CHAP. VI.

ON THE USE OF THE THUMB AND LITTLE FINGER ON THE BLACK KEYS.

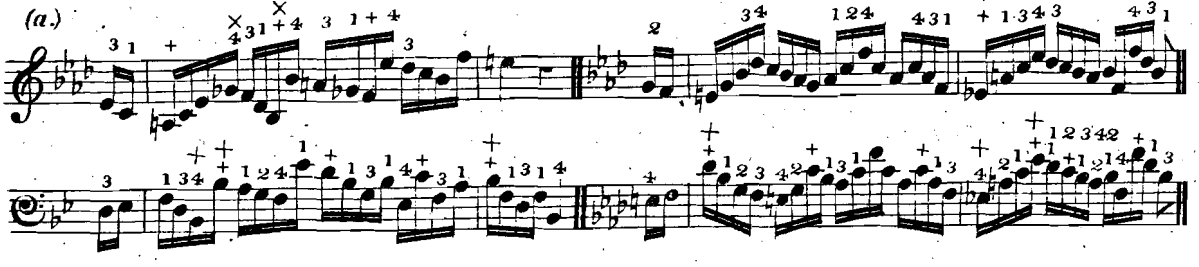
§ 1.

Before Bach, and even since his time, the thumb was scarcely ever, and the little finger but seldom used on the black keys; for which reason the compositions of that day, though easy in comparison with ours, presented great difficulties to the performer.

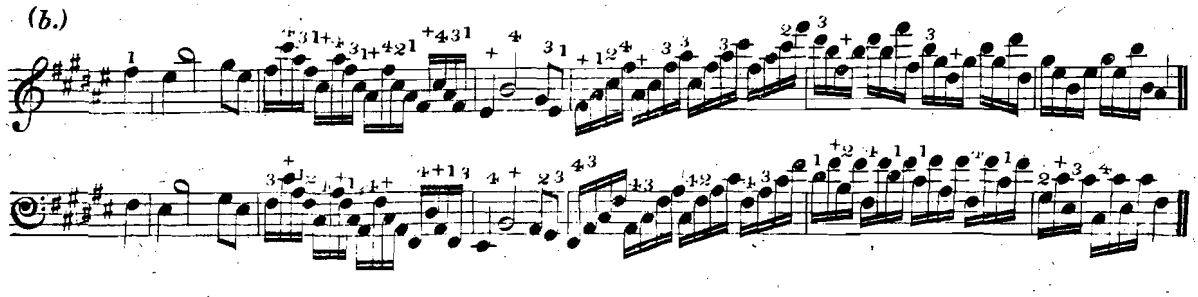
The present style of writing renders their employment on the black keys absolutely indispensable; and by this use of them, we often avoid unnecessarily passing the thumb under the fingers or the fingers over the thumb, and in many passages thereby arrive at a more convenient, certain, and connected performance. But we must take care that some real advantage is gained by resorting to this process, as any abuse of it would give rise to fresh inconveniences by introducing faulty modes of fingering.

§ 2.

With regard to the position of the hand, it must be observed, that, in passages where both the thumb and little finger are frequently employed on the black keys, the white keys are to be struck with the fingers, not in front of, but *between* the black keys. *(a.)*

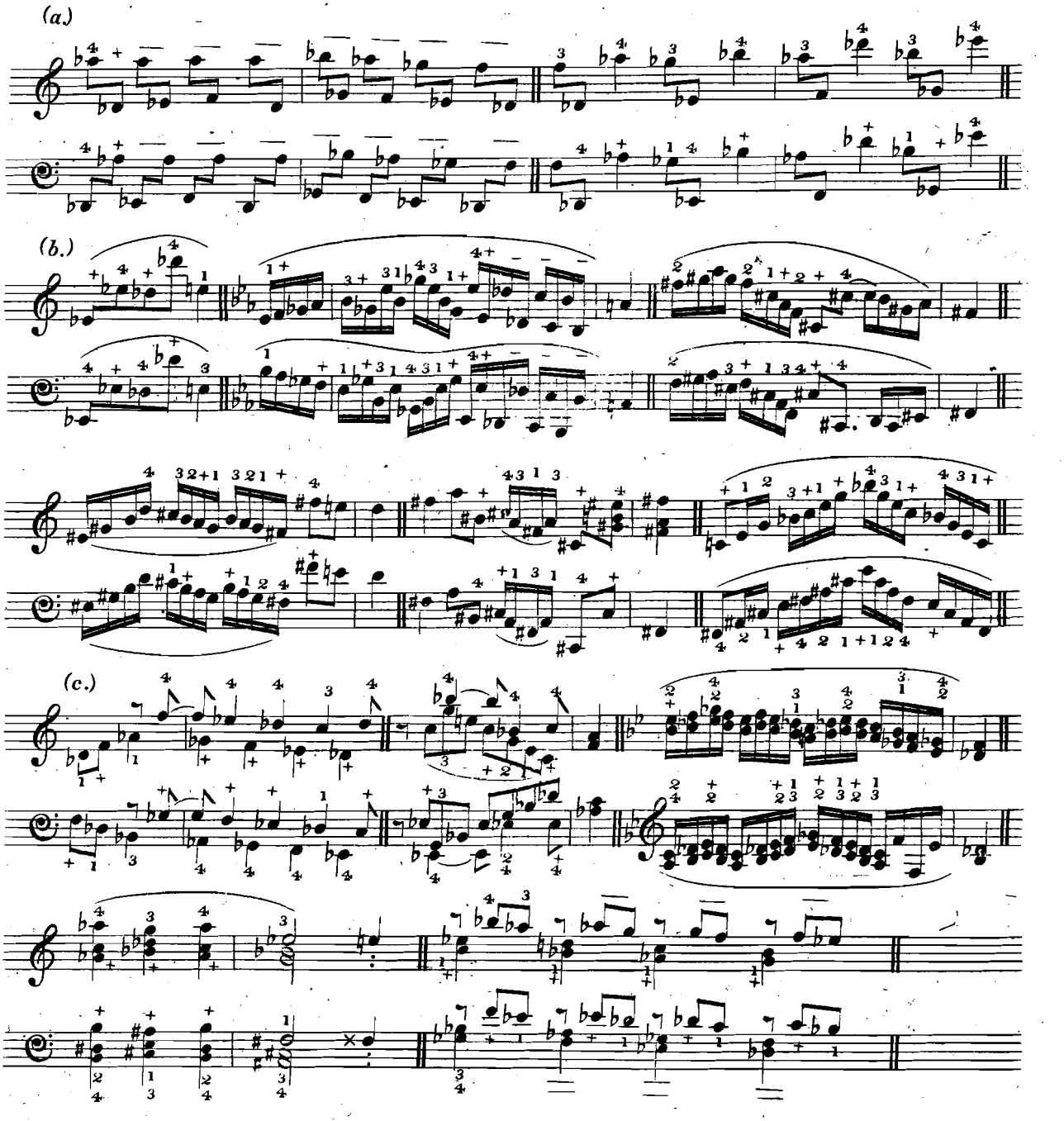


In passages, however which lie altogether on the black keys, the whole hand is elevated over them *(b.)* This position of the hand is then to be considered, as if the passage were played on white keys only.

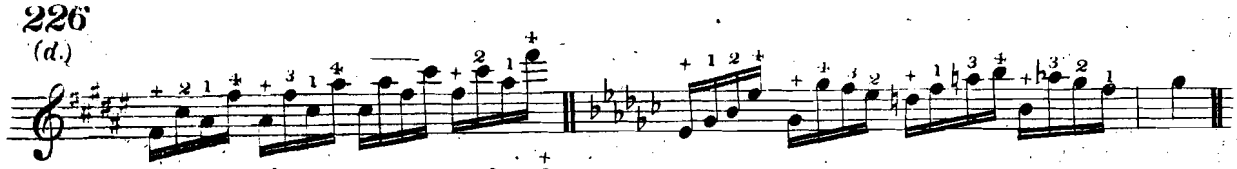


§ 3.

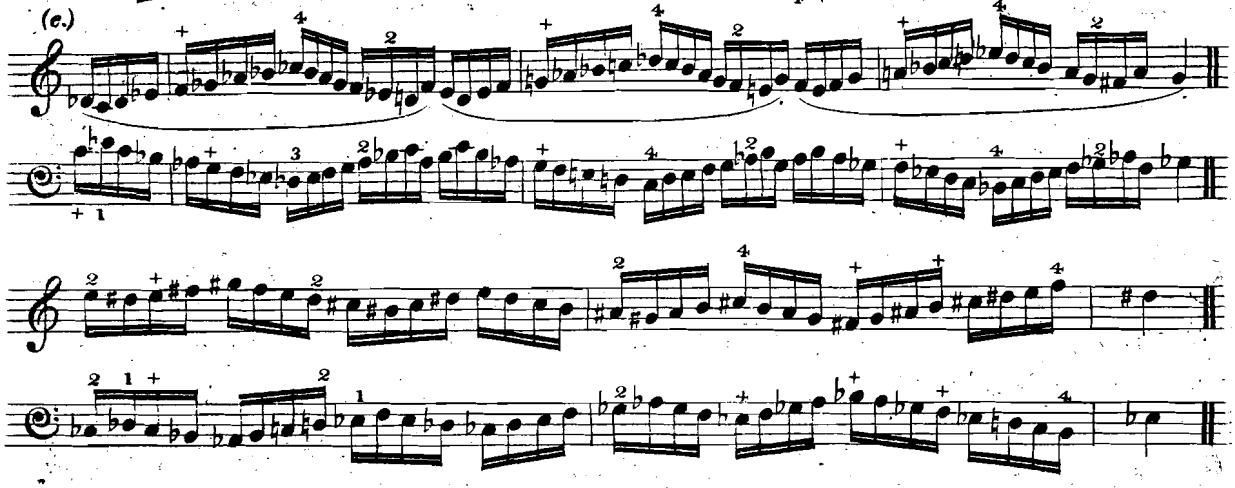
These two fingers are used on the black keys, in skips *(a.)*, in extensions *(b.)*, in syncopated and several-part-passages *(c.)*, in scales lying chiefly on the black keys *(d.)*; and often also, in diatonic series of notes when they ascend only as far as the fourth finger *(e.)*, as we have already observed in Chap I. § 14. in regard to the major scale of F ♯.



(d.)



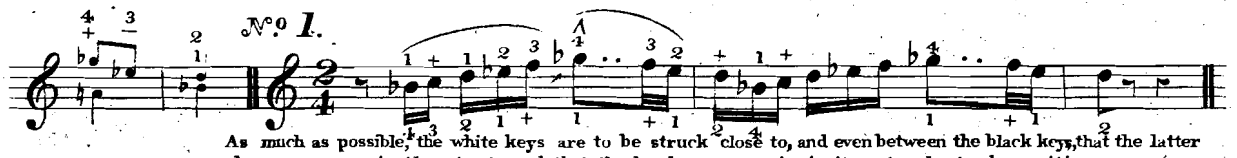
(e.)



VII.

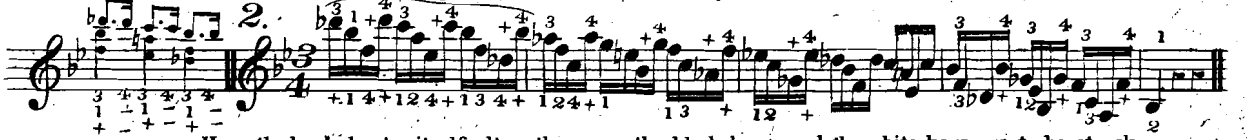
USE OF THE THUMB AND LITTLE FINGER ON THE BLACK KEYS.

No. 1.



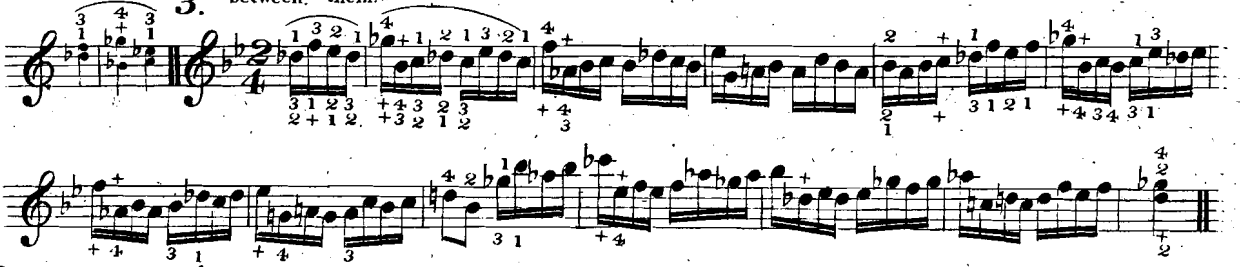
As much as possible, the white keys are to be struck close to, and even between the black keys, that the latter may be more conveniently got at, and that the hand may remain in its natural steady position.

2.

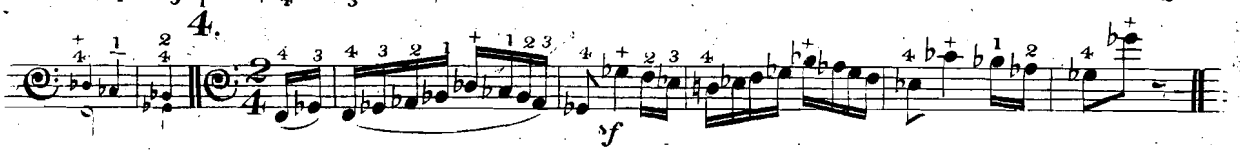


Here, the hand elevates itself altogether over the black keys, and the white keys are to be struck between them.*

3.



4.



