FIRST SOLO BOOK

By TOBIAS MATTHAY

Op. 37

For use as a supplement to Books I & II of 'The Pianist's First Music Making' and 'The Child's First Steps'

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PREFACE TO PLAYTHINGS FOR LITTLE PLAYERS. BOOK I.

The Main Cause of Bad Technique, Pianistically,

by

TOBIAS MATTHAY.

MOST of the evil technical habits which we, Artist-teachers, have to eradicate in our pupils usually date from the very early days—the first days—of Piano-life. Indeed, most of the mischief must be laid to the door of the now happily out-of-date so-called "Tutor," and this, because the old Tutor did not distinguish between the first steps of *learning to play the instrument*, and *learning to read notation*. The first exercises were therefore designed solely for ease in deciphering notation, while no consideration whatever was given to the proper series of steps necessary to overcome the mental-physical difficulties of playing, since the laws of Technique were not then known or understood. Hence, the most easy-to-read exercises were given first, and thus the child had inflicted upon him five-finger exercises moving straight up-and-down, and also the most difficult scale of all—that of C major! Worse still, both exercises and scales were given with the hands moving by *similar* motion. Here then we have the direct cause of all the mischief done, and done in the first year or two of Piano-practice.

Ignorance, at that time, as to the function of the Forearm Rotative Principle in all finger-passage work was no doubt the fundamental cause of the mischief. Obviously, when the five-finger exercise is taken in a straight-on succession of notes this needs the *repetition* of the *same* fore-arm rotative conditions four times each way; and when the notes are played by the two hands in similar motion we need the coincidence of rotative conditions of *opposite* character between the hands. These facts are quite unlikely to strike the uninformed learner, and the inevitable result is the direct acquisition of habits of "stiffening"—stiffening rotatively, and also in every other way; "stiffening," meaning the habit of allowing *conflict* between the muscular exertions required to actuate the limbs required in playing and those not required. Hence the result, bad, inefficient or inadequate technique and a handicap for the rest of the victim's life. Many teachers, indeed, although uninformed on these points, have delayed the teaching of the scale from an instinctive feeling of the difficulties here touched upon.

The proper course, clearly, is to teach the overcoming of one difficulty at a time. Thus, firstly: to *separate* the act of learning to *play* from the act of learning to *read* notation, just as in ordinary speech, where a child first learns to express himself, and subsequently learns to recognize the signs which, on paper represent speech.

Secondly, technical accomplishment must be taught in the proper series of steps. Here the first finger-exercises and pieces should (so far as possible) consist of sequences of notes which require *alternating* conditions rotatively, and when the hands are used together they should move by contrary motion musically, thus implying rotative changes in *similar* direction.

In this way, the beginner, even if uninformed as to laws and facts of Technique, is more likely to form habits of correct co-ordination between the exertions required of the hand and the fingers themselves and the fore-arm rotative changes and repetitions so imperatively required as a basis for each and every note in so-called "finger passages," etc.

Of course, the best way of all is fully to instruct the learner on all these points! In my "Nine Steps towards Finger Individualization" (Anglo-French Music Co.) I have summed up the proper sequence of steps leading to such harmony between finger and forearm.

To write musical studies and pieces in accordance with this knowledge of the technical pitfalls in the path of the beginner, manifestly implies a set of formidable restrictions and a severe problem for any composer, however gifted. Now, although some music has accidently been written in the past in accordance with the conditions here defined, we now imperatively need a mass of educative material, properly written, *and of a musical nature*, for the beginner in his first stages. It is to be hoped that composers of genius and with child sympathy will come forward and supply it.

The present set of little Studies (for the first year, or the second or third year studentship) were written as tentative examples of what should be striven for—and perhaps Nos. 1, 9 and 5 only are really in accordance with the technical conditions here imposed on the composer. My main purpose has been to endeavour to stimulate and prompt composers of perhaps higher genius than myself to provide the educative material on these lines so urgently needed.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.

HASLEMERE, JULY, 1924.

Affectionately to Gwendoline Warren, and her pupil Nina Yudin.

FIRST SOLO BOOK

For use as a supplement to Books I & II of
"Pianist's First Music Making"
and to
"The Child's First Steps."

I.

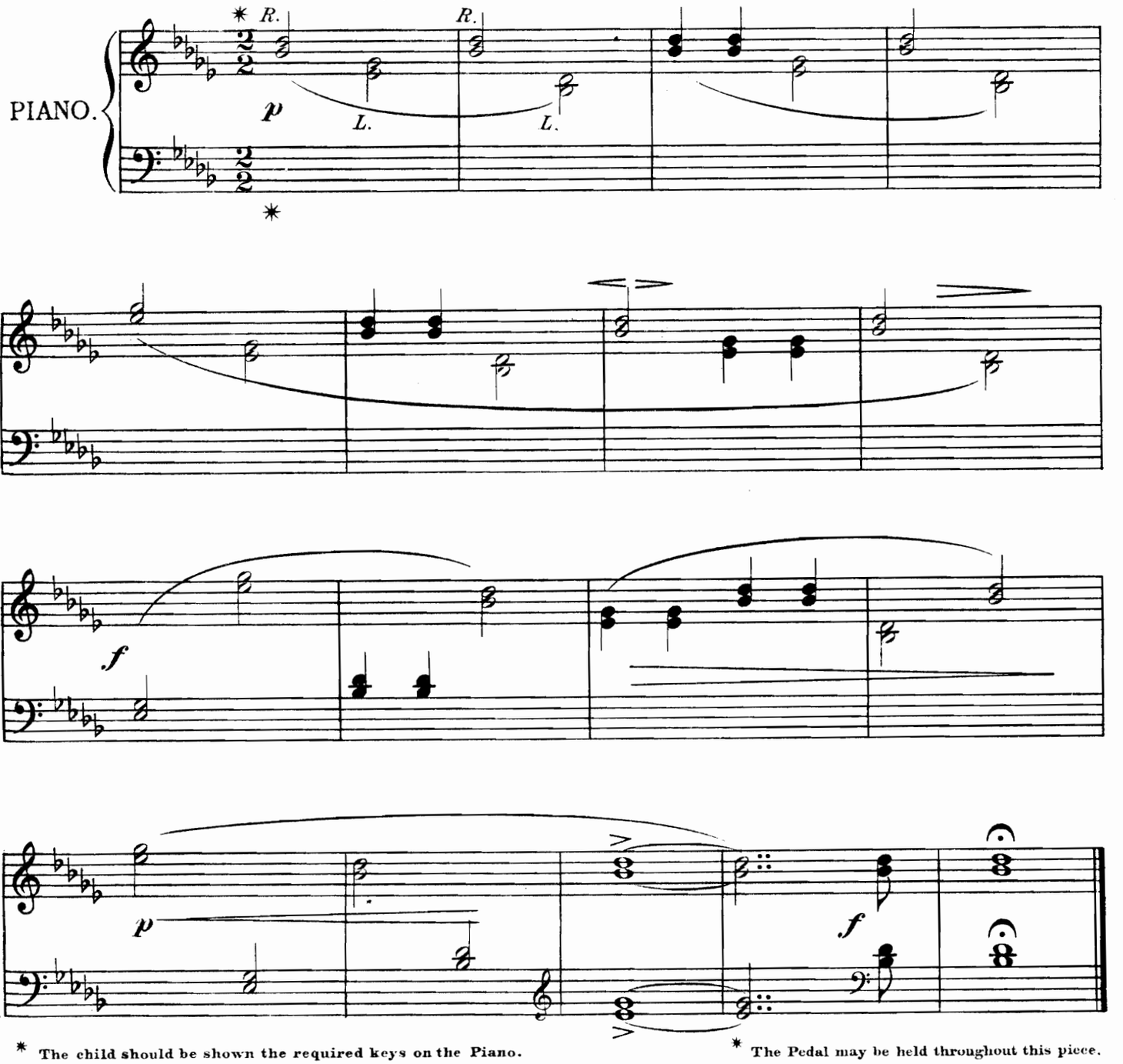
CHIMES.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.

