TONE PICTURES AFTER PASTELS IN PROSE

ARTHUR FARWELL

OPUS 7

114454

To Atha Haydock

TONE PICTURES

after

PASTELS IN PROSE

ARTHUR FARWELL

BOSTON
PRIVATELY PRINTED
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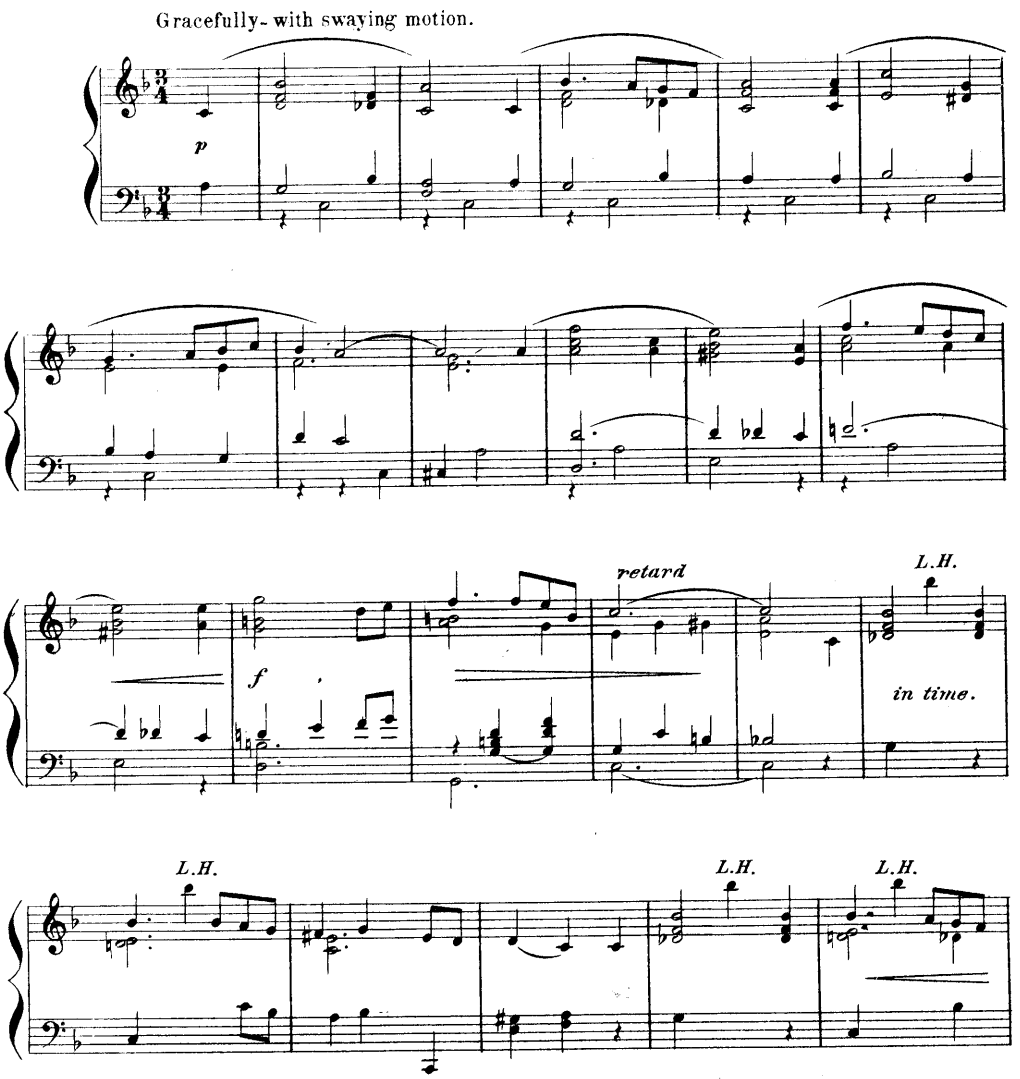
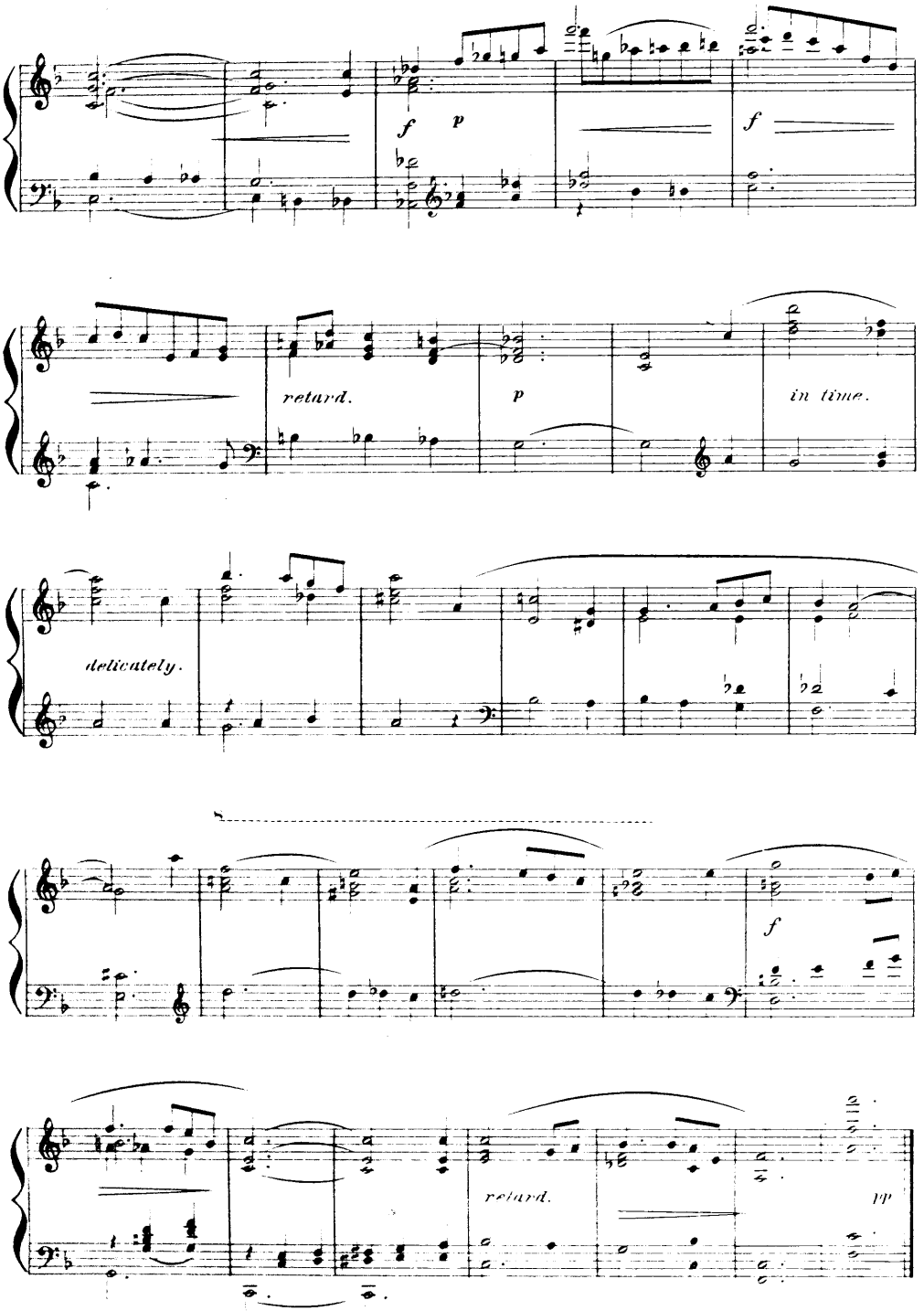
Roses and Lilies

A great corbel of Roses and a great corbel of Lilies both burst into flower at the same time in the garden of the poet. The Lilies and the Roses are intoxicated with joy. The soft summer wind caresses them and the sun kisses them, and makes the clear colors of their corals sparkle like the fires of precious stones. With a voice that makes no sound, and yet that can be heard, with the mysterious voice that emanates from things believed to be inanimate, they say, swaying in the light:

"We, the Flowers, are happy, because we live in the garden of the good poet, where we perform our proper functions, and where we exist purely and simply as Flowers, without fear of furnishing a pretext for classical tropes and of being used as terms of comparison. And as no philistine and no sayer of commonplaces will enter the garden, nobody will pretend that we have any relations with the winged butterflies — which is as absurd as to suppose any love between doves and crocodiles. And we, the Lilies with the straight petals and green chalices — we will gloriously uplift our golden pistils; and we the blushing Roses with ecstatic hearts — we will bloom for no reason at all, for the simple pleasure of it, without being constrained to affirm the pretended whiteness of red or green women, and without the humiliation of being compared to any young lady."

Roses and Lilies




f
p
f
retard.
p
in time.
delicately.
f
retard.
pp

The Sages' Dance

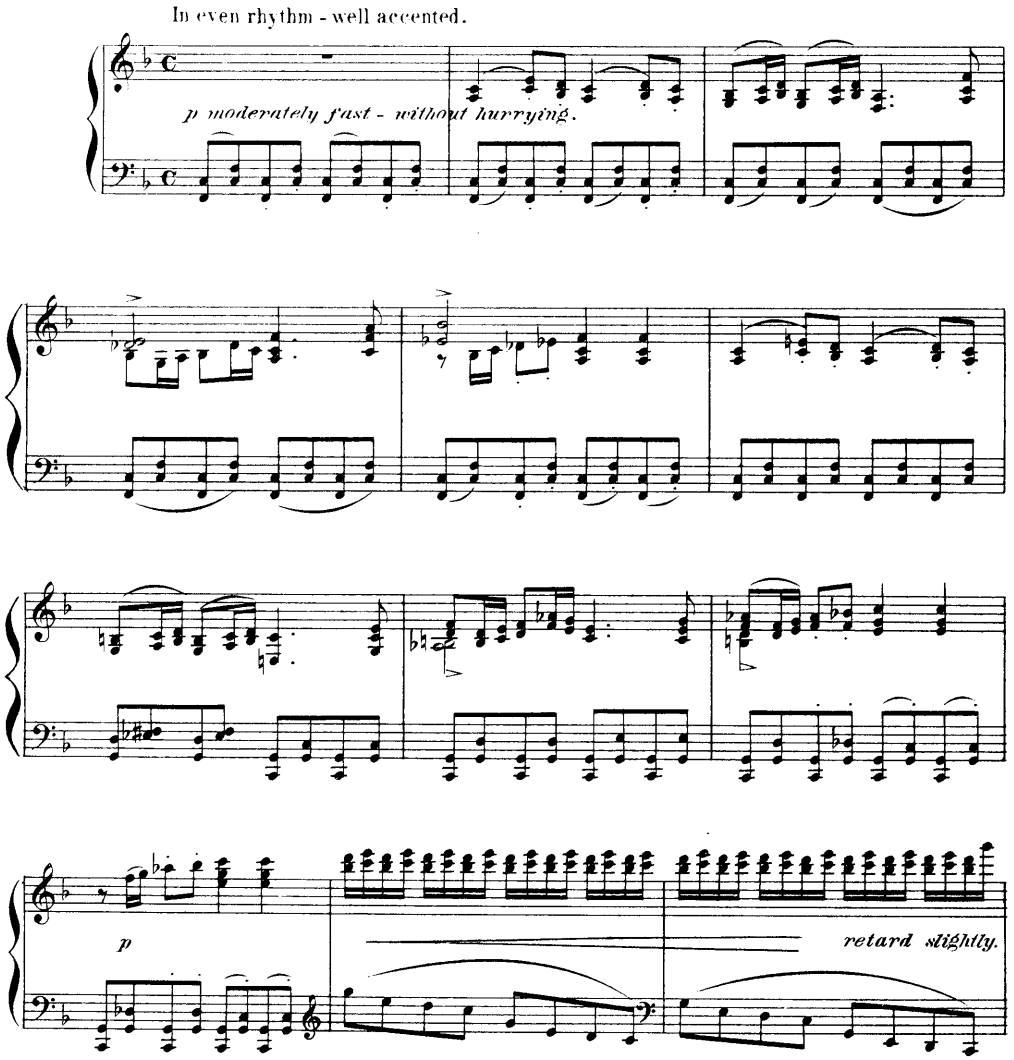
On my flute, tipped with jade, I sang a song to mortals; but the mortals did not understand.