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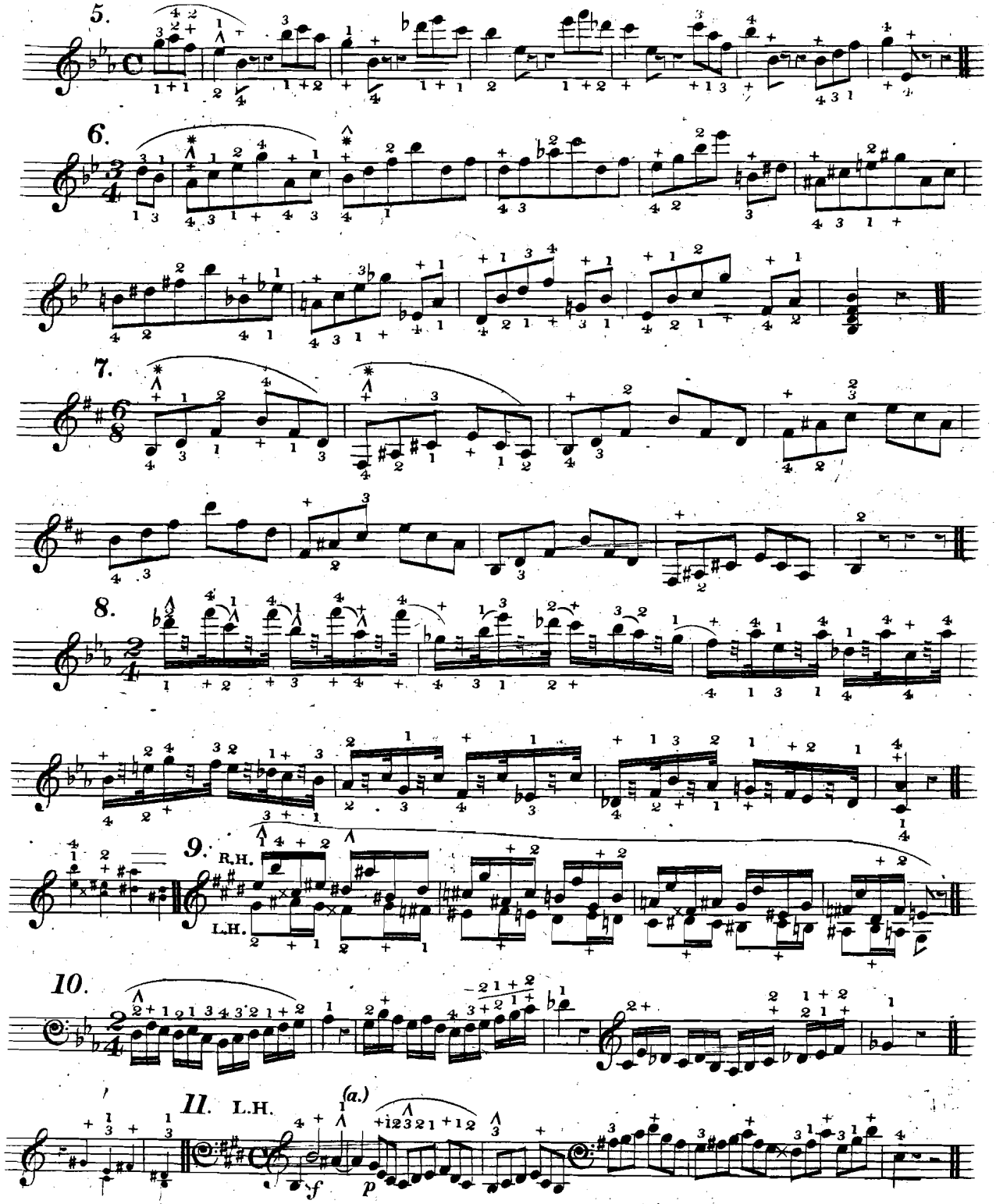
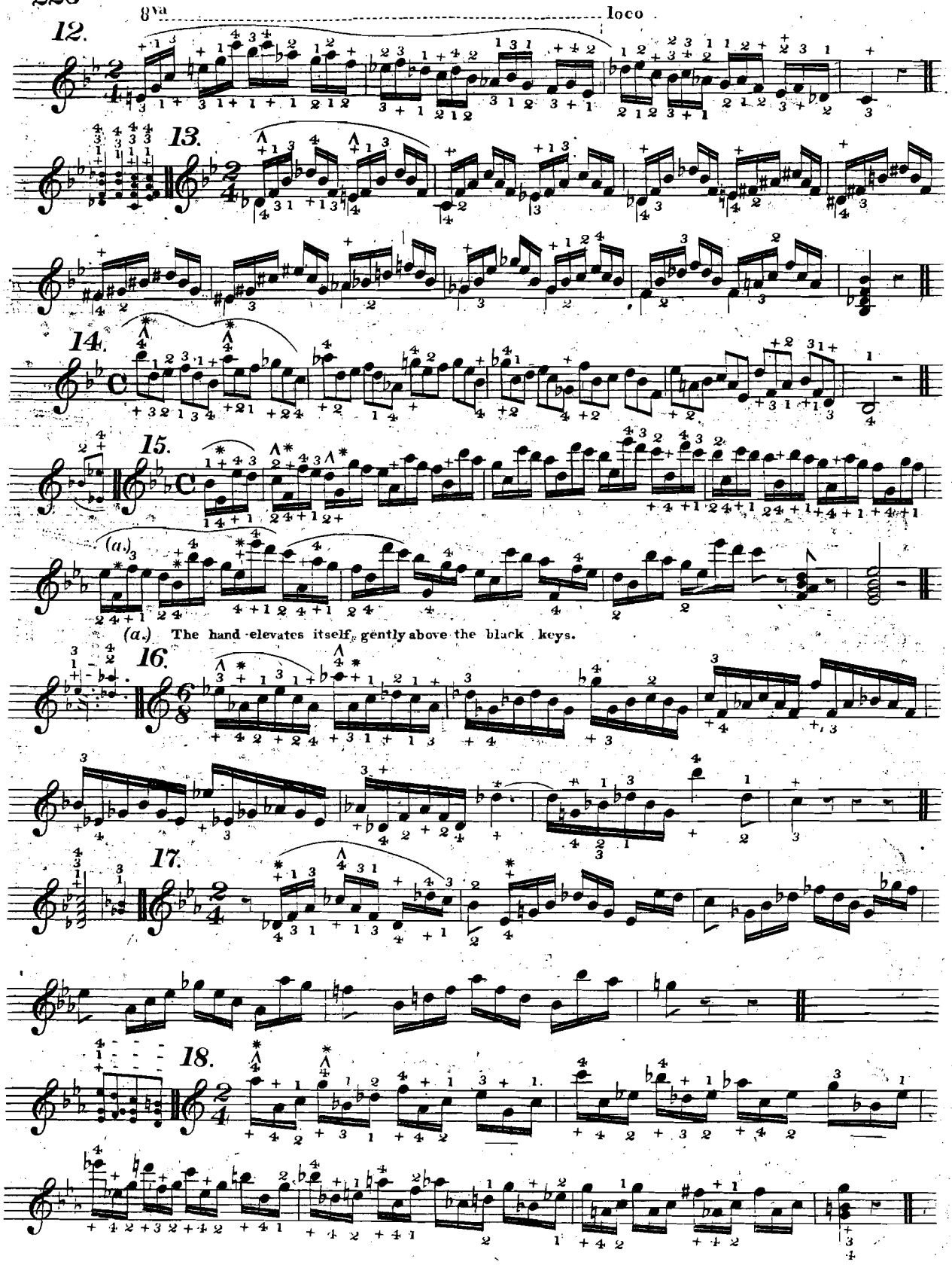
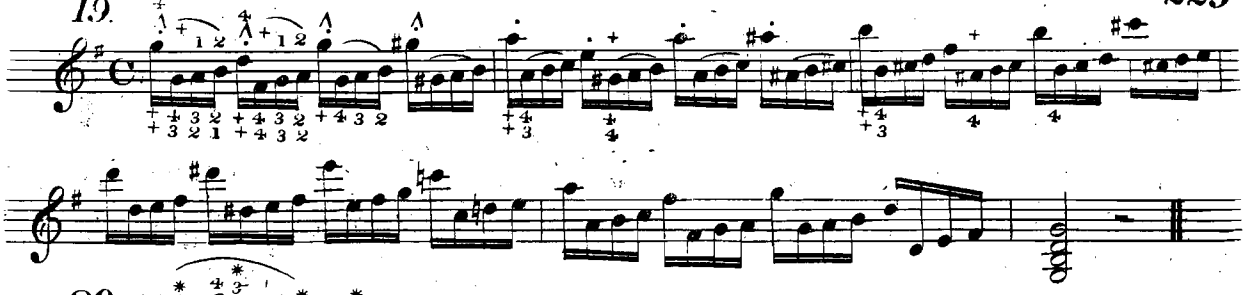
* The above two observations apply generally to all cases where the black keys are often used.



(a.) The hand lies altogether over the black keys.


12.
8va
loco
13.
14.
15.
(a.)
(a.) The hand elevates itself gently above the black keys.
16.
17.
18.

19.



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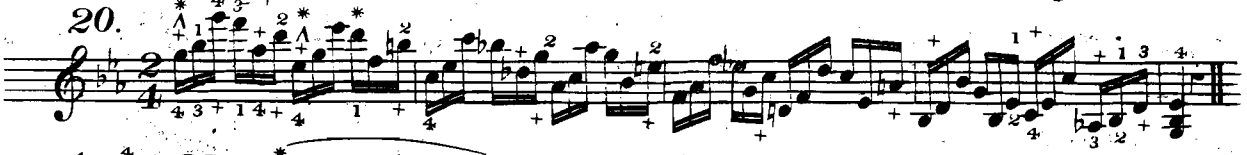

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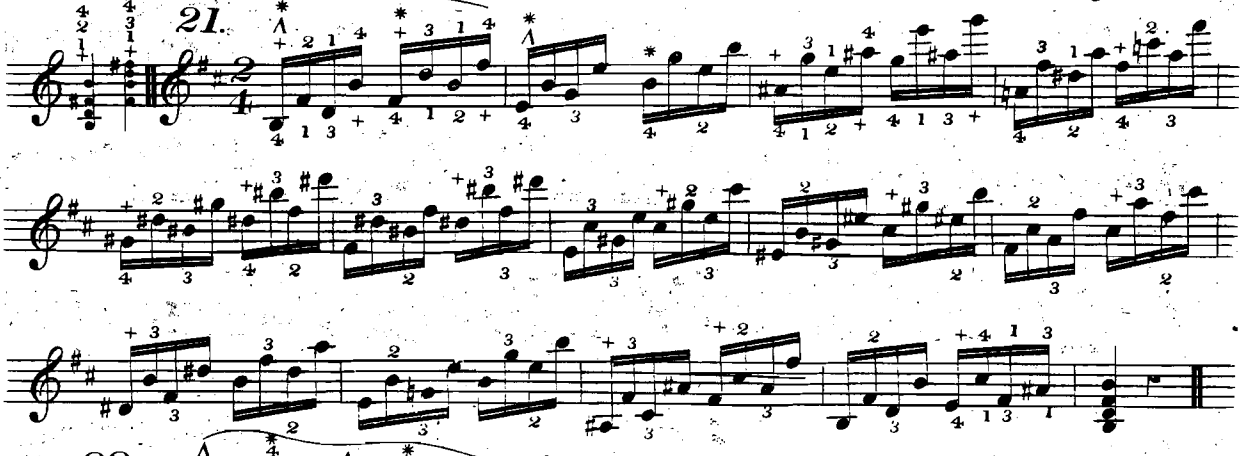

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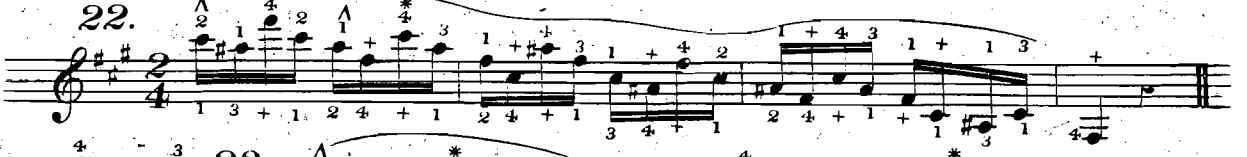

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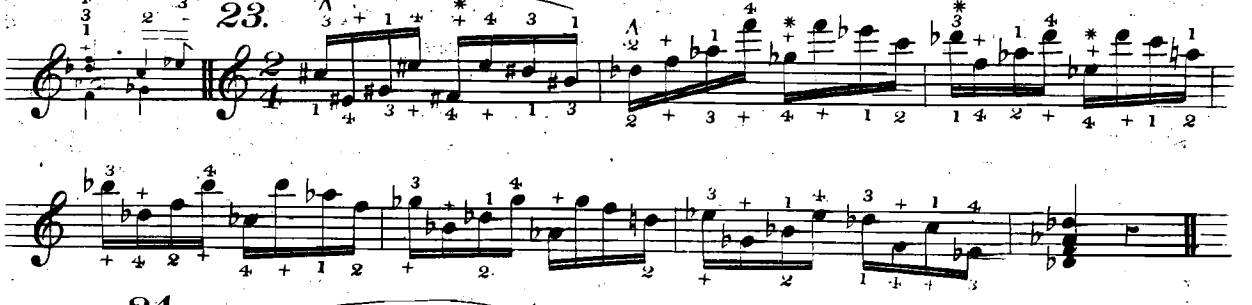

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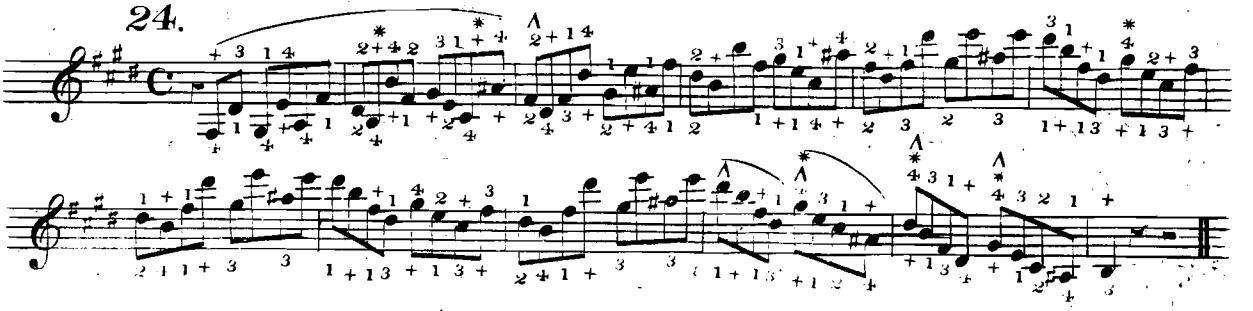


25. (a.)