Op. 37.

To be played "Weight-touch," with the *fist* gently clenched.
(*a*) used sideways – thumb up, therefore without any rotational exertion.
(*b*) with fist in horizontal position – therefore with the addition of a rotational exertion towards the thumb. See pp.7, 9 etc., P. F. M. M. Book I, and page 4, etc., "Child's First Steps."

Not too slow, with humour.



* The child should be shown the required keys on the Piano.

* The Pedal may be held throughout this piece.

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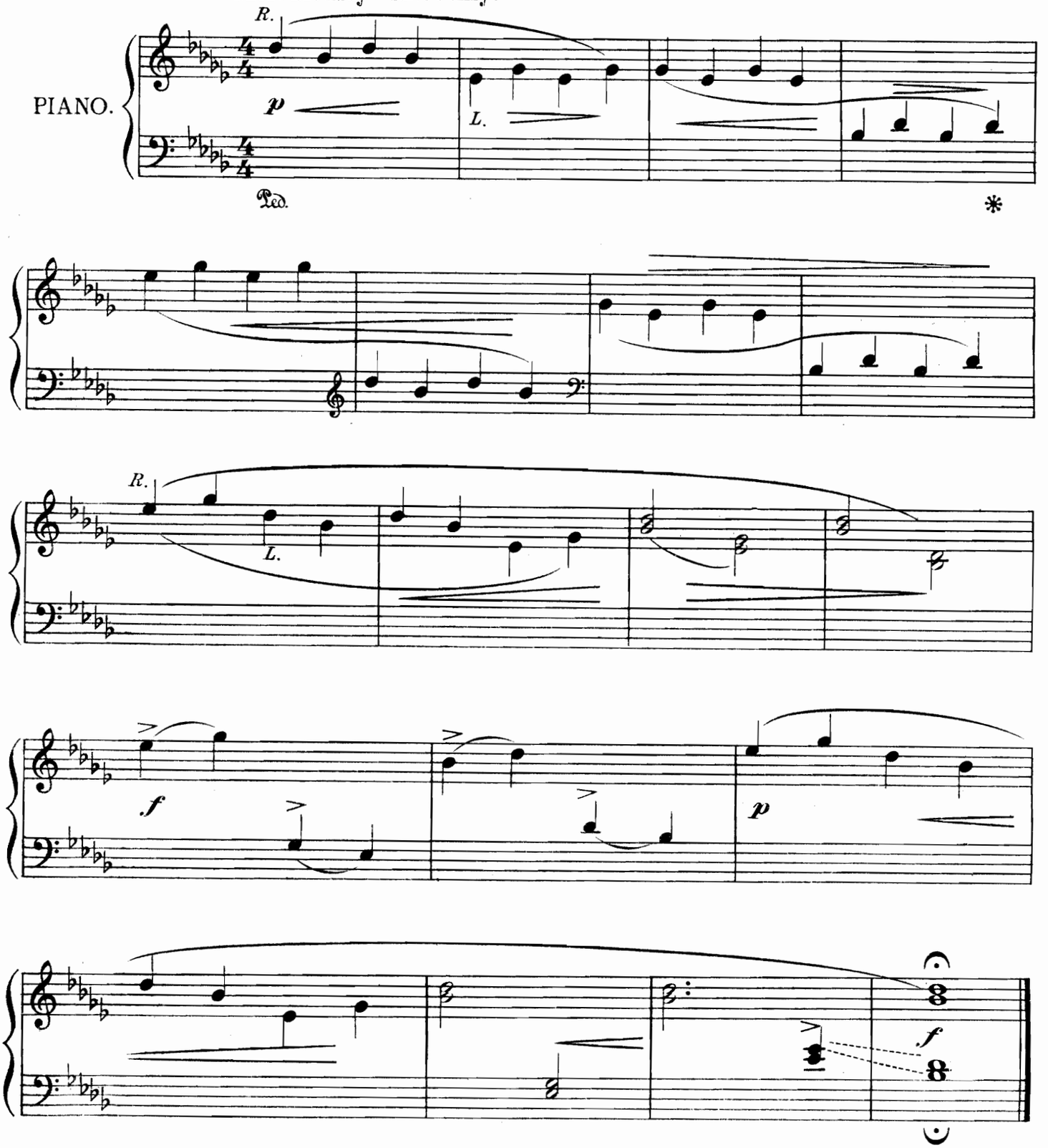
II.
THE WHEEL-BARROW.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.

To be played:

(a) by *fist*, rocking from note to note—horizontal position.
(b) by *Two Fingers* used instead—3̂5 or 2̂4 or 1̂3.

Melodiously—smoothly.



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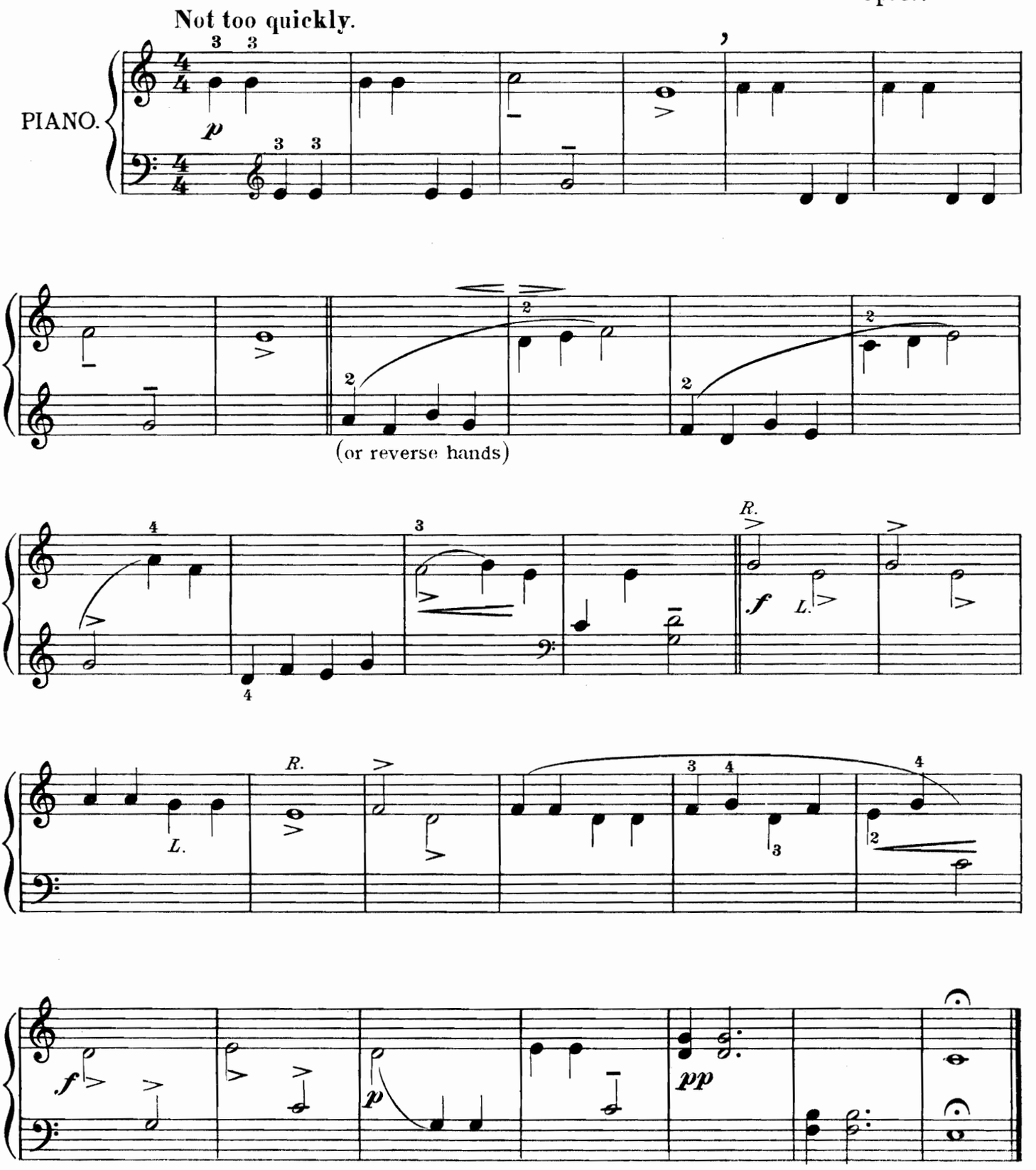
III.
ON DADDY'S KNEE.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.



