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Merrie England...	
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Christmässe in Merrie England

WITH

Old Carols, Dances and a Masque.



Arranged by

MARI RUEF HOFER.

Price 35 Cents.

CLAYTON F. SUMMY CO.
CHICAGO NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

"Any man or woman that can give any knowledge, or tel any tidings, of an old, old, very old gray-bearded gentleman, called Christmas, who was wont to be a verie familiar ghest, and visite all sorts of people both pore and rich, and used to appeare in glittering gold, silk and silver, in the Court, and in all shapes in the Theater in Whitehall, and had ringing, feasts, and jollitie in all places, both in the citie and countrie, for his coming: Whosoever can tel what is become of him, or where he may be found, let him bring him back againe into England." *Hue and Cry* after Christmas, 1647.

The quaint old Christmas Carols picturing the social life and customs of Merrie England seem too precious to be used casually as isolated instances, or to be entirely lost out of our vital Christmas experiences.

For the sake of again bringing into logical use these treasures which comprehend entire chapters of traditions of past good cheer, the compiler has taken the liberty of weaving them into this little play. The settings are drawn from old accounts and plots, preserving as carefully as may be the spirit of the times in which they flourished. The Ben Johnson monologues are retained in the Masque, the characters and their sayings adapted to better meet our modern comprehension.

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

Old Christmas has come around again and all the happy folk great and small are celebrating. Sounds from the street tell of gay crowds; happy voices, ringing bells and snatches of carols fall on the ear. A quaint Bell Man appears, announces Old Christmas and gives the message of "Good Christian Men?" A group of cavaliers in doublet and hose, velvet cloaks and top boots, gold lace hats and jewelled swords, draw near. Sweeping a low bow with their brave plumes, they carol from lusty throats the well known "God Rest Ye Merrie, Gentlemen?" A peal of Christmas chimes breaks on the ear. Royalty is returning from church. Soon appear in view the King and Queen in robes of state, surrounded by Pages, Ladies and Gentlemen in Waiting. They enter the hall, preceded by Heralds, Trumpeter, and Standard Bearers with their ensigns and flags decorated with holly and ever-green garlands.

The Royal Pair seat themselves, and the company disperses about the room. With great shouting and noise a group of knaves, followed by giggling wenches, drag in the Yule Log, and with song and jest perform the ancient hearthstone rites. The Fire Dance follows. Urged by the King, the Ladies and Gentleman in Waiting next perform the ancient Greensleeves, after which the roiters noisily depart.

At the King's command, the guests assemble at the board, when again confusion and a blare of trumpets is heard. With great pomp and ceremony of song, the Boar's head is placed upon the table and general hospitality is dispensed. As the feast progresses, a group of young Carolers enter and sing the Wassail Song, one passing the bag for coin. These are given cakes by one of the Pages; they then dance the Shoe Dance, leaving their shoes on the floor conveniently, to be filled with gifts. As the Carolers finish, a loud noise and altercation is heard at the door and without more ado Father Christmas and his merry crew from London burst in and present a masque, or farce, as was customary at Christmas time. As they finish their particular roles, Father Christmas makes his farewell speech and they go out, the Carolers trailing after. A Cavalier then sings "Good King Wenceslaus" after which the Ladies and Gentlemen in Waiting finish with the Cushion Dance and the curtain falls.

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STAGING OF THE PLAY.

The following festival may accommodate from fifty to eighty children of all sizes. The principal parts of King and Queen, Cavaliers, Father Christmas, should be taken by grown-ups capable of moving the play along. The King's Suite is composed of twenty people - Standard bearers, Cavaliers, Fool, etc., Ladies and Gentlemen in Waiting. The latter parts should be taken by older boys and girls, eight in number. Yule Log boys and girls, eight in number, from twelve to fourteen years of age; Boar's Head by eight older boys; Wassailers, any number of younger children from ten to twelve years of age; Father Christmas and crew should number twelve to sixteen. The classes and clubs taking part may be placed in charge of leaders in different sections. If these sections are well drilled, one full dress rehearsal will be all that is necessary for presentation. These leaders should take complete responsibility in getting the groups on and off the stage at the proper time.

