



LEVEL SIX

READER


THE *Good* AND THE *Beautiful*
CURRICULUM

For use with the Level 6 Language Arts and Literature course.



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Saved at Sea

A Lighthouse Story



By Mrs. O. F. Walton

Edited by Mary Beyer and Jenny Phillips

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First published in 1879

Chapter 1

My Strange Home

It was a strange day, the day that I was born. The waves were beating against the lighthouse, and the wind was roaring and raging against everything. Had the lighthouse not been built very firmly into the strong, solid rock, it, and all within it, must have been swept into the deep, wild sea.

It was a terrible storm. My grandfather said he had never known such a storm since he came to live on the island more than forty years before.

Many ships went down in the storm that day, and many lives were lost. But in the very midst of it, when the wind was highest, and the waves were strongest, and when the foam and the spray had completely covered the lighthouse windows, I, Alick Fergusson, was born.

I was born on a strange day, and I was born into a strange home. The lighthouse stood on an island, four miles distant from any land. The island was not very large; if you stood in the middle of it, you could see the sea all round you—that sea which was sometimes so blue and peaceful, and at other times was as black as ink and roaring and thundering on the rocky shores of the little island. At one side of the island, on a steep

rock overhanging the sea, stood the lighthouse. Night by night as soon as it began to grow dark, the lighthouse lamps were lighted.

I can remember how I used to admire those lights as a child. I would sit for hours watching them revolve and change in color. First, there was a white light, then a blue one, then a red one, then a green one—then a white one again. And, as the ships went by, they always kept a lookout for our friendly lights and avoided the rocks of which they warned them.

My grandfather, old Sandy Fergusson, was one of the lighthouse men whose duty it was always to keep these lamps in order and to light them every night. He was a clever, active old man and did his work well and cheerfully. His great desire was to be able to hold on at his post till I should be able to take his place.

At the time when my story begins, I was nearly twelve years old and daily growing taller and stronger. My grandfather was very proud of me and said I should soon be a young man, and then he should get me appointed in his place to look after the lighthouse.

I was very fond of my strange home and would not have changed it for any other. Many people would have thought it dull, for we seldom saw a strange face, and the lighthouse men were only allowed to go on shore for a few hours once in every two months. But I was very happy and thought there was no place in the world like our little island.

Close to the tower of the lighthouse was the house in which I and my grandfather lived. It was not a large house, but it was a very pleasant one. All the windows looked out over the sea, and plenty of sharp sea air came in whenever they were opened. All the furniture in the house belonged to the lighthouse and

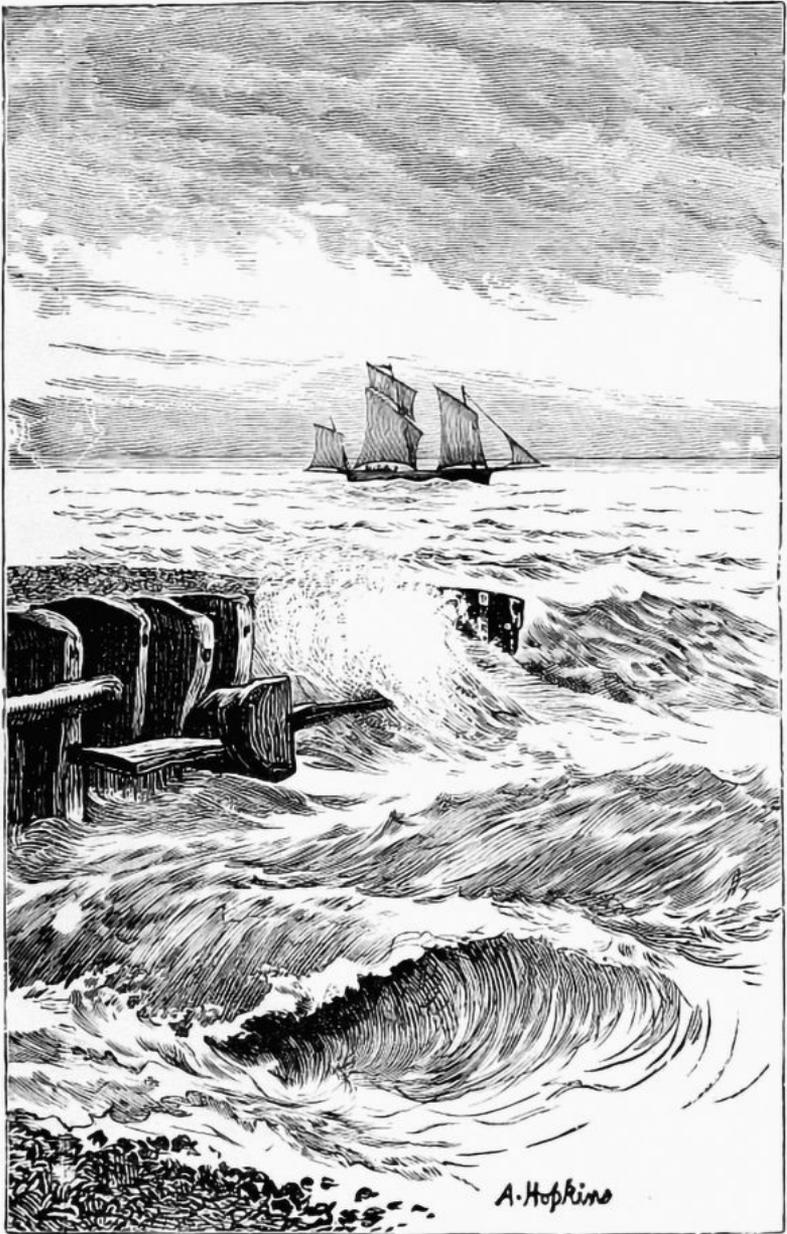
had been there long before my grandfather came to live there. Our cups and saucers and plates each had a little picture of the lighthouse with the waves dashing round it and the name of the lighthouse on them in large gilt letters. I used to think them very pretty when I was a boy.