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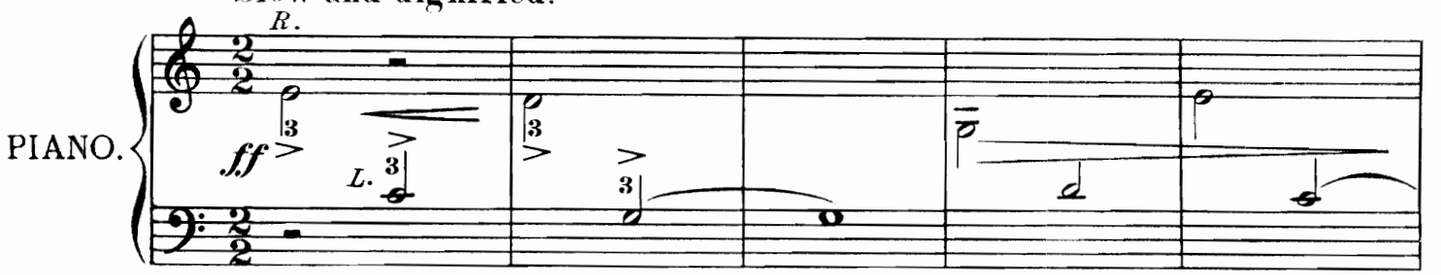
IV.

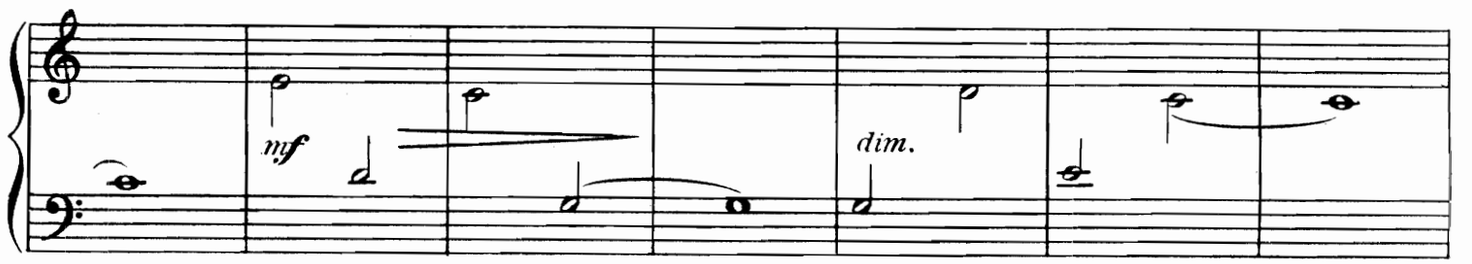
BIG BEN.

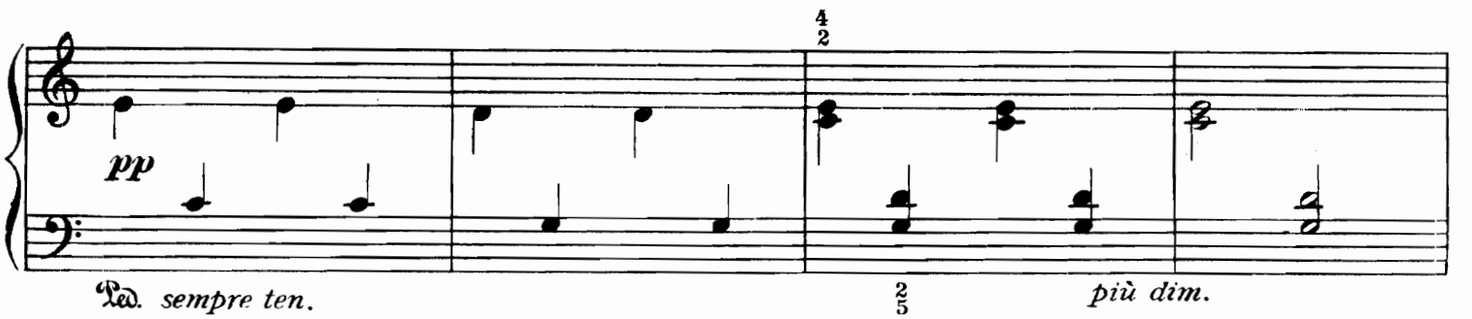
TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op.37.

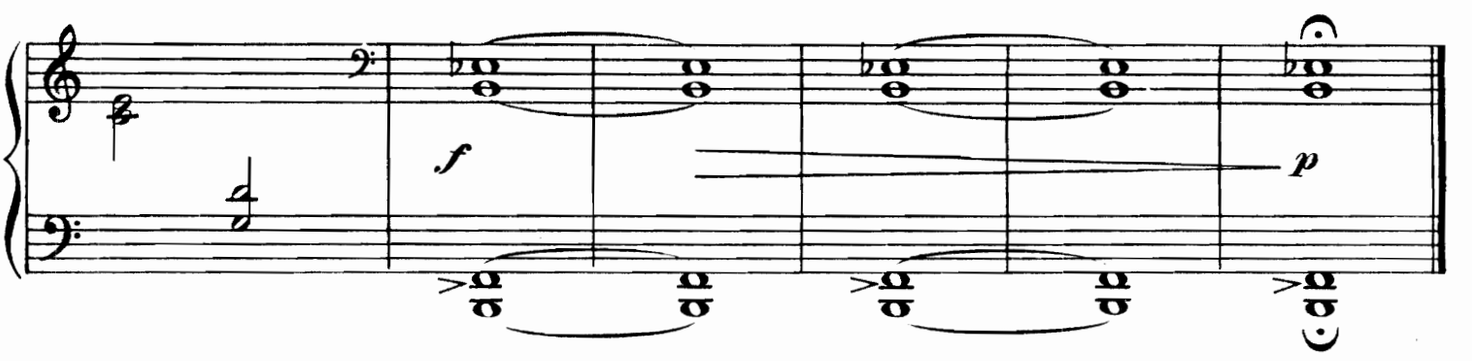
Slow and dignified.



Put *Pedal* down (if you can) and hold it to the end of this piece.