PROPERTIES

The stage should be freely decorated with Christmas wreaths and boughs. An imitation fireplace with coals should be arranged at the back of the stage. A rather large heavy library table with two raised seats behind it should be placed to the left, facing towards the center of the stage. Quaint silver dishes, bowls, goblets, pitchers, baskets of fruit, cake etc, should be spread on the same. Entrances and exits from the rear and a pair of stairs from the front if the stage be high, facilitates shifting the groups. No other stage equipment is necessary as there is but one scene.

The King's musicians in quaint garb and instruments of the time, may be placed in the left hand corner back of the table. A musician's gallery may be improvised of a draped box raised two feet from the floor, strong enough to stand three half grown boys, who pretend to play when the music is on.

The Yule Log should be dragged in with a chain and should not be less than four feet long. A thick piece of cordwood is best, although a stuffed one can be improvised.

The Boar's Head is easily made of pasteboard, properly painted and decorated, and placed on a tray. A ^{lemon} red apple should be held in the snout.

All the properties can be easily made of paper, pasteboard and other simple material. The general style of the period chosen, cannot be too closely and carefully followed.

COSTUME

The dress should be of early English period; Royalty richly decorated; yokels in brown holland, caps and shoon; maids in turned up skirts, kirtles and caps; Fool in particolored costume of red and black with cap and bells. Other characters should be dressed appropriate to the period. The Oxford students wear caps and long black and brown capes.

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CHRISTMASSE IN MERRIE ENGLAND

“Forth to the wood did merry men go,
 To gather in the mistletoe.
 Then opened wide the baron’s hall,
 To vassal, tenant, serf and all;
 Power laid his rod of rule aside,
 And ceremony doffed his pride.”

The clock from the tower chimes twelve.

An old bell-man with a lantern crosses the stage, ringing his bell. He calls the hour and recites this ancient Christmas verse.

1.

Good Christian men, rejoice,
 With heart, and soul, and voice;
 Give ye heed to what we say:
 News! News!
 Jesus Christ is born today:
 Ox and ass before Him bow,
 And He is in the manger now.
 Christ is born today!

2.

Good Christian men, rejoice,
 With heart, and soul, and voice;
 Now ye hear of endless bliss:
 Joy! Joy!
 Jesus Christ was born for this!
 He had oped the heav’nly door,
 And man is blessed evermore,
 Christ was born for this!

3.

Good Christian men, rejoice,
 With heart, and soul, and voice;
 Now ye need not fear the grave;
 Peace! Peace!
 Jesus Christ was born to save.
 Calls you one and calls you all,
 To gain His everlasting hall;
 Christ was born to save!

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

Traditional

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The tempo/mood is marked 'mf'. The lyrics are: 'God rest you mer-ry, Gen-tle-men, Let noth-ing you dis-may, Re-'. The second system continues the lyrics: 'member Christ our Sa-vi-our Was born on Christmas Day, To save us all from'. The third system is marked 'ff' and 'CHORUS'. The lyrics are: 'Sa-tan's pow'r When we were gone a-stray; O ti-dings of com-fort and'. The fourth system continues the chorus lyrics: 'joy, com-fort and joy, O ti-dings of com-fort and joy.' The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands.

2. From God our Heavenly Father,
A blessed Angel came;
And unto certain Shepherds
Brought tidings of the same:
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by Name.
O tidings, &c.

3. "Fear not then," said the Angel,
"Let nothing you affright,
This day is born a Saviour
Of a pure Virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in Him,
From Satan's power and might."
O tidings &c.

4. The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding,
In tempest, storm and wind:
And went to Bethlehem straightway,
The Son of God to find.
O tidings &c.

5. Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood,
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas,
All other doth deface.
O tidings &c.

The group of Cavaliers enter from the rear right of the stage, doffing their plumed hats, they sweep a low bow to the audience, and with much gesture, sing this old Christmas Greeting. The first part of the verses may be rendered as a solo, all joining in the chorus. When finished they step to the left of the stage, later joining the Royal party which now enters.

