To John and Myfanwy Piper

Benjamin Britten

Winter Words

Op. 52

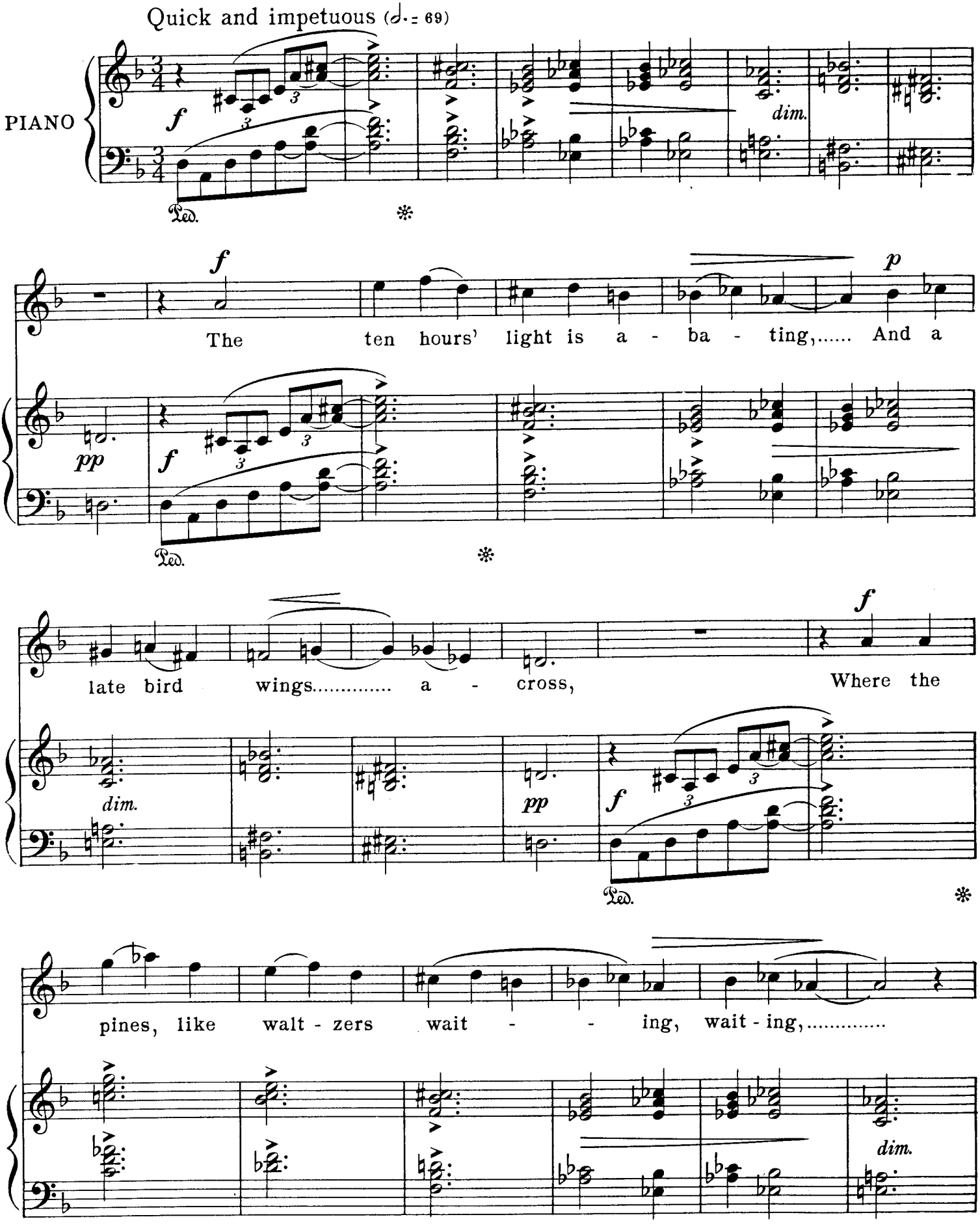
Lyrics and Ballads
of
Thomas Hardy

for
High Voice and Piano

70766531

Boosey & Hawkes
Music Publishers Limited
London · Paris · Bonn · Johannesburg · Sydney · Toronto · New York

1. At day-close in November



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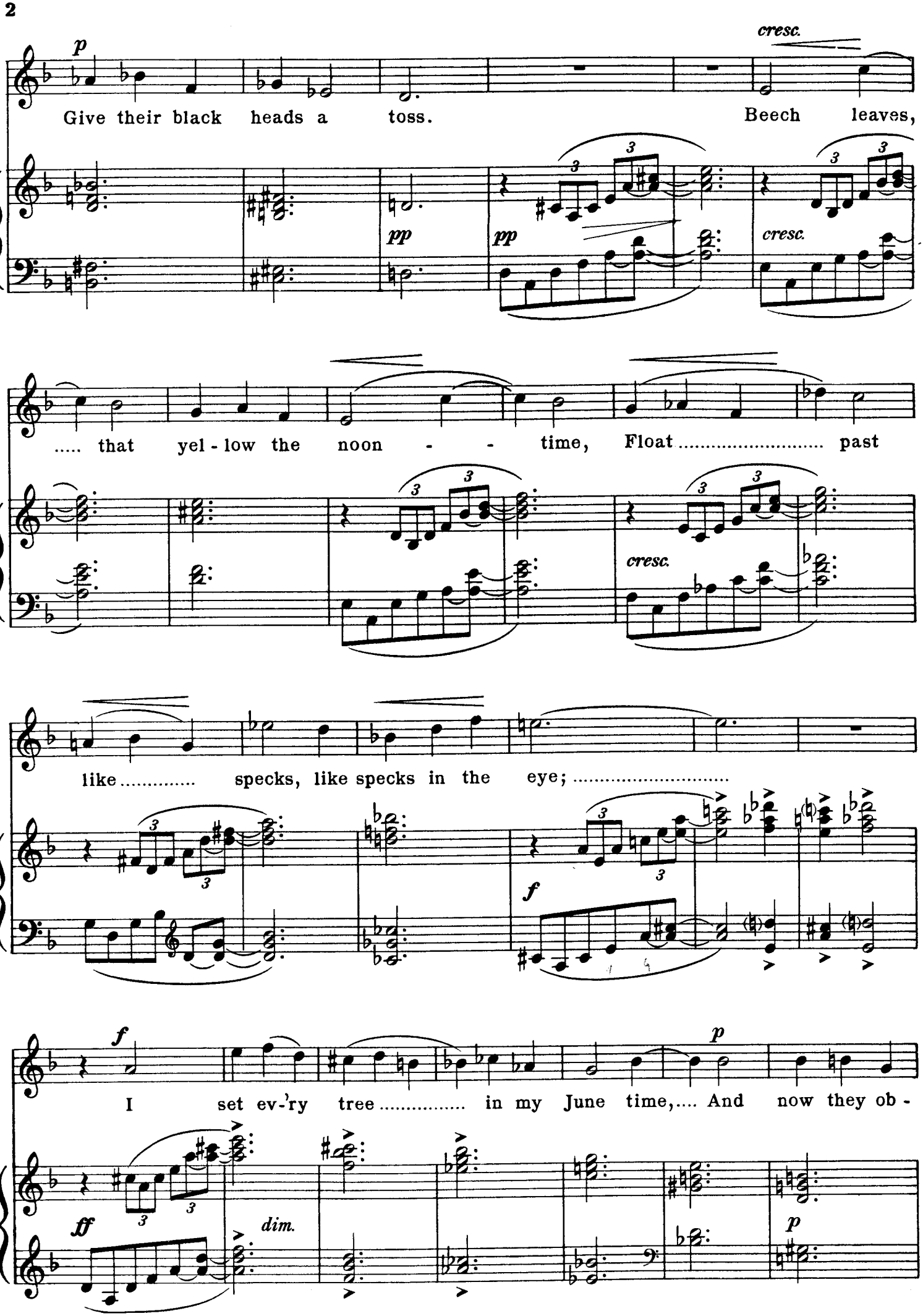
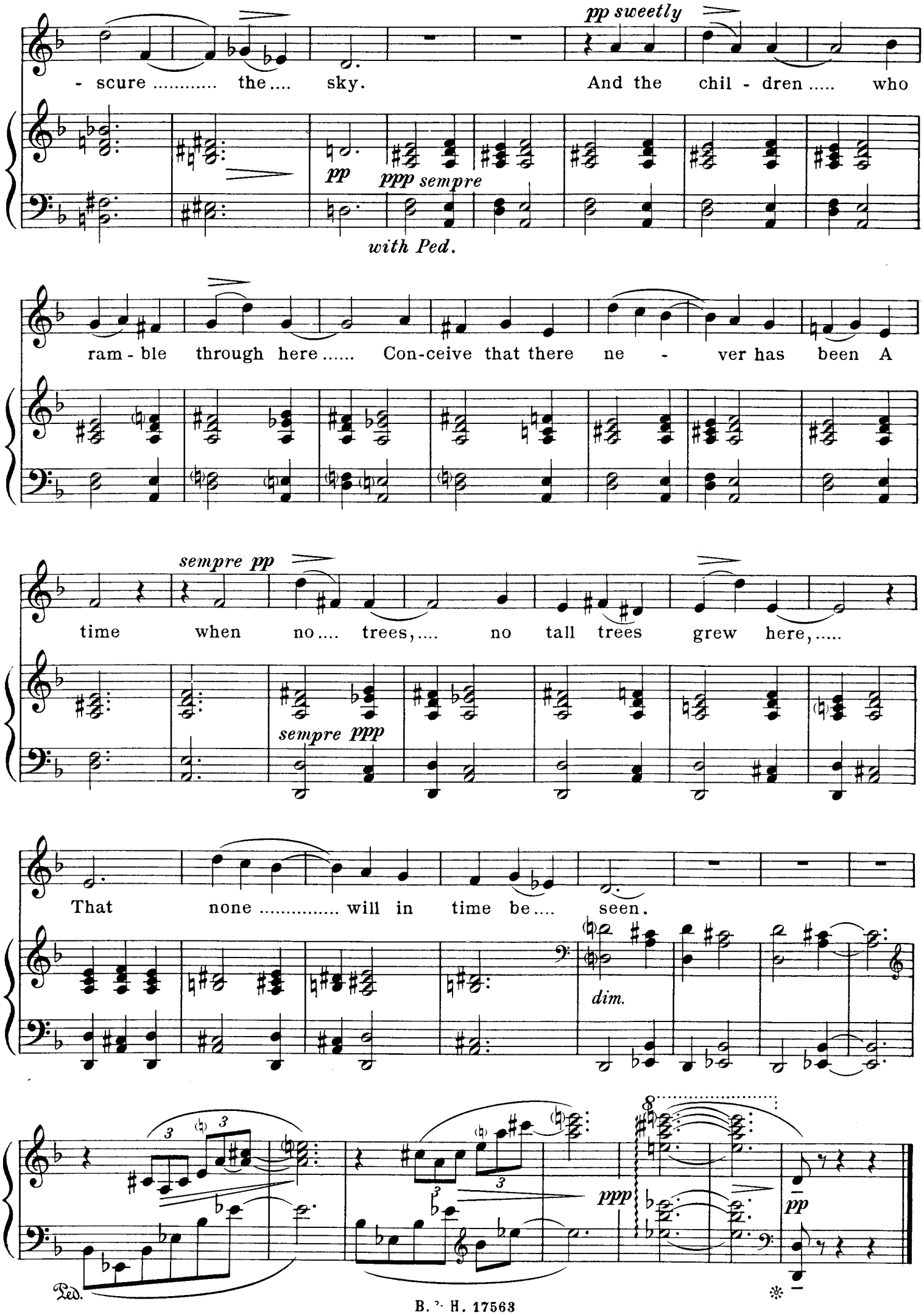
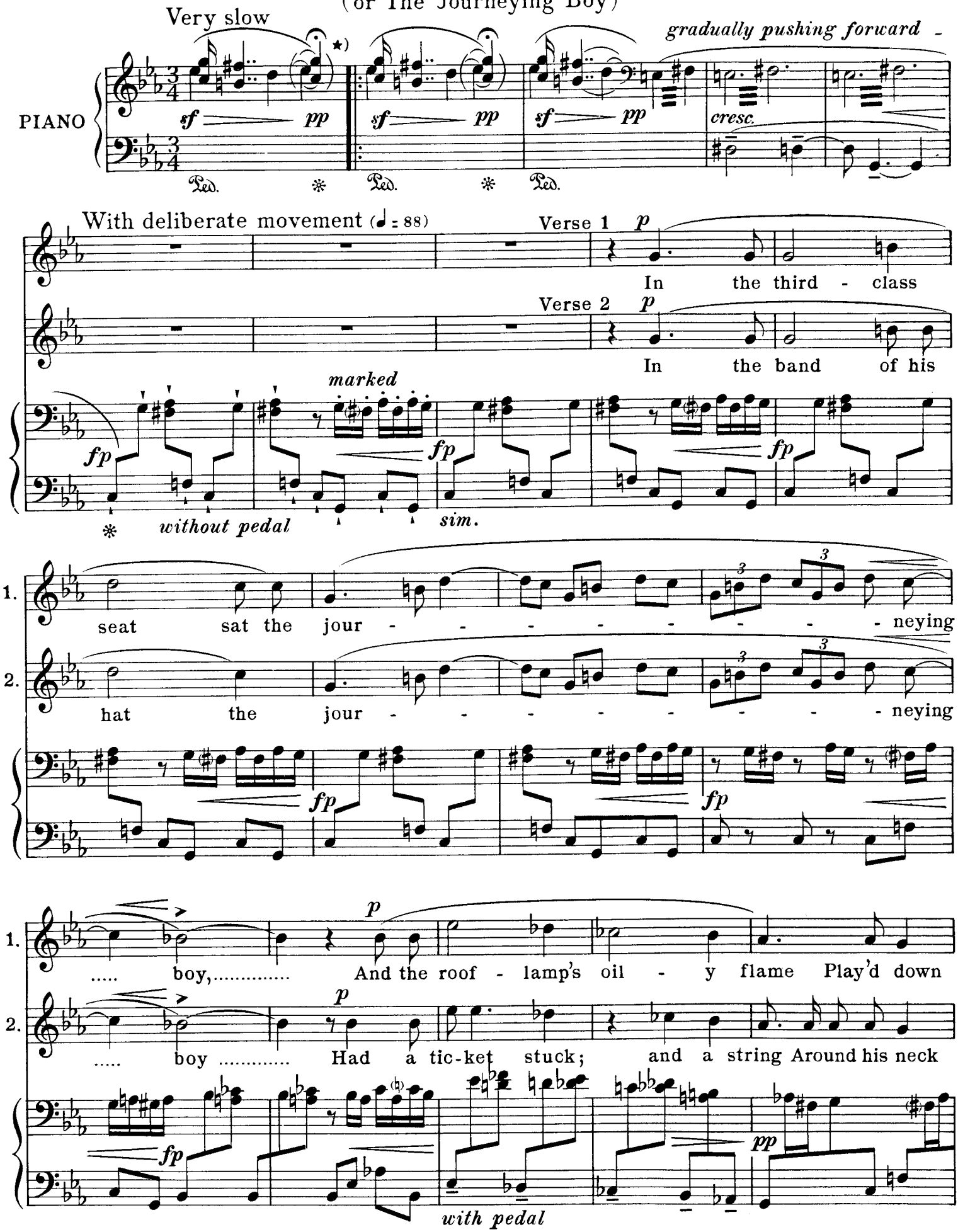

p
cresc.
Give their black heads a toss. Beech leaves,
pp
pp
cresc.
..... that yel - low the noon - - time, Float ..... past
cresc.
like ..... specks, like specks in the eye; .....
f
f
I set ev-'ry tree ..... in my June time,.... And now they ob -
p
ff
dim.
p


pp sweetly
- scure ..... the.... sky.
And the chil - dren ..... who
pp
ppp sempre
with Ped.
ram - ble through here..... Con-ceive that there ne - ver has been A
sempre pp
time when no.... trees,.... no tall trees grew here,.....
sempre ppp
That none ..... will in time be.... seen.
dim.
ppp
pp
Ped.

2

Midnight on the Great Western

(or The Journeying Boy)



*) The notes in brackets should be silently depressed before releasing the pedal.