(a.) The 2d finger must be placed in a bent position, about the middle of the black key, so that the thumb, which must be held behind it in readiness, may immediately and conveniently assume its place.

26.

27.

28.

29.

30.

31.

32.

33.

34.

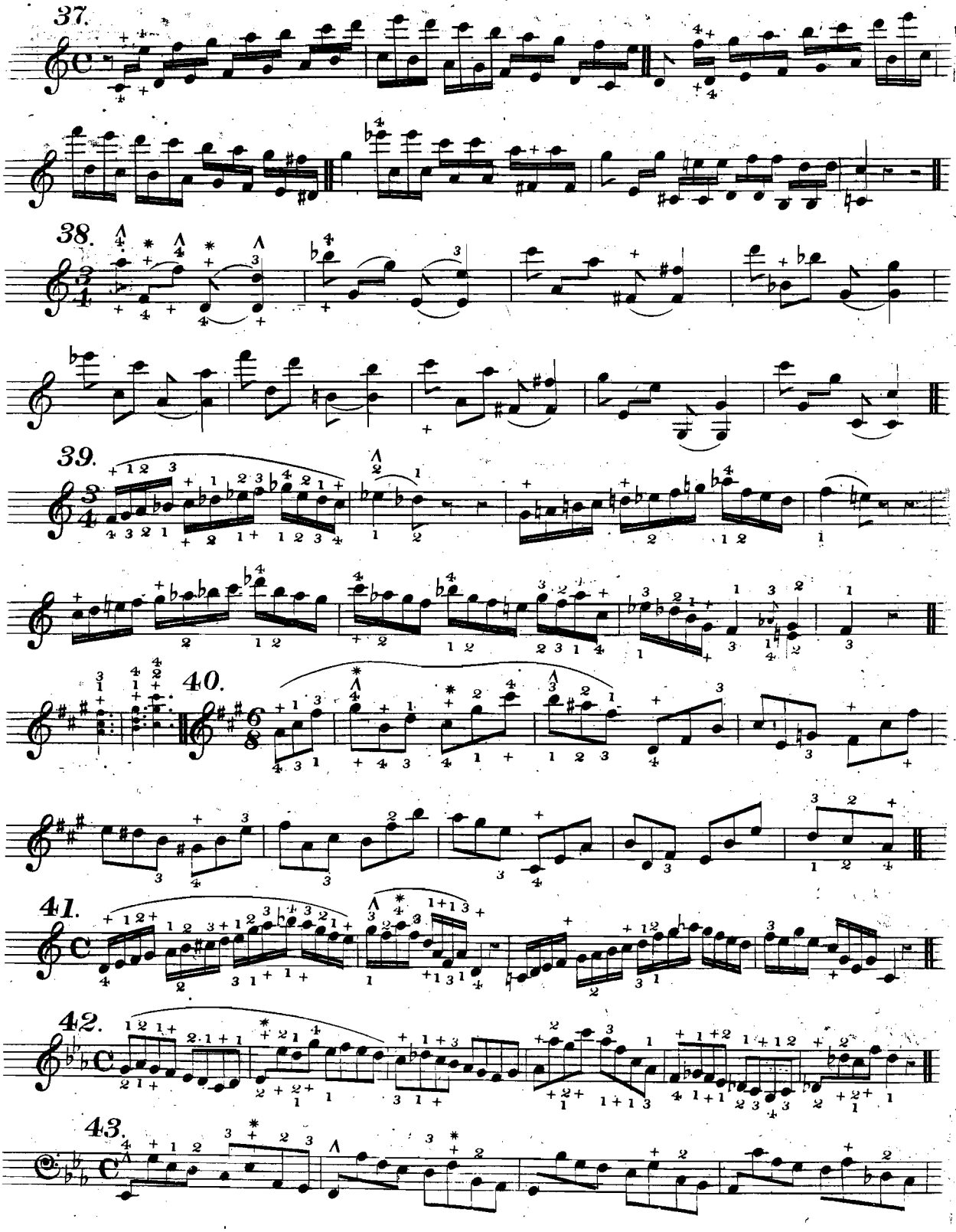
35.

(a.)

(a.) here the hand advances rather more over the black keys, that the thumb may conveniently be passed underneath.

36.

8va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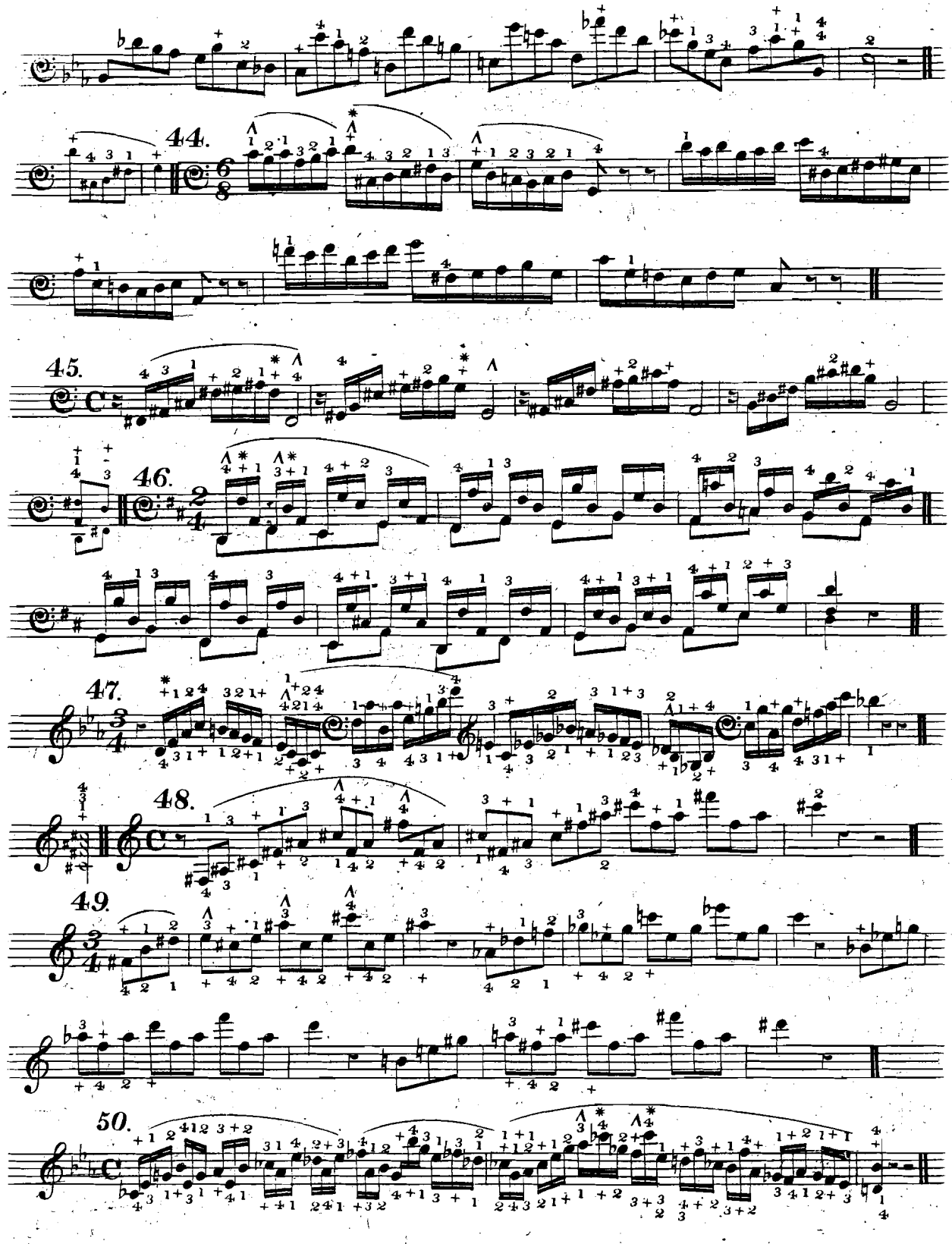
43.


44.
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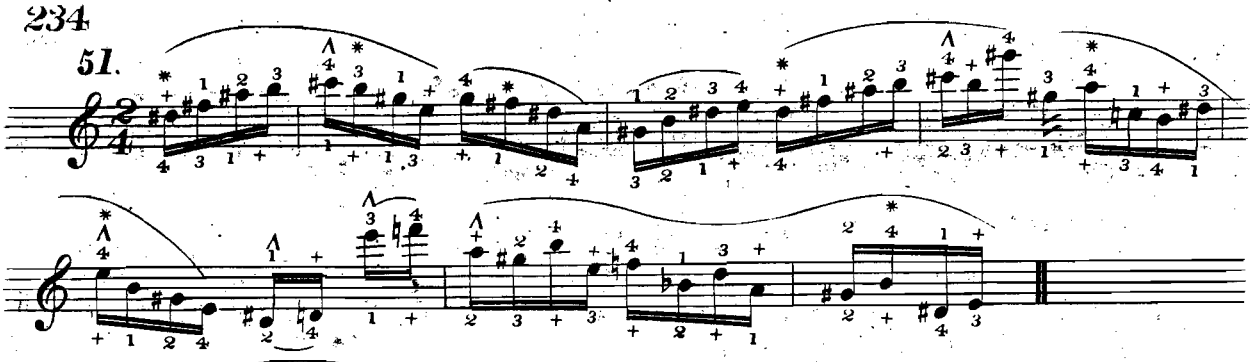

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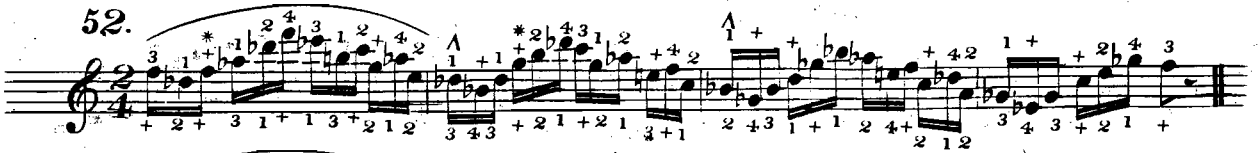

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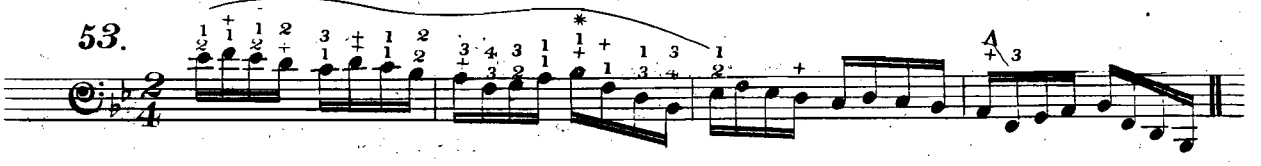

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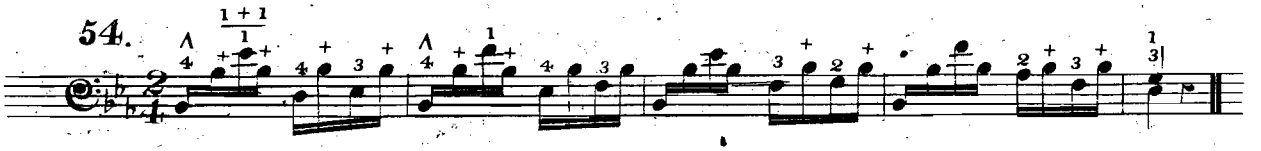

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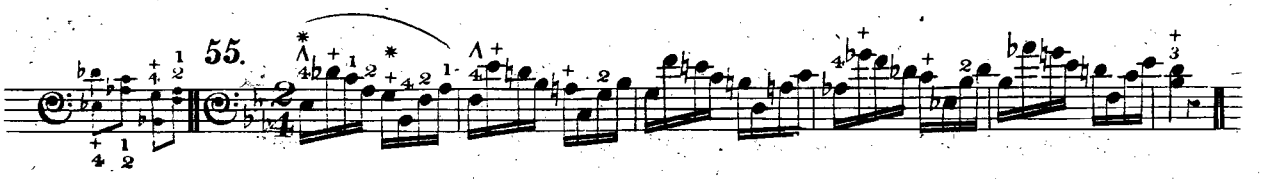

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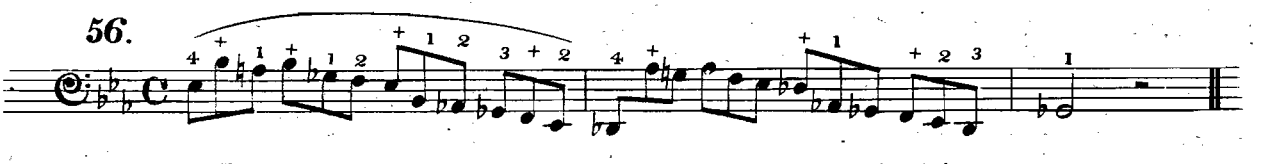

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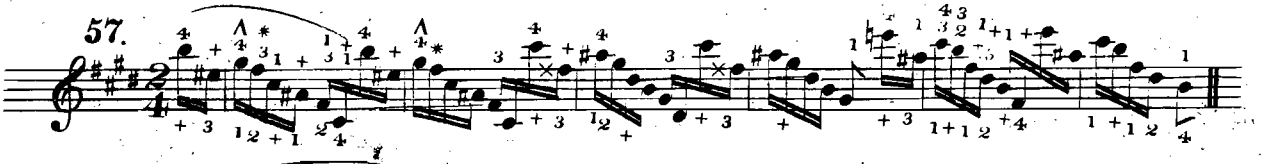