Westminster Chimes

C. A. GRAHAM.

The musical score for "Westminster Chimes" is written for piano in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a first ending bracket. The second system includes a *cresc.* marking and a *sempre cresc.* instruction. The third system features a *noisily* marking and a *ff* dynamic, with accents (*V*) and trills indicated. The fourth system continues with *noisily* and *ff* dynamics, and trills.

As Cavaliers finish a Royal Herald enters. (Trumpet is heard.)

Herald: "Make way! make way! The King approacheth!" (To be repeated several times, as he strides forward on the stage.) Enter royal party as described in introduction while the above music is played. They disperse themselves about the stage, the King and Queen placing themselves on the dais before the table, the Ladies in Waiting grouped to the left of the Queen, toward the front of the stage, the Men, Pages, Jester, Courtiers to the right of the King, to the back of the stage. The group of musicians, playing quaint instruments, ascend the gallery back of the King. They pretend to play during the various musical numbers.

Yule Log Song

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. The first system is the main melody with piano accompaniment. The second system is a refrain for unison or altos, starting with a piano accompaniment. The third system continues the main melody with piano accompaniment.

Then bring with a noise my merry merry boys, The Yule log to the fir-ing. For my good dame she bids you all be free, And sing to your hearts de-

REFRAIN
UNISON or ALTOS

sir-ing. La la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la

la For my good dame she bids you all be free and sing to your hearts de - siring.

With the last years brand, light the new block and
For good success in its spending.
On your Psalties play, that sweet luck may
Come while the log is atending.

The Yule group appear dragging in the log. They sing while the log is being heaped onto the fire; a few of their number caper and jump over the same, playing all sorts of antics. The Fool may join them, his tricks causing much merriment.

King: "A tribute to our ancient hearthstone rites. My good page, cans't tell us the Yule fire verses of our good friend Herrick, who made yon sweet Christmas poesy?" Page comes forward and kneeling recites:

Kindle the Christmase brand, and thenne
Till the sunne set let it burne
Which, quenched, then lay it up again,
Till Christmas next returne.

Parts must be kept wherewith to teende
The Christmass log next year
And where tis safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischief there.

King: "And now a Christmas dance my good wenches, a fire dance, that the ruddy flames may leap higher." (The girls form in two lines and perform the following.)

Fire Dance

11

Old French

With strong accent

f *Second time p*

1 2

mf

p cresc. *f* *rit.*

The musical score is written in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of piano and bass staves. The first system begins with a piano (*f*) dynamic and a marking for a second time (*Second time p*). The second system includes first and second endings, marked with '1' and '2', and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The third system features a piano (*p*) dynamic with a crescendo (*cresc.*), followed by a forte (*f*) dynamic and a ritardando (*rit.*) marking.

YULE LOG DANCE

Two lines facing, about eight feet apart. Advance to center, springing lightly on toes, ending forward and clapping hands over advanced foot. Retire in the same manner. figure to four measures, four steps forward and back.

I. Advance stamping right and left foot alternately four times, hand placed to right and left ear, the other hand extended backward alternately as if listening. Repeat, with return.

II. Turn around four steps to the left, waving arms. Reverse.

V. The two lines dance forward to left, converge into circle, starting with right foot, spring and wave arms. Dance around to place.

VI. Leap high in position waving arms, with flame-like motion, each in turn jumping over the fire. Dance off.

King: 'Tis a good dance - I call it a good dance.

Queen: A good dance, Sire, a good dance, indeed.

Fool echoes: A good dance - a good dance, capering in imitation.

King: Beshrew thee, fool! What now, fair maidens and men! Shall these country yokels and wenches outdo you in making old Christmas merry? Fie upon ye! Out upon the floor and show your fair graces.

Christmas Comes But Once A Year

(GREEN SLEEVES)

Not fast

Lets dance and sing and make good cheer, For Christmasse comes but once a year; Make

mer - ry now nor draw a tear, So ear - ly in the morn - ing.

Then shout and sing till raf - ters ring, For joy and mirth the sea - sons bring; We'll

wel - come Fath - er Christmasse in, So ear - ly in the Morn - ing.