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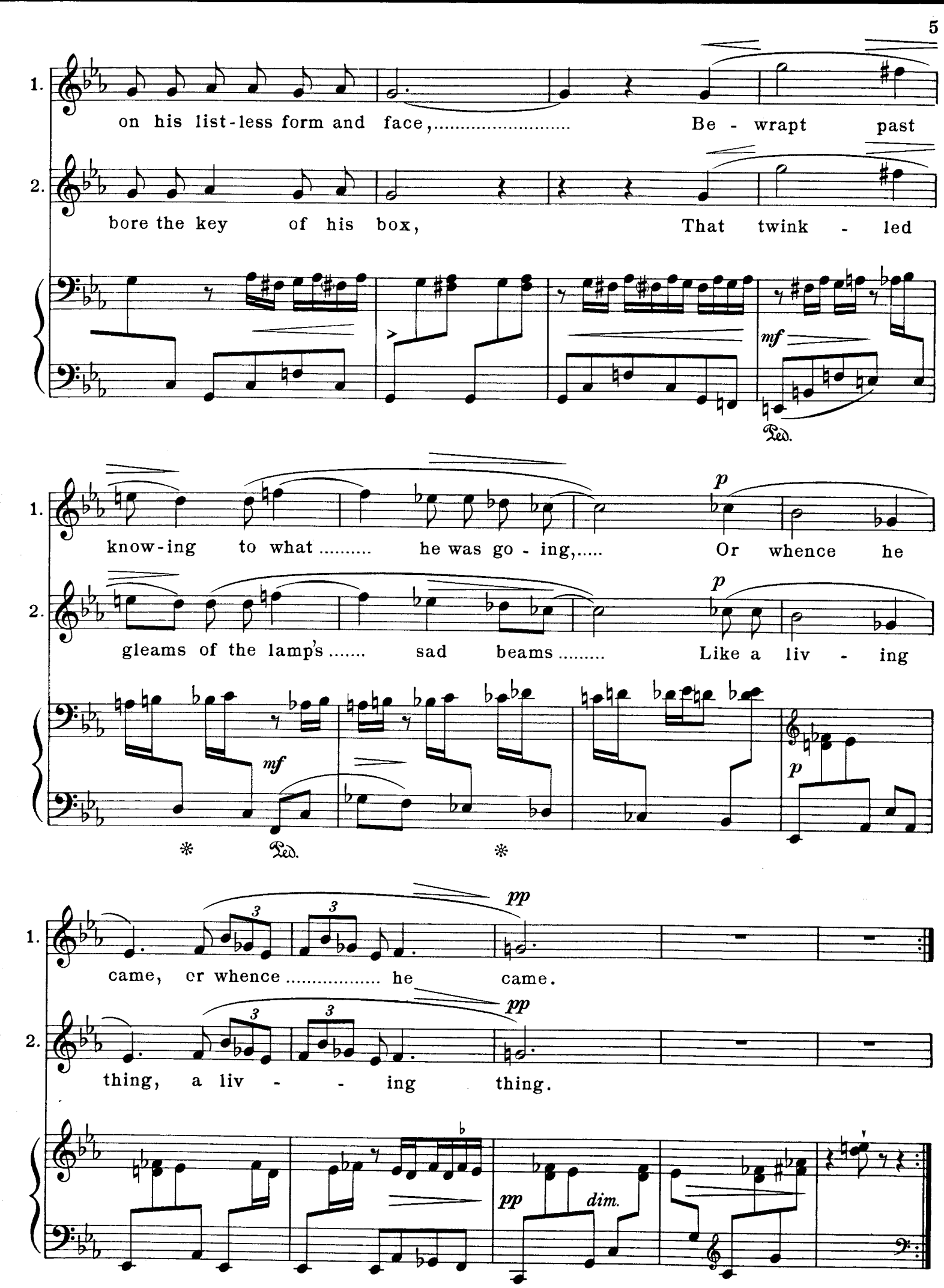
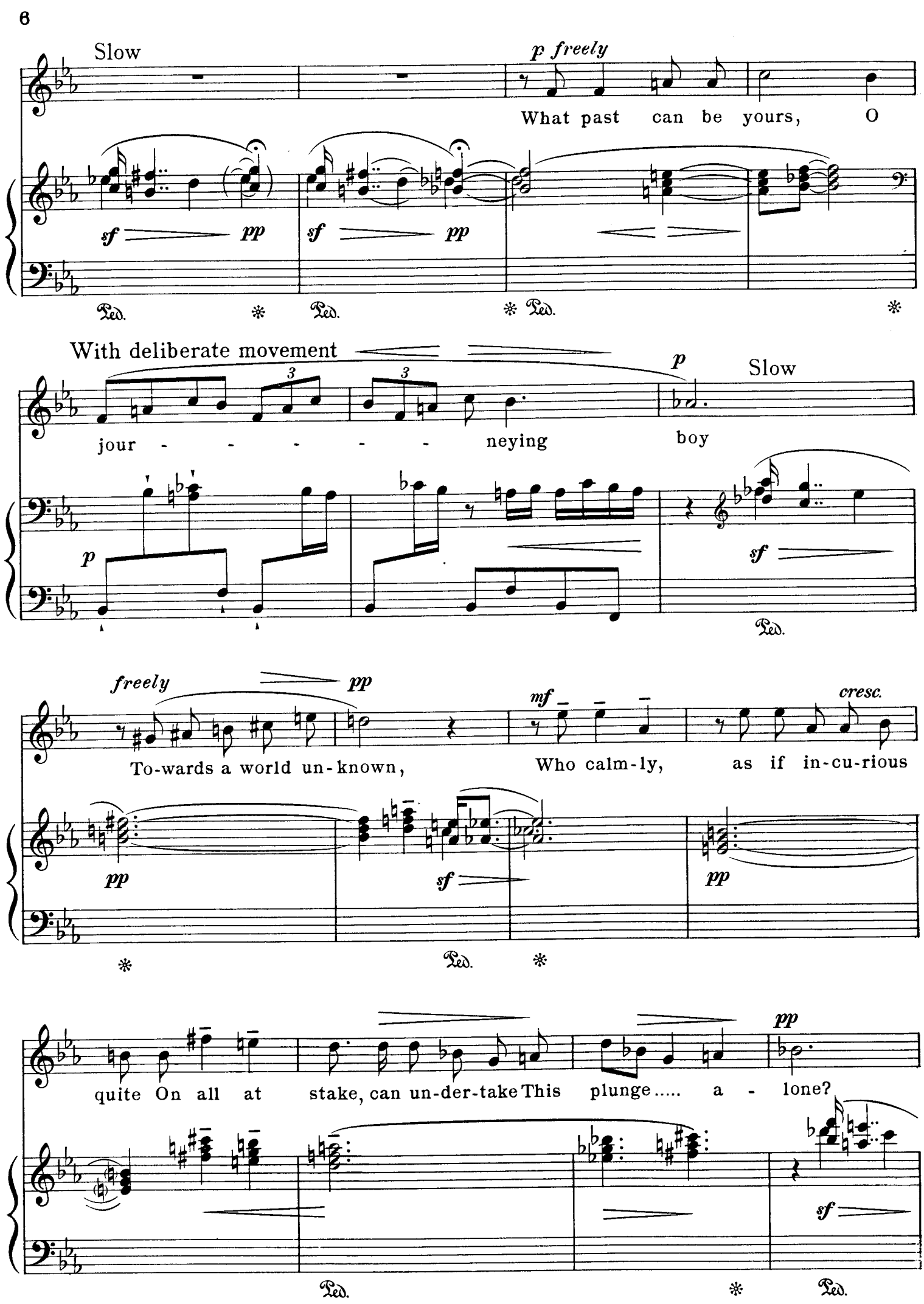
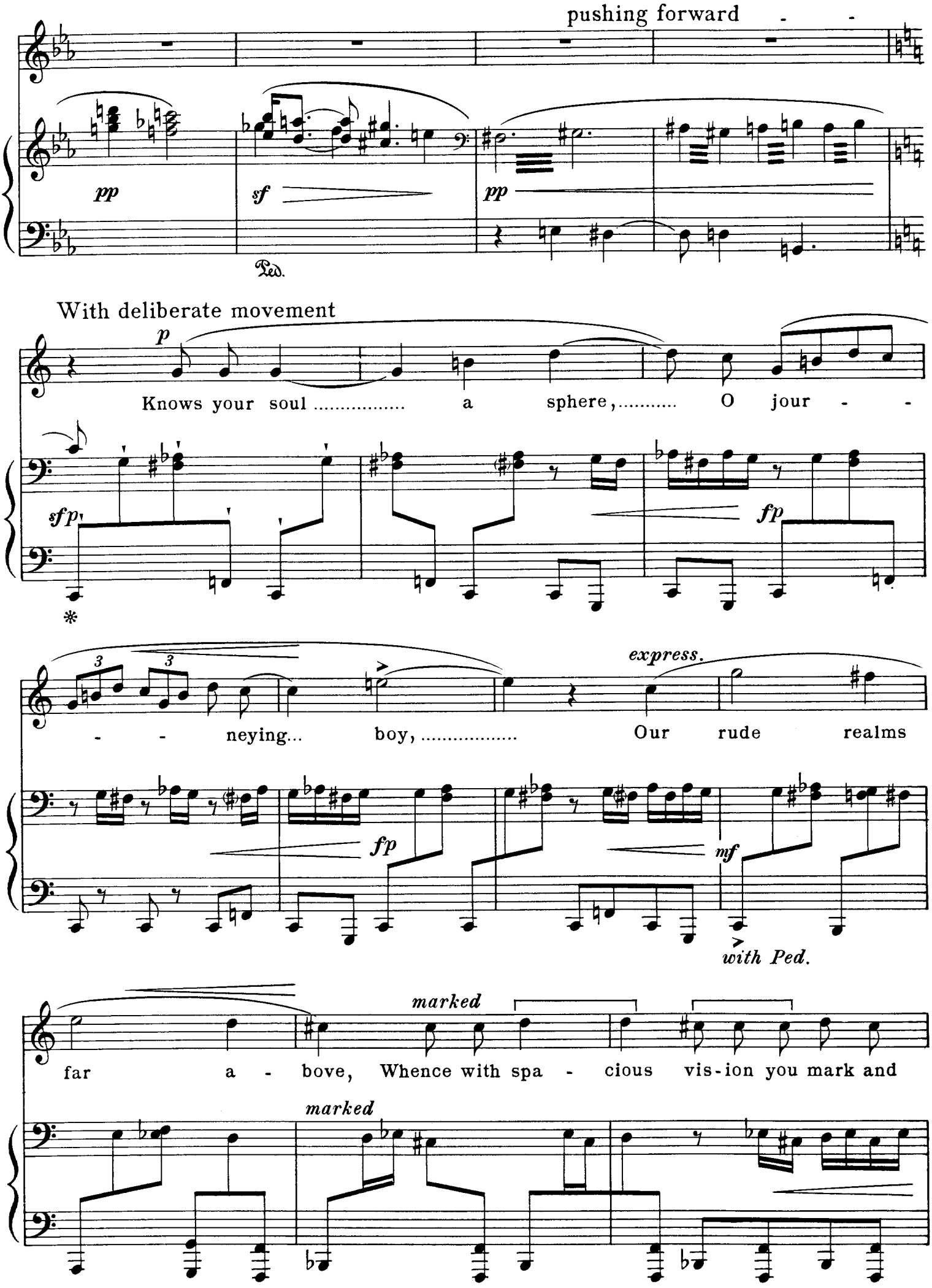
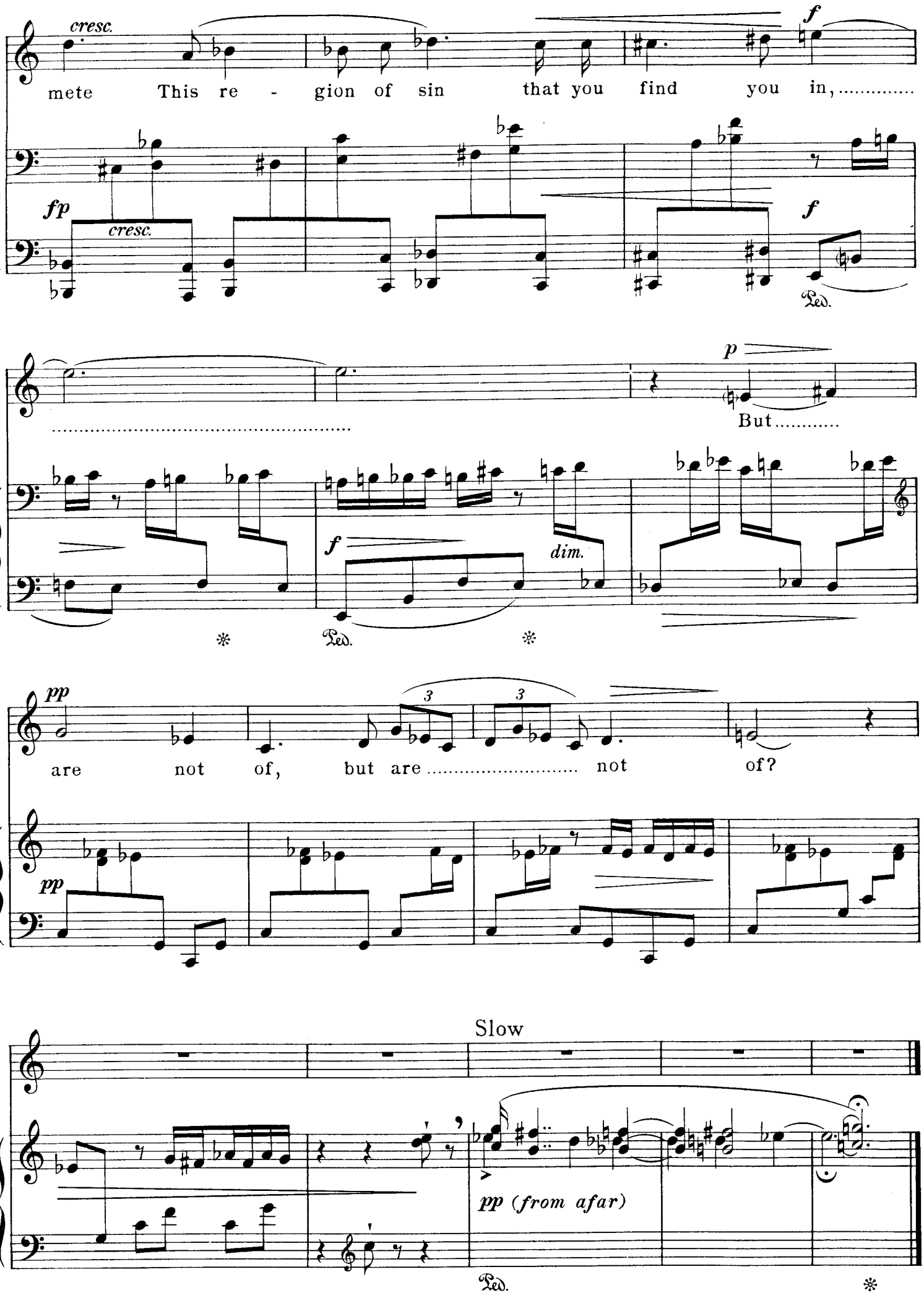

1.
on his list-less form and face,..... Be - wrapt past
2.
bore the key of his box, That twink - led
mf
Ped.
1.
know-ing to what ..... he was go - ing,..... Or whence he
2.
gleams of the lamp's ..... sad beams ..... Like a liv - ing
p
mf
p
Ped.
1.
came, or whence ..... he came.
2.
thing, a liv - - ing thing.
pp
pp
dim.


Slow
p freely
What past can be yours, O
sf pp
sf pp
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *
With deliberate movement
p
Slow
jour - - - - - - neying boy
p
sf
Ped.
freely
pp
mf
cresc.
To-wards a world un-known, Who calm-ly, as if in-cu-rious
pp
sf
pp
* Ped. *
pp
quite On all at stake, can un-der-take This plunge..... a - lone?
sf
Ped. * Ped.

