

THE THRUSH IN THE HEDGE

sought. Harry Baggs saw people on the porch; he recognized a man's voice that he had heard there before. On the right of the drive a thick maple tree cast a deep shadow, but beyond it a pool of clear moonlight extended to the house. He started forward, but Janin dragged him into the gloom of the maple.

"Sing here," he whispered in the boy's ear; "see, the window — *Deh vieni alla finestra.*"

Harry Baggs stood at the edge of the shadow; his throat seemed to thicken, his voice expire.

"No," he protested weakly; "you must speak first."

He felt the old man shaking under his hand and a sudden desperate calm overtook him.

He moved forward a little and sang the first phrase of the Serenade.

A murmur of attention, of surprised amusement, arose from the porch; then, as his voice gained in bigness, flowed rich and thrilling and without effort from his deep powerful lungs, the murmur died away. The song rose toward its end; Harry Baggs saw nothing but the window above him; he put all the accumulated feeling, the longing, of the past miserable years into his ending.

A silence followed, in which Harry Baggs stood with drooping head. Then an unrestrained patter of applause followed; figures advanced. French Janin gave the boy a sharp unexpected shove into the radiance beyond the tree.

"Go on and on," he breathed; "and never come back any more!"

He turned and shambled rapidly away into the shadows, the obscurity, that lined the road.