We did not have many neighbors. There was only one other house on the island, and it was built on the other side of the lighthouse tower. The house belonged to Mr. Millar, who shared the care of the lighthouse with my grandfather. Just outside the two houses, was a court with a pump in the middle, from which we got our water. There was a high wall all round this court to make a little shelter for us from the stormy wind.

Beyond this court were two gardens, divided by an iron railing. The Millars' garden was very untidy and forlorn and filled with nettles, thistles, and all kinds of weeds, for Mr. Millar did not care for gardening, and Mrs. Millar had six little children and had no time to look after it.

But our garden was the admiration of everyone who visited the island. My grandfather and I were at work in it every fine day and took pride in keeping it as neat as possible. Although it was so near the sea, our garden produced the most beautiful vegetables and fruit, and the borders were filled with flowers, cabbage-roses, pansies, wallflowers, and many other hardy plants which were not afraid of the sea air.

Outside the garden was a good-sized field—full of small hillocks, over which the wild rabbits and hares, with which the island abounded, were continually scampering. In this field a cow and two goats were kept to supply the two families with milk and butter. Beyond it was the rocky shore and a little pier built out into the sea.



THE LANDING-STAGE.

On this pier I used to stand every Monday morning to watch for the steamer which called at the island once a week. It was a great event to us when the steamer came. My grandfather and I, and Mr. and Mrs. Millar and the children, all came down to the shore to welcome it. This steamer brought our provisions for the week from a town some miles off and often brought a letter for Mr. Millar or a newspaper for my grandfather.

My grandfather did not get many letters, for there were not many people that he knew. He had lived on that lonely island the greater part of his life and had been quite shut out from the world. All his relations were dead now, except my father, and what had become of him, we did not know. I had never seen him, for he went away some time before I was born.

My father was a sailor, a fine, tall, strong young fellow, my grandfather used to say. He had brought my mother to the island and left her in my grandfather's care while he went on a voyage to Australia. He went from the island in that same little steamer which called every Monday morning. My grandfather stood on the end of the pier as the steamer went out of sight, and my mother waved her handkerchief to him as long as any smoke was seen on the horizon. Grandfather has often told me how young and pretty she looked that summer morning.

My father had promised to write soon, but no letter ever came. Mother went down to the pier every Monday morning for three long years to see if it had brought her any word from her sailor husband.

But after a time, her step became slower and her face paler, and at last she was too weak to go down the rocks to the pier when the steamer arrived on Monday morning. And soon after this, I was left motherless.

From that day, the day on which my mother died, my grandfather became both father and mother to me. There was nothing he would not have done for me, and wherever he went and whatever he did, I was always by his side.