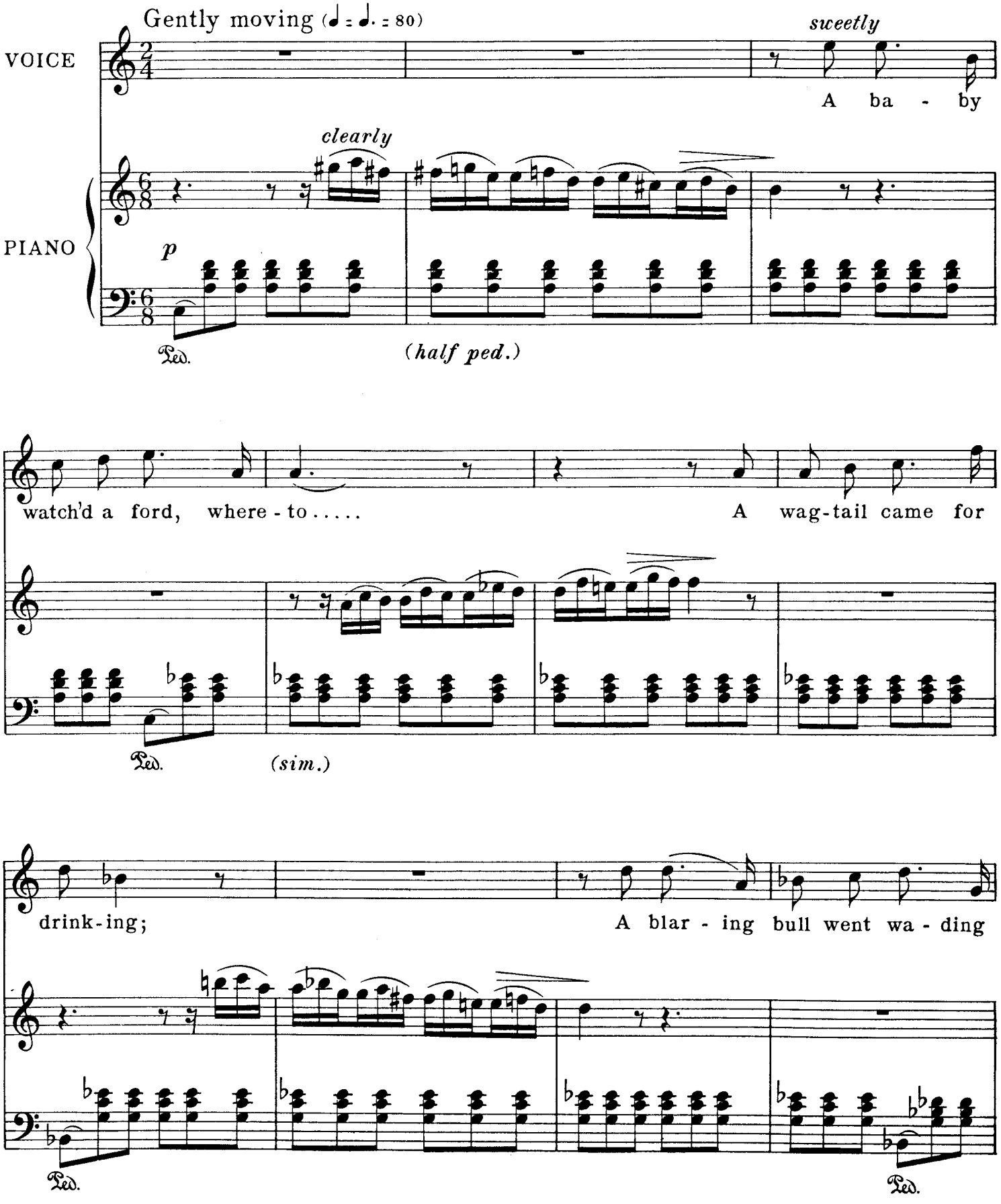

pushing forward - -
pp
sf
pp
Ped.
With deliberate movement
p
Knows your soul ..... a sphere, ... O jour - -
sfp
fp
*
3
3
- - neying... boy, ... Our rude realms
express.
fp
mf
with Ped.
marked
far a - bove, Whence with spa - cious vis-ion you mark and
marked


cresc.
f
mete This re - gion of sin that you find you in,.....
fp
cresc.
f
Ped.
p
.....
But.....
f
dim.
Ped.
pp
are not of, but are ..... not of?
pp
Slow
pp (from afar)
Ped.

3.

Wagtail and Baby

(A Satire)



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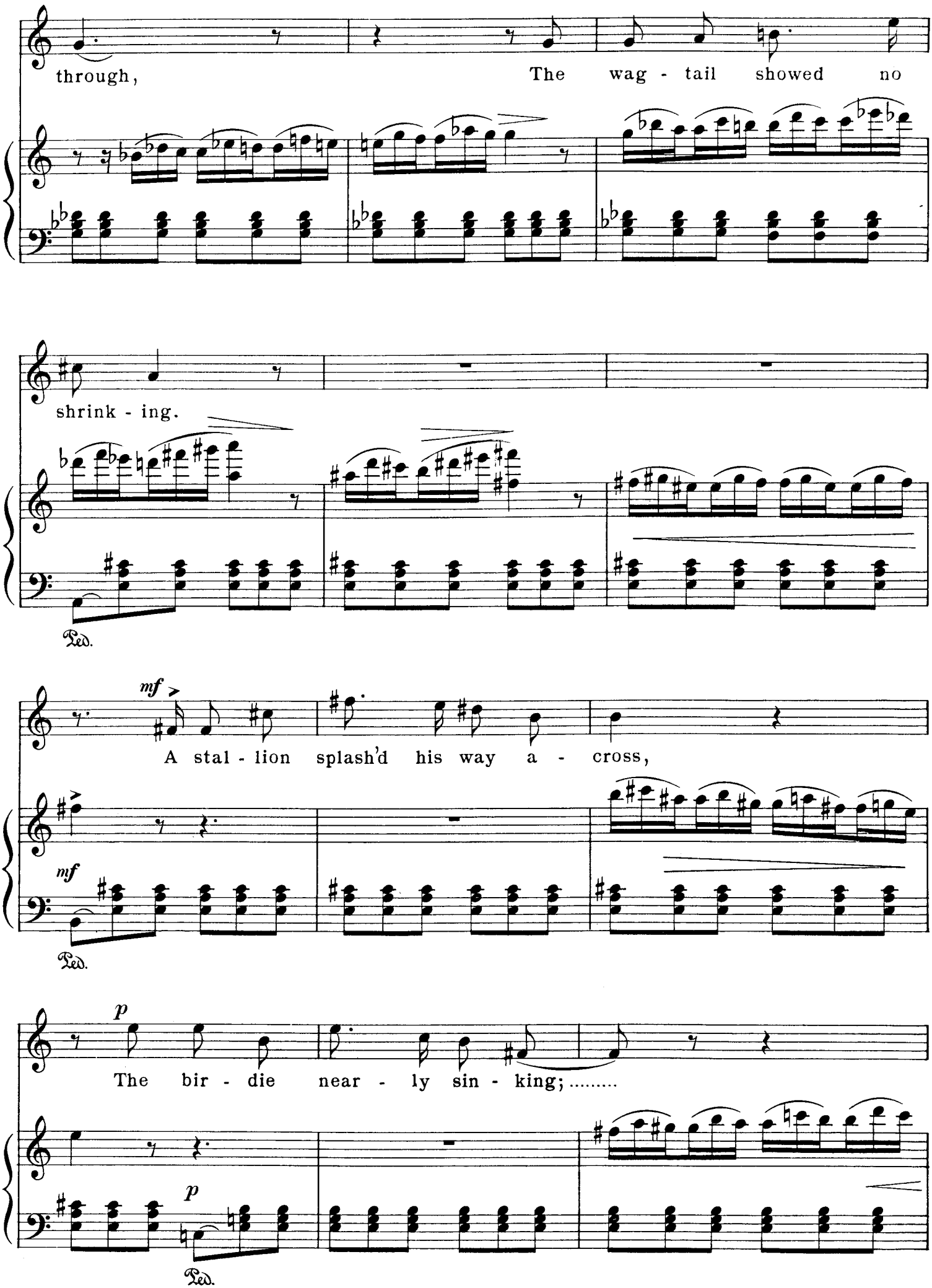
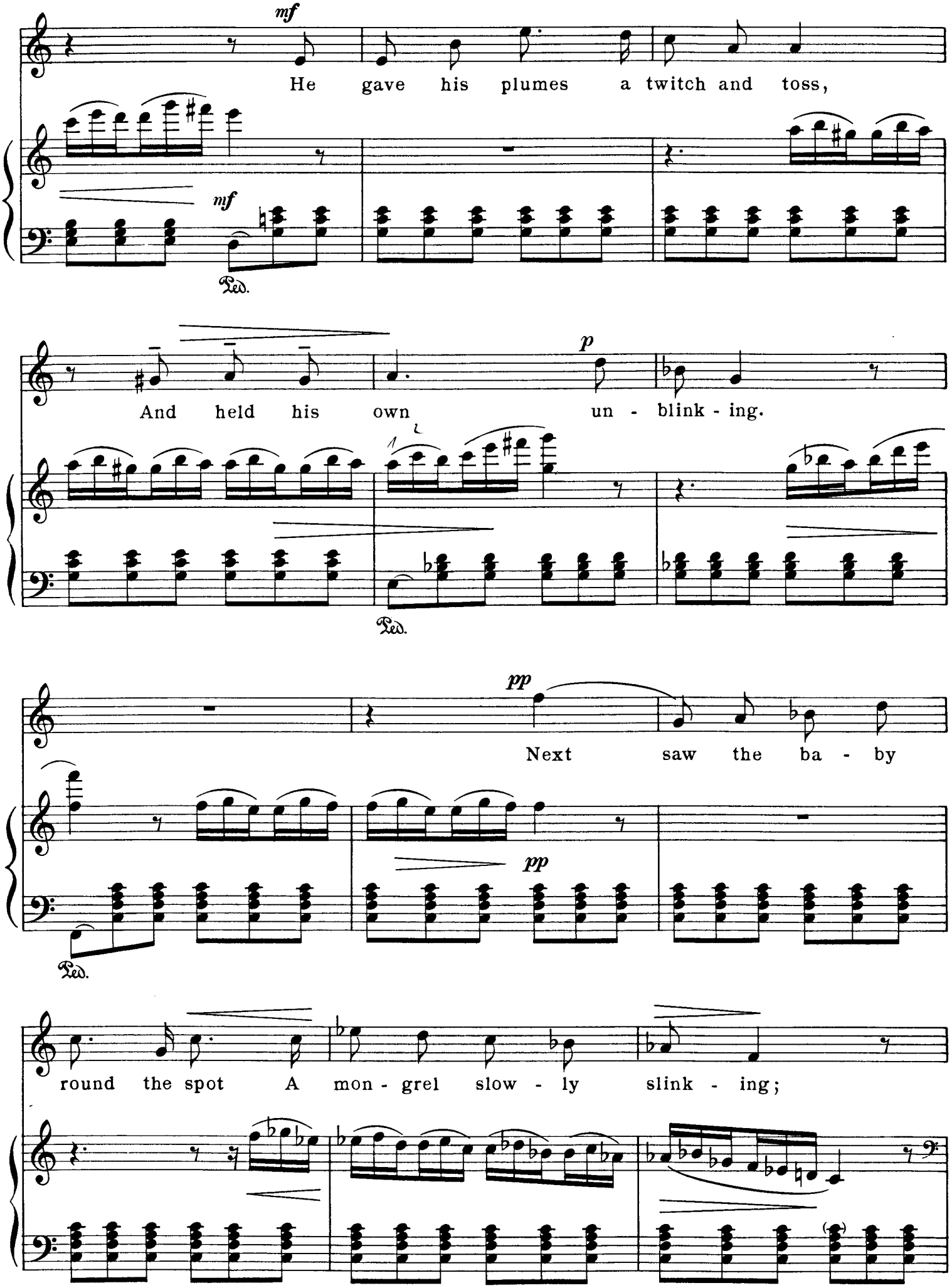
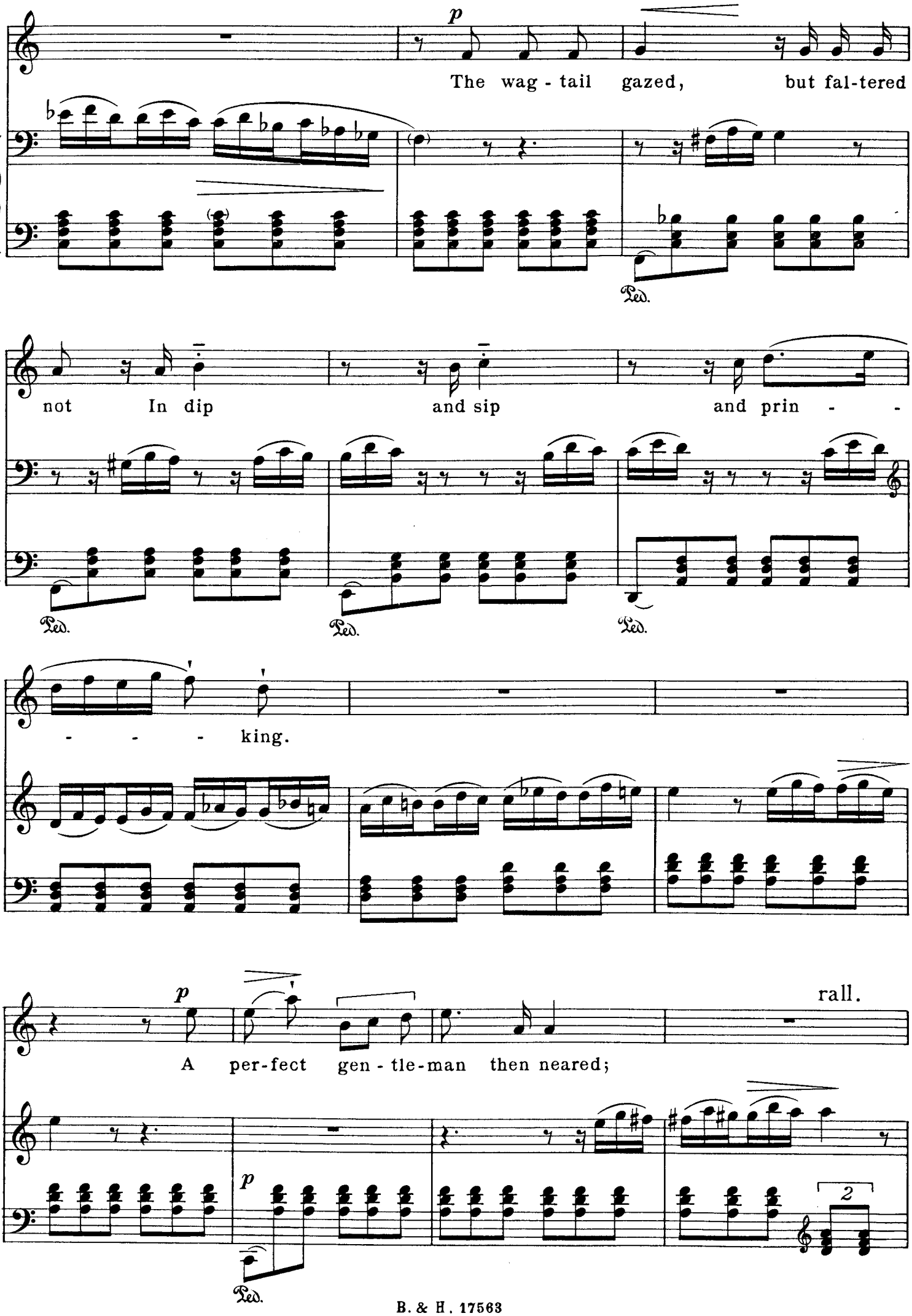
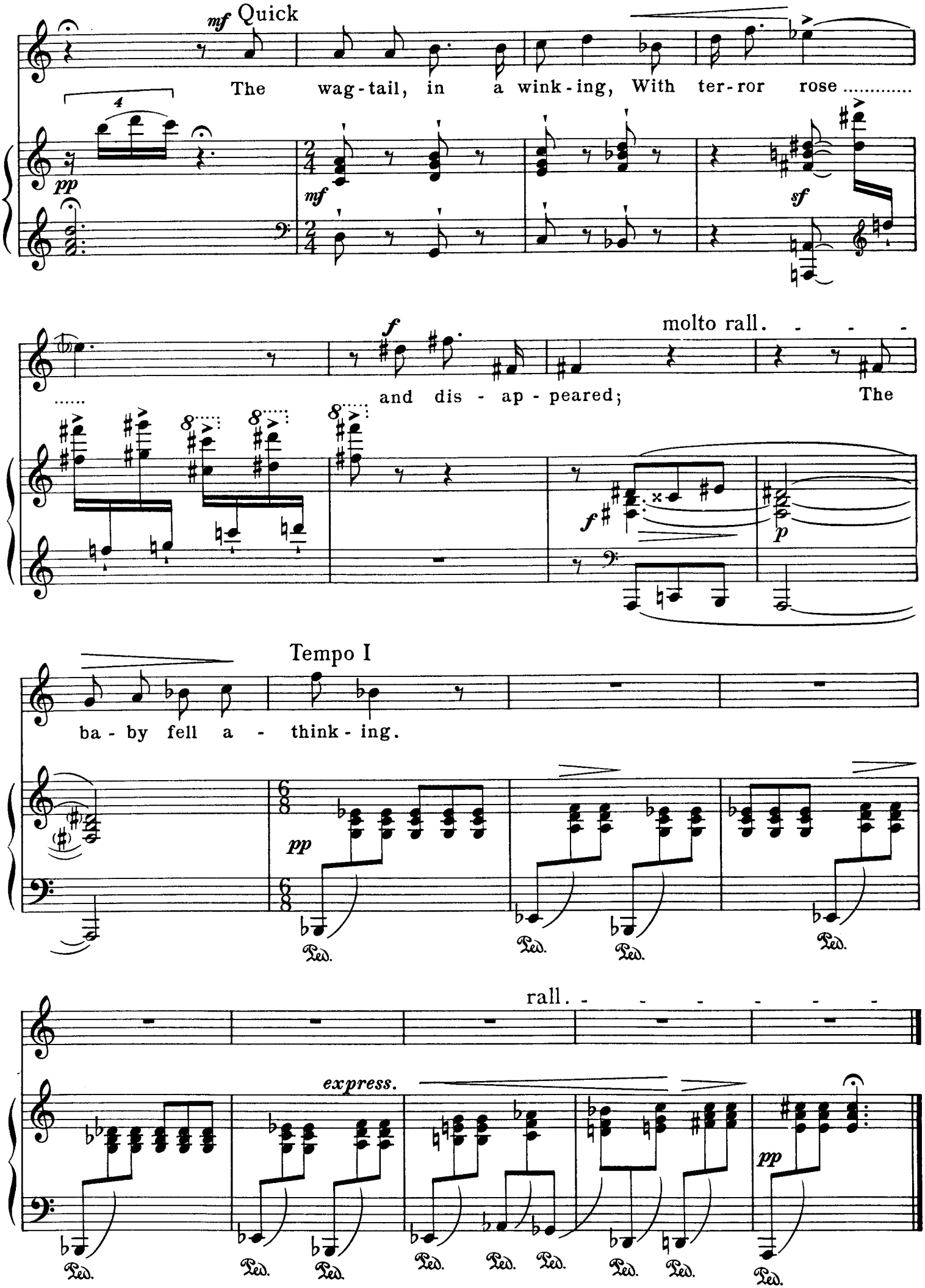