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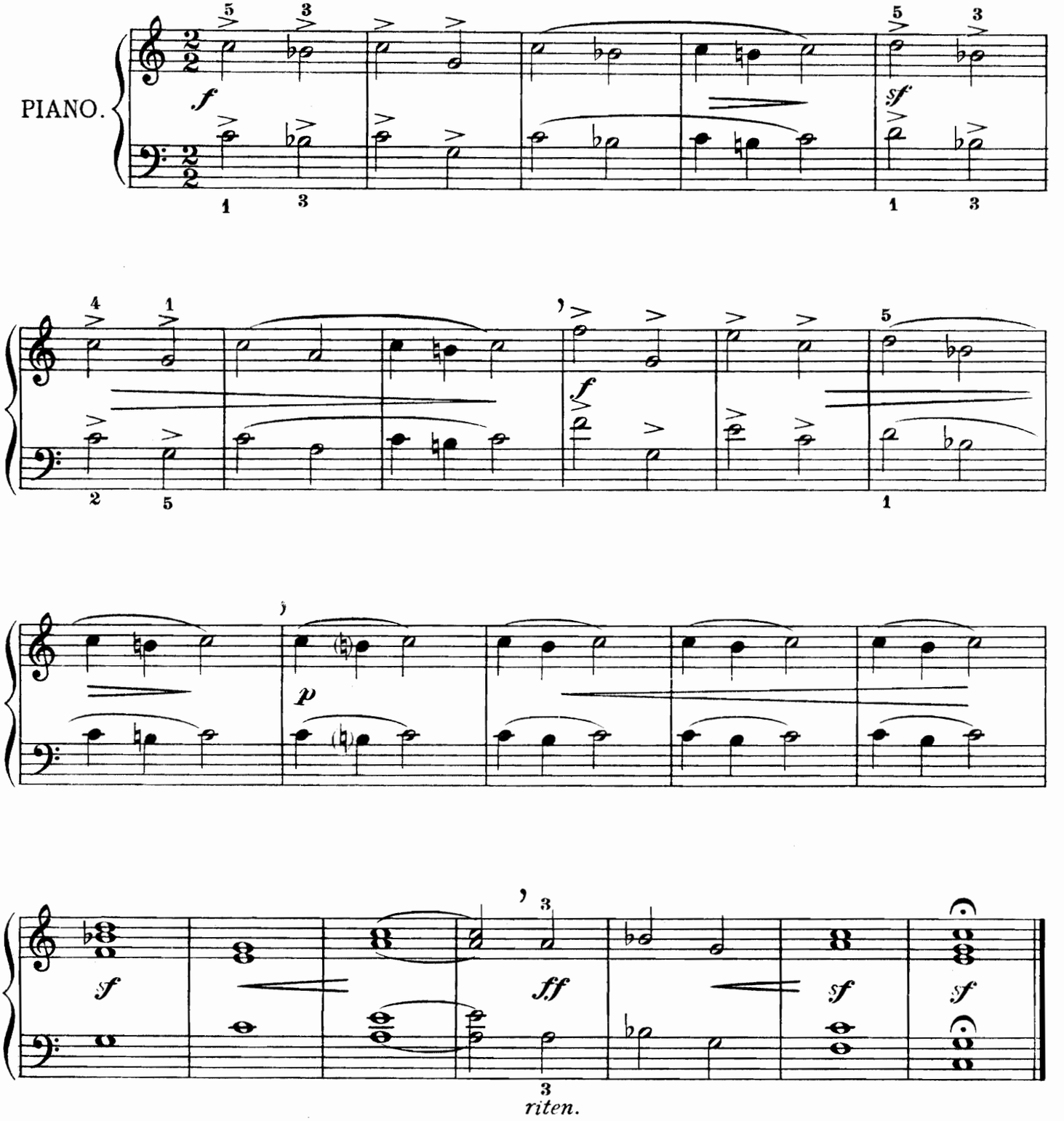
V.
THE BEAR.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.

Majestically. *but not too slow.*



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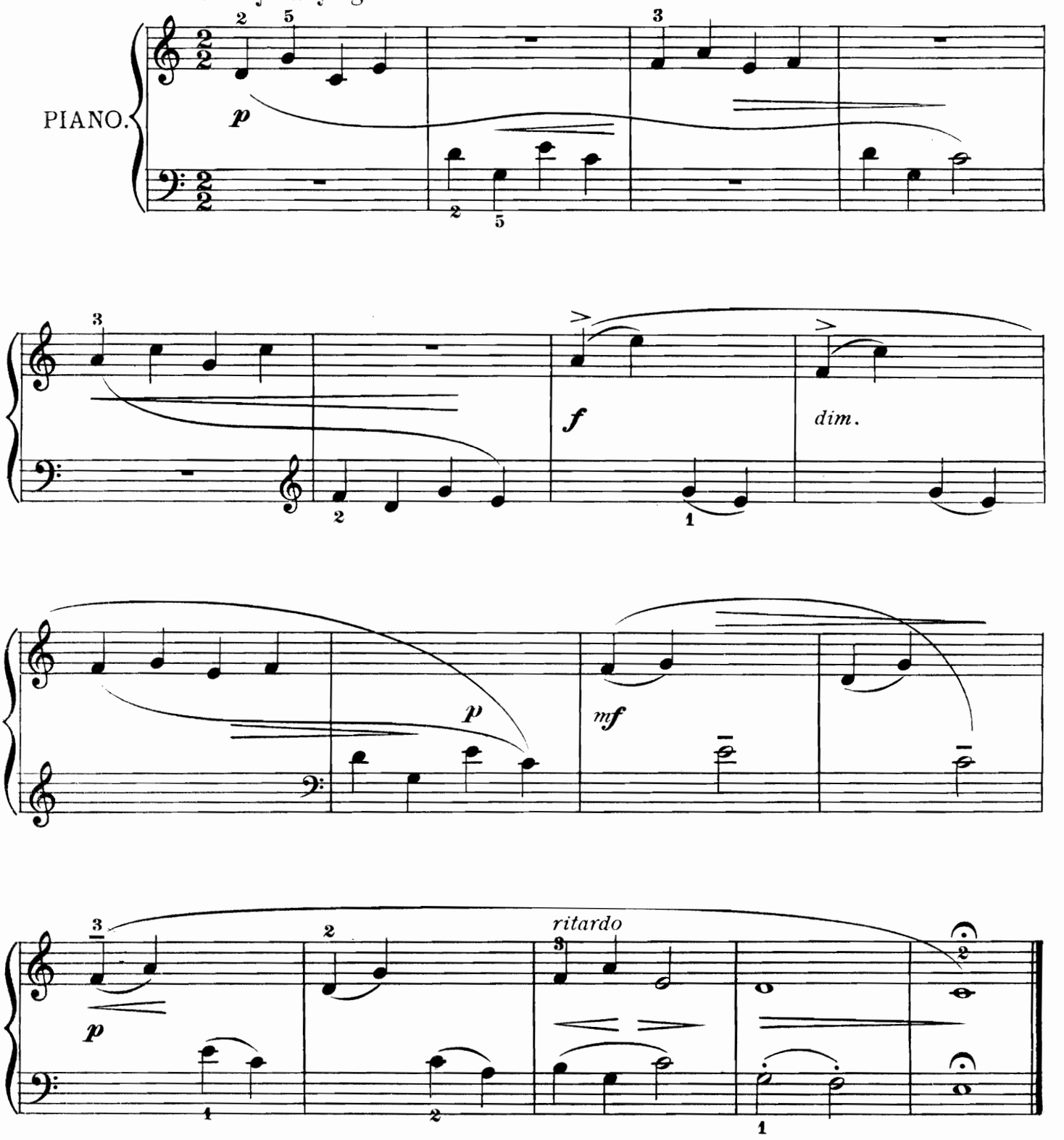
VI.

A HUMMING SONG.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.

Gently swaying.