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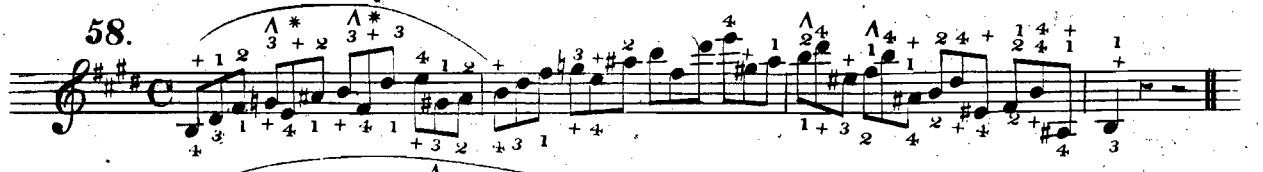

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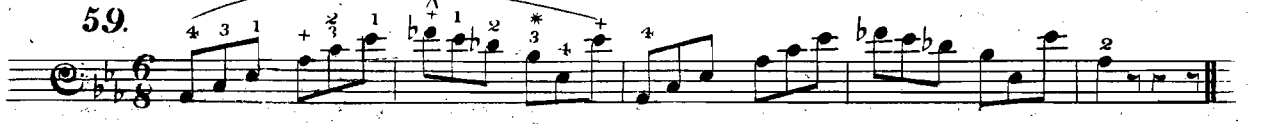

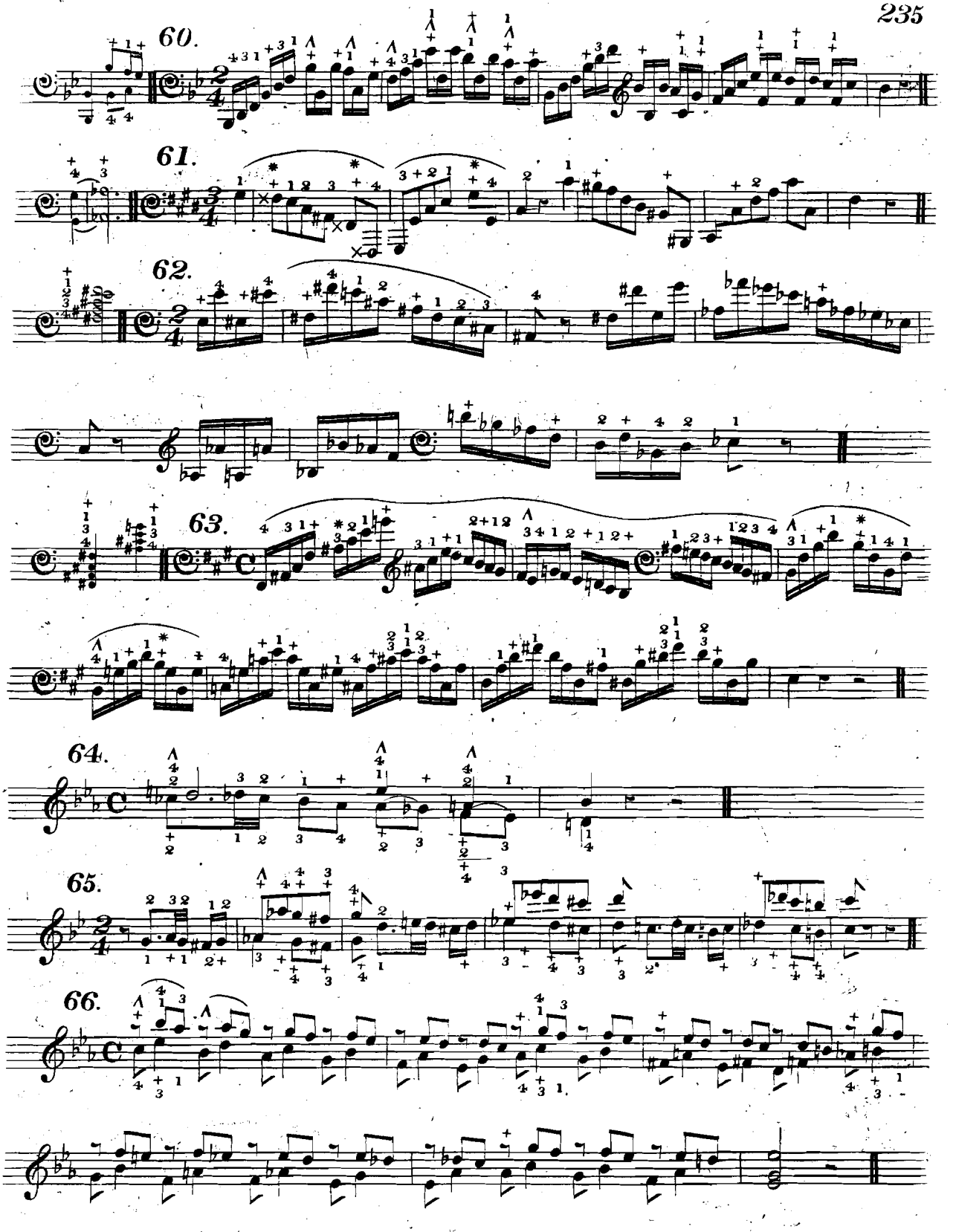
60.
61.
62.
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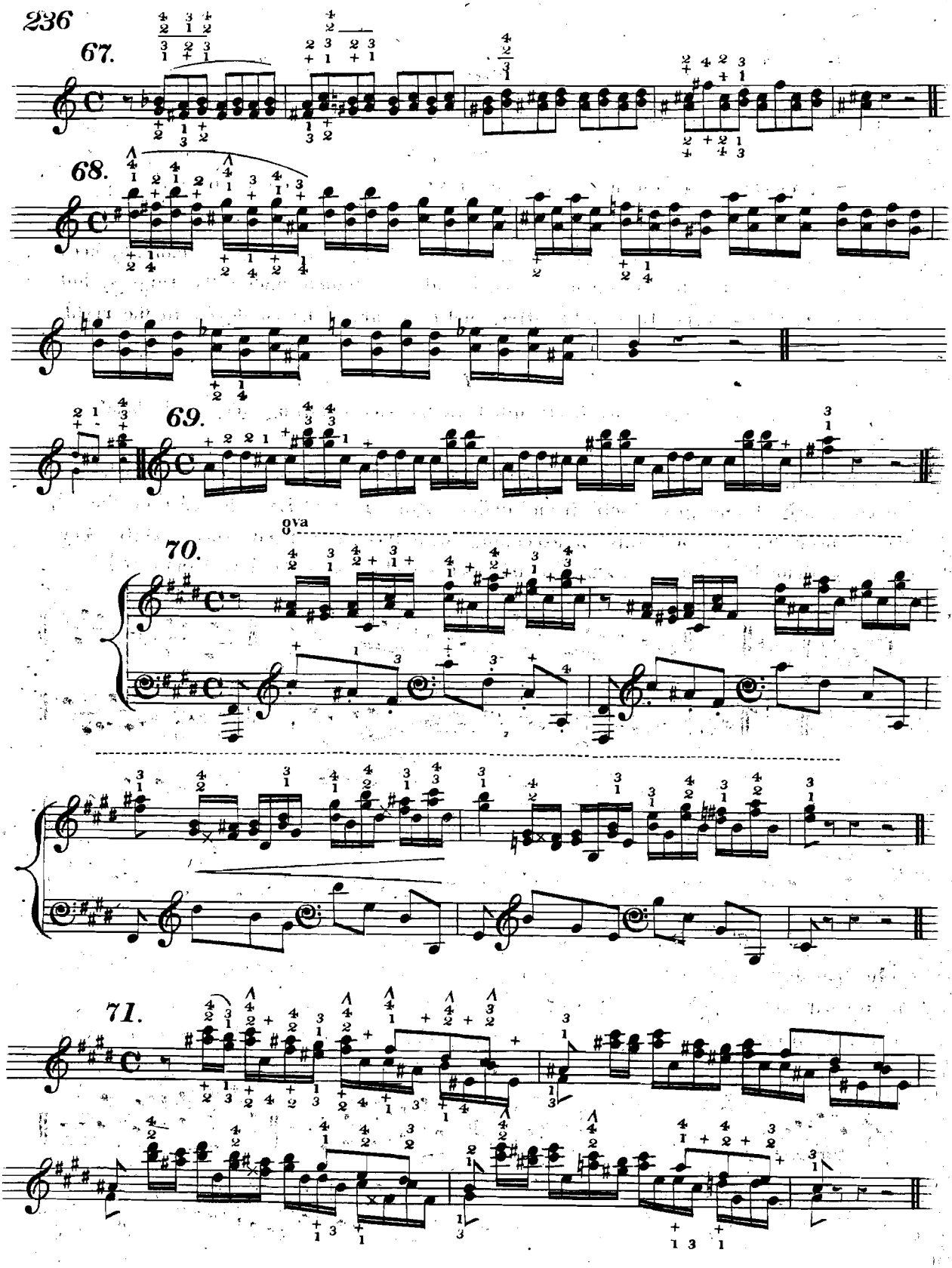

67.
68.
69.
ova
70.
71.

CHAP: VII.

ON PASSING A LONG FINGER OVER A SHORTER, and PASSING A SHORT FINGER UNDER A LONGER ONE.

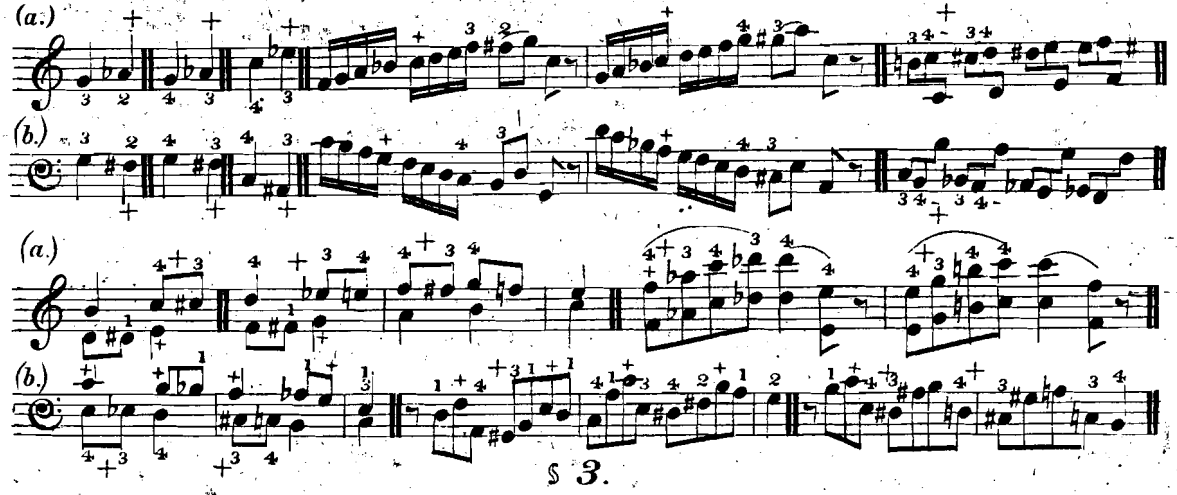
Both are to be considered as subsidiary means of accommodating the hand, by occasionally saving the too frequent passage of the thumb under the fingers; but they must not be anxiously sought after, and must always be employed in the right place.

§ 1.

The 2d 3d and 4th fingers are best suited to the cases falling under this head.

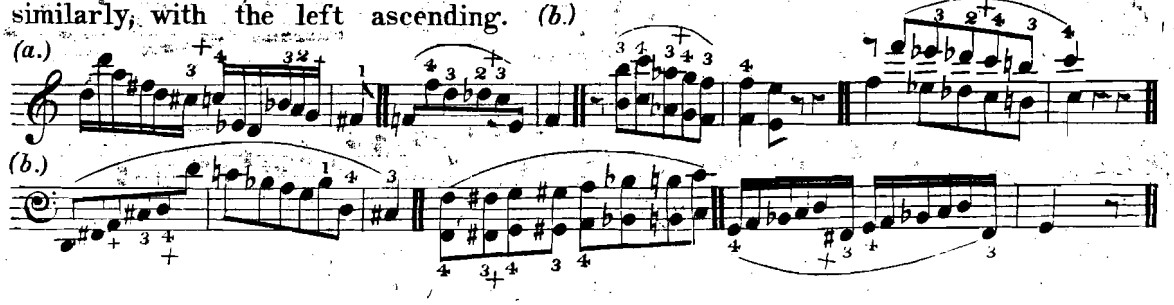
§ 2.

In passing over, the long finger bends itself over the shorter, during which the latter gently disengages itself from underneath; as for Ex: the 2d over the 3d, the 3d over the 4th, and this in ascending with the right hand from a white key to an adjoining black one *(a.)*, and, similarly, in descending with the left hand. *(b.)*



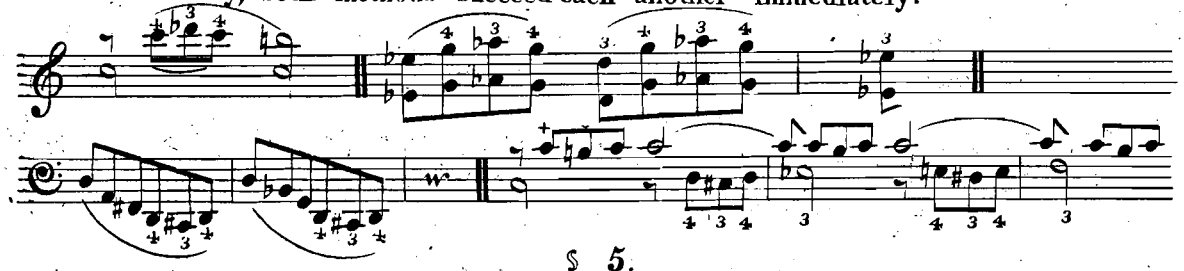
§ 3.