through,
The wag - tail showed no
shrink - ing.
Ped.
mf
A stal - lion splash'd his way a - cross,
mf
Ped.
p
The bir - die near - ly sin - king; .....
p
Ped.

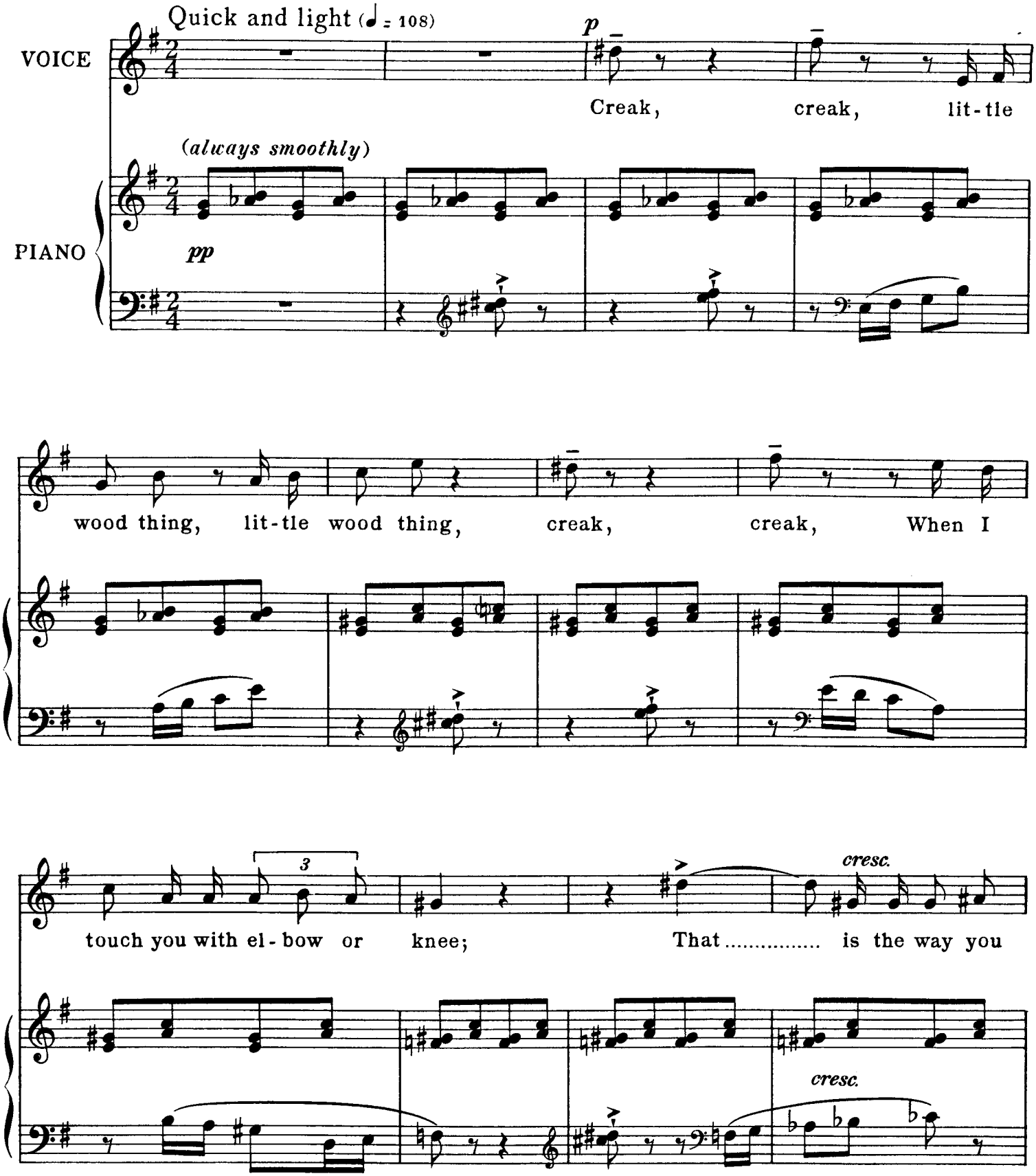

mf
He gave his plumes a twitch and toss,
mf
Ped.
p
And held his own un - blink - ing.
Ped.
pp
Next saw the ba - by
pp
Ped.
round the spot A mon - grel slow - ly slink - ing;


p
The wag - tail gazed, but fal-tered
Ped.
not In dip and sip and prin - -
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
- - - king.
p
rall.
A per-fect gen - tle-man then neared;
p
Ped.
2


mf Quick
The wag-tail, in a wink-ing, With ter-ror rose .....
pp
mf
sf
f
molto rall. - - -
..... and dis - ap - peared; The
f
p
Tempo I
ba - by fell a - think - ing.
pp
Ped.
rall. - - - - - - -
express.
pp
Ped.

4

The little old table



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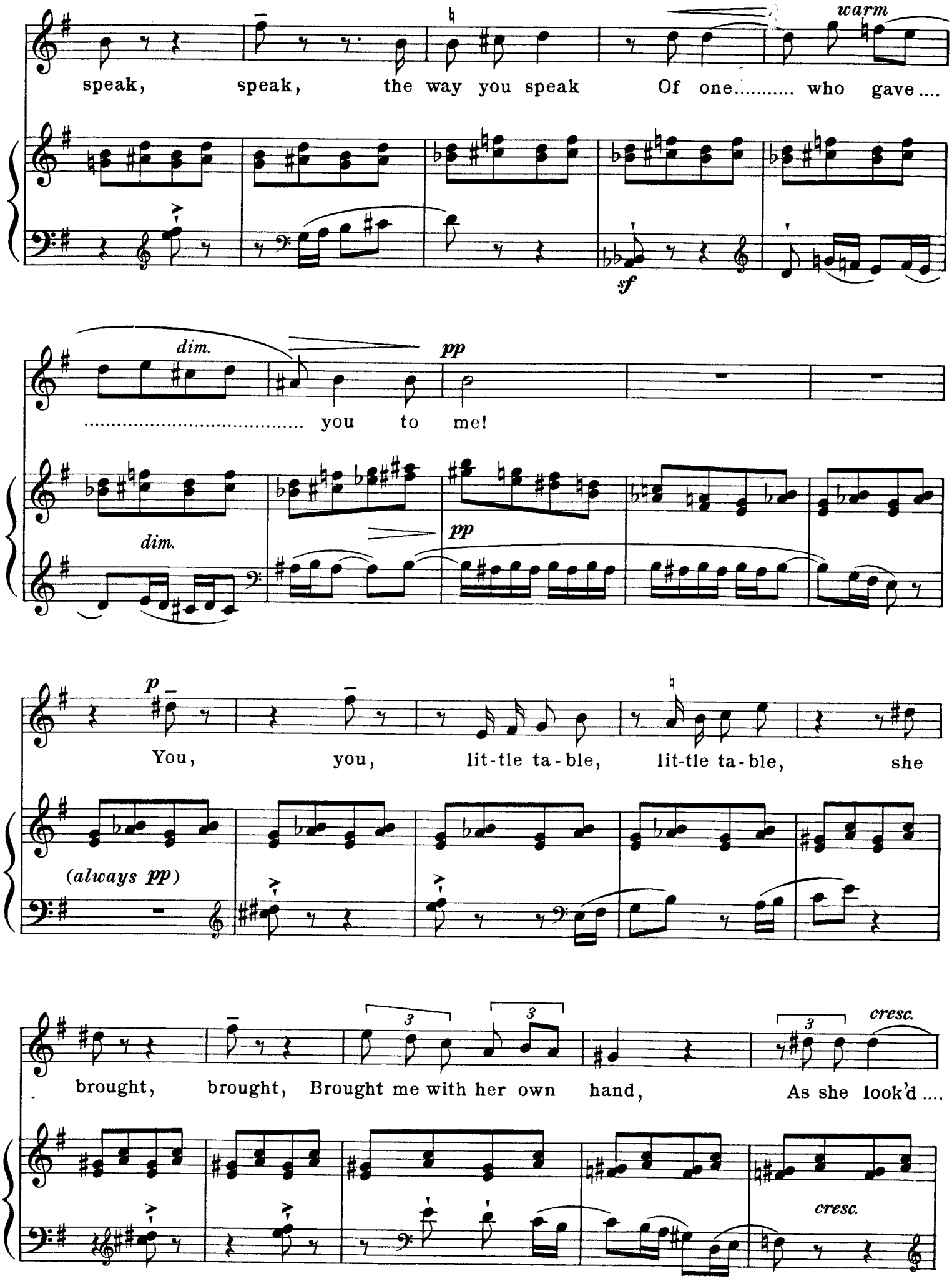
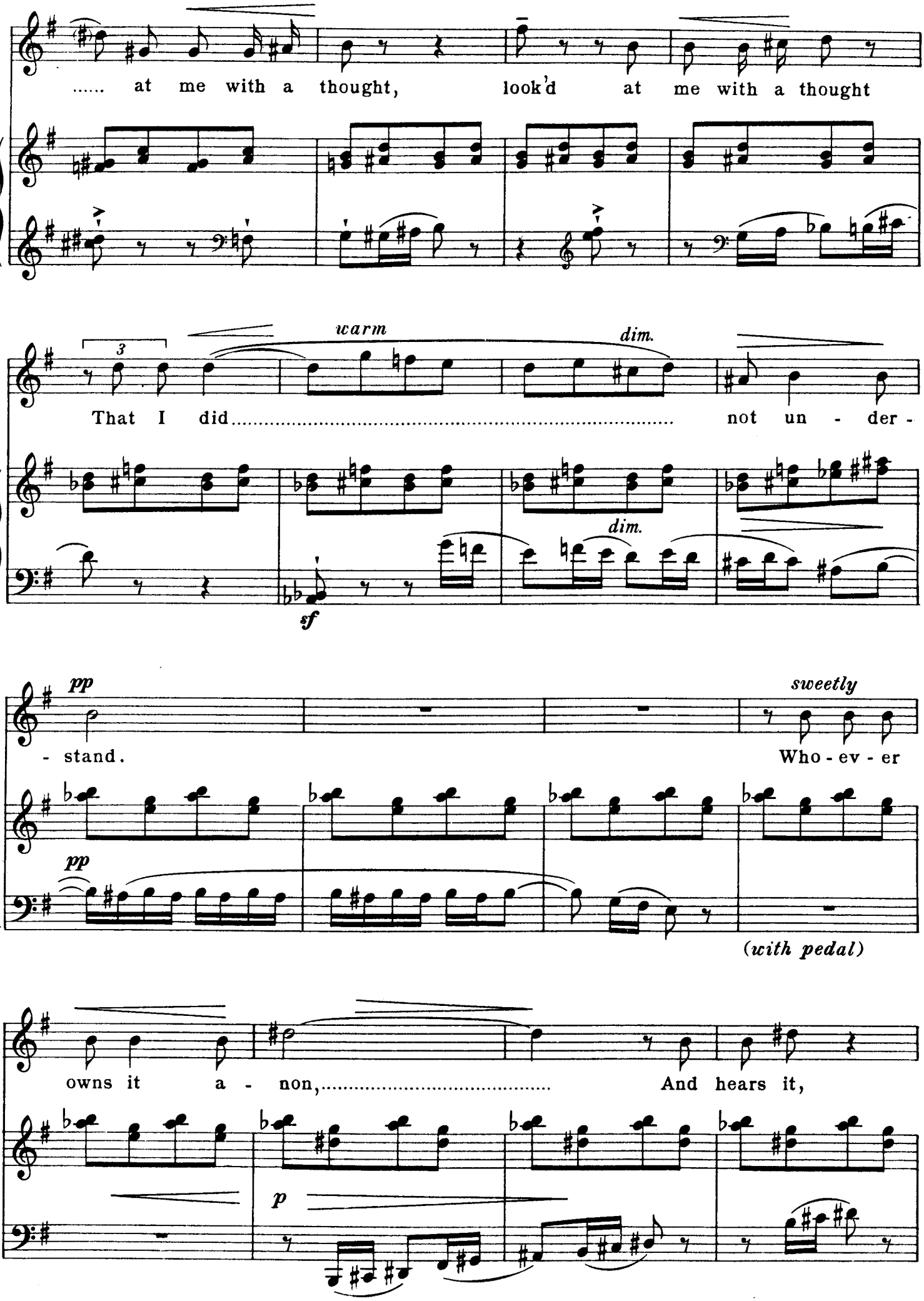
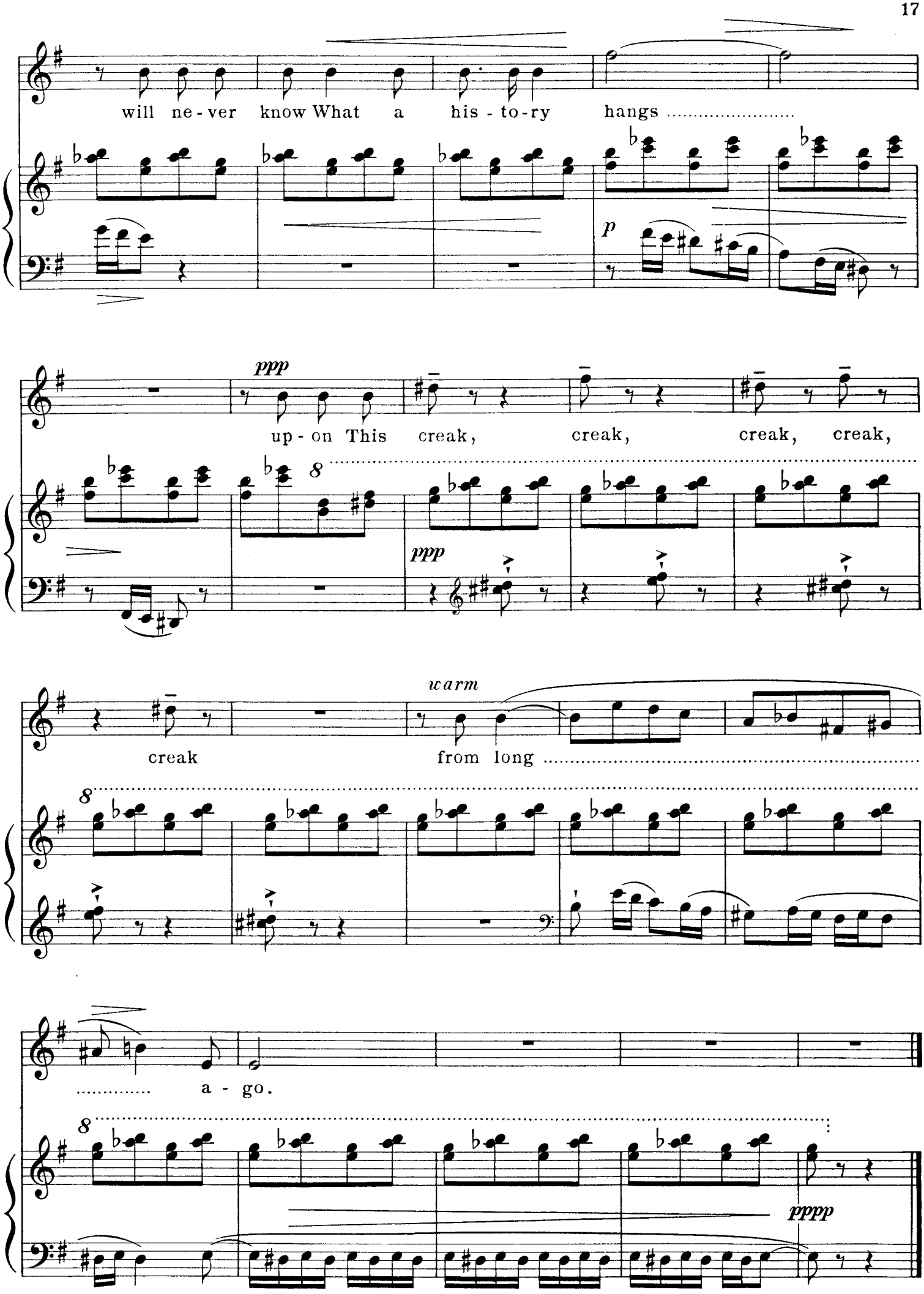