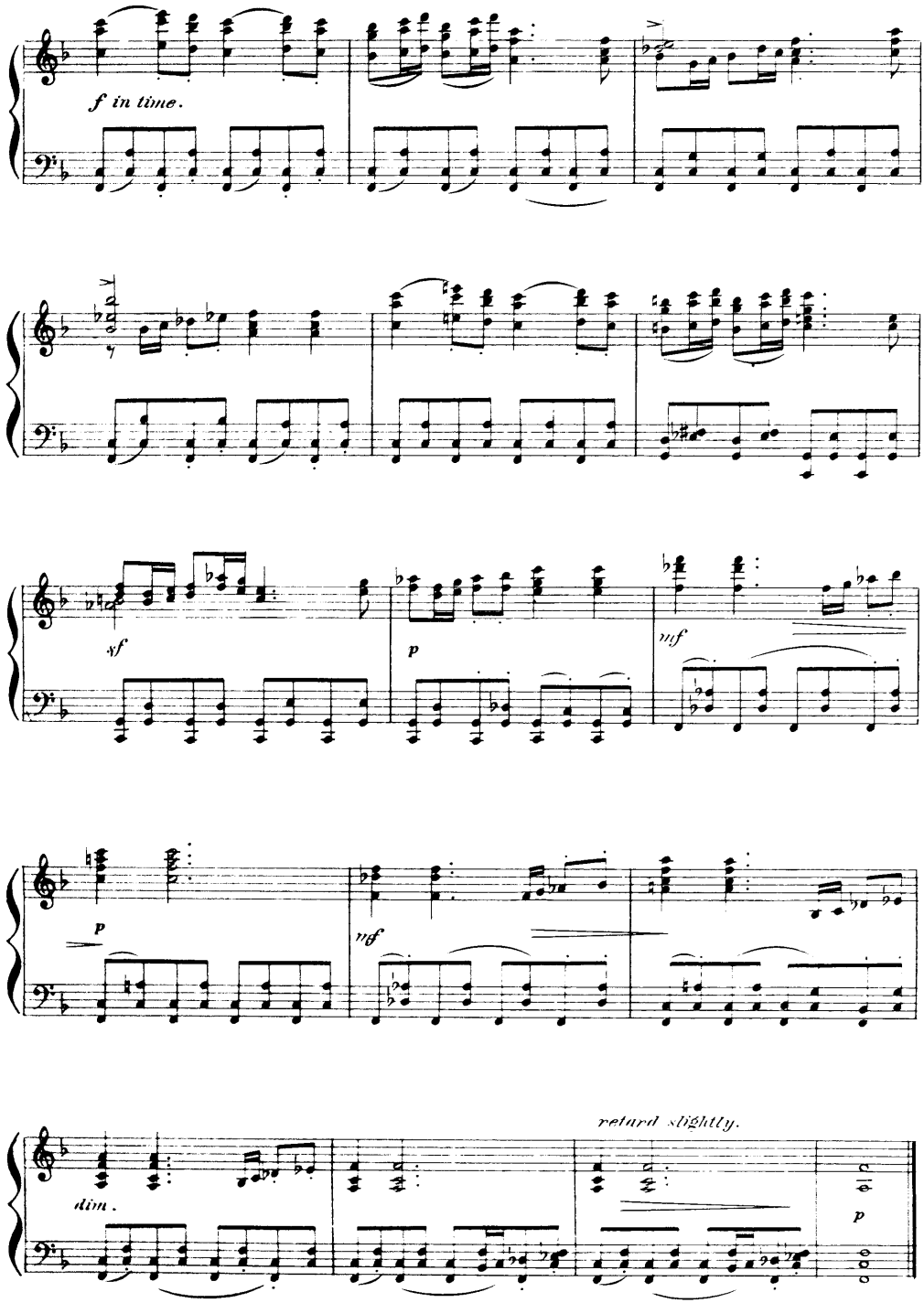
Then I lifted my flute to the heavens, and I sang my song to the Sages.

The Sages rejoiced together, they danced on the glistening clouds.

And now mortals understand me, when I sing to the accompaniment of my flute tipped with jade.

The Sages' Dance




f in time.
sf
p
mf
p
mf
dim.
retard slightly.
p

The Stranger

"Whom lovest thou the best, enigmatical man, say, thy father, thy mother, thy sister, or thy brother?"

"I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother."

"Thy friends?"

"You use there a word whose sense has to this day remained unknown to me."

"Thy fatherland?"

"I know not in what latitude it is situated."

"Beauty?"

"I would fain love it, godlike and immortal."

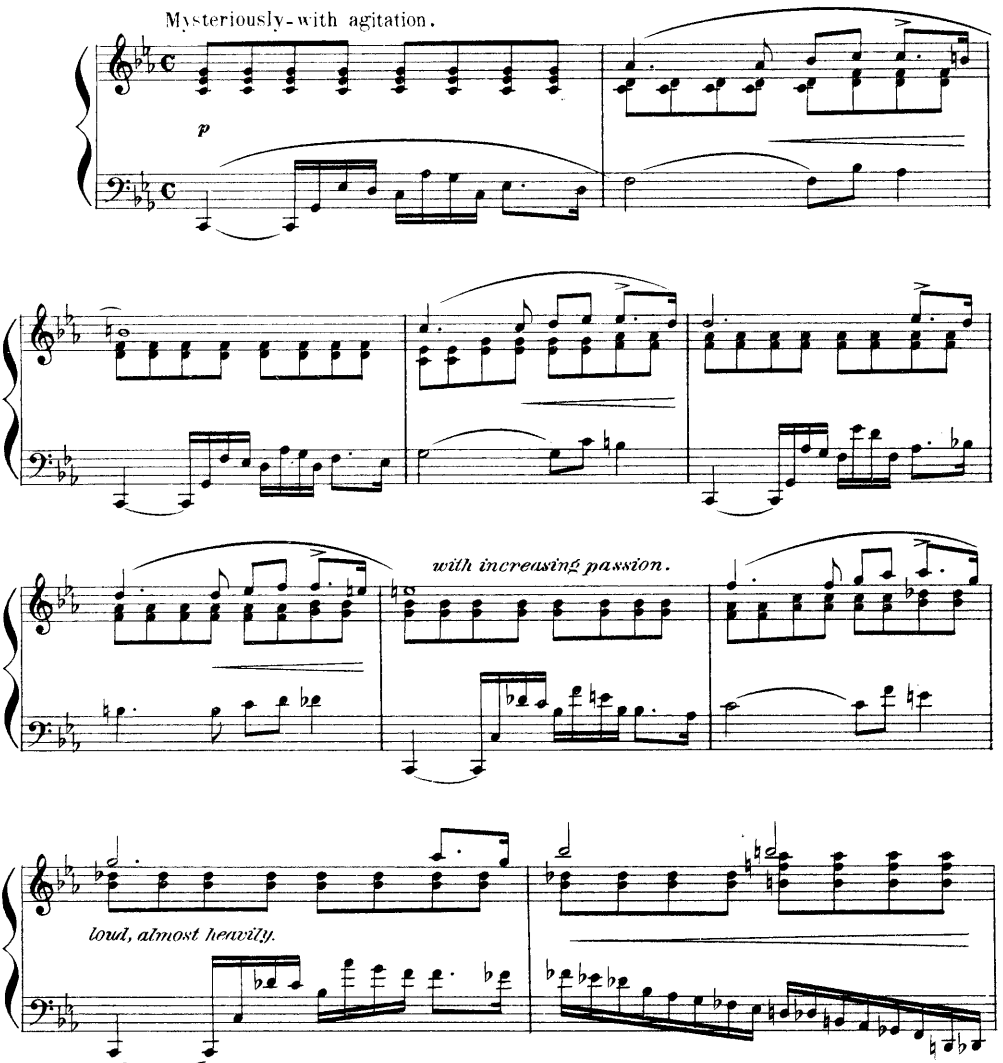
"Gold?"