In passing the fingers under each other, the rule is inverted; the shorter finger is turned under the longer, as the 4th under the 3d, and the 3d under the second; and this in descending with the right hand from a black to a white key *(a.)* and, similarly, with the left ascending. *(b.)*



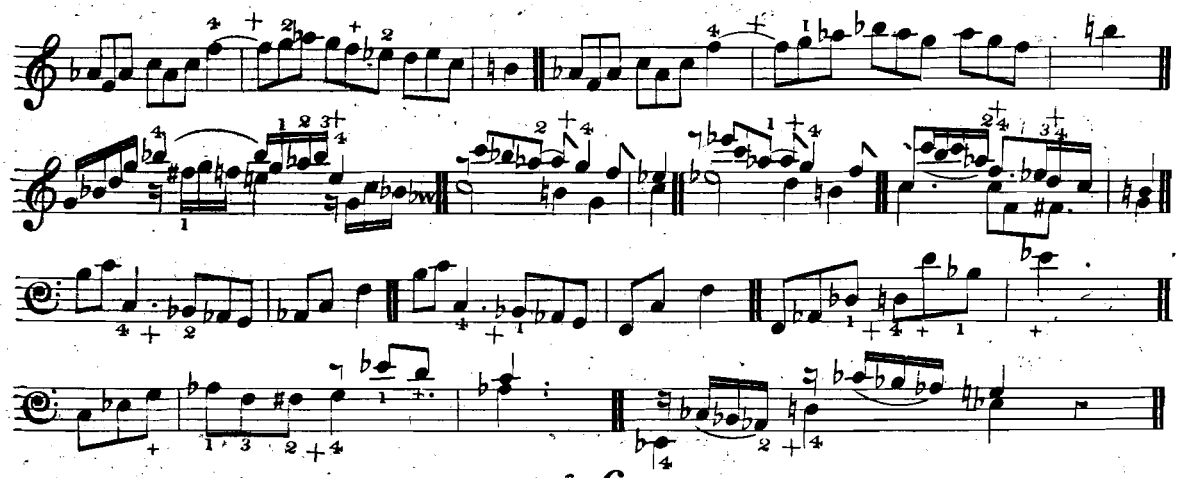
§ 4.

Occasionally, both methods succeed each another immediately.



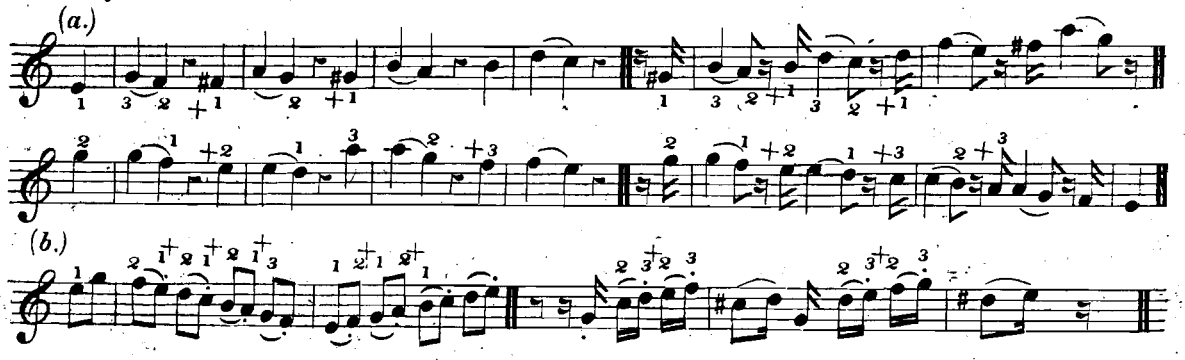
§ 5.

Cases occur in which, when employing the mode of fingering just explained, one or more fingers are omitted, and the 1st or 2d finger is crossed over the little finger; or *inversely*, the little finger is passed under the 2d or 1st; a process which partly saves the too frequent passage of the thumb under the other fingers, and partly supersedes the exchanging of fingers, treated of in the next chapter; it must therefore be considered as a gentle movement of the hand, which thereby changes its position.



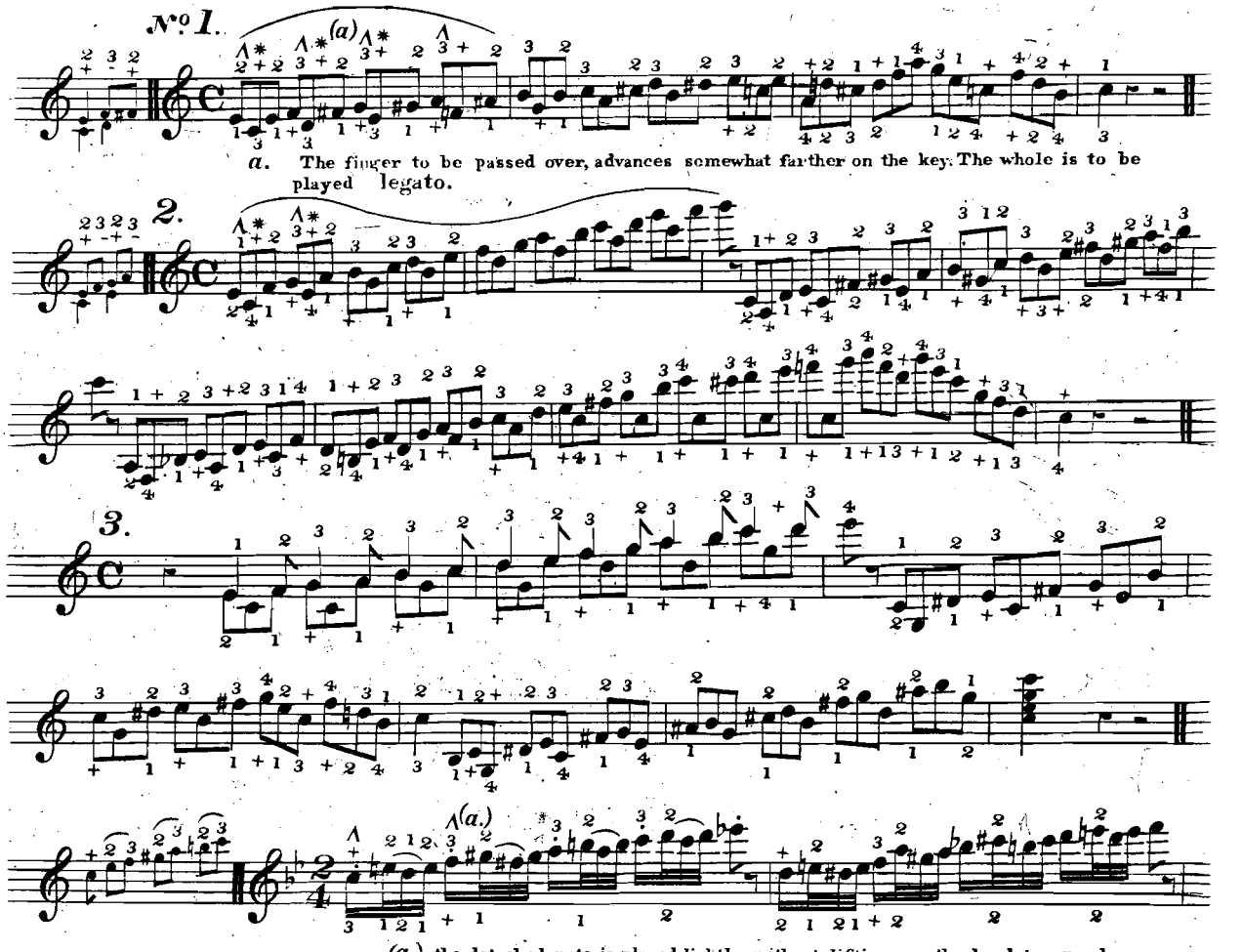
§ 6.

There is another species of fingering analogous to the present, which repeats a similar order of fingers in a succession of similar groups of notes; this takes place both in ascending and descending, and differs from that explained in this chapter, only inasmuch, as that this progressive movement on each repetition is separated by the interposition of a short rest *(a.)*, or by a slight abstraction of the finger from the key. *(b.)*



VII.

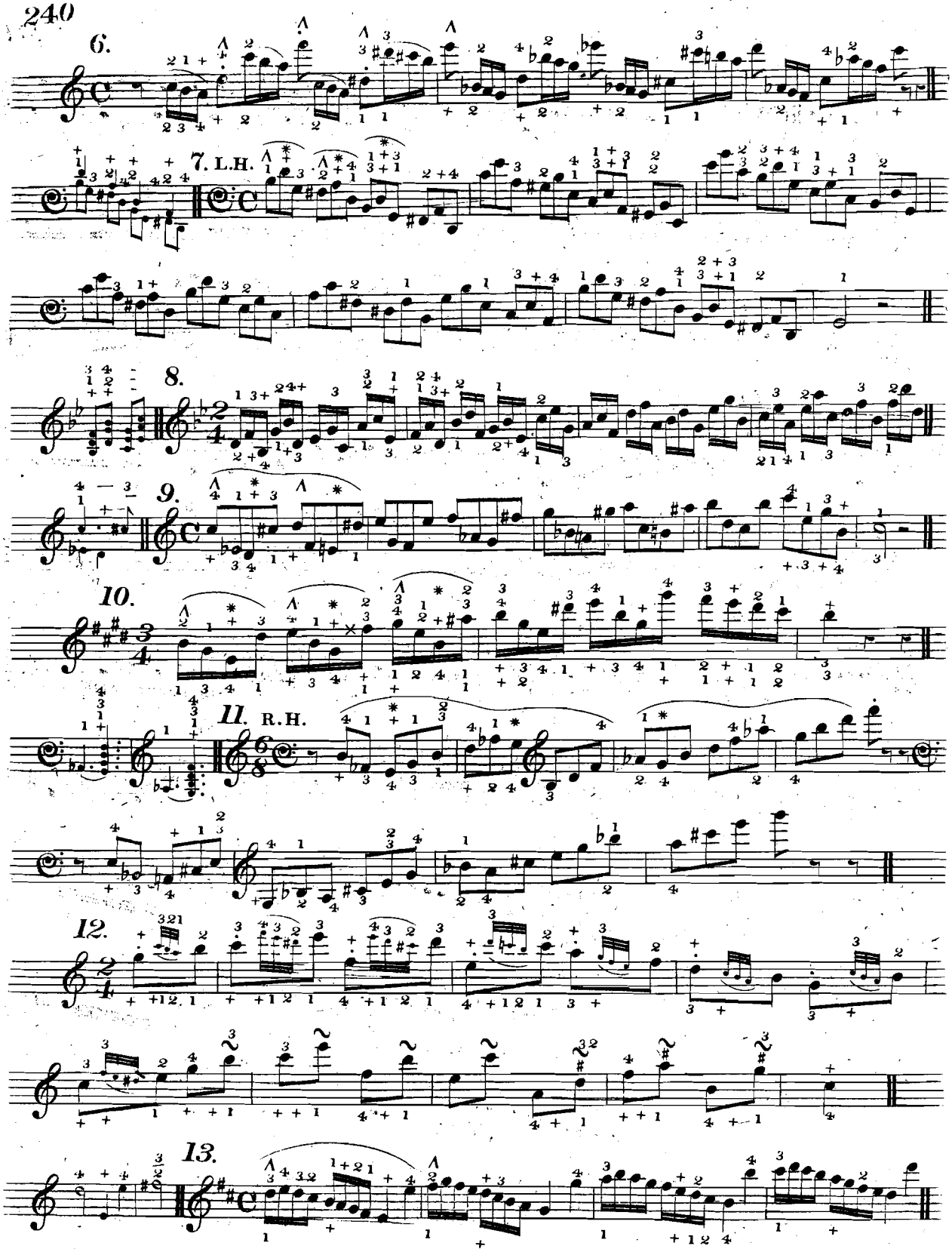
PASSAGE OF A LONG FINGER OVER A SHORTER ONE.