CHRISTMAS DANCE

The Ladies and Gentlemen in Waiting, gathered about the Queen to the left, approach the front of the stage, making a procession of four couples.

I. Join hands, raised high, step forward, with outside foot; slide inside foot to center and bow to partner; repeat beginning with inside foot, bowing outward to the audience and stage group. Eight of these steps with bow complete eight measures of music, finish with deep curtsey.

II. Lines face; partners join right hands, cross over and bow, four measures. Return and bow, four measures. Step slide right foot forward, rise, sink; Same with left, right, turn and bow on fourth measure.

III. Four right hands across making wheel; to left four measures. Return four measures, step slide, right foot, rise sink; Same with left, right, both four measures and return to place.

IV. Like Figure I.

King: "Enough, enough and now to the feast, that Christmas be most justly celebrated in these gracious viands." King and Queen seat themselves. Pages and maids remain standing.

Ye Boar's Head Carol

Slow and majestic *rall*

Solo

The boar's head in hand bear I, Bedeck'd with bays and ros - ma - ry.
The boar's head, as I un - der - stand, Is the chiefest dish in all the land.

Acc.

a tempo *rall*

And I pray you, my mas - ters, be mer - ry, *Quot es - tis in con - vi - vi - o,*
And I pray you where ev - er it be found *Ser - vi - te cum in can - ti - o.*

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CHORUS *rall*

Treble

Ca - put a - pri de - fe - ro, Red - dens laud - es do - - mi - no.

Alto

Ca - put a - pri de - fe - ro, Red - dens laud - es do - - mi - no.

69 c

Tenor

Ca - put a - pri de - fe - ro, Red - dens laud - es do - mi - no.

H

Bass

Ca - put a - pri de - fe - ro, Red - dens laud - es do - - mi - no.

793 12

Acc.

f **CHORUS** *rall*

A blare of trumpets is heard. Enter Master of Ceremonies followed by bearer of the Boar's head. A huntsman in green, carrying a boar spear, two pages bearing pots of mustard, and student singers come after. Singing the first verse, the huntsman now steps forward and announces in a loud voice, striking his spear on the floor:

"The Boar is deade
Lo! here is his heade."

The head is then placed on the table, and second verse sung by the group, standing at one side. The feasting then begins. Fruits, cakes, and goblets are passed by the pages to Royalty first, and then sent by the Queen to those in waiting. At least five minutes should be given this scene, during which time, the music on next page may be softly played. Here is opportunity for pretty manners and courtesies of the time; soft conversation and slow movement. Pages kneel in presenting dishes, etc.

Musical Interlude

Old English

Court musicians affect to play this composition on their instruments as the piano plays it.

Noël bourguignon

*Un poco allegretto**mf*

J'en tends par no - tre ru - e Pas-

ser les me - ne - triers;

E - cou - tez comme ils jou - ent

Surlleurs haut bois des no -

els: Nous de - vant le feu, Pourle mieux, Chan - tons en - jus qu'a mi nuit.

1
 En december on vous sonne
 Des Noels tous les jours
 Des chantres, la parole
 Se deploie aux carre fours
 Nous devant le feu,
 Pourle mieux,
 Chantons en jus qu'à minuit.

2
 Les pauvers la vandieres
 Auson deleurs battoirs,
 Chantent a la riviere
 Tete an vent, les pieds mouilles
 Nous devant le feu,
 Pourle mieux,
 Chantons en jus qu'à minuit.

These words were translated by Longfellow and may be found in English. These Carols were much affected by the Courts of the peroid.

A French Minstrel visiting at Court kneels to the left, and sings and plays the quaint French Carol.

The Wassail Song

mf
Here we come a -- was - sail - ing A - mong the leaves so green,
mf

CHORUS
f
Here we come a wandering, So fair to be seen. Love and joy come to

you, And to you your was-sail too, And God bless you, and send you - A

hap - py new year, And God send you a hap - py new year.

2.
We are not daily beggers
That beg from door to door,
But we are neighbors' children
Whom you have seen before.
Love and joy, &c.

3.
Good Master and good Mistress,
As you sit by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
Who are wandering in the mire,
Love and joy, &c.