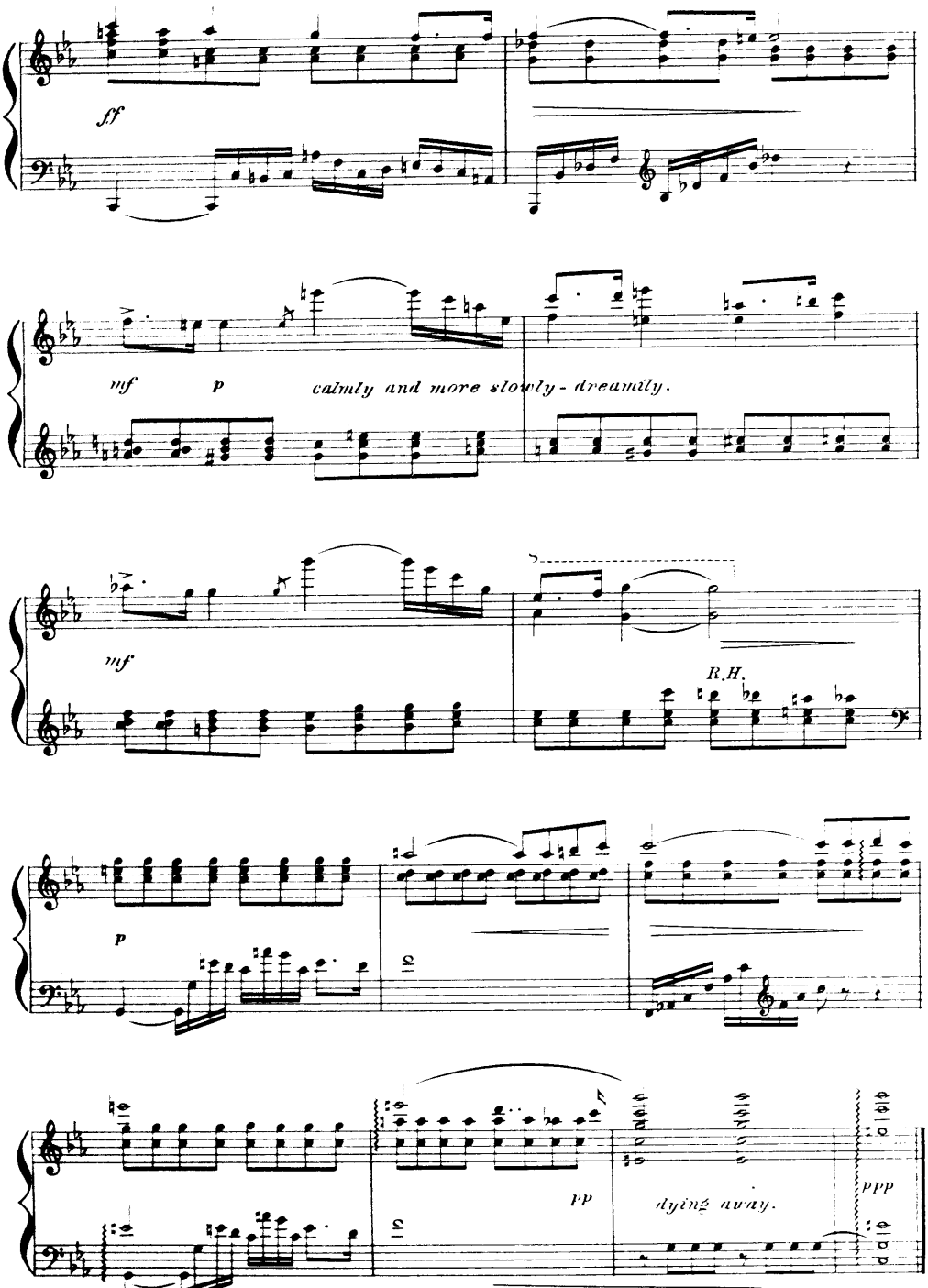
"I hate it as you hate God."

"Eh? What lovest thou, then, extraordinary stranger?"

"I love the clouds — the clouds that pass — over there — the marvellous clouds!"

The Stranger




ff
mf
p
calmly and more slowly - dreamily.
mf
R.H.
p
pp
dying away.
ppp

Indifference to the Lures of Spring

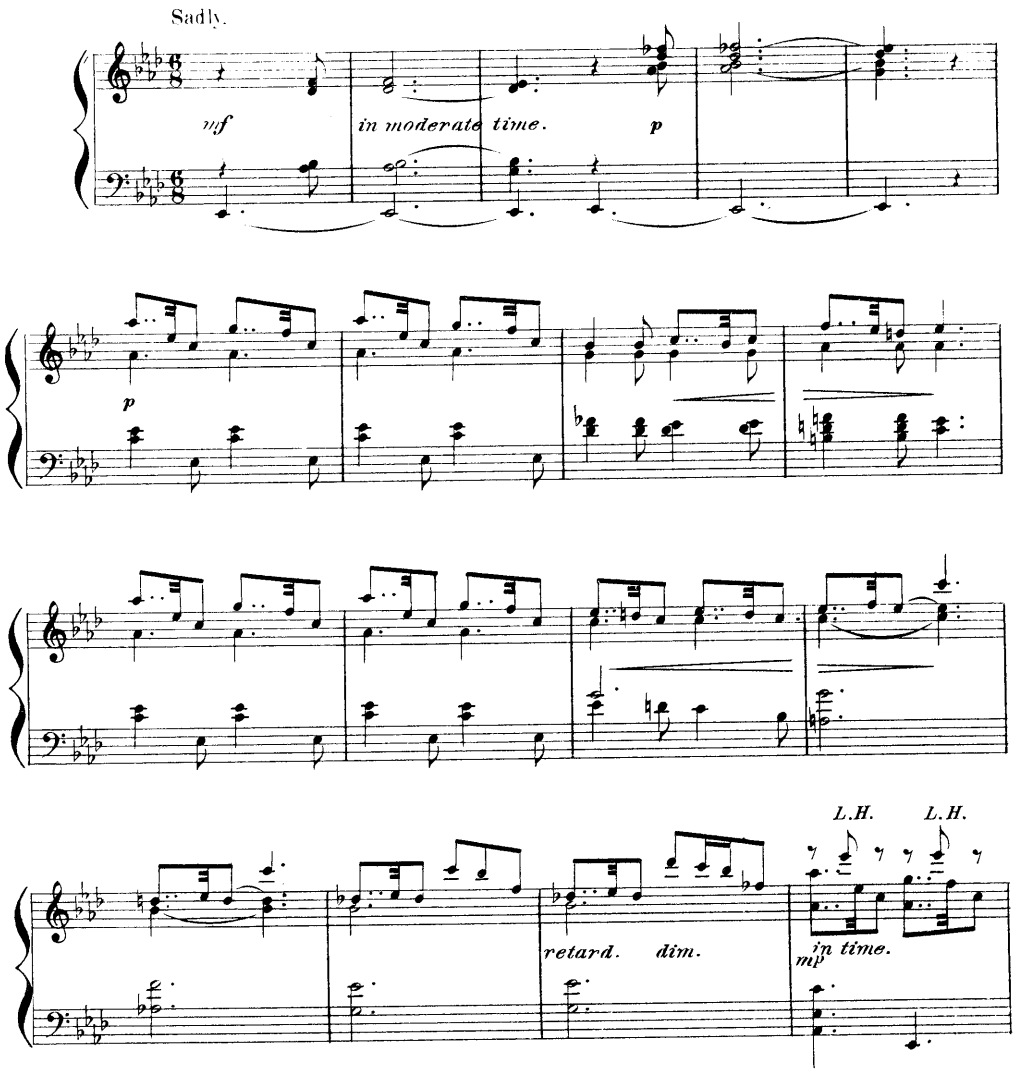
The peach-blossoms flutter like pink butterflies; the willow sees itself smiling in the water.

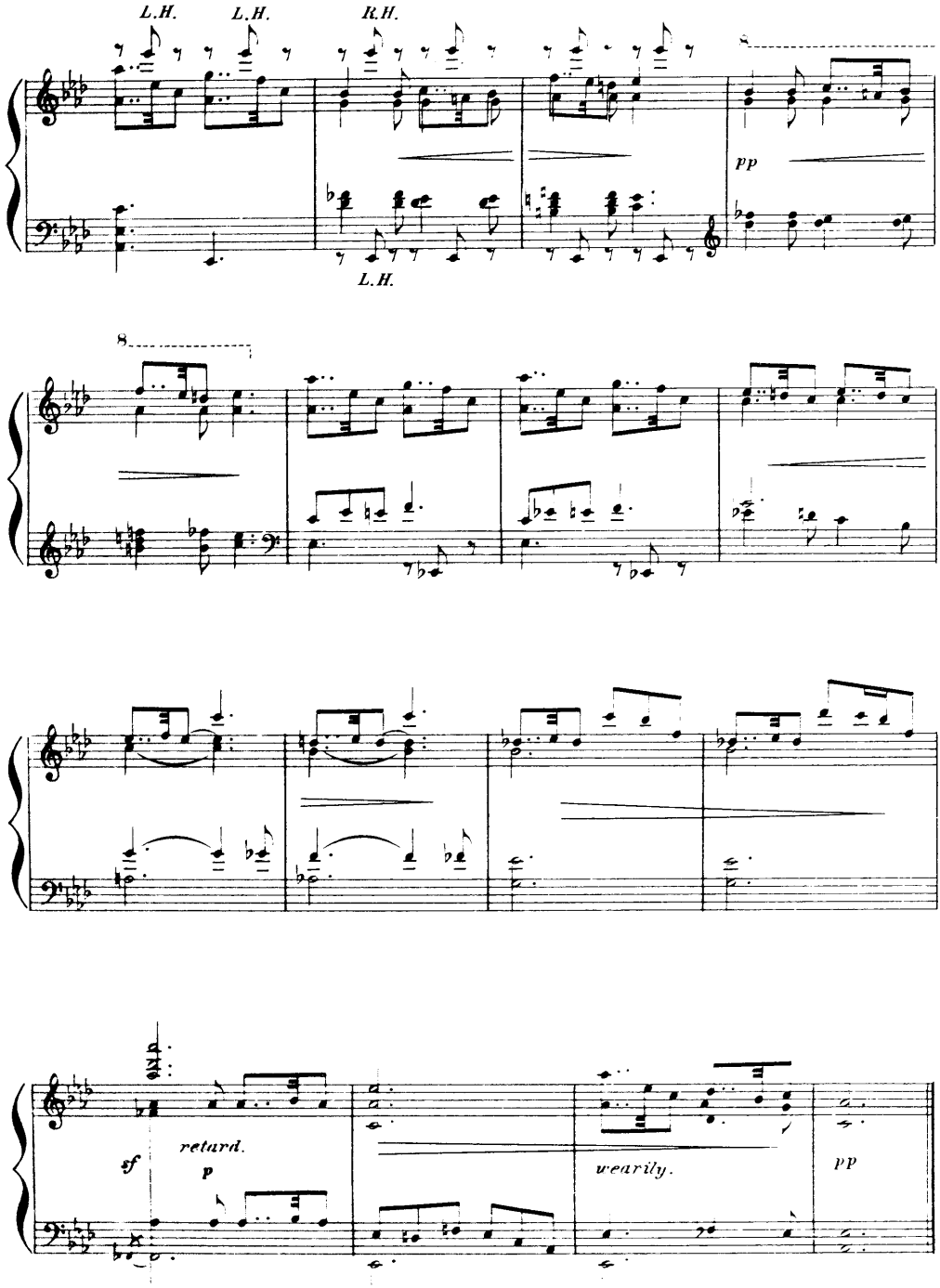
Yet my weariness persists and I cannot write poetry.

The breeze from the coast, bringing me the perfume of the plum-trees, finds me indifferent.

Ah! when will night come and make me forget my sadness in sleep.

