

THE CALLING OF DAN MATTHEWS

"I was going over to old Dewey myself," he answered. "I thought I would like to look the ground over." He smiled down at her. "But now I'm going with you. Just wait a minute until I saddle a horse."

She laughed at him. "Oh no, you're not."

"But, mother, I want to talk to you. I—I have something to tell you."

"Yes, I know," she nodded. "You have already told me—"

"Has Doctor—" he burst forth.

"No indeed! For shame, Dan. You know Doctor wouldn't. It was in your letters, and— But I have planned for you to tell me the rest this evening. Go with your father and Doctor to look at the stock this morning and write your business letters while I attend to *my* affairs. Then, the first thing after dinner, you slip away alone over to Dewey and do your planning. Perhaps I'll meet you on the old trail as you come back. You see I have it all fixed."

"Yes," he said slowly, "you always have things fixed, don't you? What a mother you are! There's only one other woman in all the world like you."

And at this she answered bravely, "Yes, I know dear. I have always known it would come, and I am glad, glad my boy—but—I—I think you'd better kiss me now." So she left him standing at the fence and rode away alone down the old familiar path.

After dinner Dan set out.