

— XXIV —

VALE!

THE years have passed — but in their passing have brought few changes to the little village nestling in the Maine pines that border on the sea. Not many changes — it is as though Time had touched it loath to touch at all; as though some spirit lingering there, sweet and fresh and vernal, had bade Time stay its hand.

Not many changes — the same familiar faces gather around the stove in the hotel office; and, neither as a memory, nor yet as of one who has gone, but as if he were amongst them, living still, they speak of the Patriarch as of yore.

And with this little circle of kindly, simple folk Time has dealt gently too, for there is only one who is no more — Cale Rodgers, the proprietor of the general store.

But the general store on the village street still flourishes, and in Cale Rodgers' place is one whose speech is still a marvelous thing in staid old New England ears — it is an Irish brogue perhaps, for his name is Michael Coogan. There are little Coogans too, and Mamie is a happy wife.