As I grew older, he taught me to read and write, for there was, of course, no school that I could attend. I also learned to help him trim the lamps and work in the garden. Our life went on very evenly from day to day until I was about twelve years old. I used to wish sometimes that something new would happen to make a little change on the island. And at last a change came.

Excerpts From

When I Was
Your Age

An Autobiography
By Laura E. Richards

Edited by Jenny Phillips

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First published in 1893

Excerpts From When I Was Your Age

Section 1

There were five of us. There had been six, but the Beautiful Boy was taken home to heaven while he was still very little; and it was good for the rest of us to know that there was always one to wait for and welcome us in the Place of Light to which we should go some day. So, as I said, there were five of us here—Julia Romana, Florence, Harry, Laura, and Maud. Julia was the eldest. She took her second name from the ancient city in which she was born, and she was as beautiful as a soft Italian evening, with dark hair, clear gray eyes, perfect features, and a complexion of such pure and wonderful red and white as I have never seen in any other face. She had a look as if when she came away from heaven she had been allowed to remember it, while others must forget. She walked in a dream always, of beauty and poetry, thinking of strange things. Very shy she was, very sensitive. When Flossy (this was Florence's home name) called her "a great red-haired giant," she wept bitterly, and reproached her sister for hurting her feelings.

Julia knew everything, according to the belief of the younger children. She it was who led the famous before-breakfast walks,

when we used to start off at six o'clock and walk to the yellow house at the top of the long hill, or sometimes even to the windmill beyond it, where we could see the miller at work, all white and dusty, and watch the white sails moving slowly round.

And on the way Julia told us stories, from Sir Walter Scott or Shakespeare; or she gave us the plot of some opera, with snatches of song here and there.

Julia wrote stories herself, too—very wonderful stories, we all thought, and, indeed, I think so still. She began when she was a little girl, not more than six or seven years old. There lies beside me now on the table a small book, about five inches square, bound in faded pink and green, and filled from cover to cover with writing in a cramped, childish hand. It is a book of novels and plays, written by our Julia before she was ten years old; and I often think that the beautiful and helpful things she wrote in her later years were hardly more remarkable than these queer little stories.

Flossy was very small as a child. One day a lady, not knowing that the little girl was within hearing, said to her mother, "What a pity Flossy is so small!"

"I'm big inside," cried a little, angry voice at her elbow. There was Flossy, swelling with rage. And she was big inside! Her lively, active spirit seemed to break through the little body and carry it along in spite of itself. Sometimes it was an impish spirit; always it was an enterprising one. She it was who invented the dances which seemed to us such wonderful performances. We danced every evening in the great parlor, our mother playing for us on the piano.

Flossy invented many other amusements, too. There was the school-loan system. We had school in the little parlor at that

time, and our desks had lids that lifted up. In her desk Flossy kept a number of precious things, which she lent to the younger children for so many pins an hour. The most valuable thing was a set of three colored worsted balls, red, green, and blue. You could set them twirling, and they would keep going for ever so long. It was a delightful sport; but they were very expensive, costing, I think, twenty pins an hour. It took a long time to collect twenty pins, for of course it was not fair to take them out of the pincushions.

Flossy also told stories; or rather she told one story which had no end, and of which we never tired.

Julia and Flossy did not content themselves with writing plays and telling stories. They aspired to making a language—a real language, which should be all their own, and should have grammars and dictionaries like any other famous tongue. It was called Patagonian—whether with any idea of future missionary work among the people of that remote country, or merely because it sounded well, I cannot say. It was a singular language. I wish more of it had survived, but I can give only a few of its more familiar phrases.

MILLDAM - Yes.

PILLDAM - No.

MOUCHE - Mother.

BIS VON SNOUT? - Are you well?

CHING CHU STICK STUMPS? - Will you have some doughnuts?

These fragments will, I am sure, make my readers regret deeply the loss of this language, which has the merit of entire originality.



At the age of six, Harry determined to marry, and offered his hand and heart to Mary, the nurse, an excellent woman some thirty years older than he. He sternly forbade her to sew or do other nursery work, saying that his wife must not work for her living. About this time, too, he told our mother that he thought he felt his beard growing.

He was just two years older than Laura, and the tie between them was very close. Laura's first question to a stranger was always, "Does you know my bulla Hally? I hope you does!" And she was truly sorry for any one who had not that privilege.