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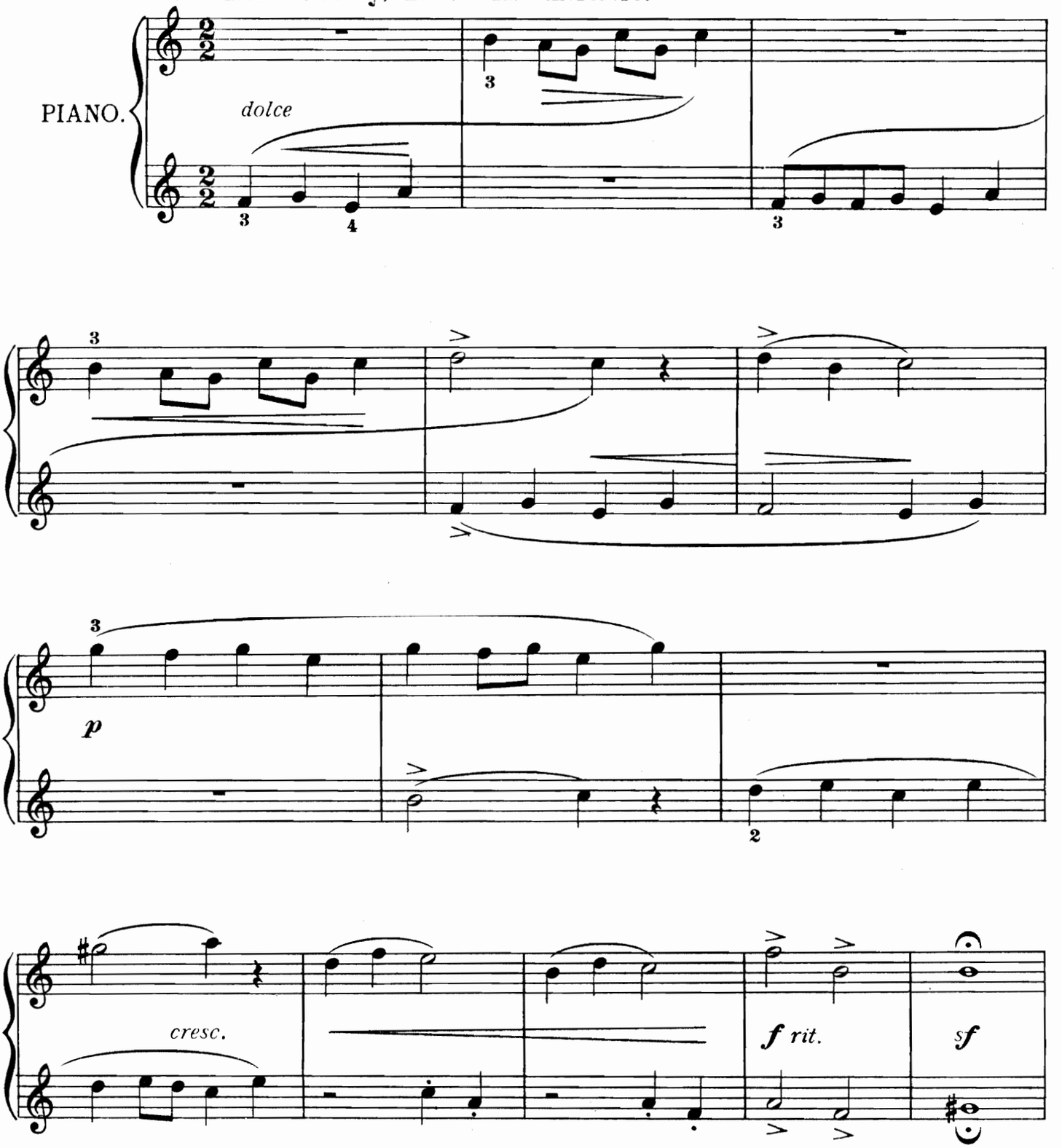
VII.
GLIDING.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.

A melodic study, not too fast therefore.



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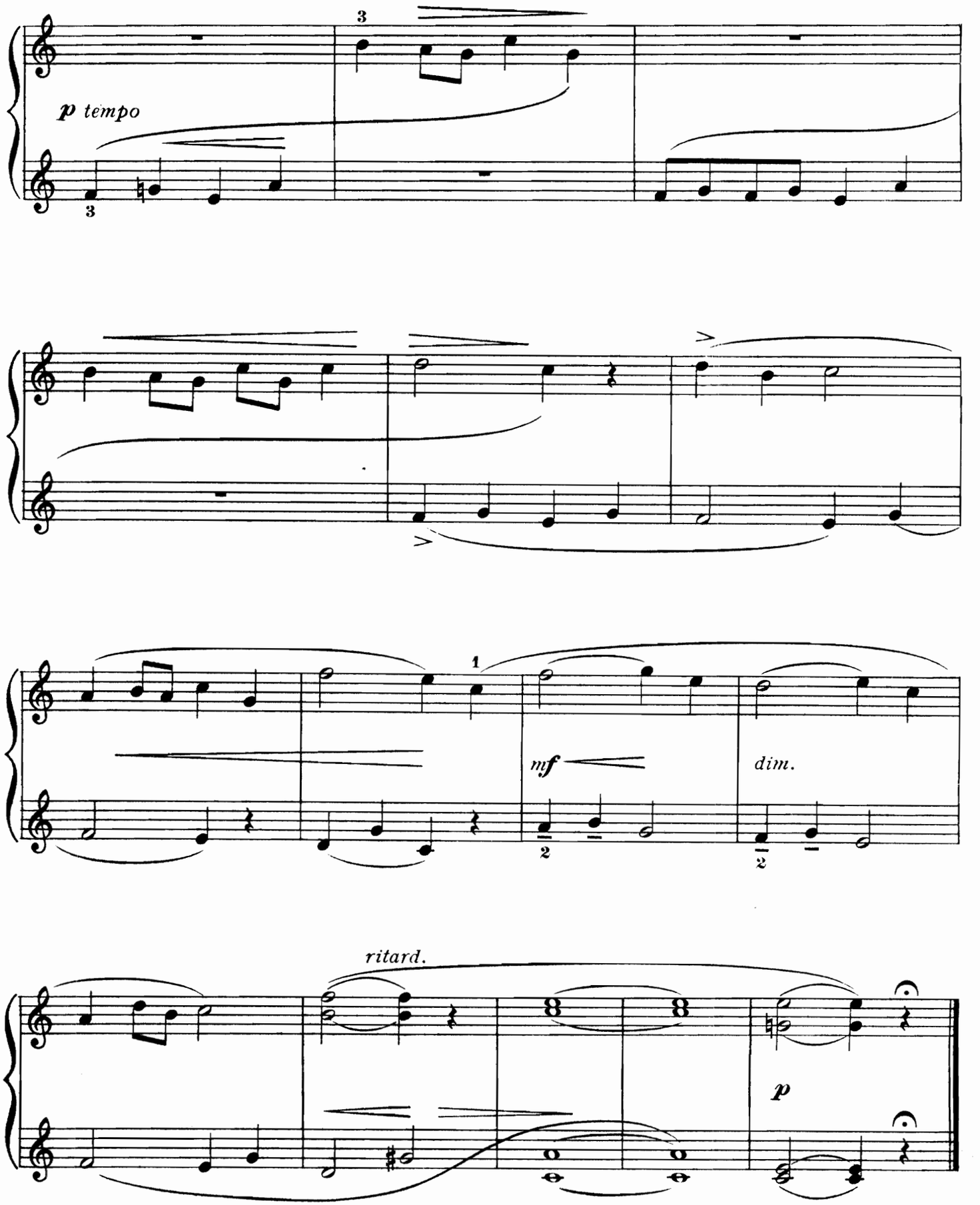
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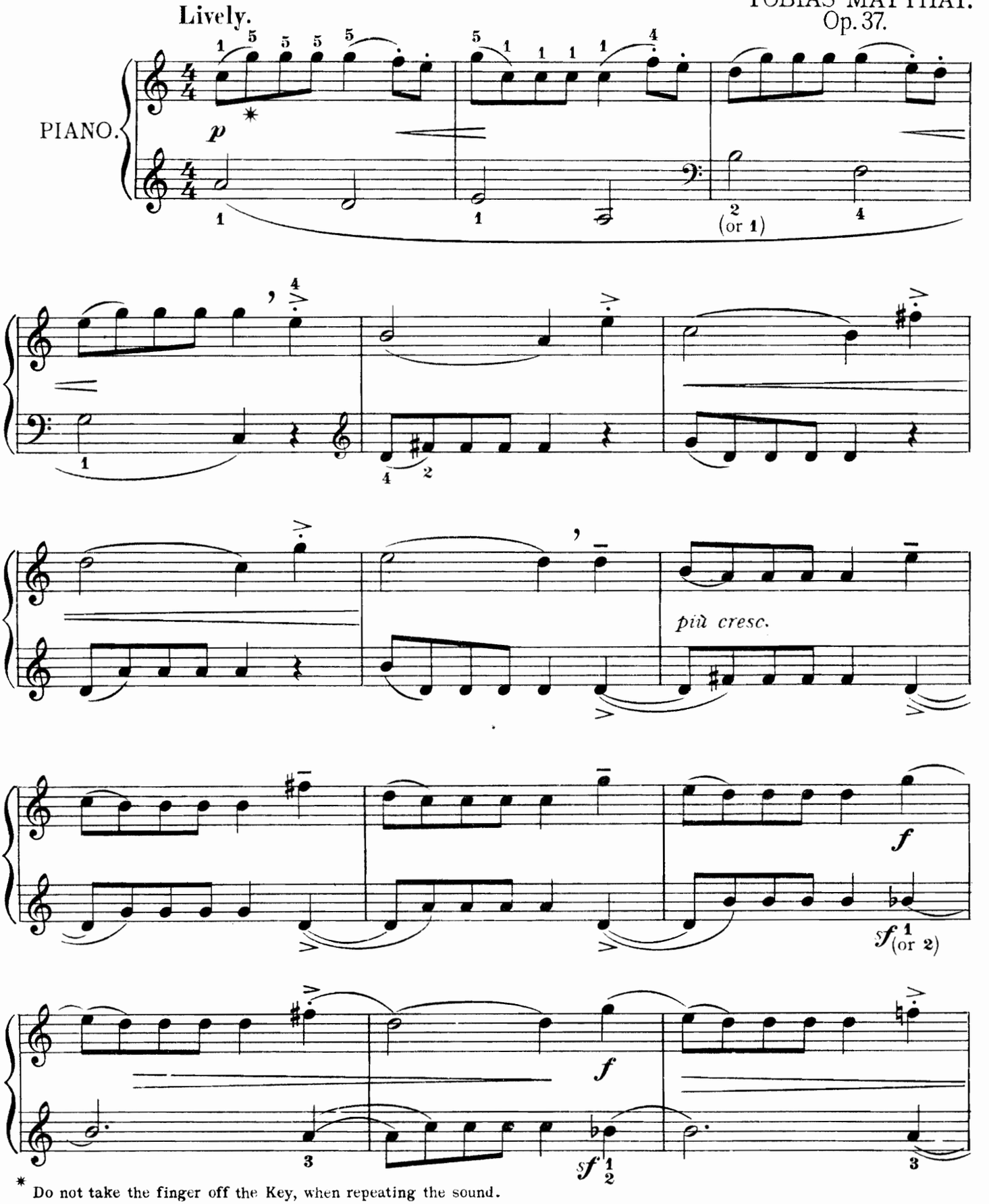
p

