

THE WHISTLING MOTHER

that was the thing he was really afraid of—that his upper lip wouldn't keep stiff but would wobble, in spite of him. And of course a breakdown on his own part would be the worst possible thing that could happen to him. No potential soldier wants to feel his upper lip unreliable, no matter what happens. It's likely to make him flinch in a critical moment, when flinching won't do.

I was looking up at a picture of Mother on the wall over my desk as I advised him to go home, and he asked me suddenly what *my* mother wrote back when I told her. I hated to tell him, but he pushed me about it, so I finally got out her letter and read him the last paragraph—but one. Of course the last one I wouldn't have read to anybody.

“It's all right, Son, and we're proud as