4.
We have a little purse
Made of ratching* leather skin;
We want some of your small change
To line it well within.
Love and joy, &c.

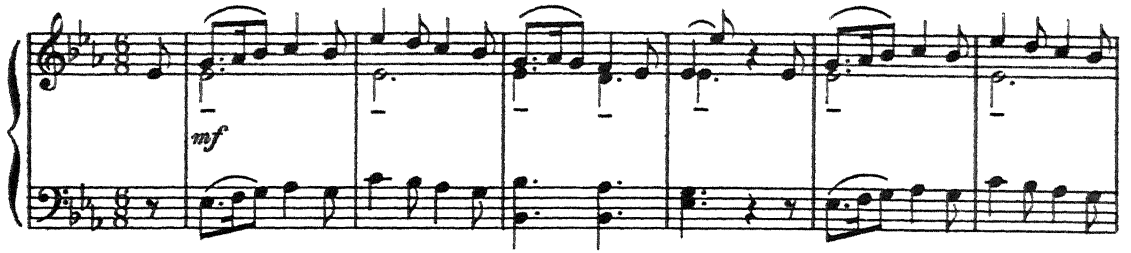
5.
Call up the butler of this house,
Put on his golden ring,
Let him bring us a glass of beer,
And the better we shall sing.
Love and joy, &c.

6.
Bring us out a table,
And spread it with a cloth;
Bring us out a mould of cheese,
And some of your christmas loaf.
Love and joy, &c.

7.
God bless the master of this house,
Likewise the mistress too;
And all the little children
That round the table go
Love and joy, &c.

Bearing boughs of greens and old shoes, with much merry noise and clatter, the group of Wassailers ascend the stage from the front. While they sing the above song the pages pass cakes and apples from the King's table, and one of the singers collects pence at the singing of the fourth verse, which is put into a pigskin purse.

Shoe Dance



At the close of singing, the Wassailers form in a ring for the Shoe Dance, which is performed as follows:

- I. Children dance in a ring, to the left, waving their shoes in time to the music and shouting to the high note. Turn back to place eight measures.
- II. All dance to center, four steps, tapping partner's shoe on high note. Return to place finishing with tap. (Repeat first eight measures.)
- III. All kneel on right knee tapping floor three beats and with corner partner on high note. Repeat, finish by tapping with partner. (Second part of music.)
- IV. All dance to left, jump and wave shoe on eighth beat, then return to place, jump and wave. Repeat to right. (Third part of music.)
- V. Dance across the room to fireplace, leaving shoes in front of the Royal couple. Page goes about, placing gift in each shoe. (Play first part of music.)

(Enter Father Christmas with much noise and bluster, recites, performs.)

"Why Gentleman, do you know what you do? Ha! would you have kept me out? Christmas, old Christmas, Father Christmas of London, and Captain Christmas?" "'Tis merry in the hall, when beards wag all;" I have seen the time you have wished for me, for a merry Christmas; and now you have me. They would not let me in; I must come another time! A good jest; as if I could come more than once a year; Why I am not a dangerous person, and so I told my friends of the guard. The truth is, I have brought a Masque here, out o' the city, of my own making, and do present it by a set of my sons that come out of the lanes of London, good dancing boys all. Bones o' the bred. the kind! Be ready there in a trice; quick boys! Let us show them that old Father Christmas be yet alive."

"For a good Christmas dinner, the first in the sheaf,
You will all agree is Esquire Roast Beef.

(Roast beef, drawn front and back, on a shield enters. Boy with wooden knife and fork passes slices.)

Then fat Capon and Goose with stuffing and sauce,
Without them we surely would suffer great loss.

(Goose waddles in - boys pull tail-feathers.)

Then Mistress Plumpudding - so rich and so round,
Made of raisins and suet all pound for pound.

(Boy appears in huge stuffed bag, tied in at the neck.)

Here is a haunch of venison from the green wood,
Garnished with herbs to make it taste good.

(Boy with antlers, stamping and bucking.)

Here's a jolly Punch Bowl all steaming and hot,
With mint leaves and tea, well stirred in the pot.