warm
speak, speak, the way you speak Of one..... who gave....
sf
dim.
pp
..... you to me!
dim.
pp
p
You, you, lit-tle ta-ble, lit-tle ta-ble, she
(always pp)
3
3
3
cresc.
brought, brought, Brought me with her own hand, As she look'd....
cresc.

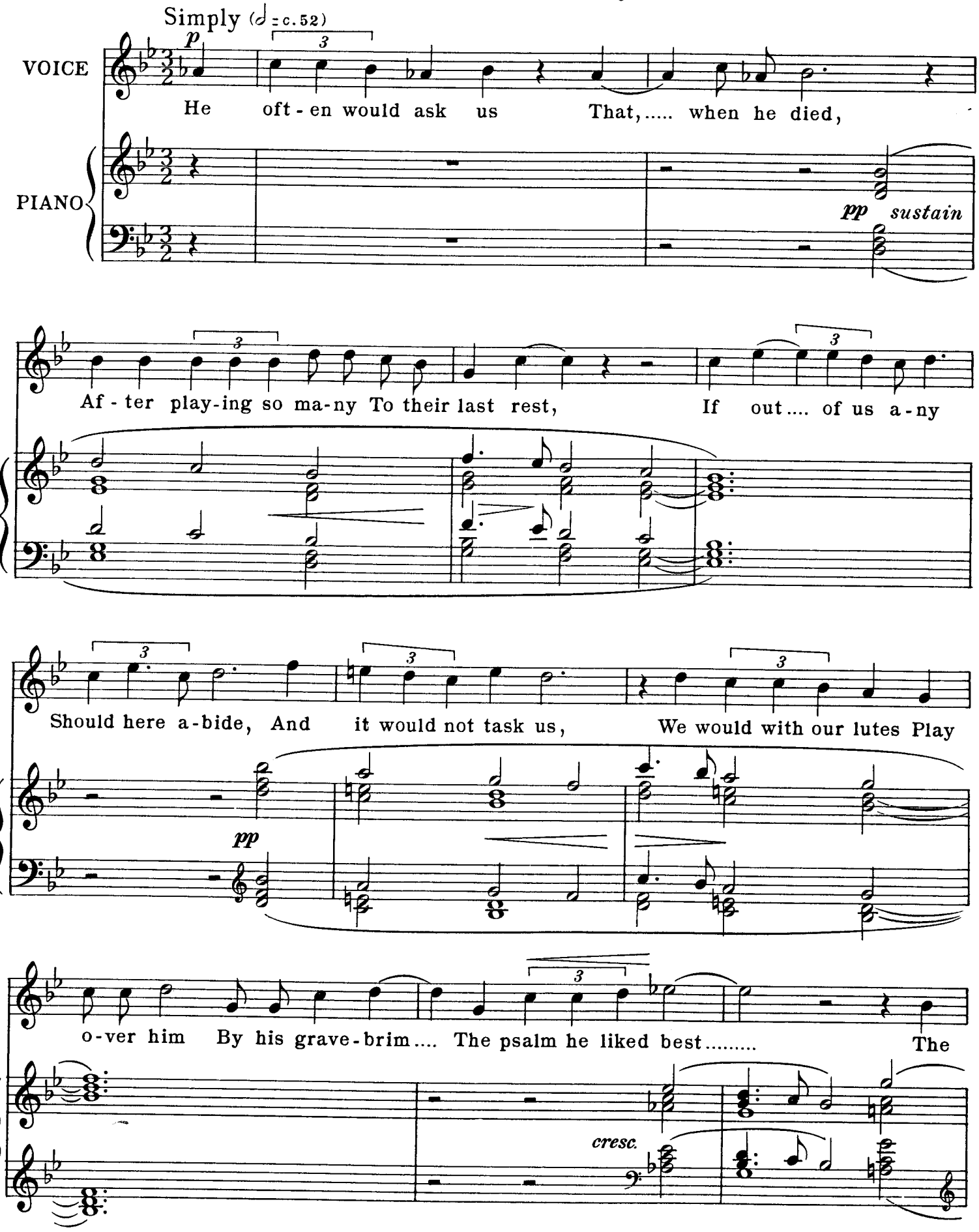

..... at me with a thought, look'd at me with a thought
warm
dim.
That I did..... not un - der -
dim.
sf
pp
sweetly
- stand.
Who - ev - er
pp
(with pedal)
owns it a - non,..... And hears it,
p


will ne-ver know What a his-to-ry hangs
p
ppp
up-on This creak, creak, creak, creak,
ppp
creak
warm
from long
a-go.
pppp

5

The Choirmaster's Burial

(or The Tenor man's story)



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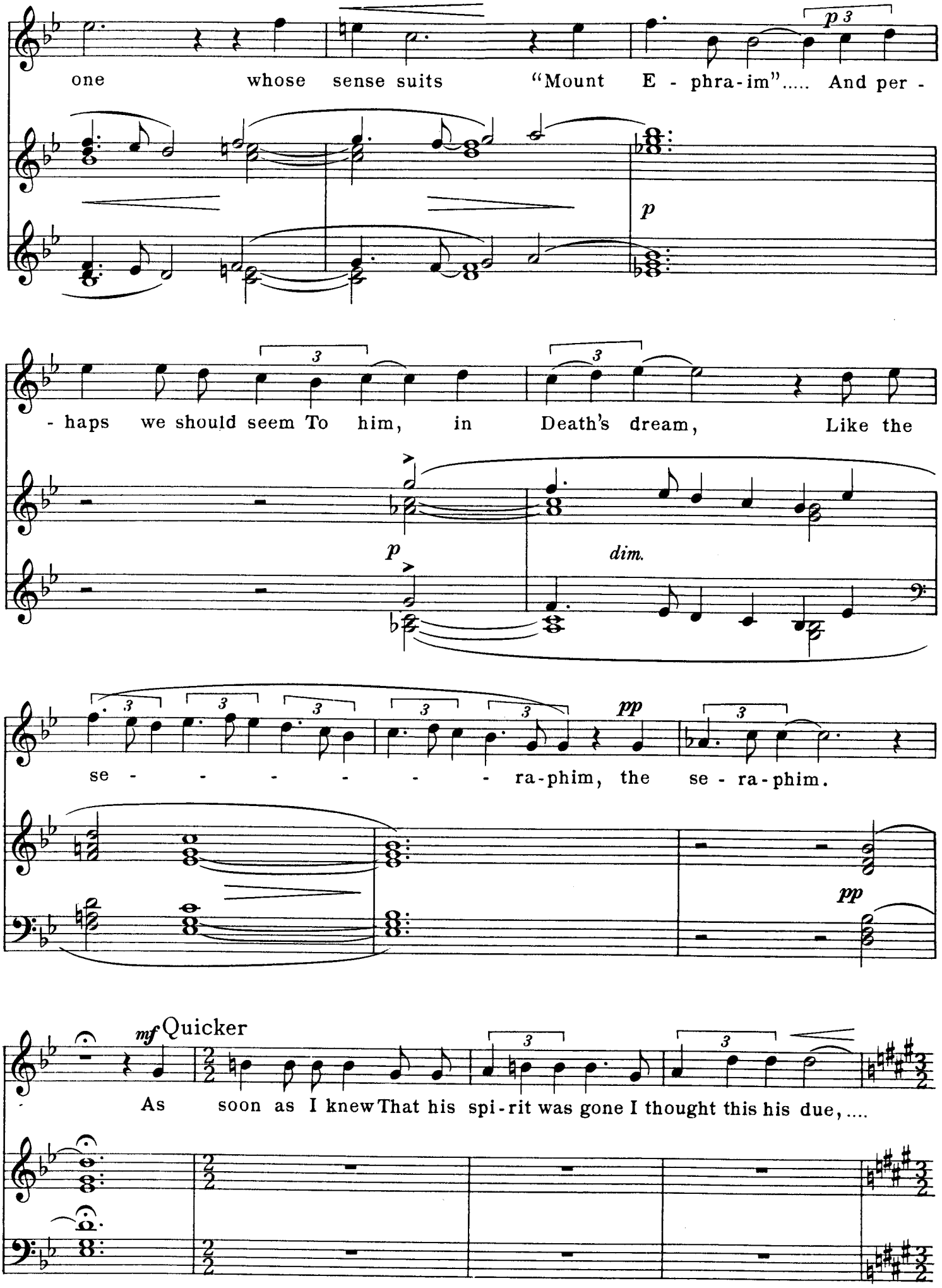
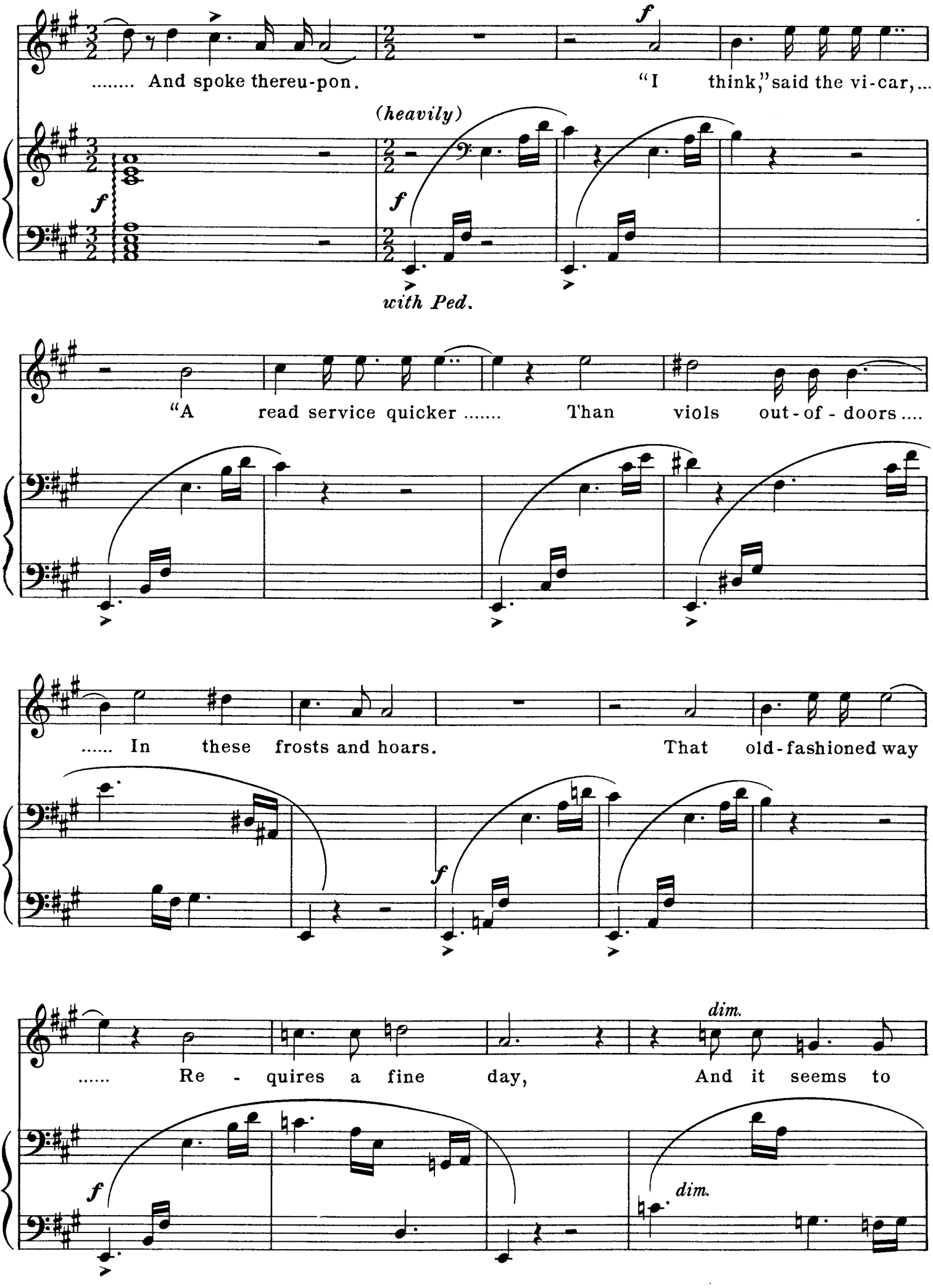
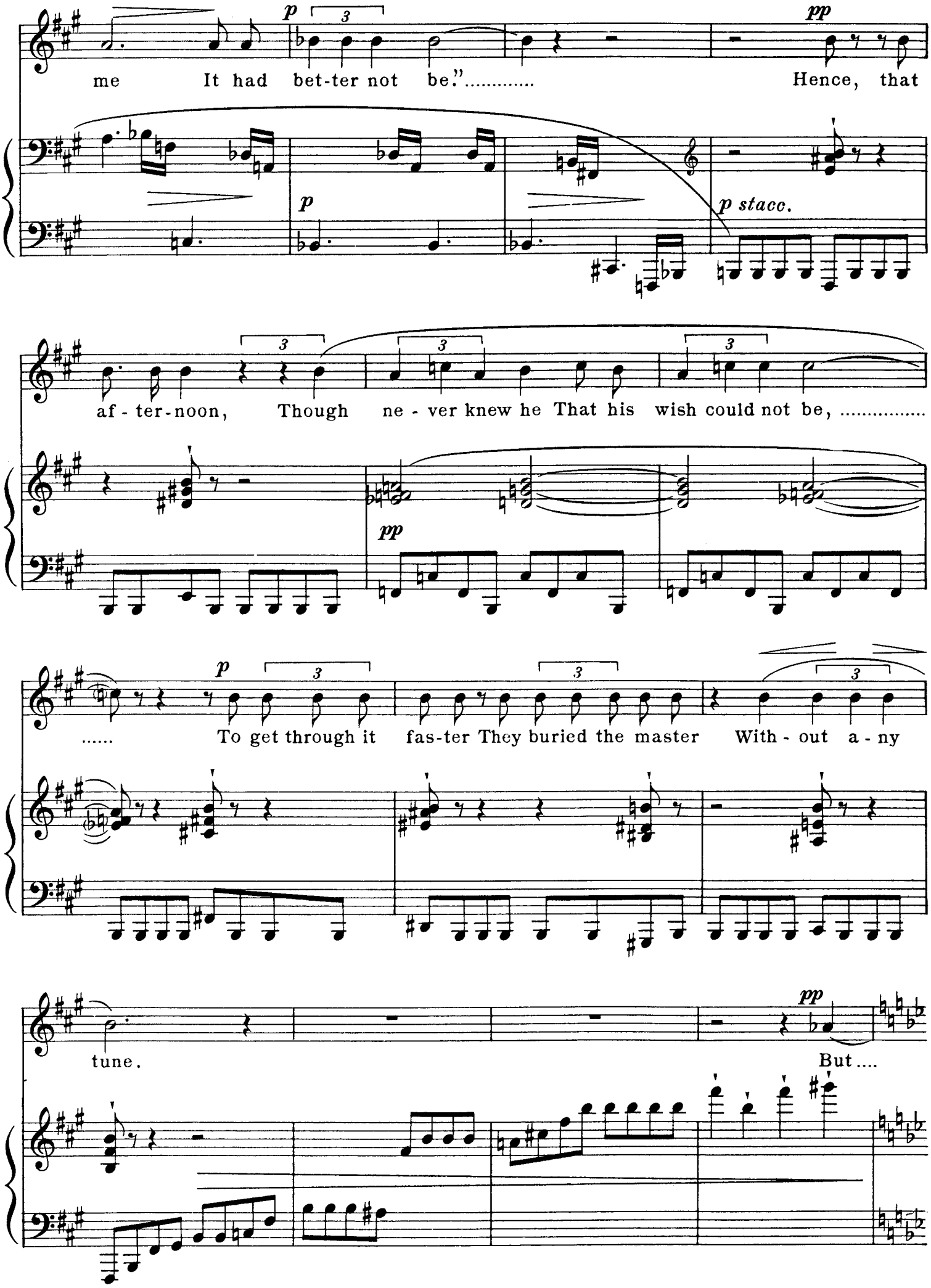