VIII.

THE RATTLE.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.



* Do not take the finger off the Key, when repeating the sound.

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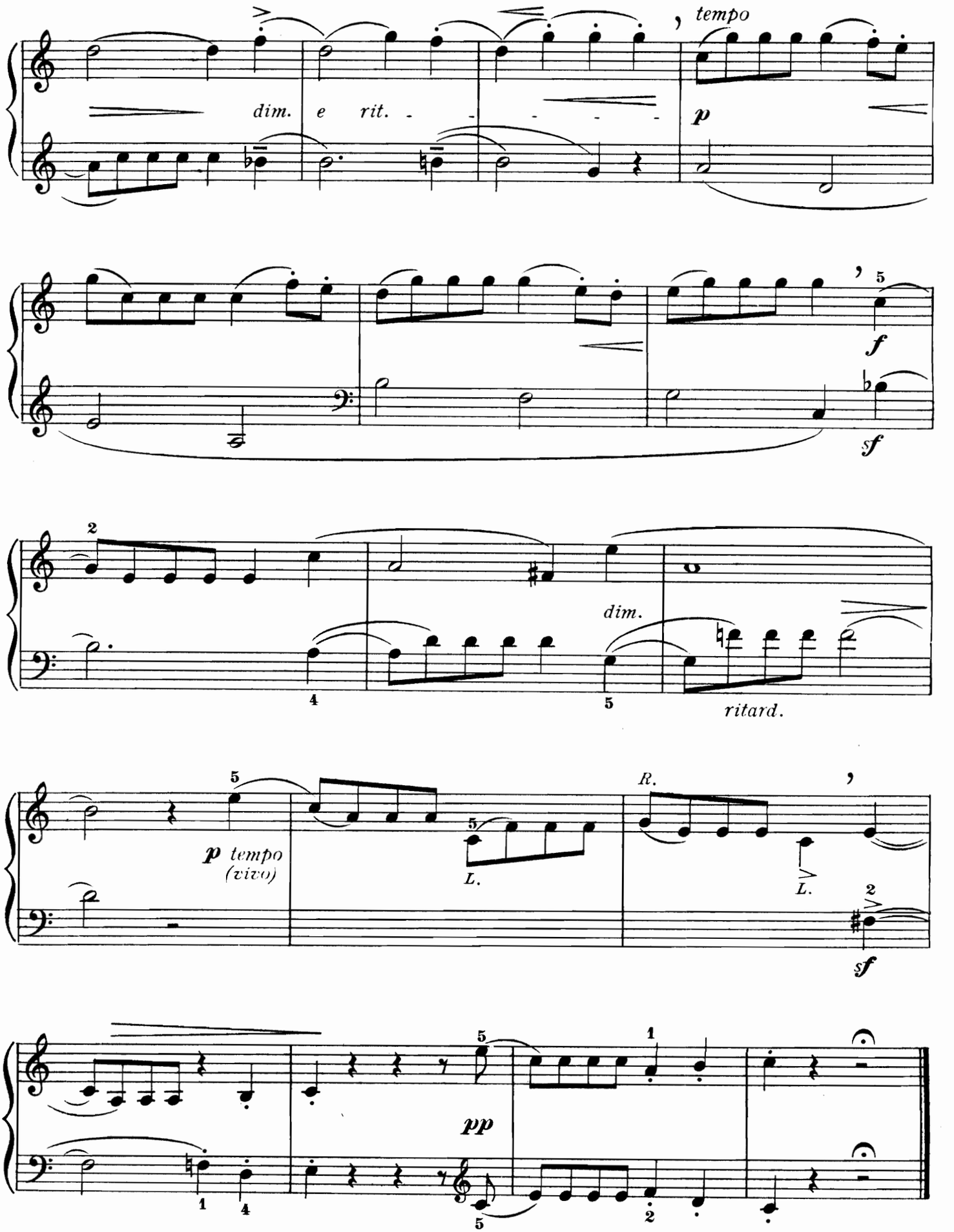
tempo
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p
f
sf
dim.
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p tempo (vivo)
L.
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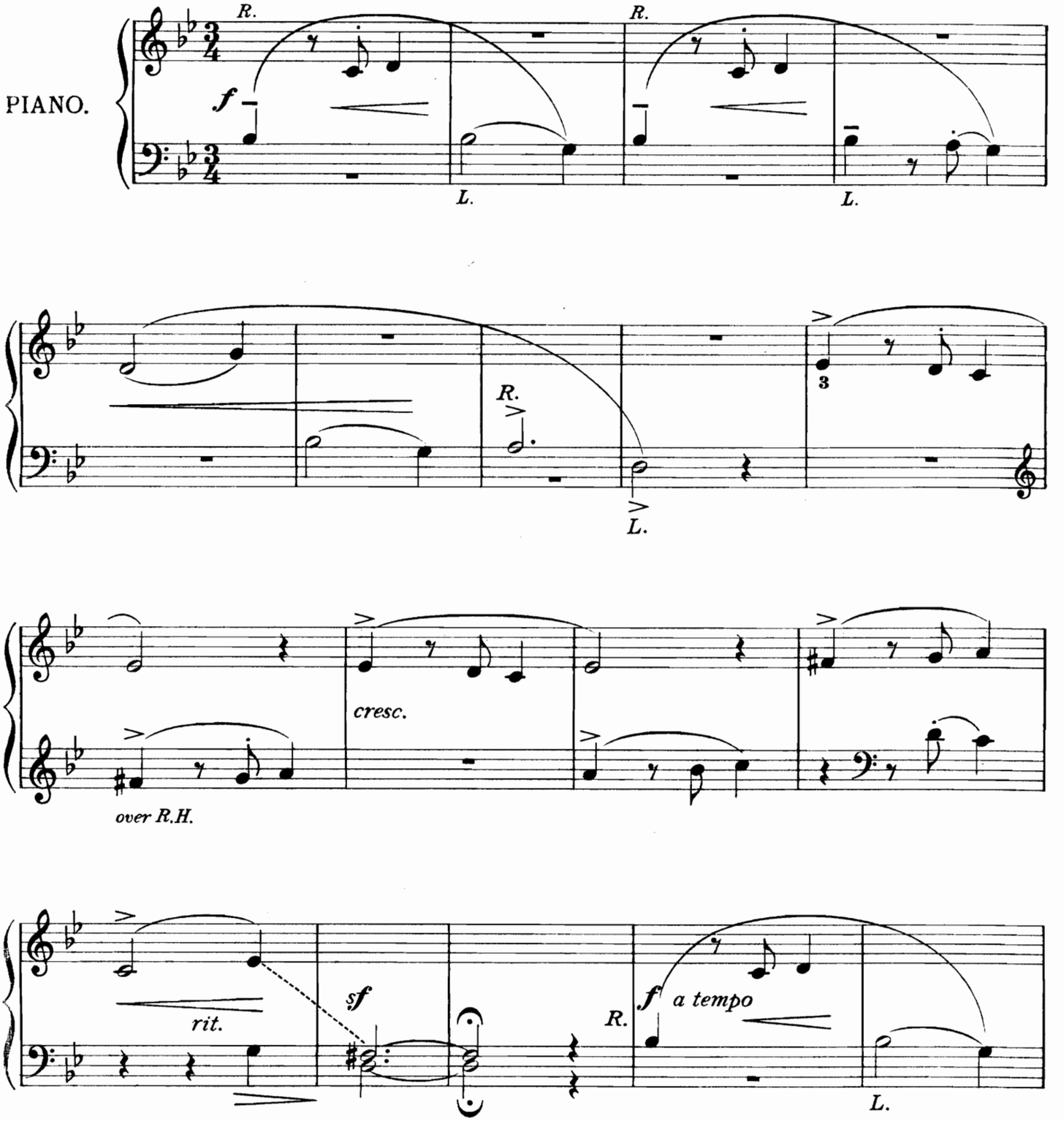
sf
pp