Indifference to the Lures of Spring




L.H.
L.H.
R.H.
L.H.
pp
8
sf
retard.
p
wearily.
pp

The Red Flower

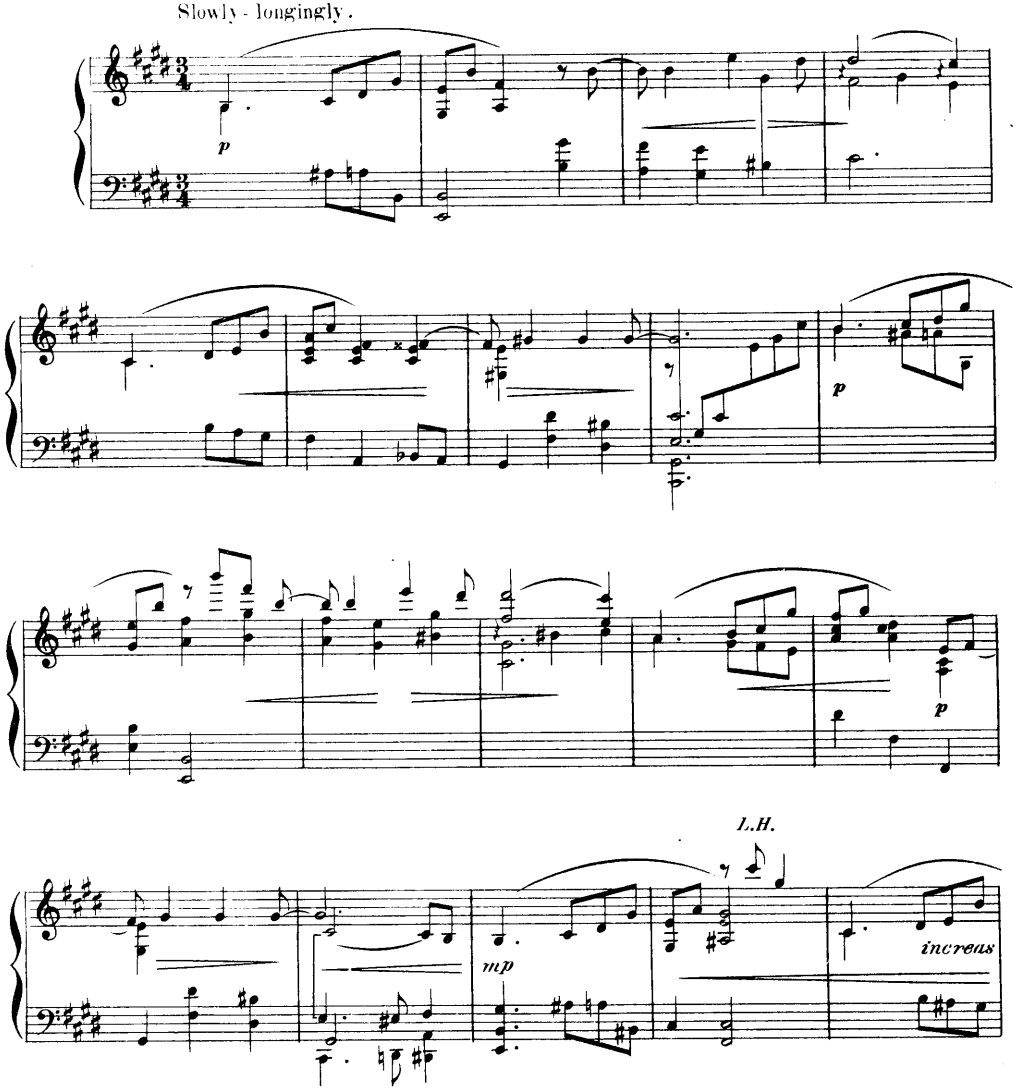
While working sadly by my window, I pricked my finger, and the white flower that I was embroidering became a red flower.

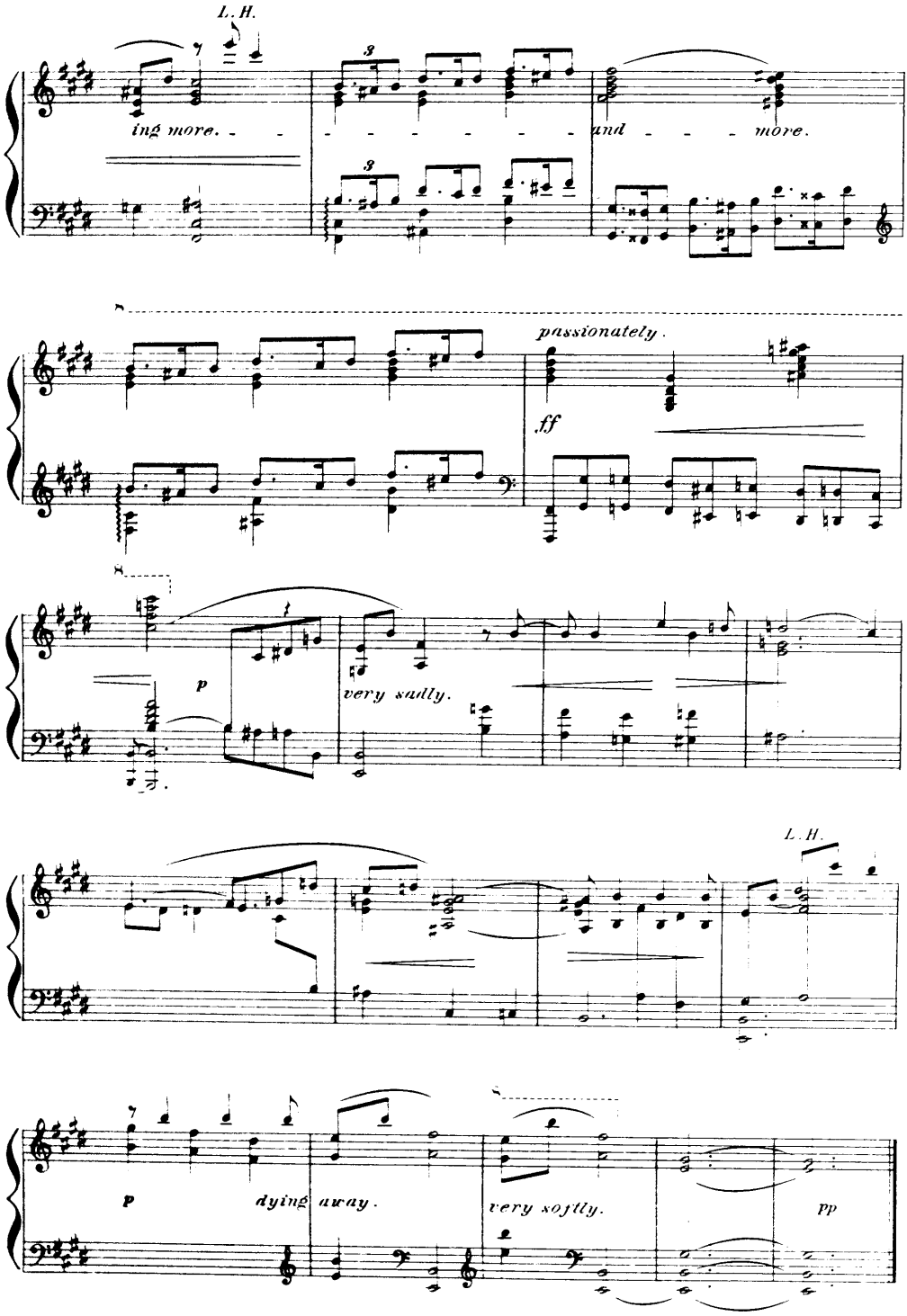
Then I thought suddenly of him who has gone from me to fight the rebels; I imagined that his blood was flowing also, and tears fell from my eyes.

But methought that I heard the sound of his horse's steps, and I arose joyously. It was my heart, which, beating too fast, imitated the sound of his horse's steps.

And I resumed my work by the window, and my tears embroidered with pearls the stuff stretched on the frame.

The Red Flower




L. H.
ing more.
and
more.
passionately.
ff
p
very sadly.
L. H.
p
dying away.
very softly.
pp

Anywhere out of the World

This life is a hospital where every patient is possessed with the desire to change his bed. This one would prefer to suffer before the stove, and that other thinks that he would recover by the window.

It always seems to me that I will be better where I am not, and that question of removal is one that I discuss incessantly with my soul.

"Tell me, my soul, poor chilled soul, what wouldst thou think of dwelling in Lisbon? It must be warm there, and thou wouldst grow as lusty as a lizard. The city is on the sea-shore; they say that it is built of marble, and that the inhabitants have such a dislike for anything green that they uproot all the trees. There is a landscape after thy taste, a landscape composed of light and minerals, and water to reflect them."

My soul makes no answer.

"Since thou lovest repose so well, combined with the sight of movement, wilt thou come and dwell in Holland, that beatifying land? Mayhaps thou wouldst find distraction in that country, whose image thou hast so often admired in the museums. What wouldst think of Rotterdam, thou who lovest forests of masts, and ships anchored before the steps of the houses?"

My soul remains dumb.

"Thou wouldst smile, perhaps, on Batavia? We would find there the mind of Europe joined to the beauty of the tropics."

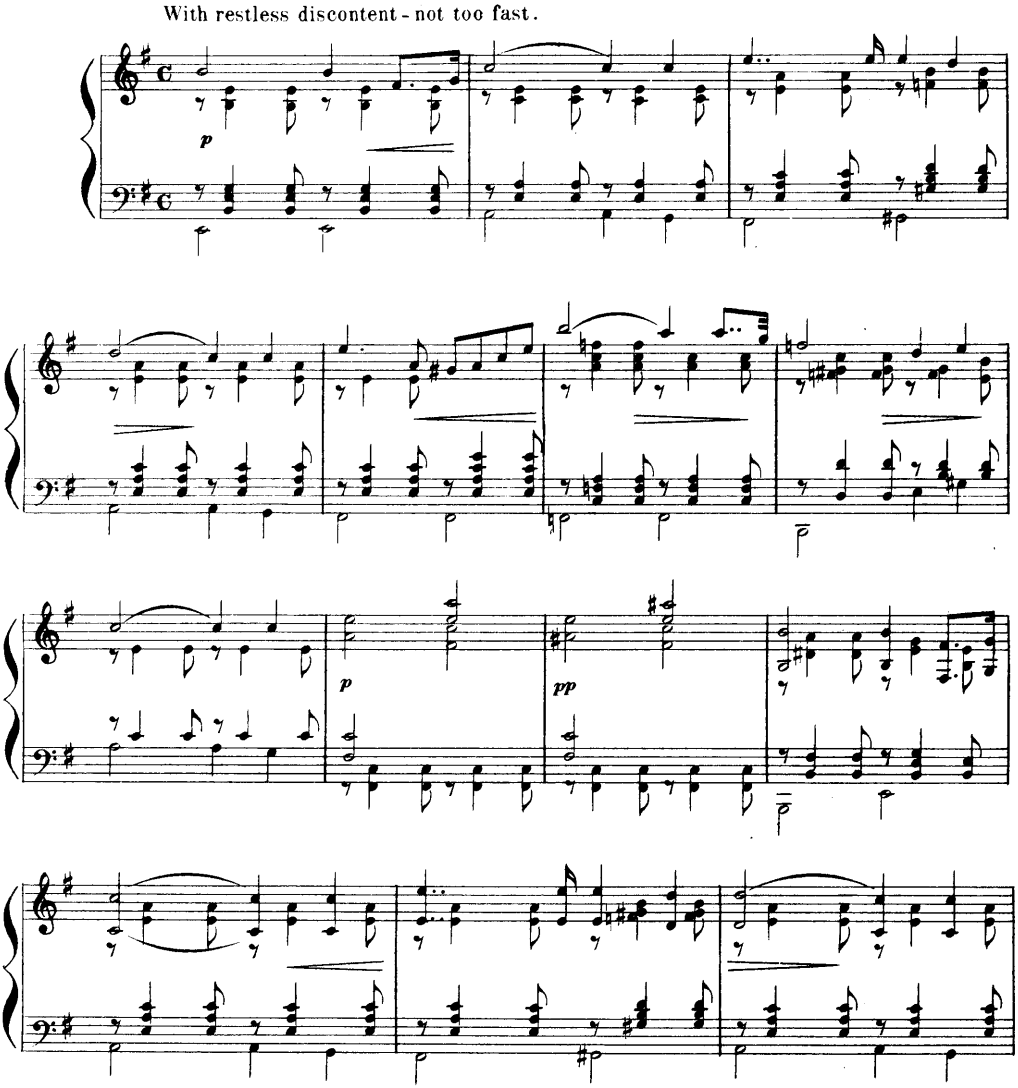
Not a word. - Is my soul dead?