one whose sense suits "Mount E - phra-im"..... And per -
p 3
p
- haps we should seem To him, in Death's dream, Like the
p
dim.
se - - - - - - - - ra-phim, the se - ra-phim.
pp
pp
mf Quicker
As soon as I knew That his spi-rit was gone I thought this his due, ...


..... And spoke thereu-pon.
"I think," said the vi-car, ...
(heavily)
f
f
with Ped.
"A read service quicker ..... Than viols out-of-doors ....
..... In these frosts and hoars. That old-fashioned way
f
..... Re-quires a fine day, And it seems to
dim.
f
dim.


p
3
pp
me It had bet-ter not be." Hence, that
p
p stacc.
3
3
3
af - ter-noon, Though ne - ver knew he That his wish could not be,
pp
p
3
3
3
To get through it fas-ter They buried the master With - out a - ny
pp
tune.
But....

Tempo I

..... 'twas said that, when .... At the dead of next night The vi - car looked out,

pp

There struck on his ken Thronged ..... round-a - bout, Where the

p

frost was gray-ing The head-stoned grass, A band .....

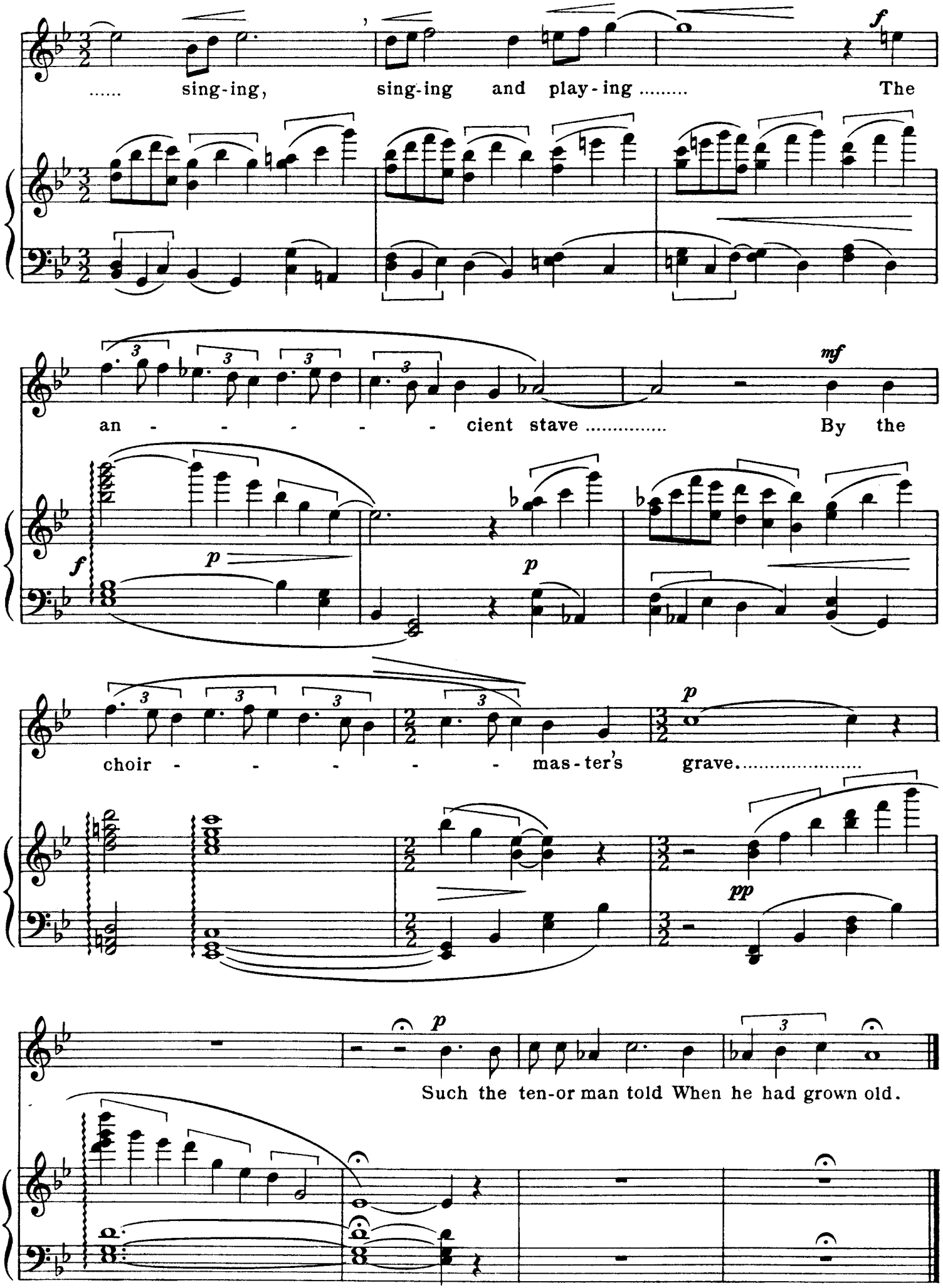
ppp

*

..... all in white Like the saints in church-glass, ... Sing-ing and play - ing .....

cresc.

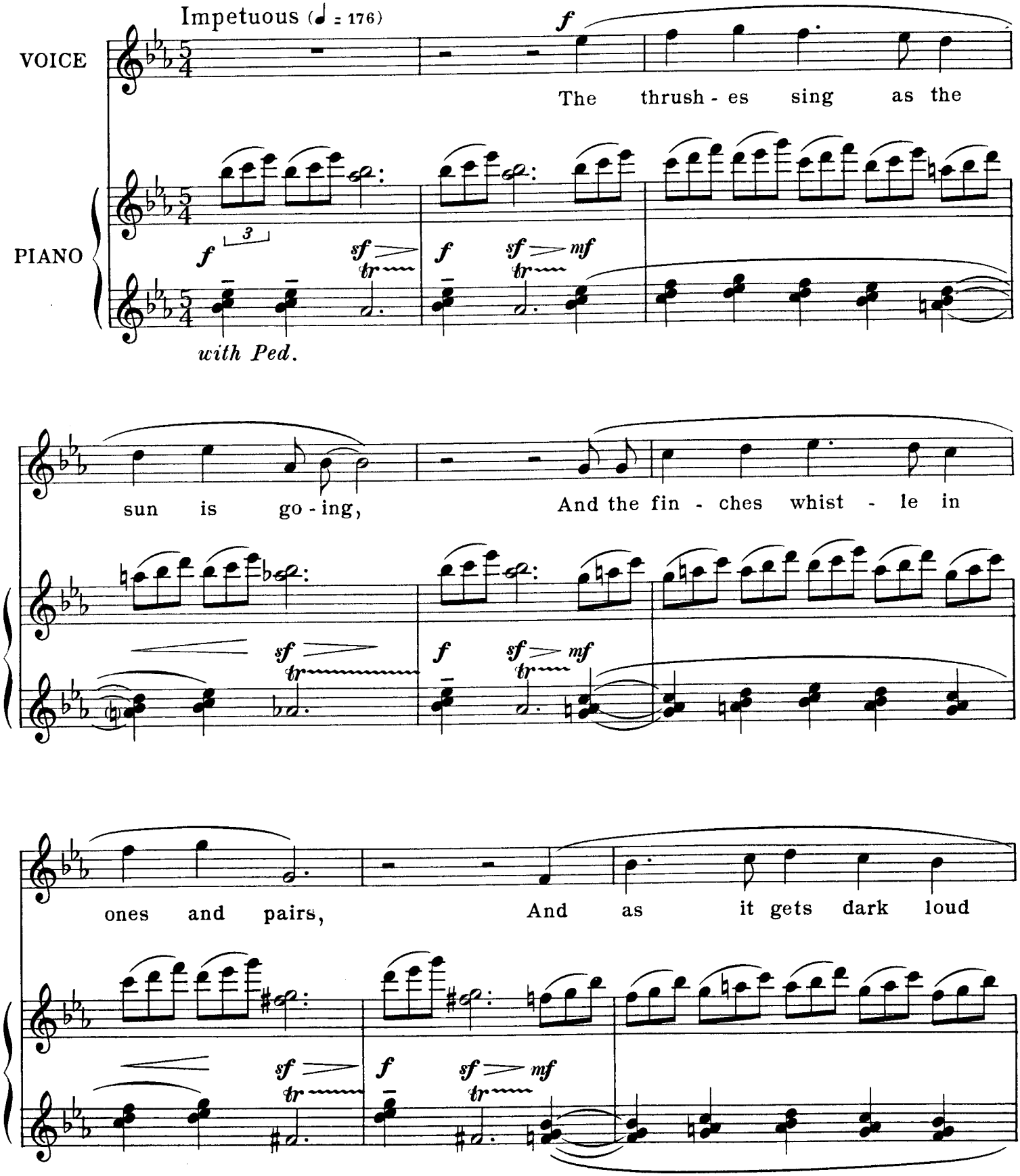
cresc.


..... sing-ing, sing-ing and play-ing ..... The
an - - - - - - cient stave ..... By the
choir - - - - - - mas-ter's grave.....
Such the ten-or man told When he had grown old.

6

Proud Songsters

(Thrushes, Finches and Nightingales)



