

THE WHISTLING MOTHER

happen to see them as she came in. They were clinched tight at her sides, just the way I've often clinched mine before I went into a game on which a good deal depended. But the next minute her arms were round my neck in the old way, and she was holding me so tight I could hardly breathe—and I don't believe she could breathe much, either, for I was giving her back every bit of that, with some to spare. I have an idea she was saying, inside, "I won't—I *won't*"—just the same way I was. And she didn't—and I didn't—though *not to* certainly pulled harder than anything I ever *didn't* do in my life!

She didn't keep me long. Just that one great hug, and something else that goes with it, and then *what* do you think she said? If I'd had a hat on I'd have taken it off to her at that moment. She looked up