(Boy in a big pasteboard bowl with ladle in hand.)

Then next the lady for whom we all sigh,
Dancing and prancing Miss Dainty Mince Pie.

(Boy in mincing girl attire, with pie tin for a hat.)

To give the occasion the true Christmas flavor,
Good Brother Gambol will now turn a favor.

(Gambol and fellows do acrobatics.)

Then at last with old Christmas well gone to the head,
We'll come back to reason and plain Gingerbread."

(Gingerbread boy of brown paper.)

Father Christmas: "And now friends, to make a long story short, this is the end of it. I hope you have profited by it and will remember that Christmas is like the Sun, and shines all around the world for everybody. And this year, if never before, let us open the door wide, and let everybody into our Christmas cheer. Everybody I say, rich or poor, old or young, great or small, white, black, or even yellow, and everybody's wife or sweetheart. For there's no one so bad, that he doesn't deserve a bit of Christmas once a year, and no one so good, that he ought to have more than his share. So let us play fair, and divide all around, and be happy all together. For I tell you, —

"Without the door let sorrow lye,
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury it in a Christmas pie
And evermore be merry. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

(Exit Father Christmas and his merry crew.)

The Carollers depart, each dropping a curtsey before the King and Queen as they pass the table, picking up their shoes and showering gifts as they go.

Good King Wenceslas

Traditional

CHORUS

Good King Wenceslas look'd out On the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about, Deep, and crisp, and even:
Brightly shone the moon that night, Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight, Gathering winter fuel.

Tenor Solo "Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"

Treble Solo "Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain;
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

Tenor Solo "Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
Bring me pine-logs hither;
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither."

Chorus Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament,
And the bitter weather.

Treble Solo "Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how,
I can go no longer."

Ten. Solo "Mark my footsteps, my good page,
Tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

Chorus In his master's steps, he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.

King: By my troth, Christmas cheer, like the hour, doth spend itself. Ho Cavaliers, yet another song to stay its progress!

Fool: "A song, a song, yet another song, I say - say I."

Cavalier: My Royal Liege and Ladye, an old legend of St. Stephens Day doth stay itself upon my lips. If it please you, I and my fellows will sing.

King: Sing, then, I bid thee sing, sing lustily (Fool echoes "lustily")

Cavaliers sing "Good King Wenceslas."

King: 'Tis a noble song, nobly sung, at a noble time.

The Cushion Dance

19

Dance in search of a partner.

The first system of musical notation is for the piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The music begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The melody in the treble staff features eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

The second system of musical notation continues the piano accompaniment. It features two staves. The treble staff has a melodic line with some accents and a dynamic marking of *f*. The bass staff continues with a consistent eighth-note accompaniment.

Presenting cushion, kneeling ceremonial, for turn together.

The third system of musical notation concludes the piano accompaniment. It features two staves. The treble staff includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking and ends with a *D.C.* (Da Capo) instruction. The bass staff continues with the accompaniment.

The Pages and Maidens in Waiting then dance the Cushion Dance which usually closed the festivities of the Christmas-tide. In this quaint and gracious dance, each is chosen in turn from line to line, the last dancer, with graceful obeisance, leaving the cushion at the feet of the royal couple

Dancers stand in lines from front to back on opposite sides of the stage.

I.- Boy stands in readiness with cushion in both hands. He dances to the following step:

II.- Start with the right foot, hop-polka step-hop-right-left-right, leaving back foot stretched behind until ready to begin next measure, when bring forward with a hop and half turn the body in the direction of the left foot which is now leading. Alternate this pattern for 12 measures, finally standing before the chosen one.

III.- The dancer with cushion in hand now offers cushion to first measure of the refrain, kneels on one knee and lays cushion at feet of girl to second measure, extends arms to third measure and kisses her hand to fourth. Then rising with cushion, she takes hold on other side and both step four steps to left, turning, they exchange places.

The girl now proceeds in like fashion choosing a boy from the other side. The last dancer leaves the cushion at the feet of the Queen, all the dancers bowing low and stepping to the sides of the stage. King and Queen rise, attendants fall in line and all go out as the curtain falls to the closing strains of music.

The End

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