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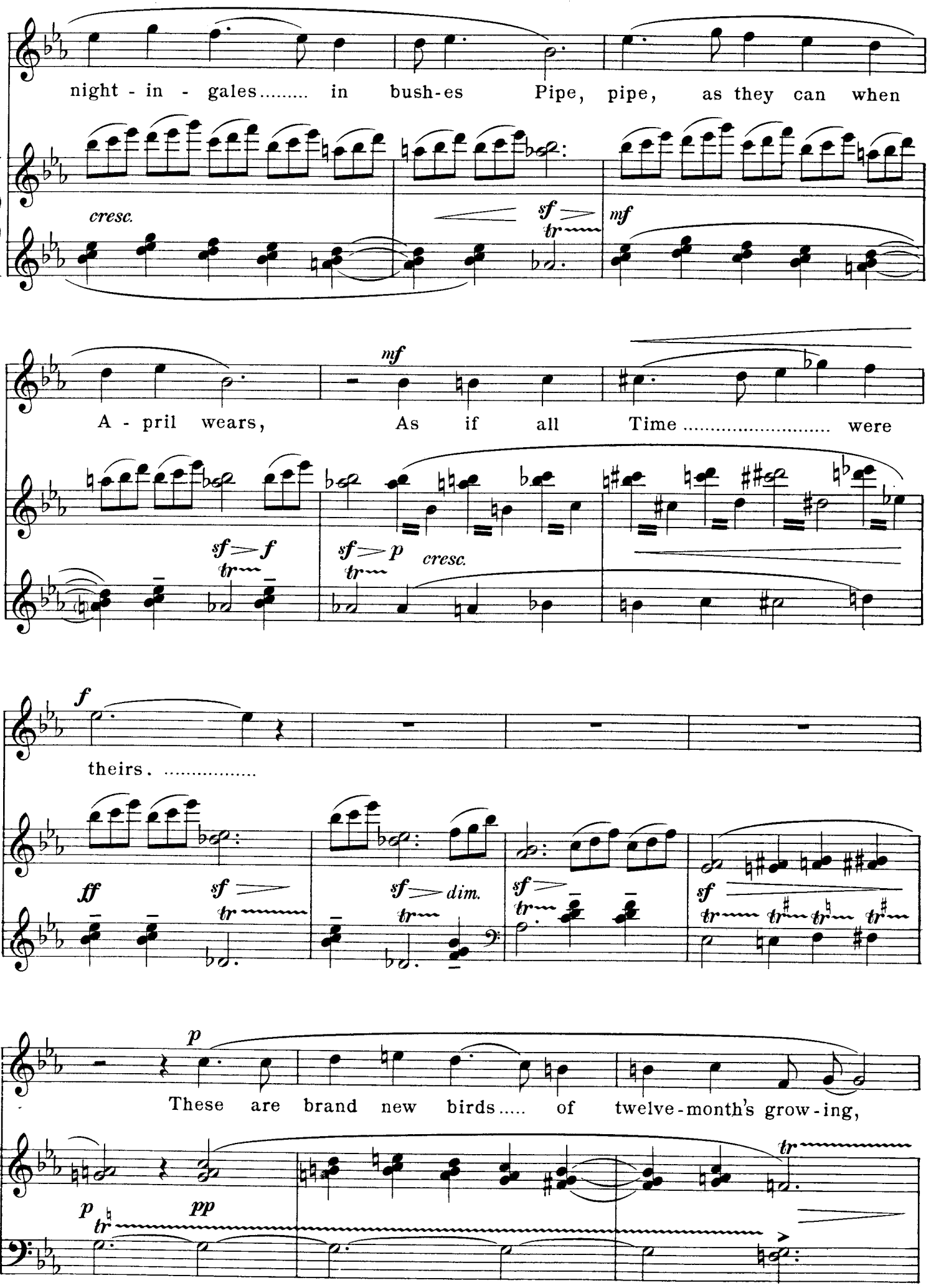
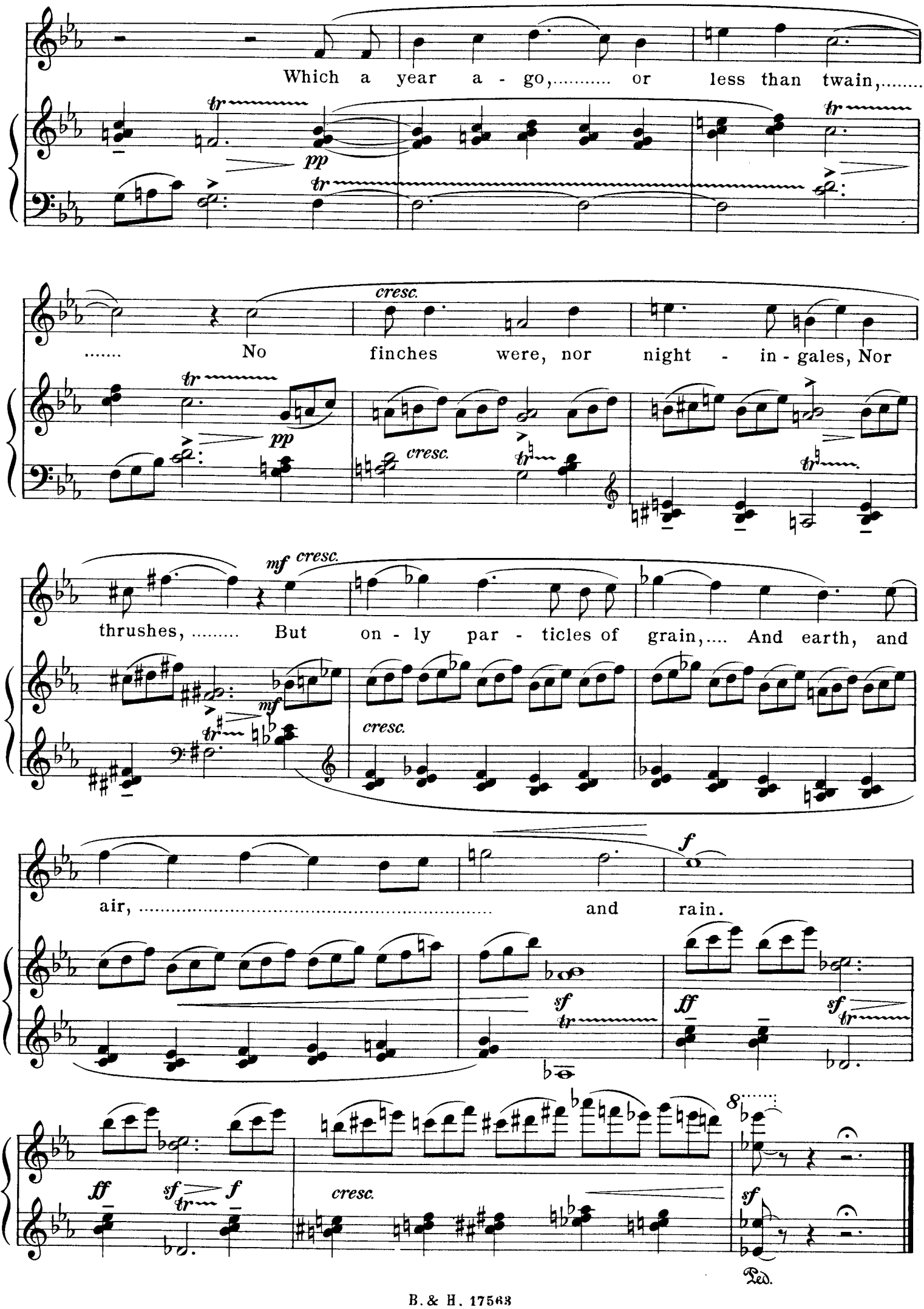
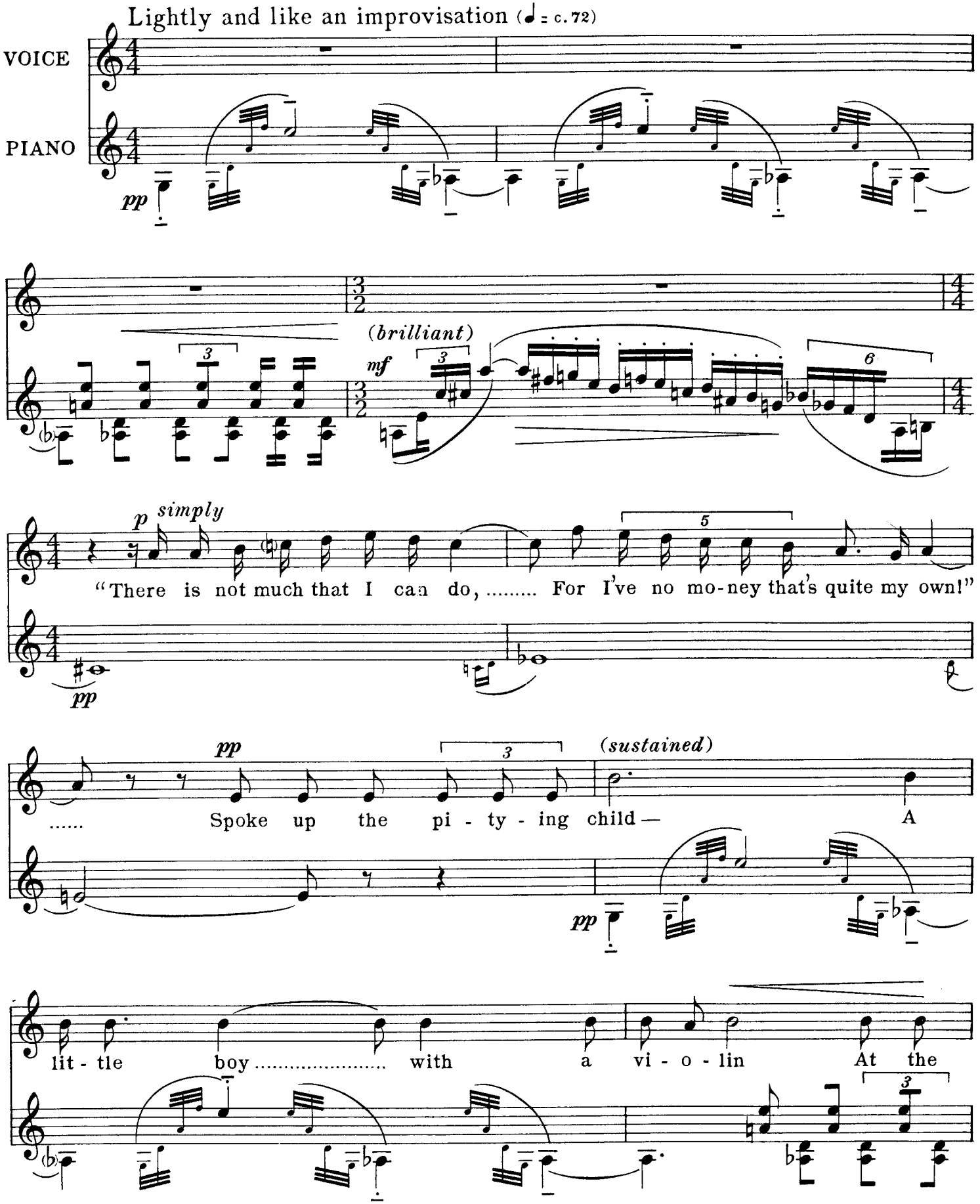

night - in - gales..... in bush-es Pipe, pipe, as they can when
cresc.
sf
tr
mf
A - pril wears, As if all Time ..... were
mf
sf > f
tr
sf > p
tr
cresc.
f
theirs. .....
ff
sf
tr
sf > dim.
tr
sf
tr
sf
tr
tr
tr
tr
p
These are brand new birds..... of twelve-month's grow-ing,
p
tr
pp
tr


Which a year a - go, ... or less than twain, ...
pp
cresc.
..... No finches were, nor night - in - gales, Nor
pp
cresc.
mf cresc.
thrushes, ... But on - ly par - ticles of grain, ... And earth, and
mf
cresc.
f
air, ... and rain.
sf
ff
sf
ff
sf
f
cresc.
sf
Ped.

7

At the Railway Station, Upway

(or The Convict and Boy with the Violin)



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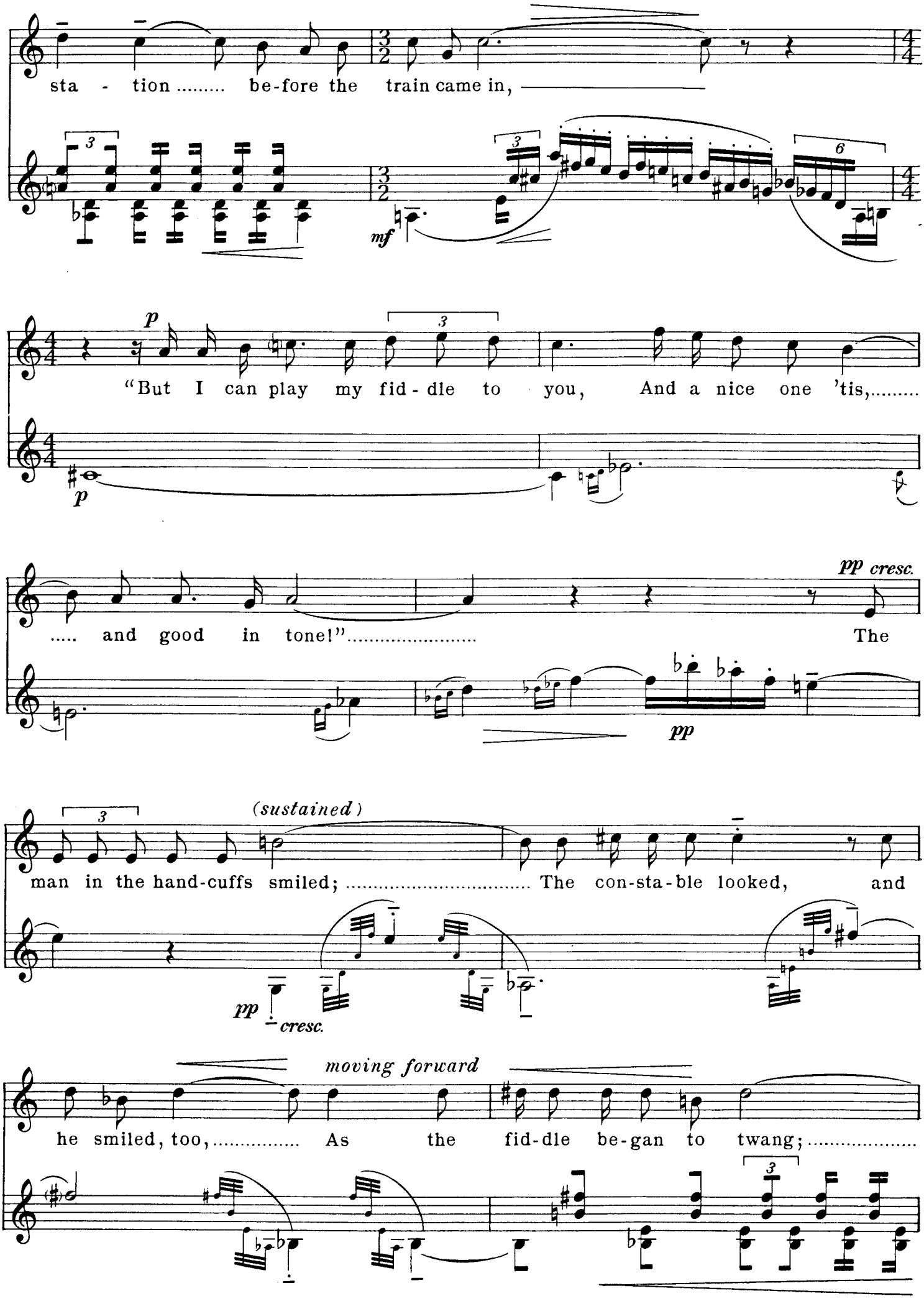
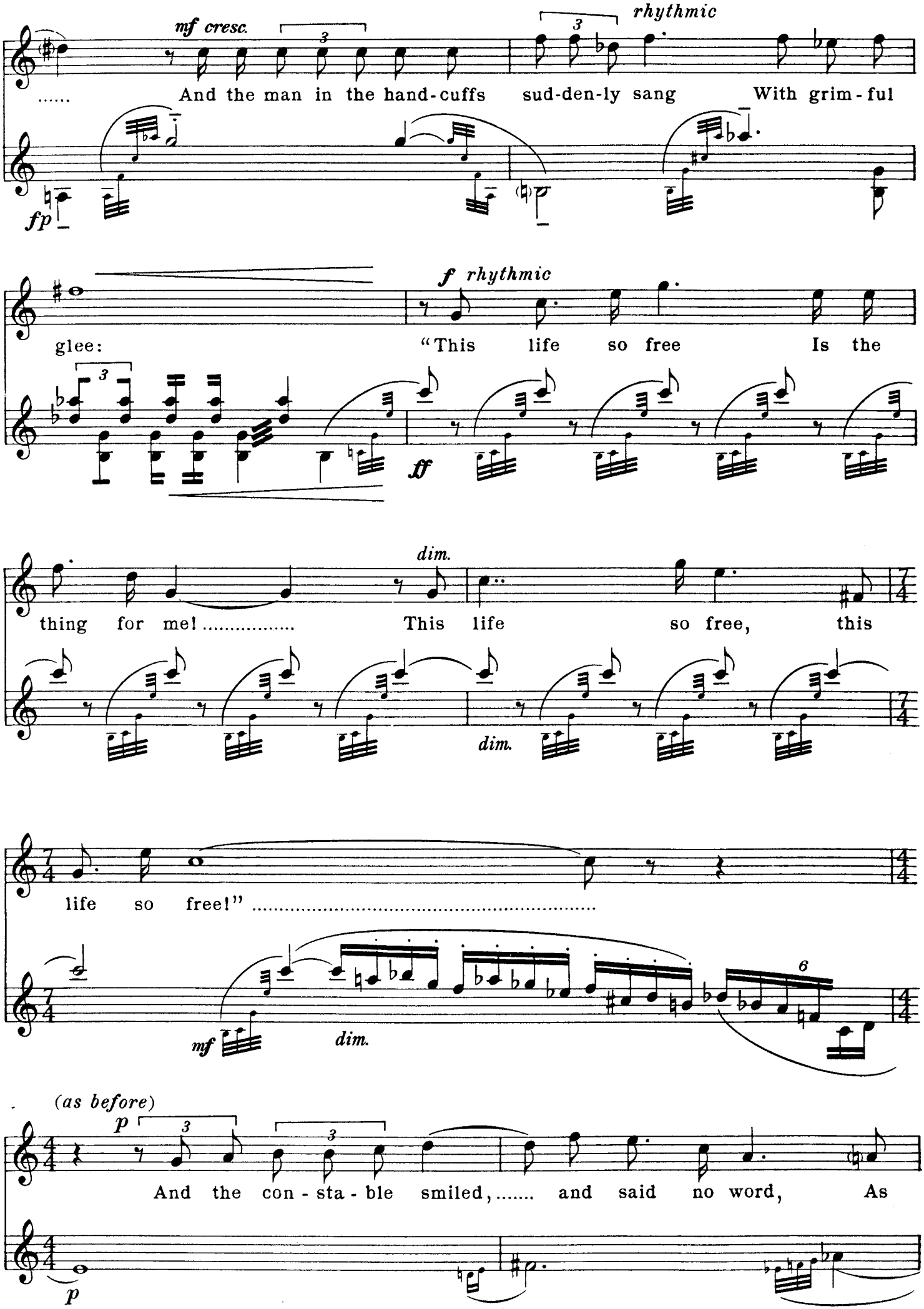
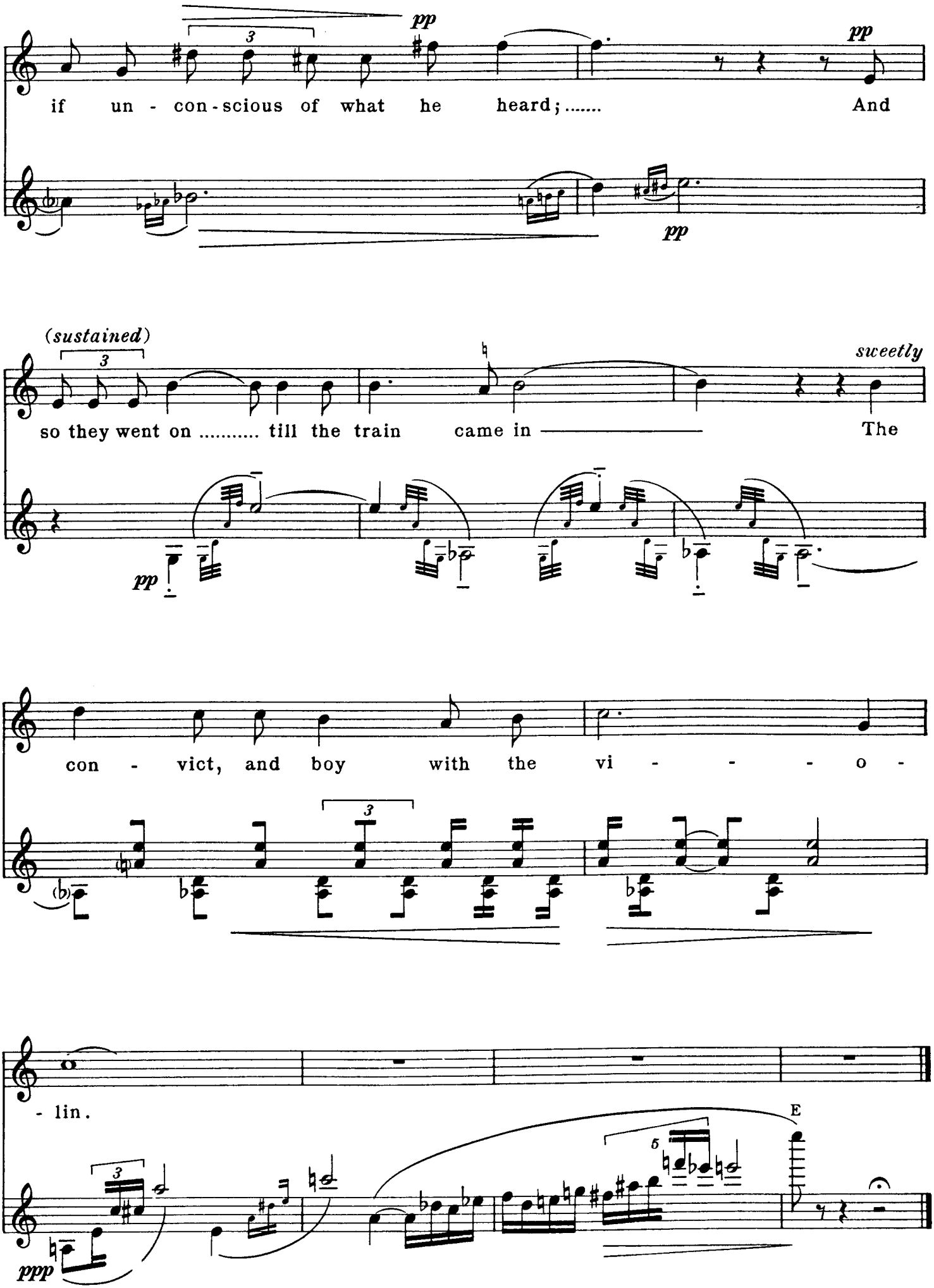
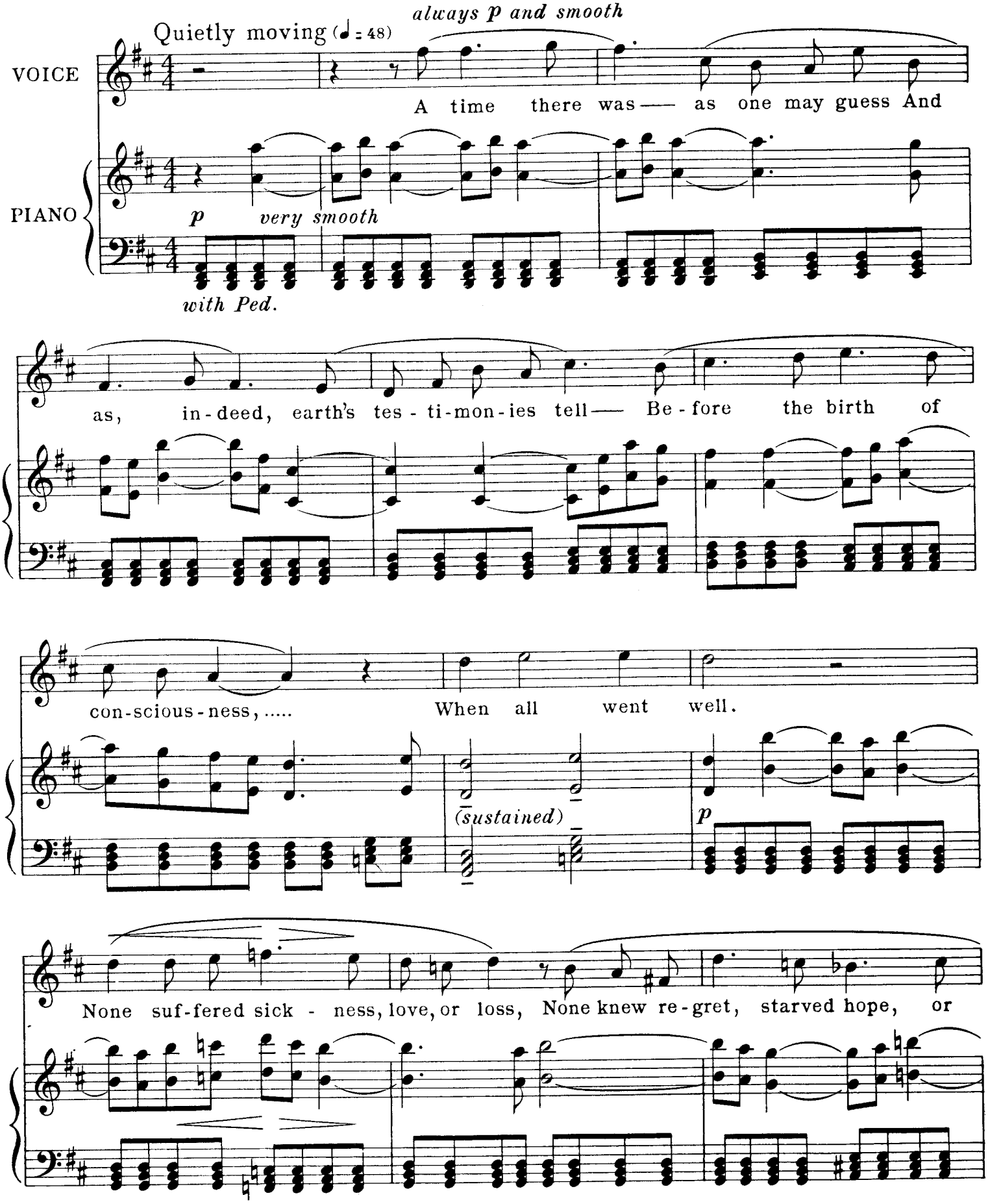