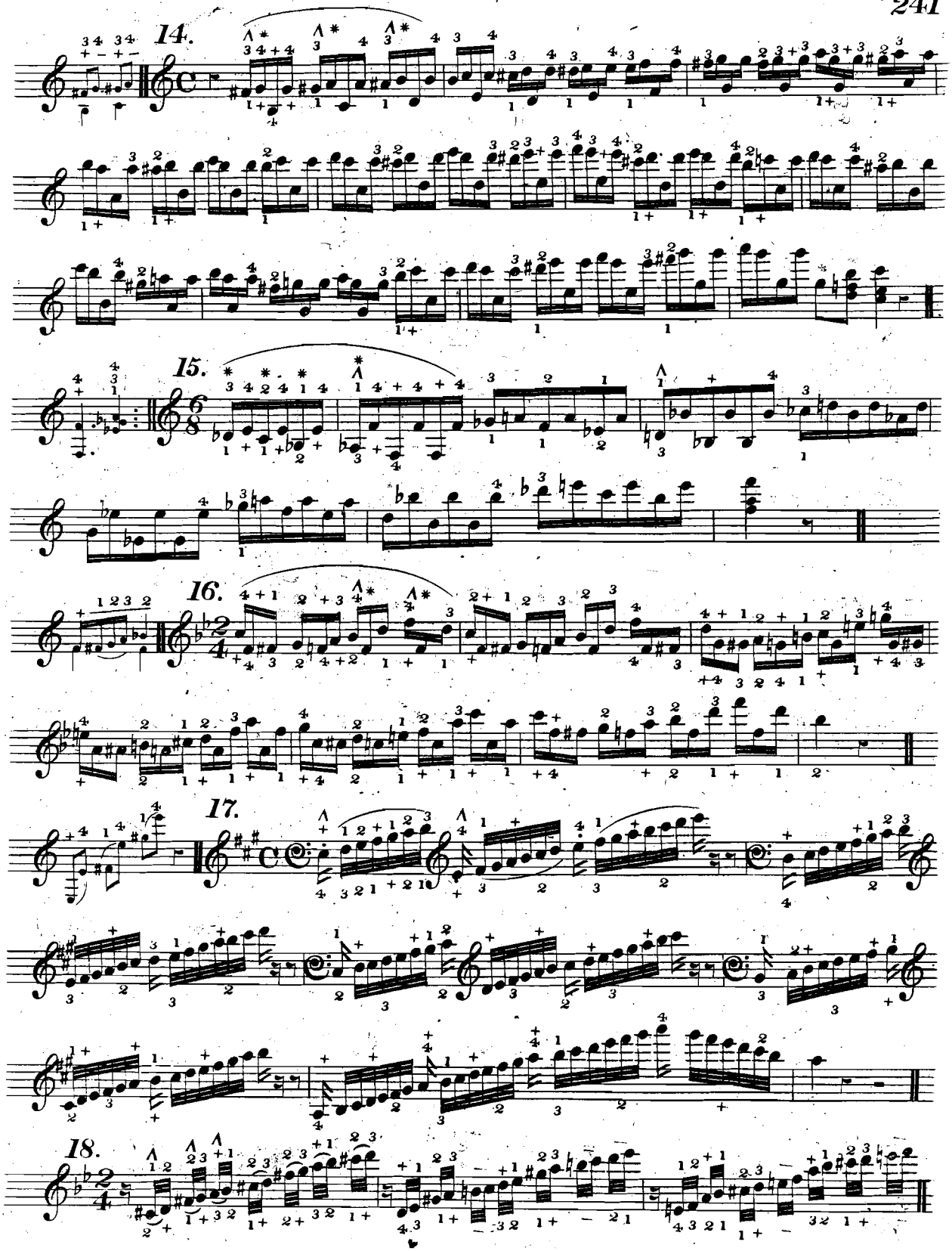


a. The finger to be passed over, advances somewhat farther on the key. The whole is to be played legato.

(*a.*) the detached note is played lightly, without lifting up the hand too much.

(*a.*) This is, as it were, a sort of springing forward with the hand.


6.
7. L.H.
8.
9.
10.
11. R.H.
12.
13.


14.
15.
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21.

22.

23.

24.

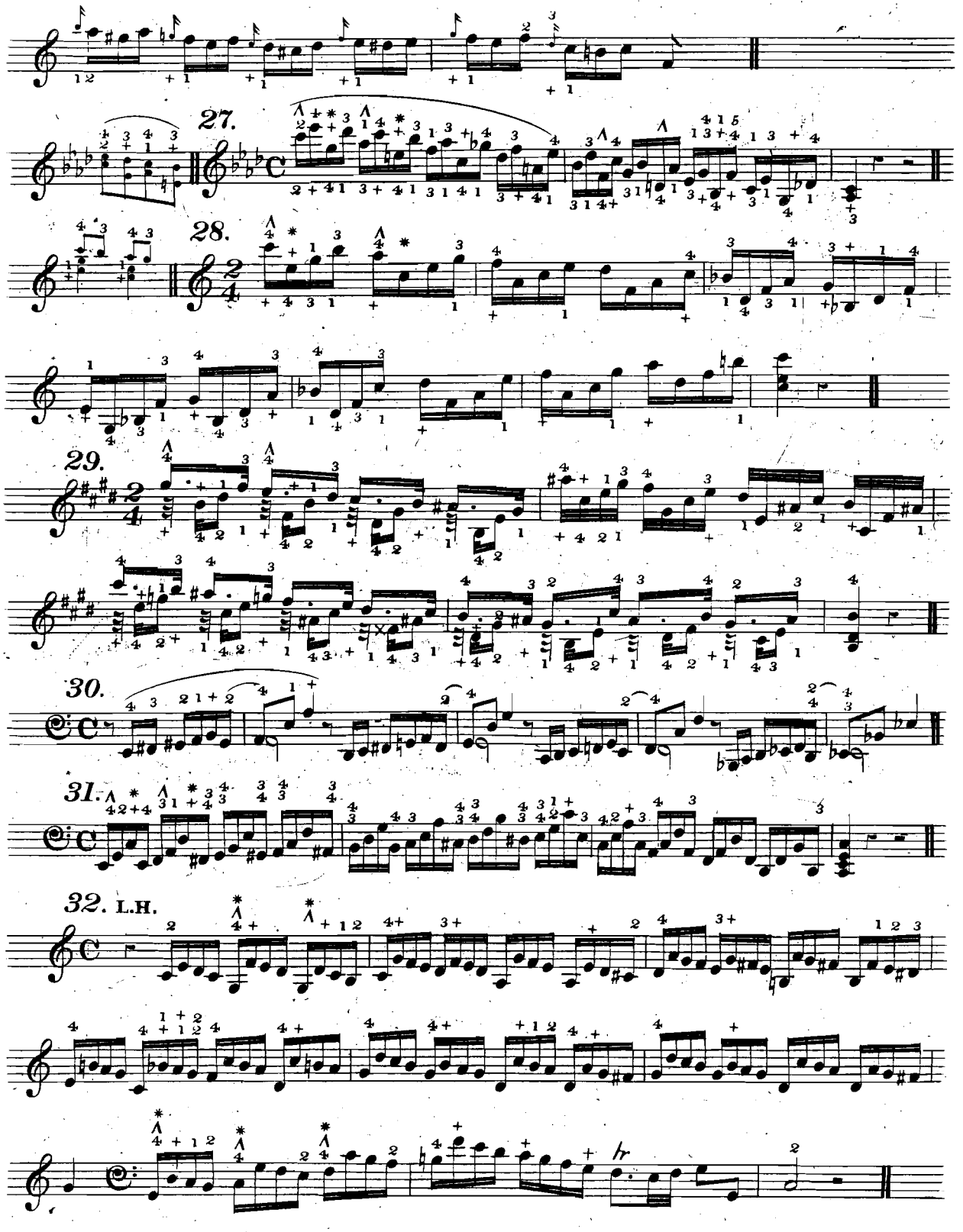
PASSING A SHORT FINGER UNDER A LONGER ONE.

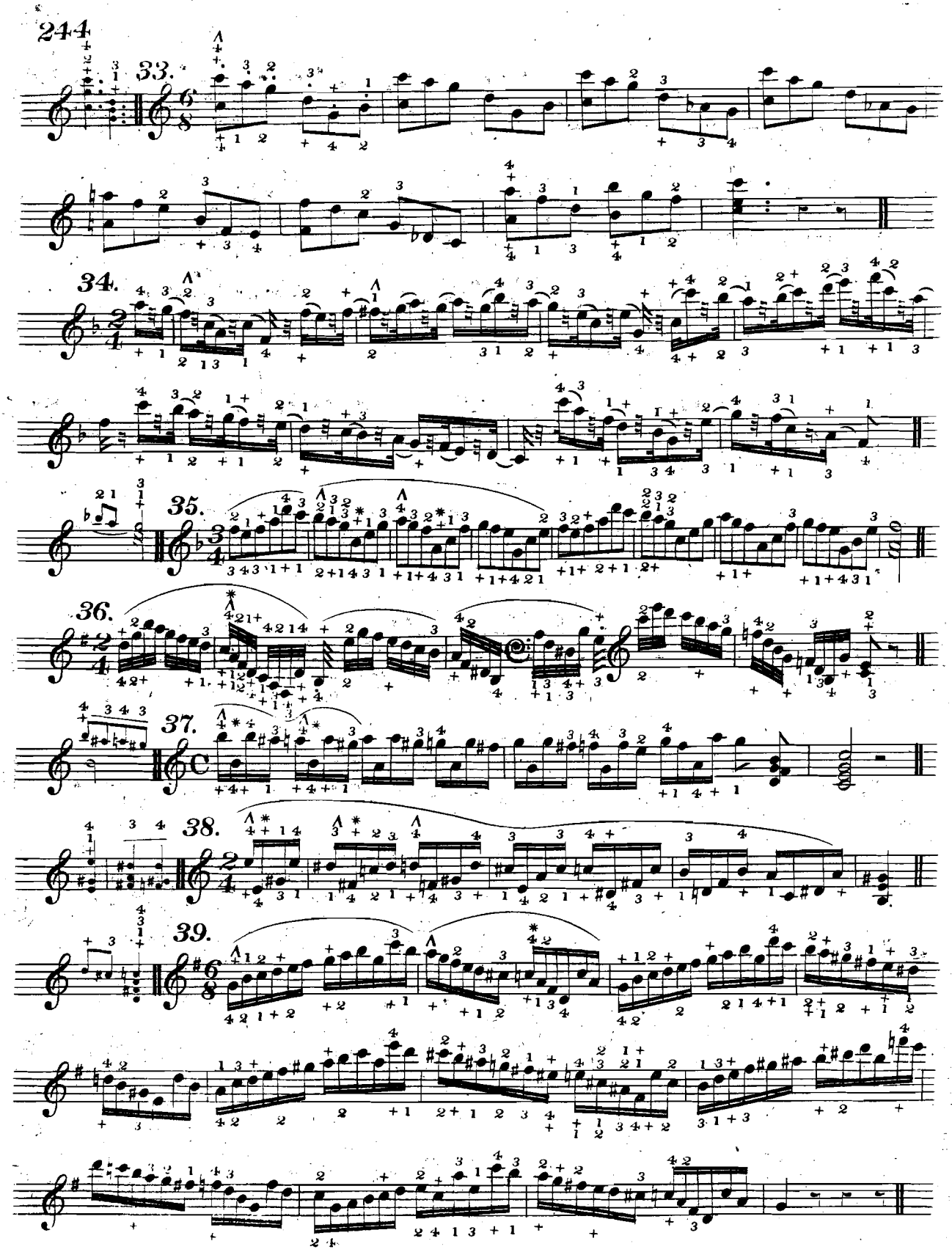
25.

(a.) here the shorter finger draws itself behind the other, to be ready for striking its note.

26.

(a.) here the hand moves forward.


27.
28.
29.
30.
31.
32. L.H.


33.
34.
35.
36.
37.
38.
39.

40.

41.

42.

43.

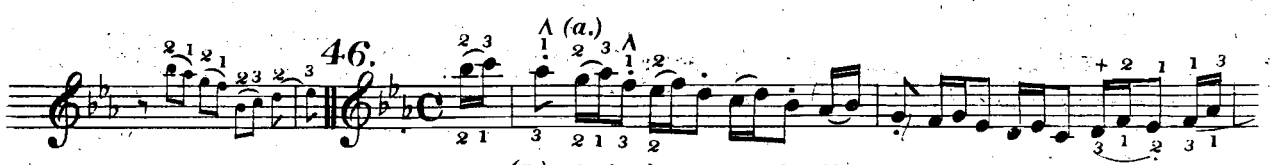
PASSING UNDER AND OVER OF THE FINGERS.

44.

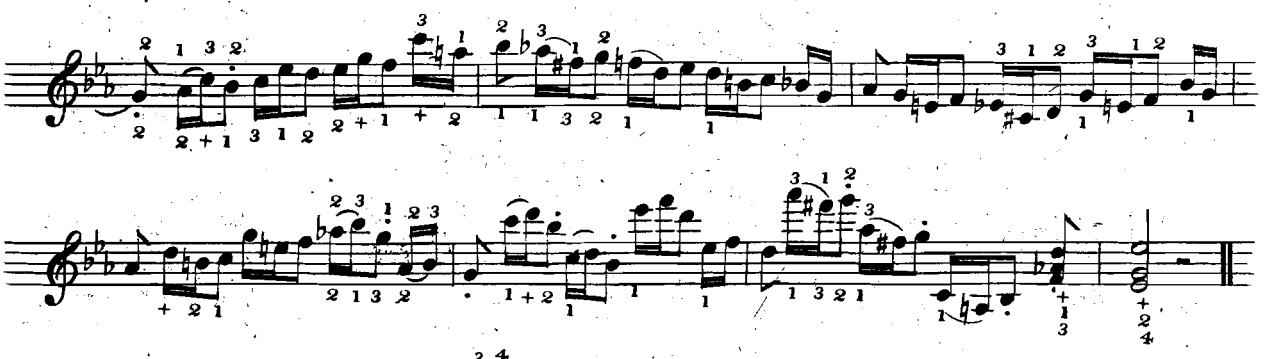
(a) the finger draws itself behind the others; and

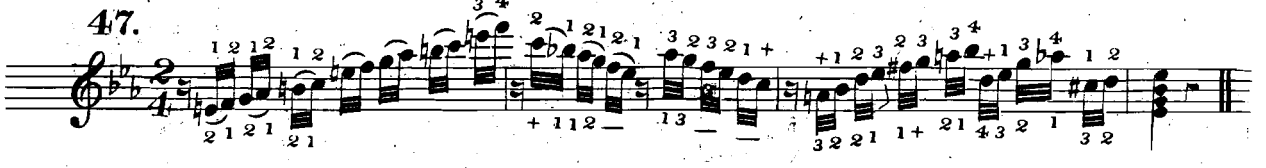
(b.) the longer finger crosses over the shorter

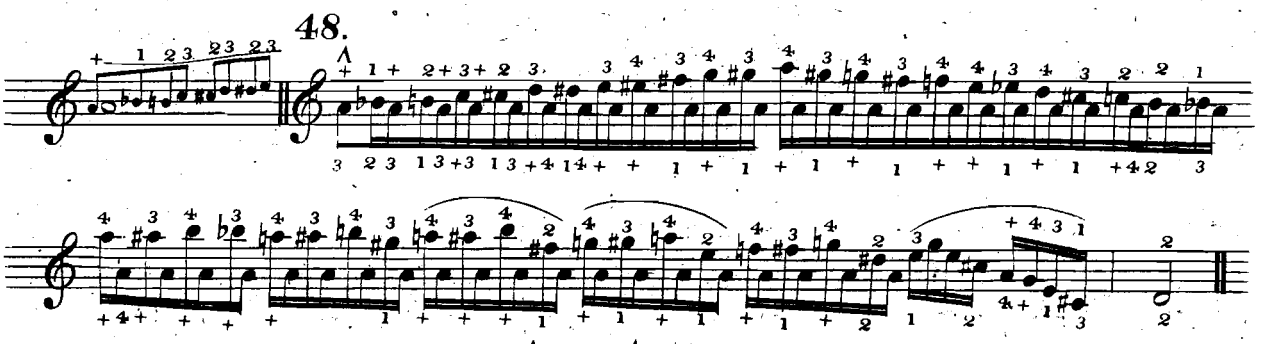
45.

