

THE WHISTLING MOTHER

whom of course I always leave till the last, she just gave me one good kiss, with her hands on my shoulders, and then I jumped on board. The train didn't linger long, for which I was mighty glad. When it pulled out, and I looked back at them all standing there—the whole bunch of them—suddenly I couldn't see them awfully well. But I gave a big wink that cleared my eyes, and saw that Mother was smiling, just as she always does, exactly as if I'd been going back to prep-school after my first vacation home. It wasn't a teary smile, either—it was her very best. . . . I see it now, sometimes, when I'm just dropping off to sleep.

I've thought about that send-off a lot since I got away. I've realized since, more than I did then, that it must have taken just sheer pluck on all their parts to