IX.
PIRATES.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.

With swinging gait.



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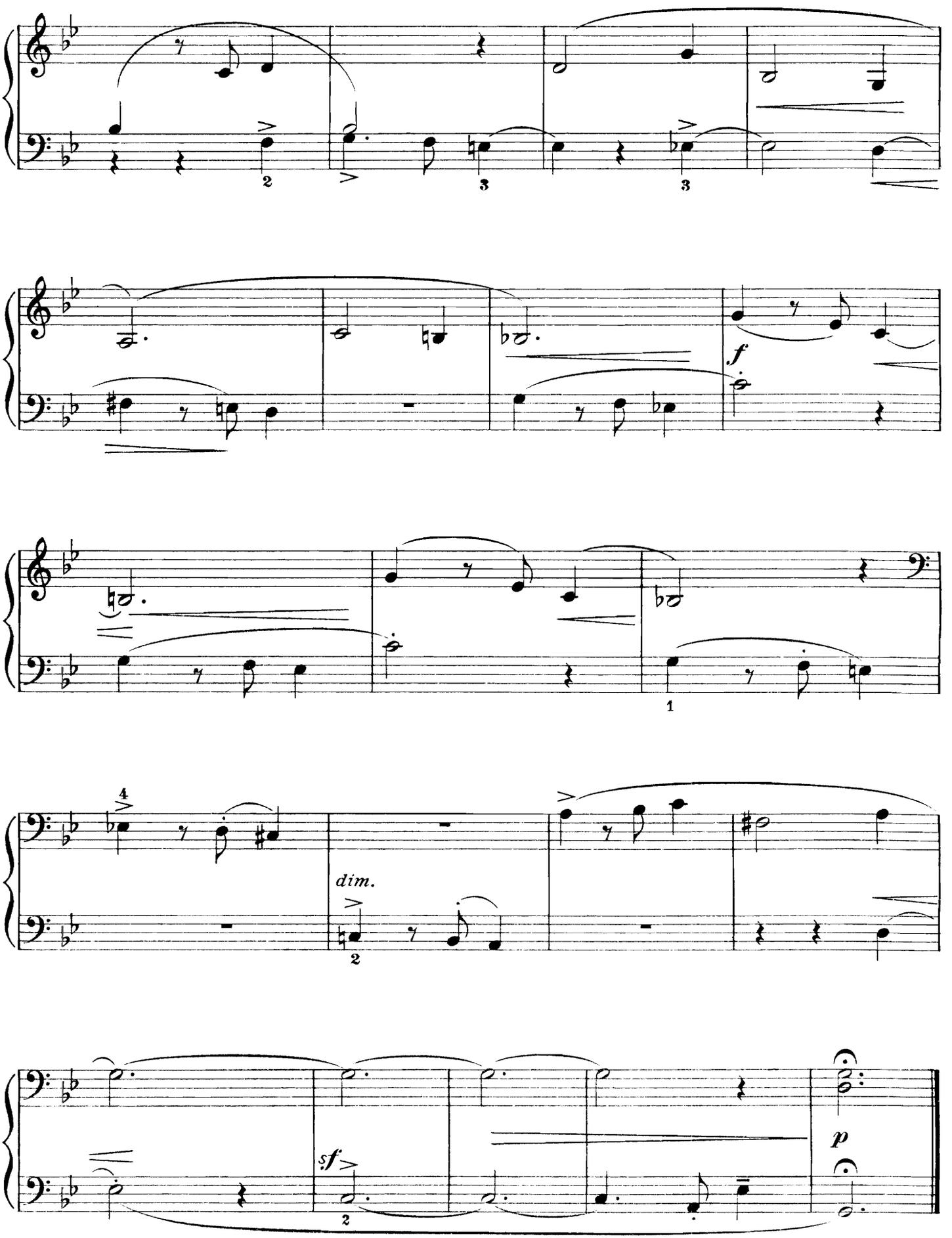
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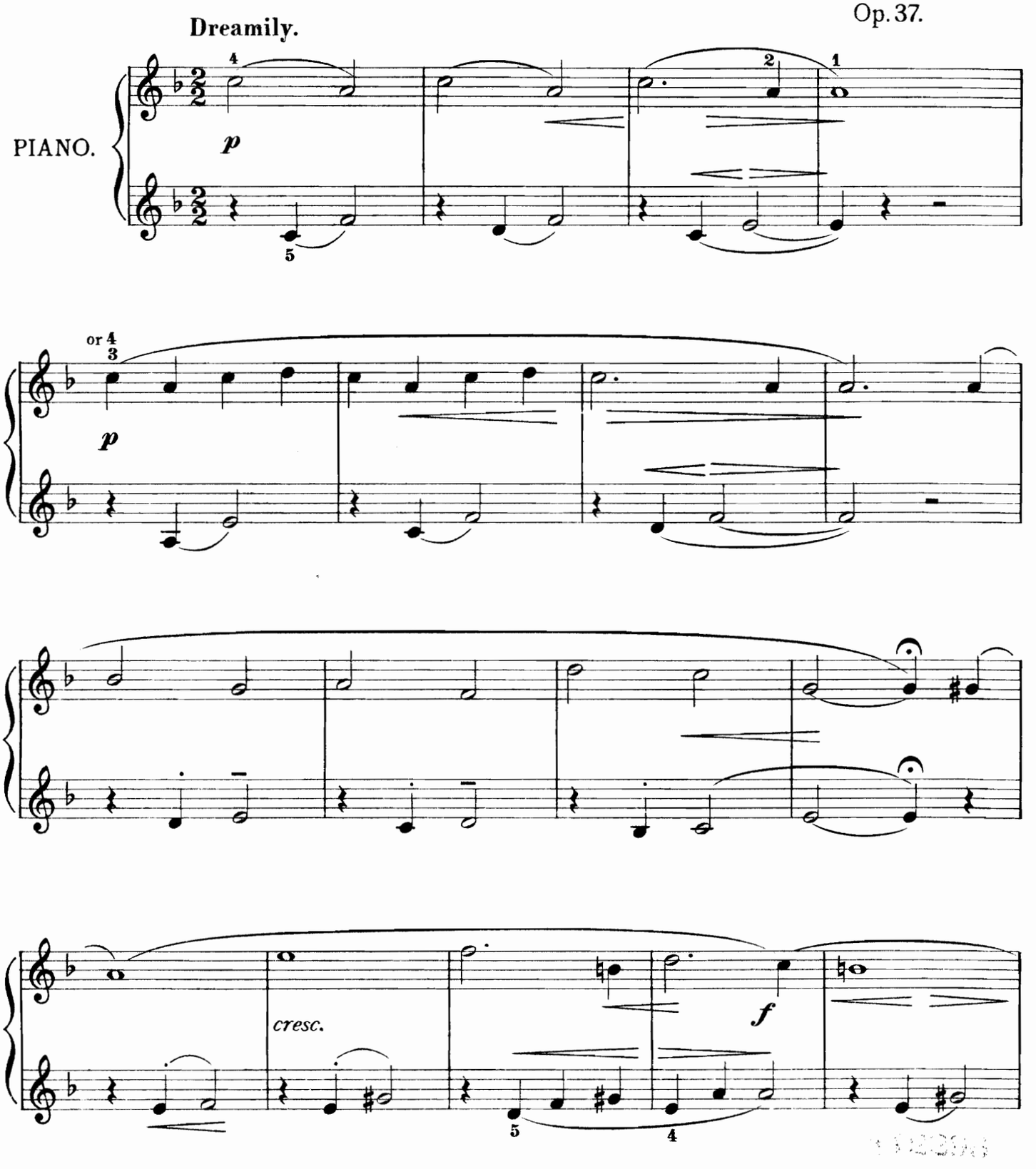
X.
DOLLY'S CRADLE SONG.