The two children slept in tiny rooms adjoining each other. It was both easy and pleasant to "talk across" while lying in bed, when they were supposed to be sound asleep. Neither liked to give up the last word of greeting, and they would sometimes say "Good night!" "Good night!" over and over, backward and forward, for ten minutes together. In general, Harry was very kind to Laura, playing with her, and protecting her from any roughness of neighbor children. But truth compels me to tell of one occasion on which Harry did not show a brotherly spirit. In the garden under a great birch tree, stood a trough for watering the horses. It was a large and deep trough, and always full of beautiful, clear water. It was pleasant to lean over the edge and see the sky and the leaves of the tree reflected as if in a crystal mirror, to see one's own rosy, freckled face, too, and make other faces, to see which could open eyes or mouth widest.

Now one day as little Laura, being perhaps four years old, was hanging over the edge of the trough, forgetful of all save the delight of gazing, it chanced that Harry came up behind her; and the spirit of mischief that was always in him triumphed

over brotherly affection, and he “ups with her heels, and smothers her squeals” in the clear, cold water.

Laura came up gasping and puffing, her hair streaming all over her round face, her eyes staring with wonder and fright!

By the time help arrived, as it fortunately did, in the person of Thomas the gardener, poor Laura was in a deplorable condition, half choked with water, and frightened nearly out of her wits.

Thomas carried the dripping child to the house and put her into Mary’s kind arms, and then reported to our mother what Harry had done.

We were almost never whipped, but for this misdeed Harry was put to bed at once; and our mother, sitting beside him, gave him what we used to call a “talking to,” which he did not soon forget.



Not many children can boast of having two homes; some, alas, have hardly one! But we actually had two abiding places, both of which were so dear to us that we loved them equally. First, there was Green Peace. When our mother first came to the place and saw the fair garden and the house with its lawn and its shadowing trees, she gave it this name, half in sport; and the title clung to it always.

The house itself was pleasant. The original building, nearly two hundred years old, was low and squat, with low-studded rooms, and great posts in the corners, and small many-paned windows. . . . But, after all, we did not stay in the house much. Why should we, with the garden calling us out with its thousand voices? On one side of the house lay an oval lawn, green as emerald. One lawn had the laburnum-tree, where at the right

Queen Hildegarde

By Laura E. Richards

Edited by Jenny Phillips

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First published in 1889

Chapter 1

Hildegarde Graham



have a little plan, which I should like very much to carry out, if you fully approve of it," said Mrs. Graham to her husband. "I know what I would like to do with Hilda when we go to California."

Mr. Graham has been called suddenly to administer the estate of a cousin who had recently died, and Mrs. Graham was to accompany her husband for an extended stay to offer sympathy and help the widow who was invalid with three little children. Hilda, the Graham's daughter, believed she was going with them, but Mrs. Graham had a different plan. What the plan was, we shall see by and by. Meanwhile, let us take a peep at Hilda, or Hildegardis, as she sits in her own room, all unconscious of the plot which is hatching in the parlor below.

She is a tall girl of fifteen. Probably, she has attained her full height, for she looks as if she had been growing too fast; her form is slender, her face pale with a weary look in the large gray eyes. It is a delicate, high-bred face, with a pretty nose, slightly "tip-tilted," and a beautiful mouth; but it is half-spoiled by the expression, which is discontented, if not actually peevish. If we lifted the light curling locks of fair hair that lie on her

forehead, we should see a very decided frown on a broad white space which ought to be absolutely smooth. Why should a girl of fifteen frown, especially a girl so “exceptionally fortunate” as all her friends considered Hilda Graham? Certainly her surroundings at this moment are pretty enough to satisfy any girl. Her room is not large, but it has a sunny bay-window which seems to increase its size twofold. In refurnishing it a year before, her father had in mind Hilda’s favorite flower, the forget-me-not, and the room is simply a bower of forget-me-nots. Scattered over the dull olive ground of the carpet, clustering and nodding from the wallpaper, peeping from the folds of the curtains, the forget-me-nots are everywhere. Even the creamy surface of the toilet-jug and bowl, even the ivory backs of the brushes that lie on the blue-covered toilet table, bear each its cluster of pale-blue blossoms. The low easy-chair in which the girl is reclining, and the pretty sofa with its plump cushions inviting to repose, repeat the same tale. The tale is again repeated, though in a different way, by a scroll running round the top of the wall, on which in letters of blue and gold is written at intervals phrases in French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, of all which tongues Hilda’s father possessed knowledge.