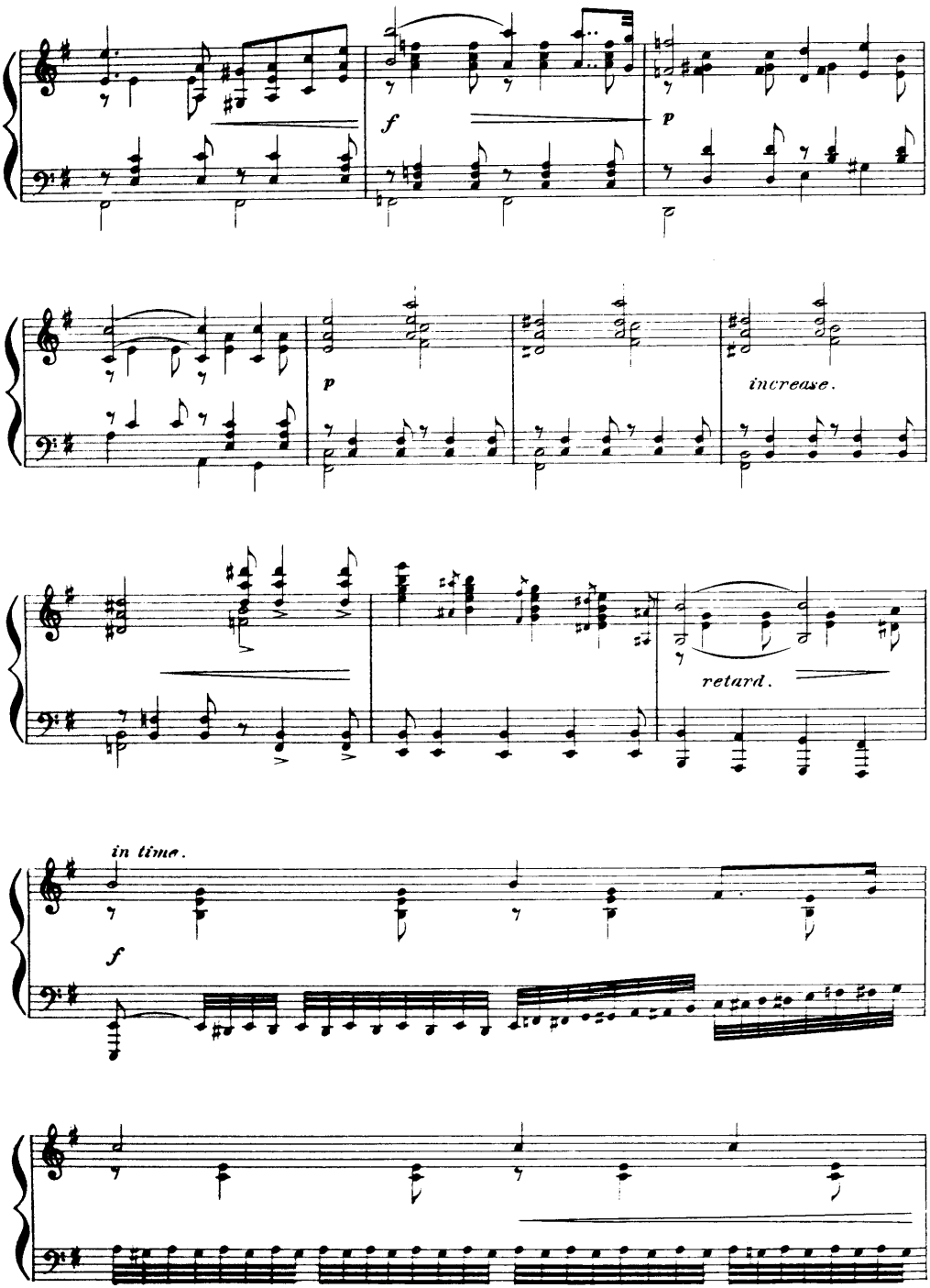
"Hast thou, then, attained such a state of numbness that thou findest pleasure only in thy sorrow? If so, let us fly to the lands that are the analogues of Death. - I have it, poor soul! I will pack my trunk for Torneo. Let us go yet farther, to the extremity of the Baltic; yet farther from life, if possible; let us settle at the Pole. There the sun slants upon the earth, and the slow alternations of light and night suppress variety and increase monotony, that half of Nothingness. There we shall be able to take long baths of darkness, while, to divert us, the aurora borealis will send us from time to time its rosy rays, like the reflection of the fireworks of Hell!"

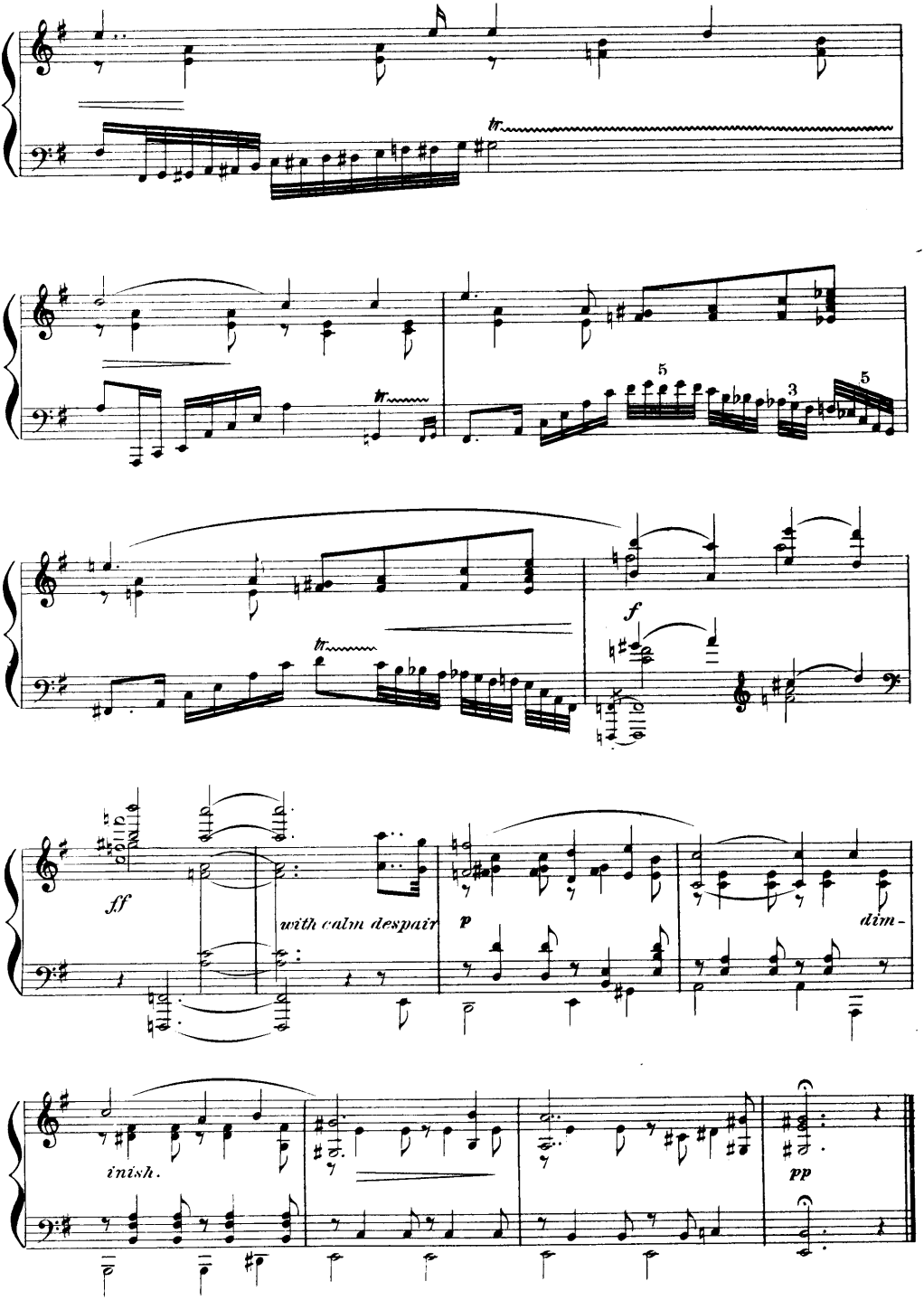
At last my soul bursts forth, and wisely cries to me: "Anywhere! anywhere! as long as it be out of the world!"

Anywhere out of the World

With restless discontent - not too fast.




f
p
p
increase.
retard.
in time.
f


tr.
tr.
5
3
5
tr.
f
ff
with calm despair
p
dim-
inish.
pp

Evening on the Water

The black gondola glided by the palaces of marble, like a bravo running to some nocturnal adventure, with stiletto and lantern under his cloak.

A cavalier and a lady were conversing of love. "The orange-trees so perfumed, and you so indifferent! Ah, Signora, you are as a statue in a garden!"

