already conferred with Mr. Brown as to your mathematical attainments, and, making due allowance for his generous ardour to all that pertains to the First Form, I have no doubt with him that you will satisfy your examiners. Your handwriting, however, must be the subject of anxious thought, and, as you will be called upon in the course of the examination to write a brief essay on any subject that may occur to the examining authorities, I trust that you will be at pains to state your views in careful caligraphy. Again, if a word arises to your mind concerning the spelling of which you feel doubtful, discard it at once and strive to find another that will meet the case. Spelling, I have reason to know, is not a strong point with you."

The Doctor sighed and continued.

“ I am sorry to lose you,” he said. “ You have been a reasonably good and industrious boy. Your faults were those of youth. You go into the world armed, I think, at all points. Be modest, patient, and good-tempered; and choose high-minded friends. I may add, for your encouragement, that you will receive emolument from the outset of your official labours. The salary is fifty pounds a year, and you will work daily from ten o’clock until four. On Saturdays they pursue our own scholastic custom and give their officials a half-holiday. Your vacation, however, is of a trivial character. The world is a taskmaster, not a schoolmaster. One fortnight a year will be all the holiday permitted; and since you enter the establishment at the bottom, you must be prepared to enjoy this relaxation at any month in the year most convenient to your superiors. Should time and chance allow of it, Corkey Major, I may tell you that it will give me personal pleasure to see you on some occasion of this annual vacation—as a guest. Your two brothers continue with us until in their turn they pass out into the world from the little haven of Merivale.”

The idea of Merivale as a haven pleased the

Doctor. I hoped he had finished, but he went off again.

“ Yes, the simile is just. You come here empty and depart on your voyage laden. You are loaded according to your accommodation—some more, some less ; and I, the harbour-master—however, we will not push the image, for, to be frank, I am not sure as to what exactly pertains to a harbour-master’s duties in respect of cargo. To return, Mr. Brown will see you in his study after morning school with a view to some special lessons in arithmetic. He inclines to the opinion that the Rule of Three should prove a tower of strength, and no doubt he is right. You may go.”

He waved his hand and I got up. One thing had stuck exceedingly fast in my mind and now, though I did not mean to mention it in particular, it came out.

“ Am I really worth fifty pounds a year to anybody, sir ? ”

The Doctor smiled.

“ A natural question, Corkey, and I think no worse of you for having asked it. The magnitude of the sum may reasonably puzzle a lad who as yet cannot appreciate the value of money. This, however, is no time to enter