Is not this indeed a bower, wherein a girl ought to be happy? The bird in the window thinks his blue and gold cage the finest house in the world, and he sings as heartily and cheerily as if he had been in the wide green forest; but his mistress does not sing. She sits in the easy-chair, with a book upside down in her lap, and frowns—actually frowns, in a forget-me-not bower! There is not much the matter, really. Her head aches, that is all. Her German lesson had been longer and harder than usual, and

her father was quite right about the caramels; there is a box of them on the table now, within easy reach of the slim white hand with its forget-me-not ring of blue turquoises.

As I said before, Hilda had no suspicion of the plot her parents were concocting. She knew that her father was obliged to go to San Francisco, being called suddenly to administer the estate of a cousin who had recently died there, and that her mother and—as she supposed—herself were going with him to offer sympathy and help to the widow, an invalid with three little children. As to the idea of her being left behind—of her father's starting off on a long journey without his lieutenant-general, of her mother's parting from her only child, whom she had watched with tender care and anxiety since the day of her birth—such a thought never came into Hilda's mind. Wherever her parents went she went, as a matter of course. So it had always been, and so without doubt it always would be. She did not care specially about going to California at this season of the year. In fact, she had told her bosom friend, Madge Everton, only the day before, that it was “rather a bore,” and that she should have preferred to go to Newport. “But what can I do?” she added, with the slightest shrug of her pretty shoulders. “Papa and Mamma really must go, it appears; so, of course, I must go, too.”

“A bore!” repeated Madge energetically, replying to the first part of her friend's remarks. “Hilda, what a very singular girl you are! Here I, or Nelly, or any of the other girls would give both our ears, and our front teeth too, to make such a trip; and just because you can go, you sit there and call it ‘a bore!’” And Madge shook her black curls and opened wide eyes of indignation and wonder at our ungrateful heroine. “I only

wish," she added, "that you and I could be changed into each other, just for this summer."

"I wish—" began Hilda; but she checked herself in her response to the wish, as the thought of Madge's five brothers rose in her mind (Hilda could not endure boys!). She looked attentively at the toe of her little bronze slipper for a few moments, and then she changed the subject by proposing a walk. "Console yourself with the caramels, my fiery Madge," she said, pushing the box across the table, "while I put on my boots. We will go to Maillard's store and get some more while we are out. His caramels are decidedly better than Huyler's; don't you think so?"

A very busy woman was pretty Mrs. Graham during the next two weeks. First, she made an expedition into the country "to see an old friend," she said, and was gone two whole days. And after that she was out every morning, driving hither and thither, from shop to dressmaker, from dressmaker to milliner, from milliner to shoemaker.

"It is a sad thing," Mr. Graham would say, when his wife fluttered in to lunch, breathless and exhausted and half an hour late (she, the most punctual of women!)—"it is a sad thing to have married a comet by mistake, thinking it was a woman. How did you find the other planets this morning, my dear? Is it true that Saturn has lost one of his rings?"

Hilda thought nothing of her father's remarks—Papa was always talking nonsense, and she thought she always understood him perfectly. It did occur to her, however, to wonder at her mother's leaving her out on all her shopping expeditions. Hilda rather prided herself on her skill in matching shades and selecting fabrics, and Mamma was generally glad

of her assistance in all such matters. However, perhaps it was only underclothing and house linen and such things that she was buying. All that was the dull part of shopping. It was the poetry of it that Hilda loved—the shimmer of silk and satin, the rich shadows in velvet, the cool, airy fluttering of muslin and lace. So the girl went on her usual way, finding life a little dull, a little tiresome, and most people rather stupid, but everything on the whole much as usual, if her head only would not ache so; and it was without a shadow of suspicion that she obeyed one morning her mother's summons to come and see her in her dressing room.

Her mother had said a little prayer before she sent the message to Hilda—for she knew that her news would sorely hurt and grieve the child who was half the world to her; and though she did not flinch from the task, she longed for strength and wisdom to do it in the kindest and wisest way.