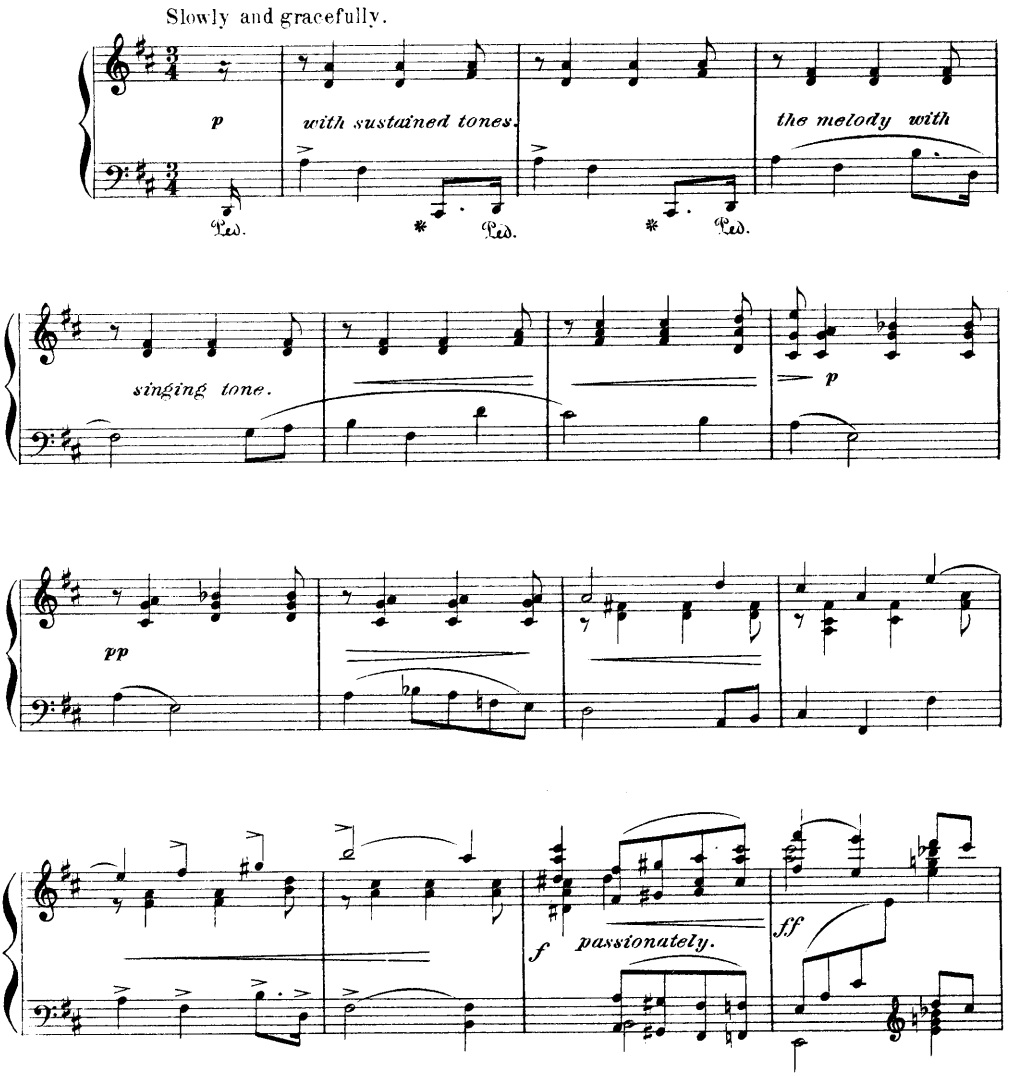
"Is this the kiss of a statue, my Georgio? Why do you sulk? You love me then?" "There is not a star in the heavens that does not know it, and thou knowest it not?"

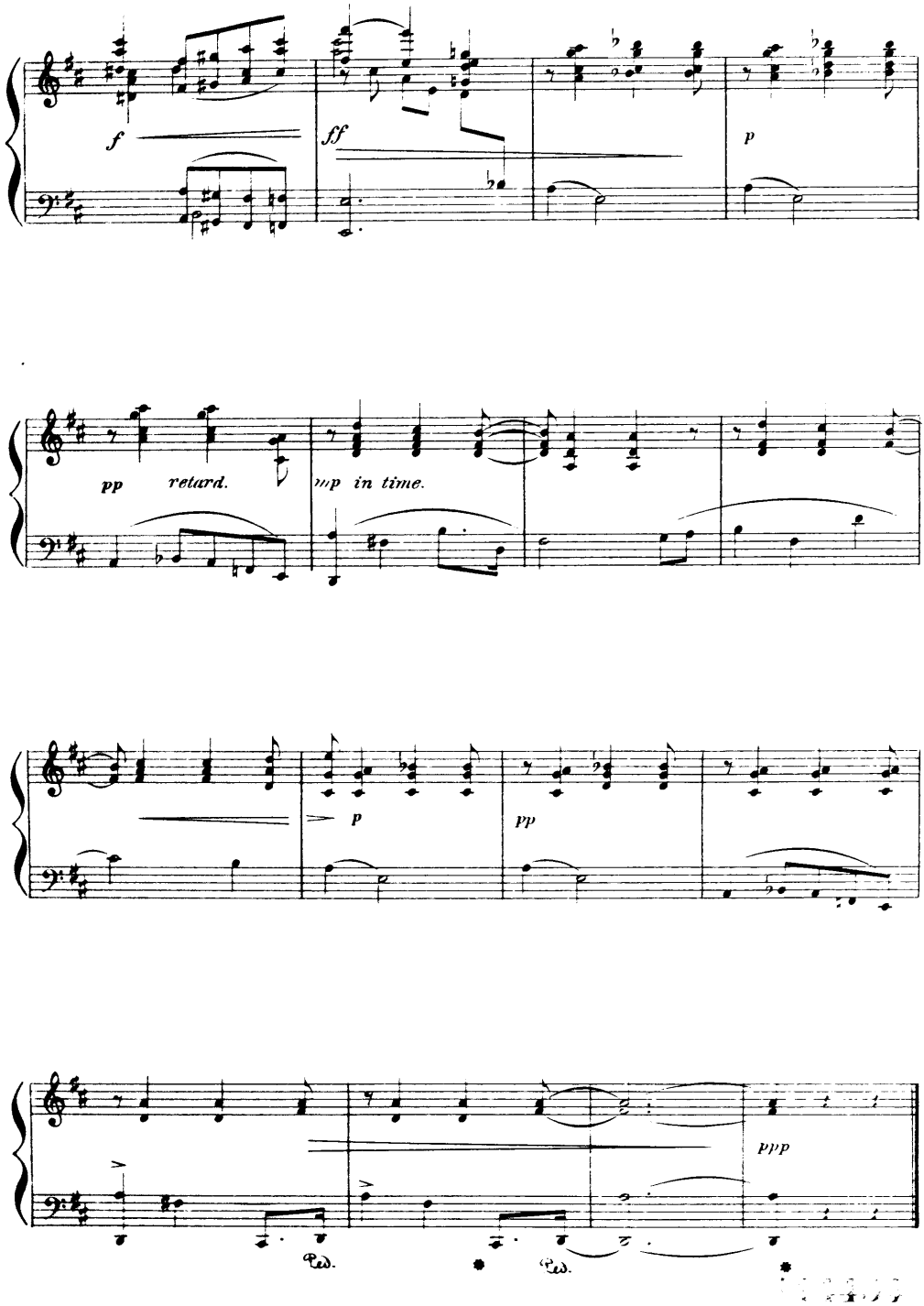
"What is that noise?" "Nothing; doubtless the splash of the water up and down a step in the stairway of the Giudecca."

"Help! help!" "Ah, Mother of the Savior! somebody drowning!" "Step aside; he has been confessed," said a monk, who appeared on the terrace.

And the black gondola strained its oars and glided by the palaces of marble, like a bravo returning from some nocturnal adventure, with stiletto and lantern under his cloak.

Evening on the Water




f
ff
p
pp
retard.
mp in time.
p
pp
ppp
Ped.
Ped.

A Poet Gazes on the Moon

From my garden I hear a woman singing, but in spite of her I gaze on the moon.

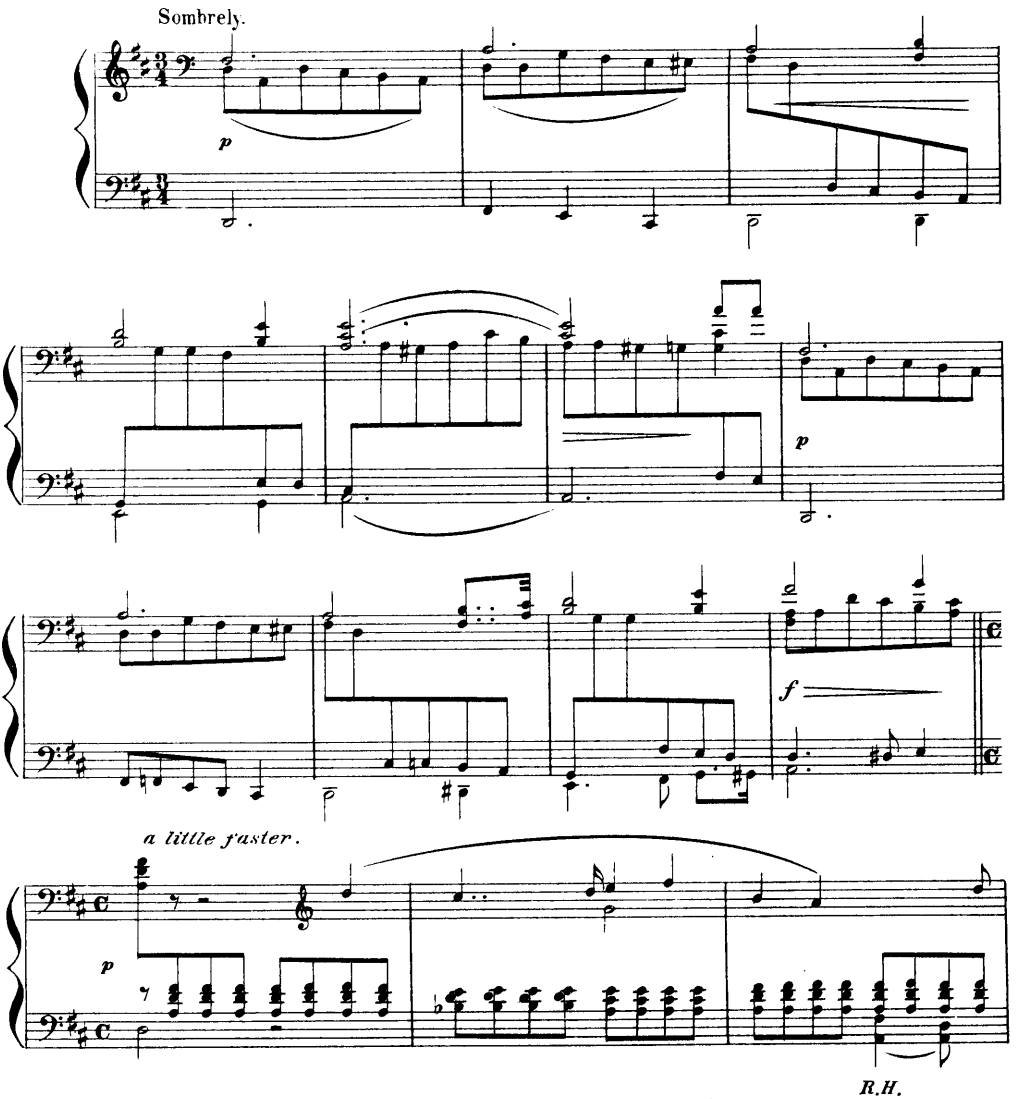
I have never thought of meeting the woman who sings in the neighboring garden; my gaze ever follows the moon in the heavens.