sta - tion ..... be-fore the train came in, ——————
mf
p
"But I can play my fid - dle to you, And a nice one 'tis,.....
p
pp cresc.
..... and good in tone!"..... The
pp
(sustained)
man in the hand-cuffs smiled; ..... The con-sta-ble looked, and
pp cresc.
moving forward
he smiled, too,..... As the fid-dle be-gan to twang;.....


mf cresc.
rhythmic
And the man in the hand-cuffs sud-den-ly sang With grim-ful
fp
f rhythmic
glee: "This life so free Is the
ff
dim.
thing for me! This life so free, this
dim.
life so free!"
mf
dim.
(as before)
p
And the con-sta-ble smiled, and said no word, As
p


pp
pp
if un - con-scious of what he heard;..... And
pp
(sustained)
sweetly
so they went on ..... till the train came in ——— The
pp
con - vict, and boy with the vi - - - - o -
- lin.
E
ppp

8

Before Life and After



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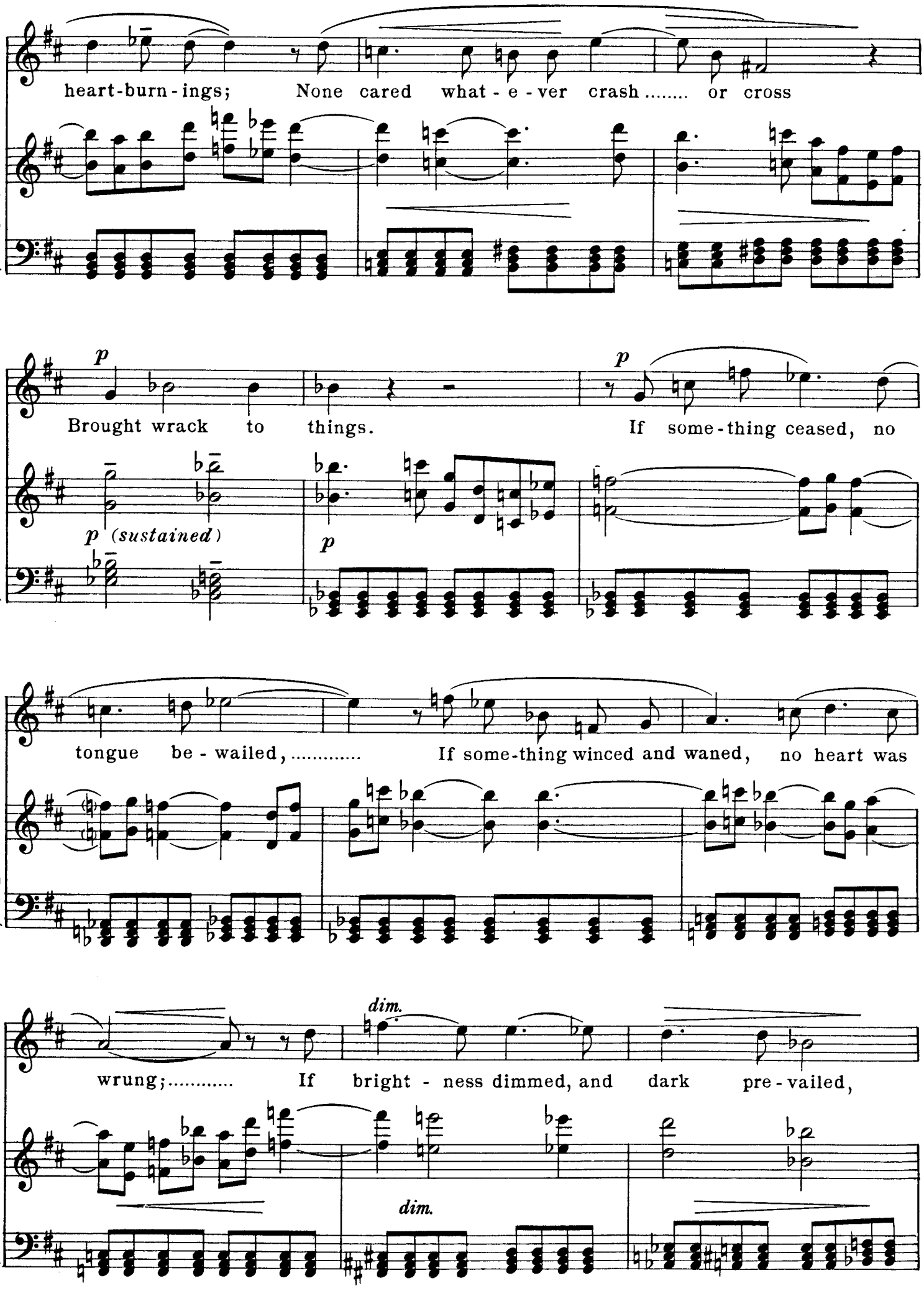
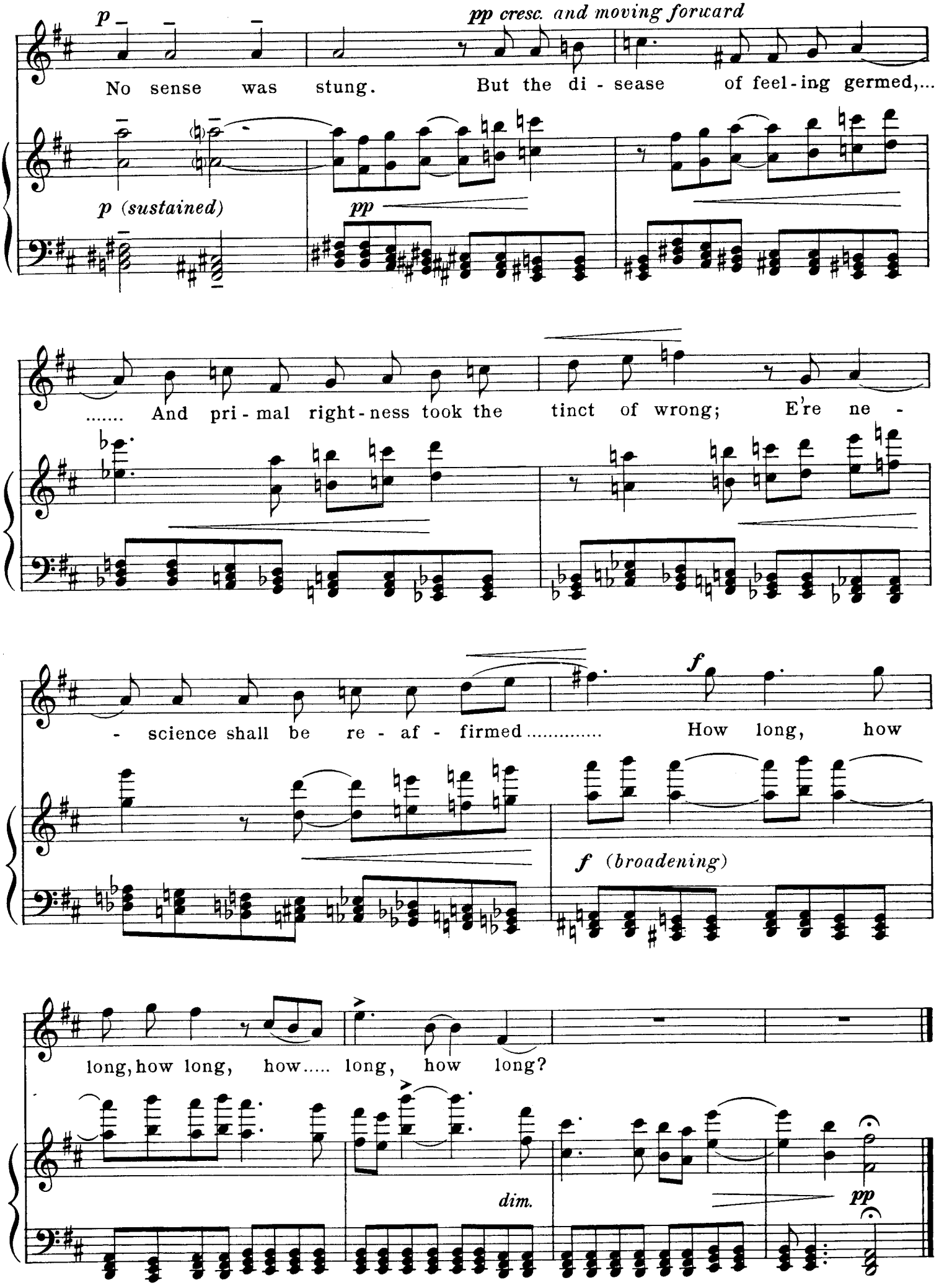

heart-burn-ings; None cared what-e-ver crash ..... or cross
p
Brought wrack to things.
p
If some-thing ceased, no
p (sustained)
p
tongue be-wailed, ...
If some-thing winced and waned, no heart was
dim.
wrung; .....
If bright-ness dimmed, and dark pre-vailed,
dim.



Aldeburgh, September 1953