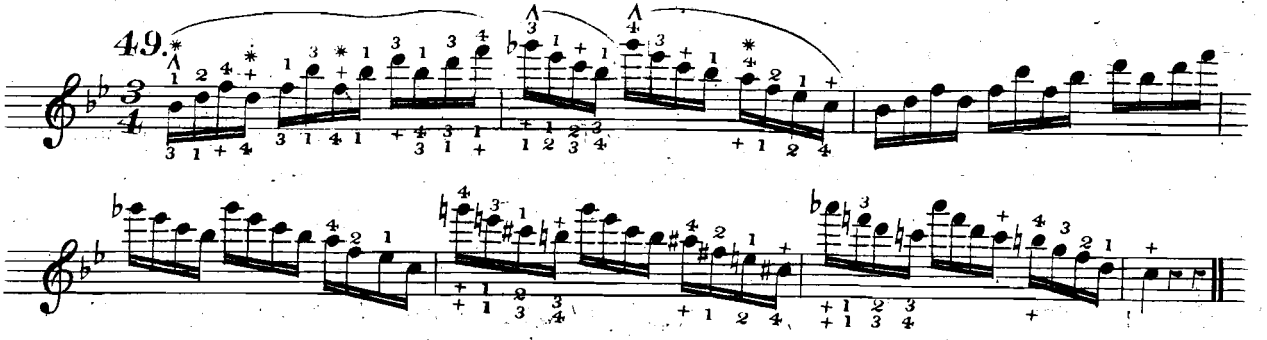


(a.) the hand moves gently sideways.

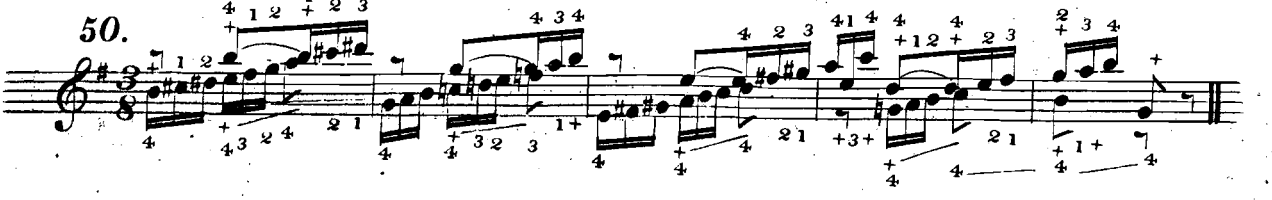








EXAMPLES IN SEVERAL PARTS.



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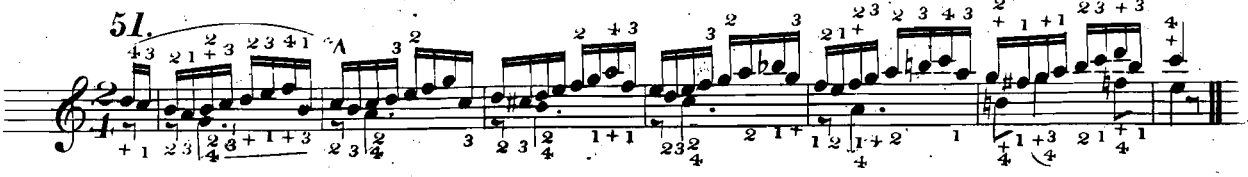

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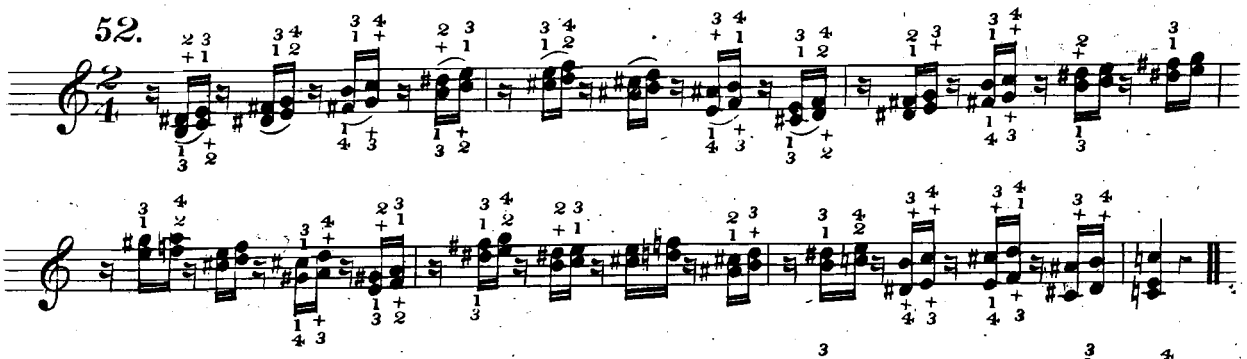

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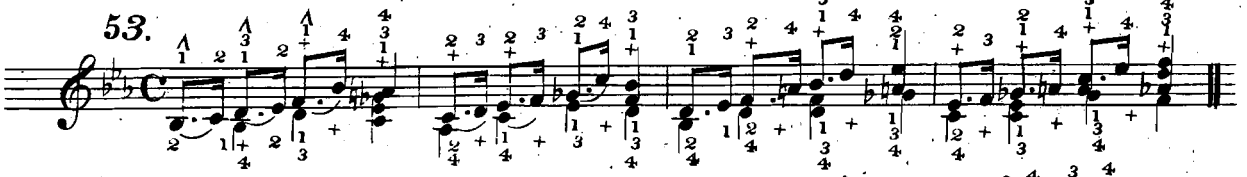

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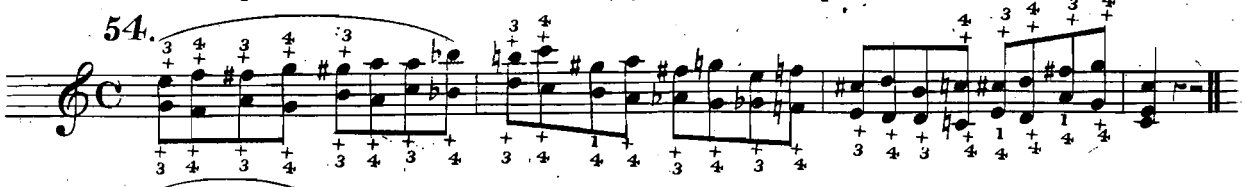

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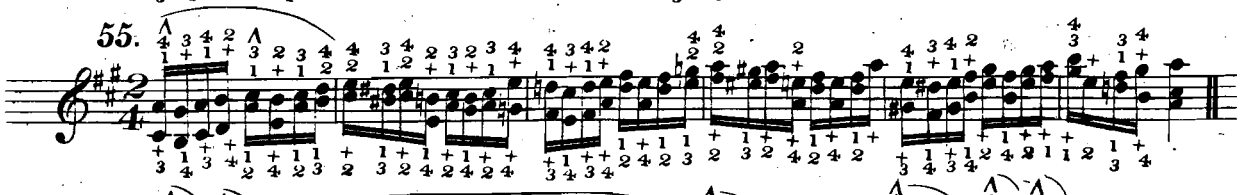

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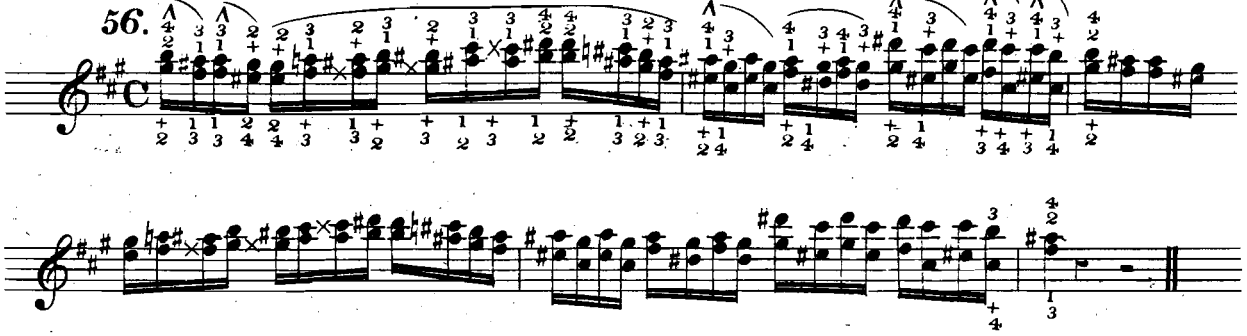

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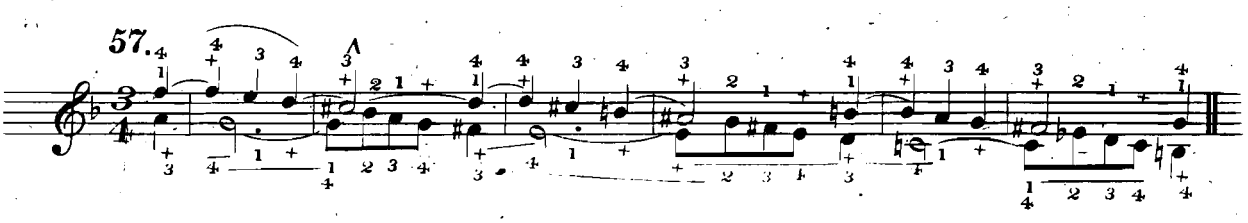


58.

59.

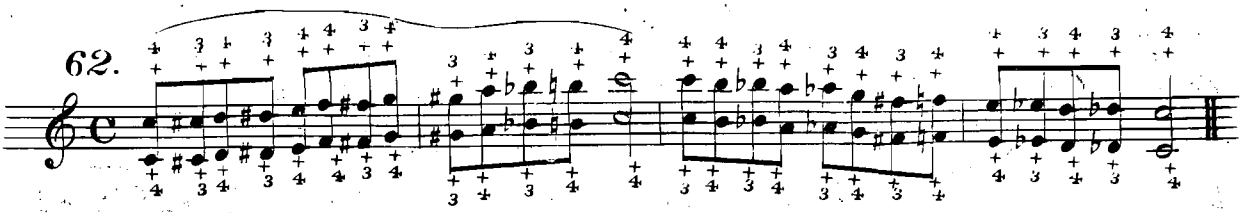
8va

a. here, the 2d finger bends itself over the first.

60.

61.

62.



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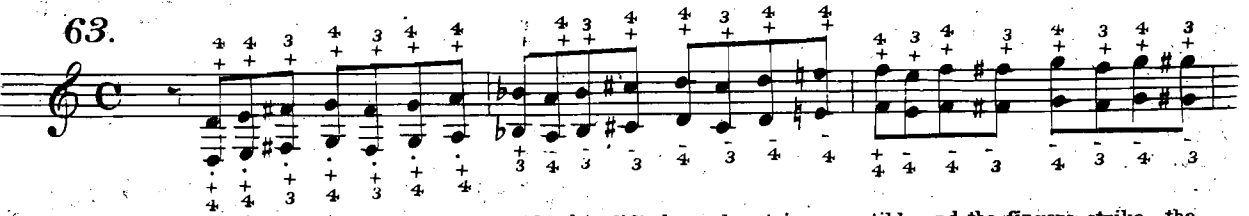
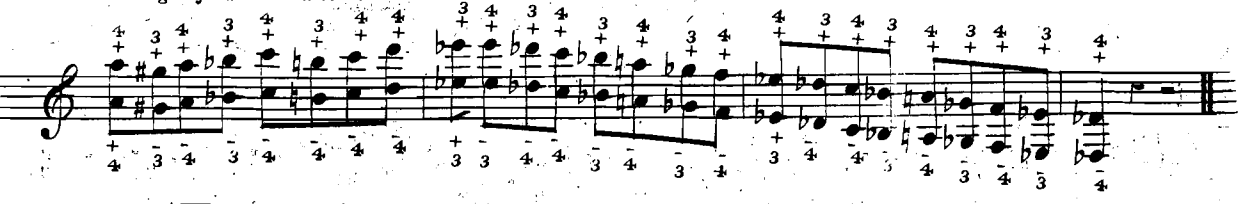


In passages of octaves played staccato, the hand is lifted up almost imperceptibly, and the fingers strike the notes lightly and detached.