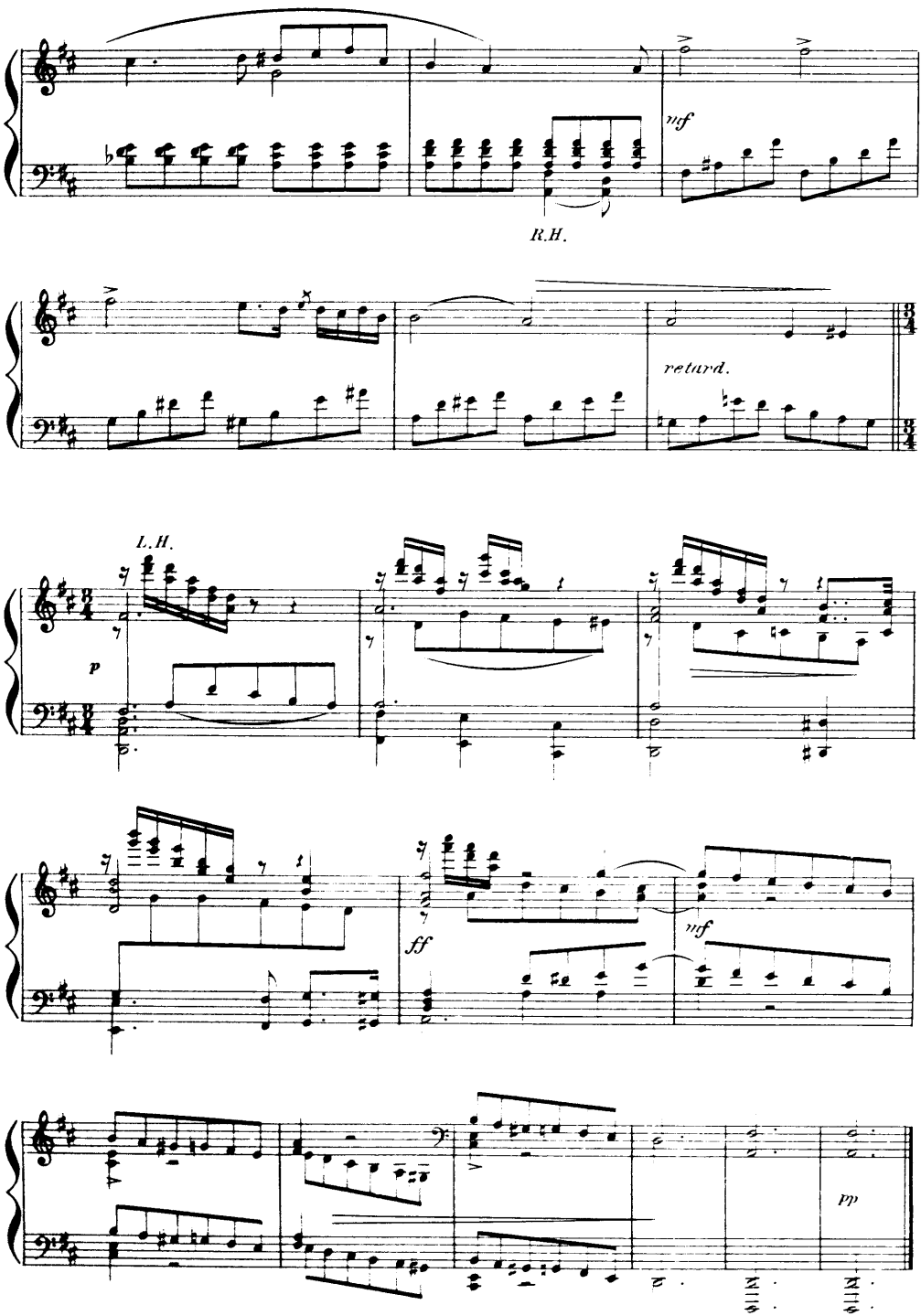
I believe that the moon looks at me too, for a long silver ray penetrates to my eyes.

The bats cross it ever and anon, and oblige me suddenly to lower my lids; but when I lift them again, I still see the silver gleam darted upon me.

The moon mirrors herself in the eyes of poets as in the brilliant scales of the dragons, those poets of the sea.

A Poet Gazes on the Moon




nf
R.H.
retard.
L.H.
p
ff
nf
pp

The Round Under the Bell

Twelve sorcerers were dancing a round under the big bell of Saint John's. They invoked the storm one after the other, and from the depths of my bed I counted with terror twelve voices that fell processionally through the darkness.

Immediately the moon hid herself behind the clouds, and rain, mingled with lightning and whirlwinds, lashed my window, while the vanes screeched, like watching cranes when a shower bursts upon them in the woods.

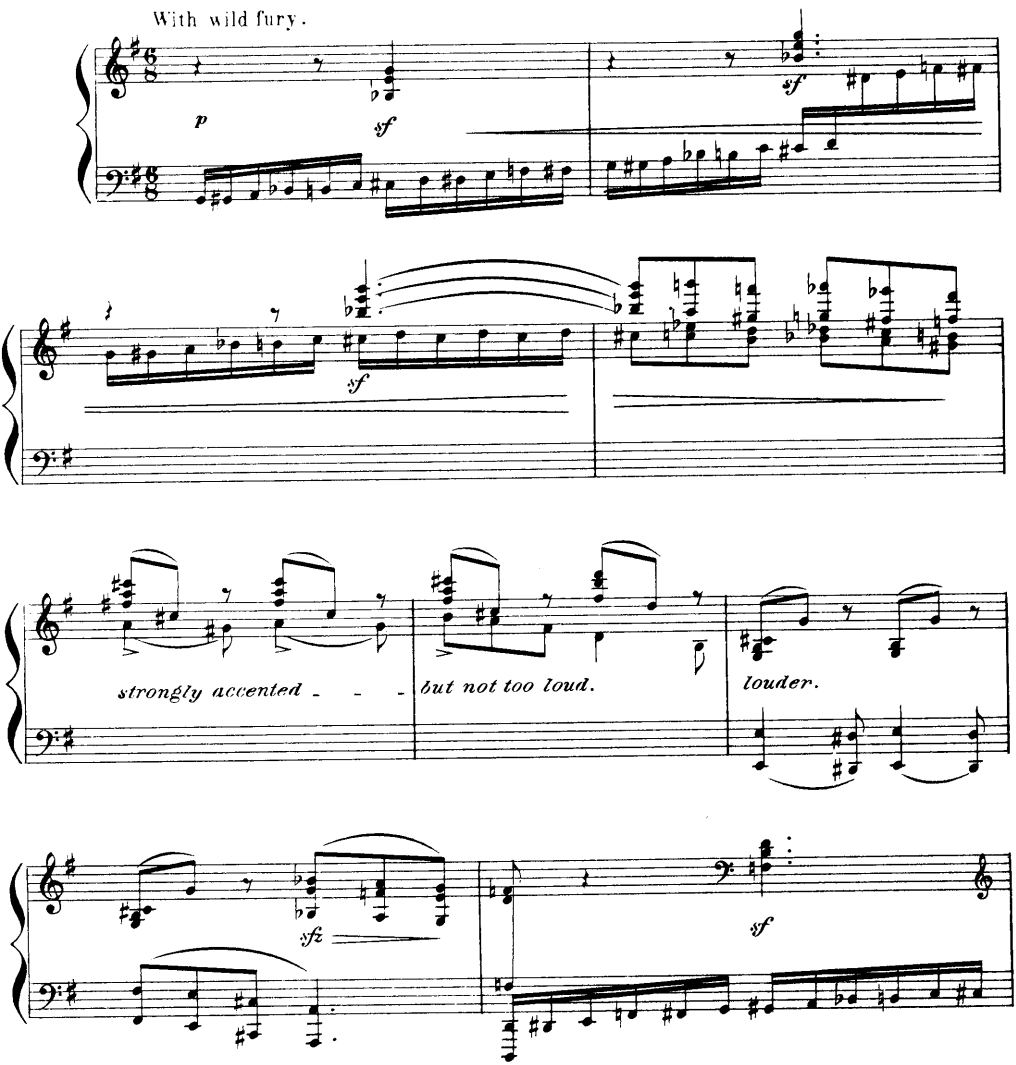
The string of my lute, hanging against a panel, broke; my goldfinch fluttered his wings in the cage; some curious sprite turned over a leaf of the "Romaunce of the Rose" that was sleeping on my desk.

