

THE FUN OF THE FAIR

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649160501

The fun of the fair 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

**THE FUN
OF THE FAIR**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LYING PROPHETS

CHILDREN OF THE MIST

SONS OF THE MORNING

THE RIVER

THE AMERICAN PRISONER

THE STRIKING HOURS

THE SECRET WOMAN

THE PORTREEVE

KNOCK AT A VENTURE

THE MOTHER

THE WHIRLWIND

THE VIRGIN IN JUDGMENT

THE THREE BROTHERS

THE HAVEN

THE FUN OF THE FAIR

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1909

TP
S1216
1-12

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE MASTERPIECE	I
THE PARSON AND THE CLERK	21
RIVALS FOR ELISHA	42
THE GRATITUDE OF JOHNNY GEE	64
THE GUARDIAN OF THE BULL	85
THE HORSESHOE	102
THE ODD MONEY	121
THE TOADSTONE	140
THE BANNS OF MERCY JANE	152
GREAT-UNCLE CAUNTER AND THE JEW	162
THE MATCHMAKER	182
THE CAIRN	205
'THE CROCK O' GOLD'	225

ILLUSTRATIONS



THE FUN OF THE FAIR

THE MASTERPIECE

I

THE great moment in Gaffer Haycraft's life was at hand ; and it might reasonably be a great one, since every dog has his day ; and this old dog waited seventy years for his.

Mr. Haycraft had hammered granite for more than half a century, and two generations regarded his familiar round shoulders, crabbed face, thin beard, and bald head as a common object of Belstone. He was very small, and round in the back as a beetle. Folk held him as enduring, necessary, and devoid of interest as the village pump. And now Aaron was nearly at the end of his tether, and his hands, long since calloused into mere pincers by the needs of his business, would soon wield mallet and chisel no more.

He had done nothing in his life to win enthusiasm. An old bachelor, he dwelt with a widowed sister five years older than himself. He was known to be short in his temper and strongly averse from going to any place of

worship; but he possessed no further qualities that a medusa or polyp might not have shared with him. He professed no opinions, and possessed no information, no friends, and no enemies. He was regarded merely as the motive power behind a stone chisel. He had in his time splintered countless tons of granite from the bowels of Dartmoor; and he had squared hundreds of yards of it. During his monotonous existence he had consumed large quantities of solid food and had drunk many barrels of beer. But he had not fallen in love nor felt his heart ache at loss; he had neither heaved a sigh nor shed a tear since he grew out of childhood. His life might be summed up in negatives. He had never taken a holiday, nor enjoyed a bit of sport, nor offered any man a drink, nor any child a penny.

And now upon this colourless career there dawned an event.

In his youth this ancient had worked for one Roger Arscott at Belstone quarries, where men burrowed into Dartmoor for its bones, and left a gaping grey scar against the harmonious colours of the hill. There Aaron Haycraft toiled, wrestled with the stone, and to perfection managed that method of working it known as the 'feather and tear.' The old man would make a row of little holes with his 'jumper,' then insert wedges of steel, and anon, with judicious tapping, split the stubborn matter almost as truly as though it had been sawed. Granite, indeed, he held to be a

good-natured mineral in the hands of those who understood it. 'But you must go about it the proper, ordained way of the grain, else 'twill be cranky, like any other mortal, and you'll have your trouble for your pains.' Thus he declared if any man inquired concerning his business.

When he was sixty, Mr. Haycraft found himself working for his first master's son, one William Arscott; and as the labourer had now reached ripe age and felt the steep climb from the village to the quarry, he changed his toil, and henceforth occupied himself in the works beside the village green. Hither the granite came in rough masses from the Moor and was fashioned to its purpose. A musical clinking and chiming of steel on stone is the immemorial music of the village, and, with brief cessation at noon, it continues from dawn until dusk of every working day.

Like a smudge, the low sheds smear the edge of Belstone green. Around them extends a carpet of granite dust and splinters, upon which giant blocks stand or lie and take gradual shape under the eternal tinkle of the chisels.

For nearly four years Aaron Haycraft had been engaged upon one single task, and now a majestic monument of his industry approached completion. In the midst of the débris of the yard, trussed upon timbers, stood a mighty granite trough wrought from a single mass. No flaw marked the monster. It was perfect in length, breadth, depth, and thickness. It would