TOBIAS MATTHAY.
Op. 37.



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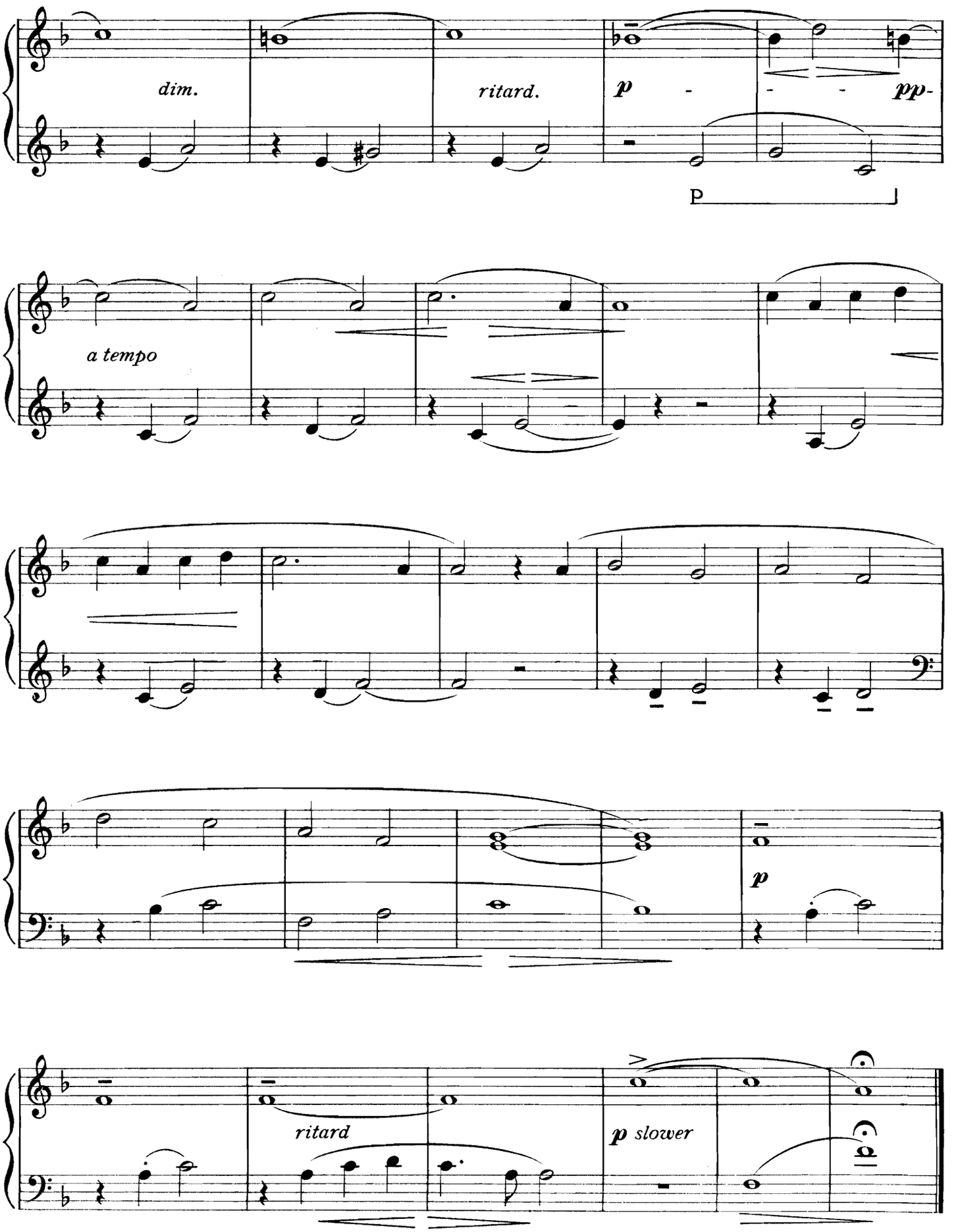

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