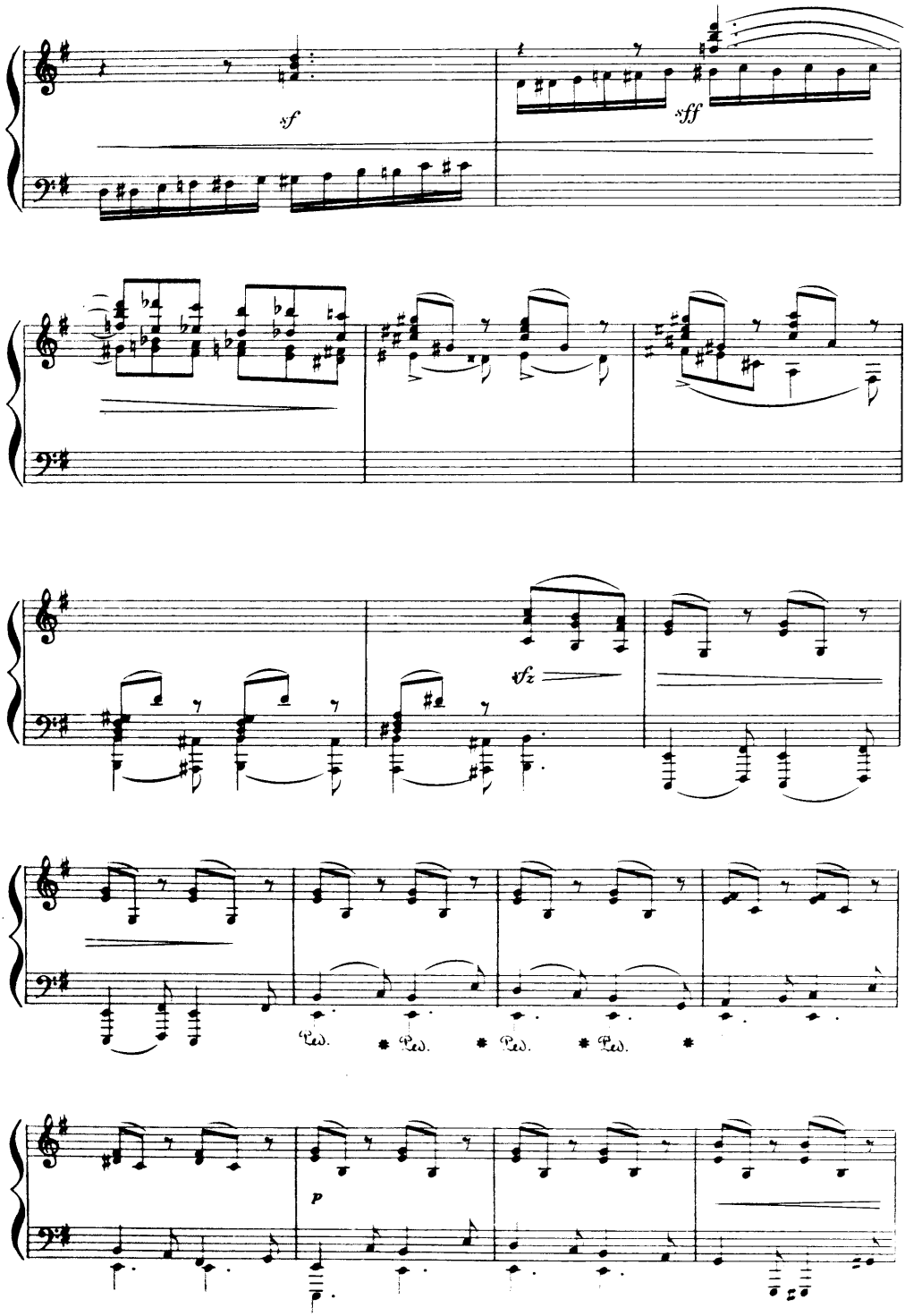
But suddenly the thunder crashed at the top of Saint John's; the sorcerers disappeared, struck to death; and I saw from afar their books of magic burning like a torch in the black belfry.

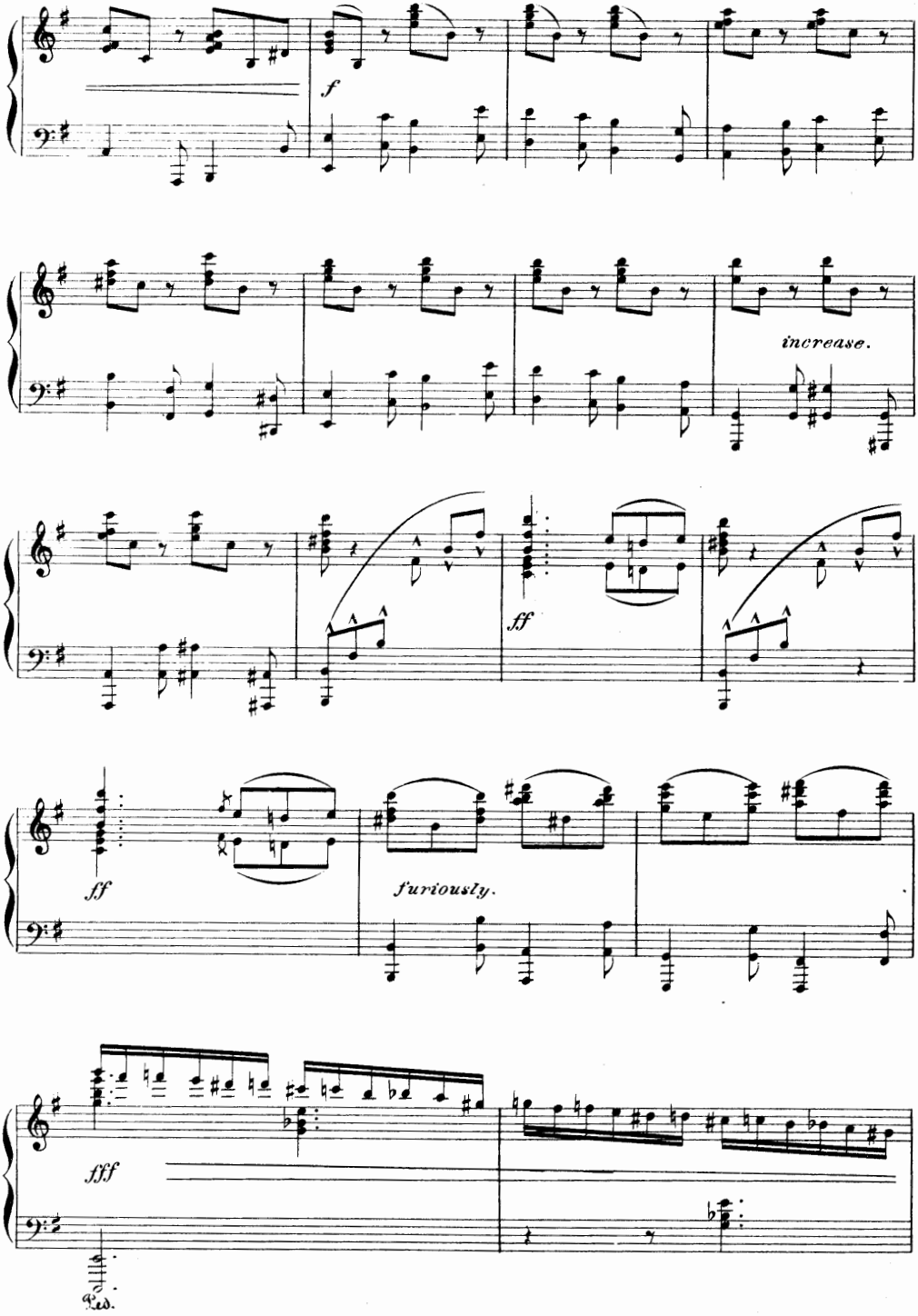
The frightful conflagration painted the walls of the Gothic church with the red flames of purgatory and hell, and prolonged upon the neighboring houses the shadow of the gigantic statue of Saint John.

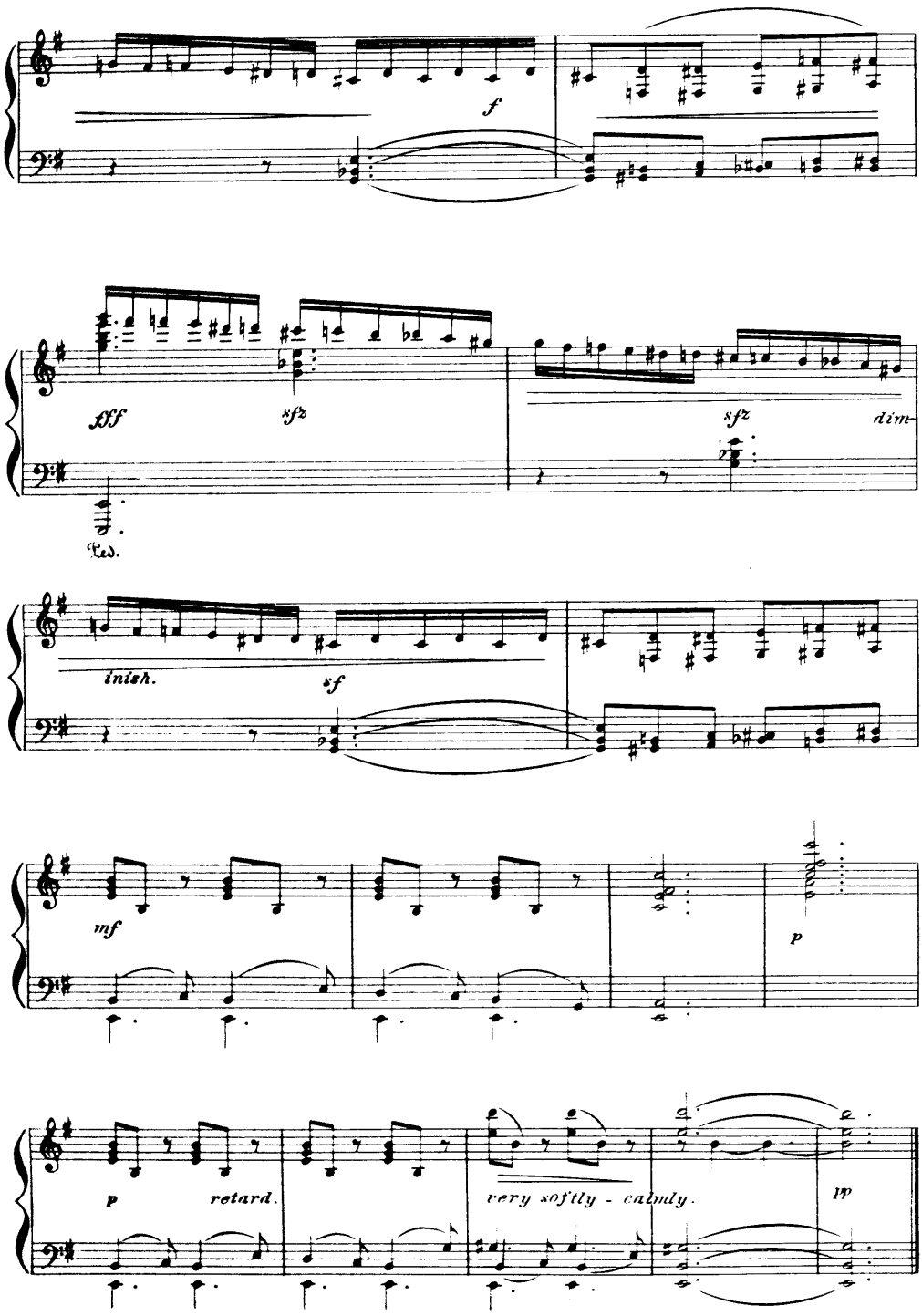
The vanes became rusty; the moon melted the pearly clouds; the rain only fell drop by drop from the edge of the roof, and the breeze, opening my ill-closed window, threw upon my pillow the flowers of my jasmine bush shaken by the storm.

The Round under the Bell




sf
sff
sfz
Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *
p


f
increase.
ff
ff
furiously.
fff
Ped.


f
fff
sfz
sfz
dim.
Ped.
inish.
sf
mf
p
p
retard.
very softly - calmly.
pp

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