“Hilda, dear,” she said gently, when they were seated together on the sofa, hand in hand, with each an arm round the other's waist, as they loved best to sit—“Hilda, dear, I have something to say that will not please you; something that may even grieve you very much at first.” She paused, and Hilda rapidly reviewed in her mind all the possibilities that she could think of. Had anything happened to the box of French dresses which was on its way from Paris? Had a careless servant broken her glass case of ferns again? Had Aunt Emily been saying disagreeable things about her, as she was apt to do? She was about to speak, but at that moment, like a thunderbolt, the next words struck her ear: “We have decided not to take you with us to California.” Amazed, wounded, indignant, Hilda could only lift her great gray eyes to meet the soft violet ones, which, full of unshed

tears, were fixed tenderly upon her. Mrs. Graham continued: "Your father and I both feel, my darling, that this long, fatiguing journey, in the full heat of summer, would be the worst possible thing for you. You have not been very well lately, and it is most important that you should lead a quiet, regular, healthy life for the next few months. We have therefore made arrangements to leave you—"

But here Hilda could control herself no longer. "Mamma! Mamma!" she cried. "How can you be so unkind, so cruel? Leave me—you and Papa both? Why, I shall die! Of course I shall die, all alone in this great house. I thought you loved me!" And she burst into tears, half of anger, half of grief, and sobbed bitterly.

"Dear child!" said Mrs. Graham, smoothing the fair hair lovingly, "If you had heard me out, you would have seen that we had no idea of leaving you alone, or of leaving you in this house either. You are to stay with—"

"Not with Aunt Emily!" cried the girl, springing to her feet with flashing eyes. "Mamma, I would rather beg in the streets than stay with Aunt Emily. She is a detestable, ill-natured, selfish woman."

"Hildegarde," said Mrs. Graham gravely, "be silent!" There was a moment of absolute stillness, broken only by the ticking of the little crystal clock on the mantelpiece, and then Mrs. Graham continued: "I must ask you not to speak again, my daughter, until I have finished what I have to say; and even then, I trust you will keep silence until you are able to command yourself. You are to stay with the woman who was my nurse when I was a child, Mrs. Hartley, at her farm near Glenfield. She is a very kind, good woman, and will take the best possible care

of you. I went to the farm myself last week, and found it a lovely place, with every comfort, though no luxuries, save the great one of a free, healthy, natural life. There, my Hilda, we shall leave you, sadly indeed, and yet feeling that you are in good and loving hands. And I feel very sure," she added in a lighter tone, "that by the time we return, you will be a rosy-cheeked country lass, strong and hearty, with no more thought of headaches, and no wrinkle in your forehead." As she ceased speaking, Mrs. Graham drew the girl close to her, and kissed the white brow tenderly, murmuring: "God bless my darling daughter! If she knew how her mother's heart aches at parting with her!" But Hilda did not know. She was too angry, too bewildered, too deeply hurt, to think of anyone except herself. She felt that she could not trust herself to speak, and it was in silence, and without returning her mother's caress, that she rose and sought her own room.

Mrs. Graham looked after her wistfully, tenderly, but made no effort to call her back. The tears trembled in her soft blue eyes, and her lip quivered as she turned to her work table; but she said quietly to herself: "Solitude is a good medicine. The child will do well, and I know that I have chosen wisely for her."

Hildegarde shed bitter tears as she flung herself face downward on her own blue sofa. Angry thoughts surged through her brain. Now she burned with resentment at the parents who could desert her—their only child; now she melted into pity for herself, and wept more and more as she pictured the misery that lay before her. To be left alone—alone!—on a squalid, wretched farm, with a dirty old woman, a woman who had been a servant—she, Hildegardis Graham, the idol of her parents, the queen of her "set" among the young people, the

proudest and most exclusive girl in New York, as she had once (and not with displeasure) heard herself called!

What would Madge Everton, what would all the girls say! How they would laugh to hear of Hilda Graham living on a farm among pigs and hens and dirty people! Oh! It was intolerable; and she sprang up and paced the floor, with burning cheeks and flashing eyes.

The thought of opposing the plan did not occur to her. Mrs. Graham's rule, gentle though it was, was not of the flabby, nor yet of the elastic sort. Her decisions were not hastily arrived at; but once made, they were final and abiding. "You might just as well try to oppose the Gulf Stream!" Mr. Graham would say.

So Hildegarde's first lessons had been in obedience and in truthfulness and these were fairly well learned before she began learning to read. And so she knew now that she might storm and weep as she would in her own room, but that the decree was fixed, and that unless the skies fell, her summer would be passed at Hartley's Glen.

