

THE WHISTLING MOTHER

and nobody even suggested that the time was short—which it blamed was. Dad came in and shook my hand off, and we settled down to talk.

Pretty soon there was dinner, a perfectly ripping dinner, with everything I like—including tons of jelly, at sight of which I grinned at Mother and she grinned back—if you can call her gorgeous smile a grin. After dinner the lights were put on and we had some music, as we always do when I'm home—little family orchestra with two fiddles, a flute, my mandolin, and the piano, and I noticed we didn't play any but the jolliest sort of things. Then Dad and I sat down again on the big couch in front of the fireplace to smoke and talk, with the kids hanging round till long past their bed-time. I went up with Jimmy, my twelve-year-old