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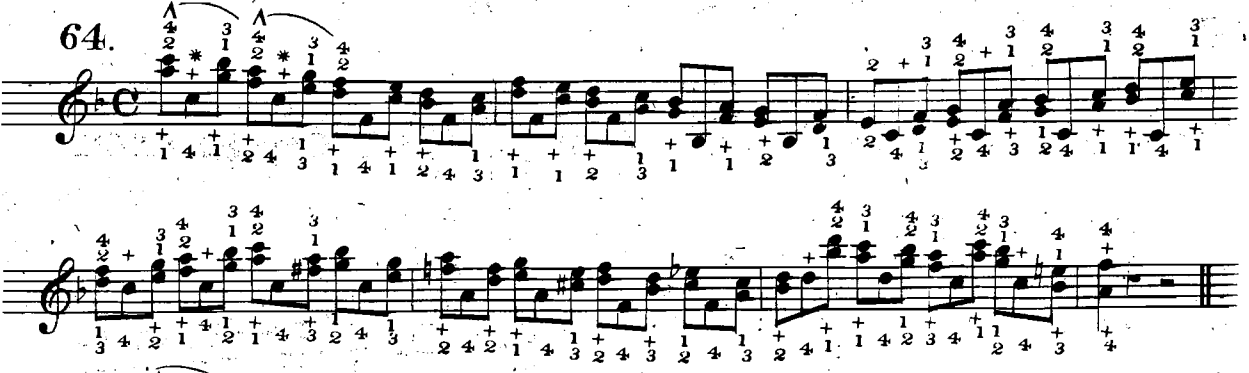

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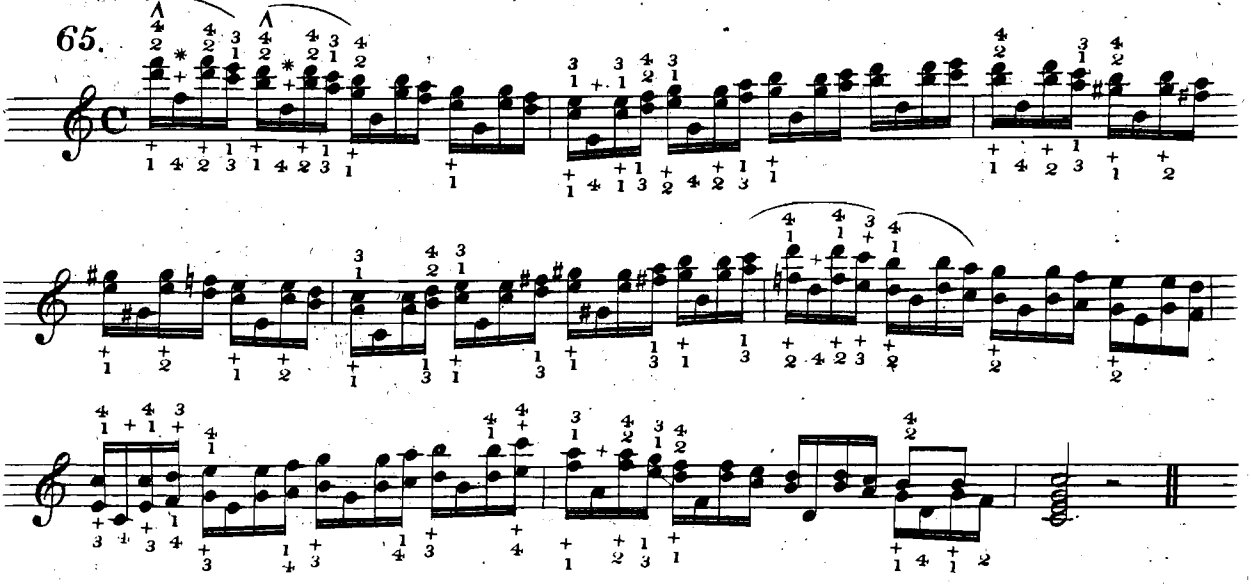

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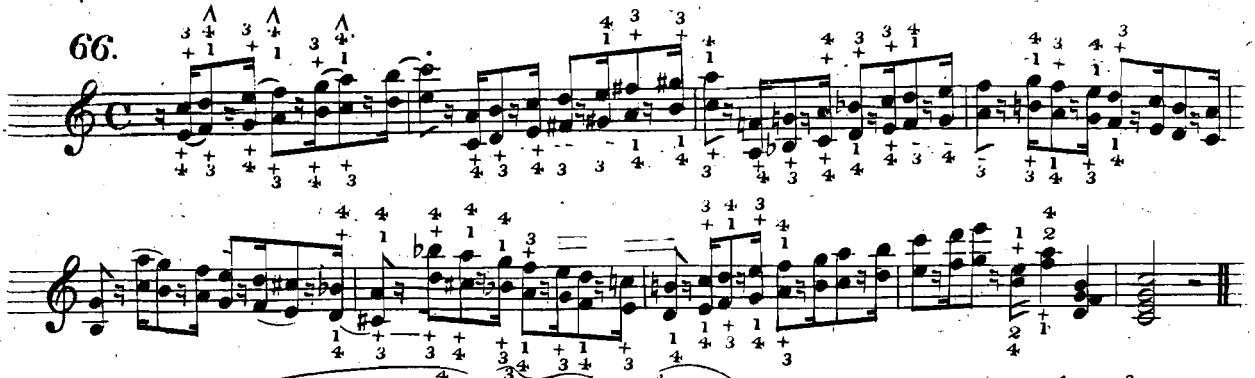

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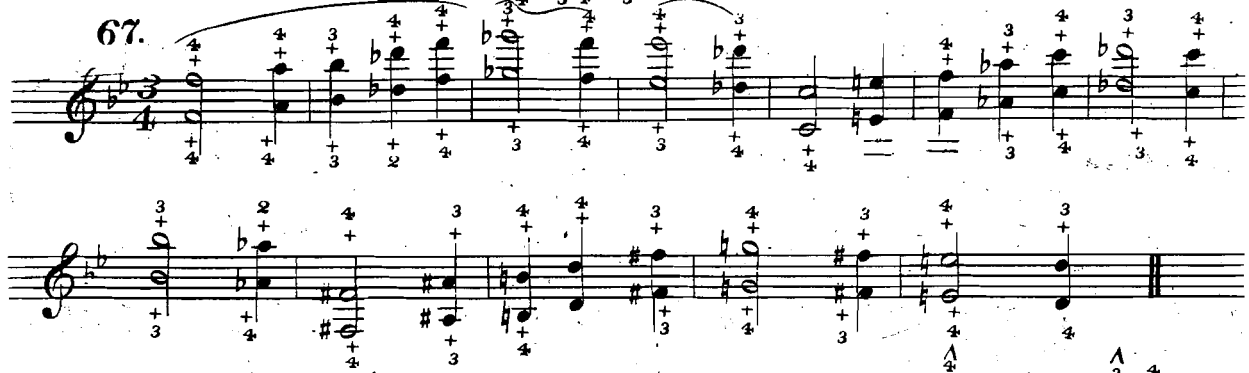

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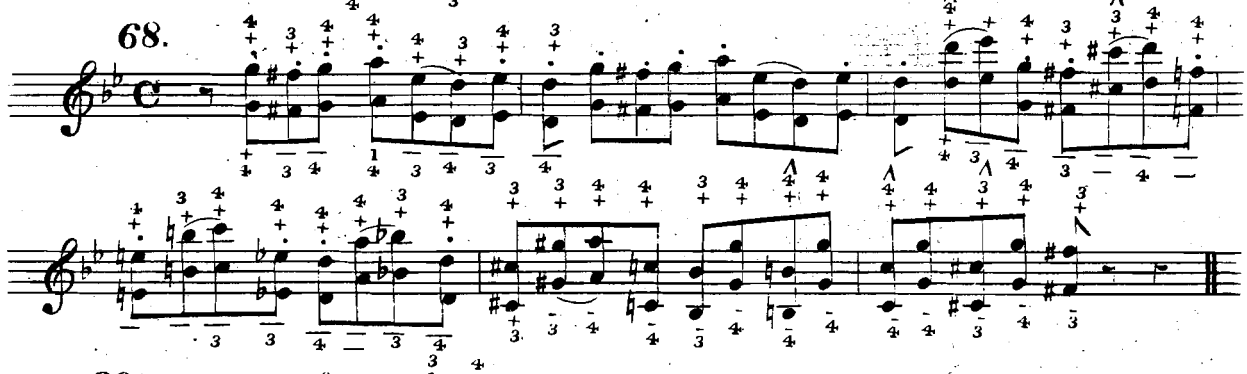

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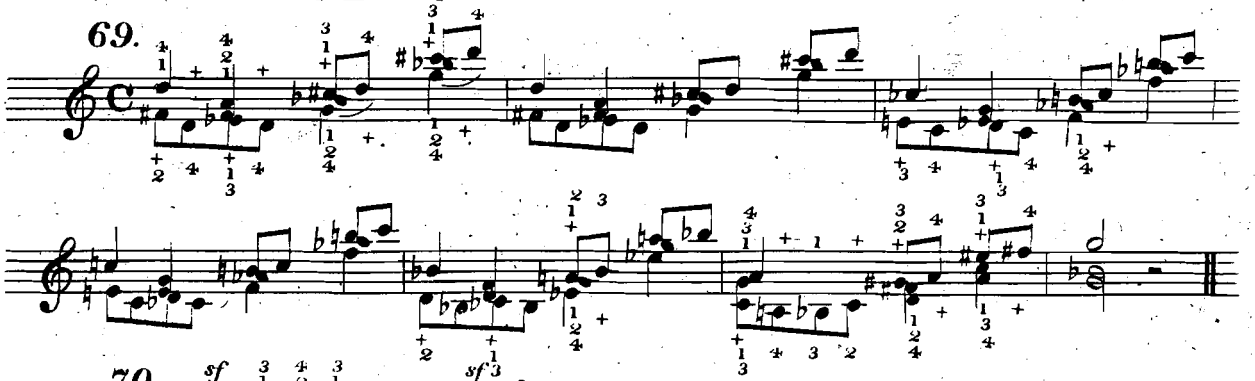
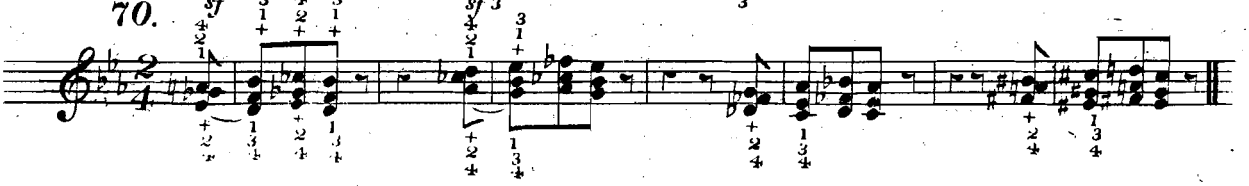
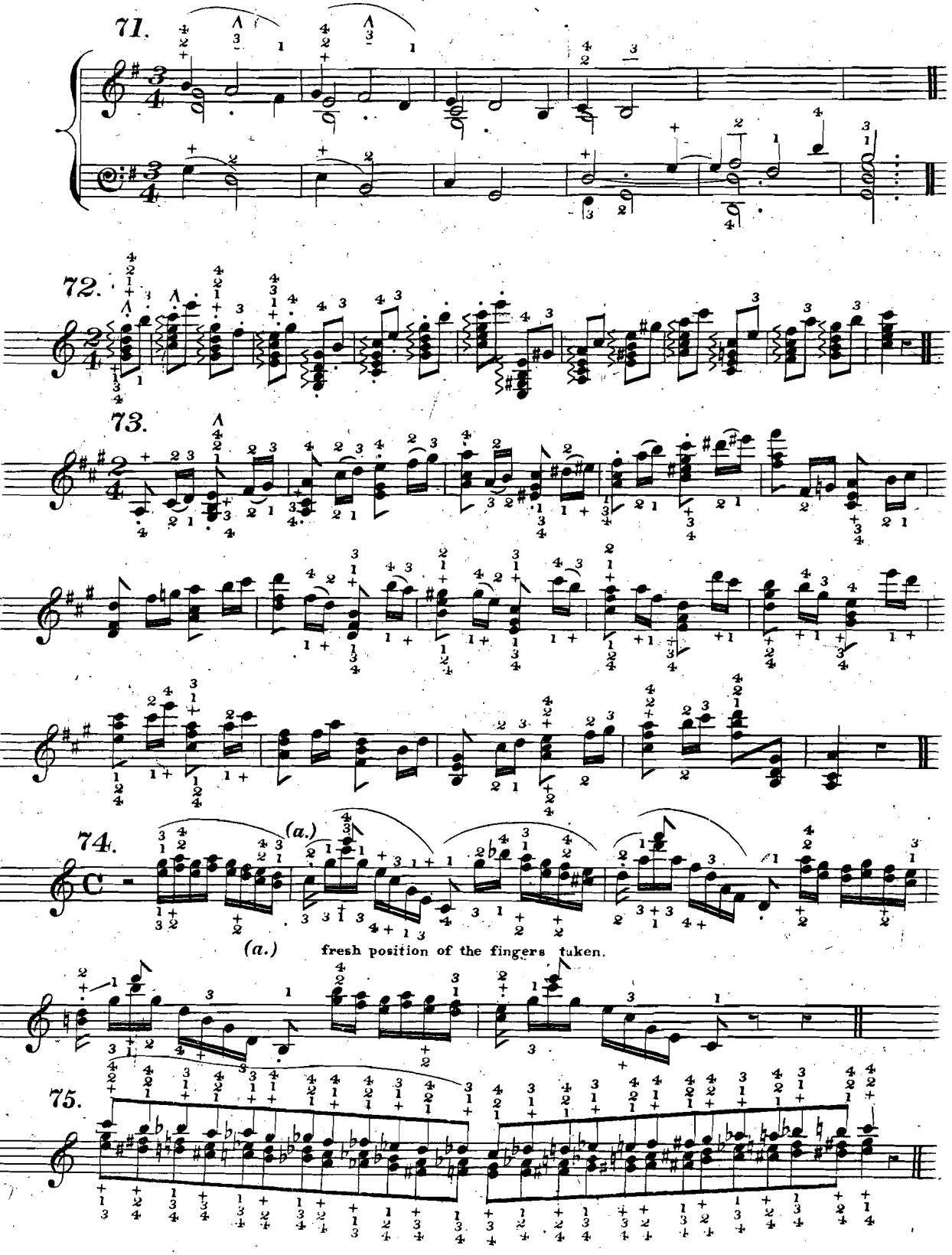


70.




71.
72.
73.
74.
(a.)
(a.) fresh position of the fingers taken.
75.

CHAP. VIII.

ON CHANGING ONE OR MORE FINGERS ON THE SAME KEY WITH OR WITHOUT THE REPETITION OF THE NOTE; &, INVERSELY, ON THE SUCCESSIVE APPLICATION OF THE SAME FINGER TO TWO OR MORE DIFFERENT KEYS.

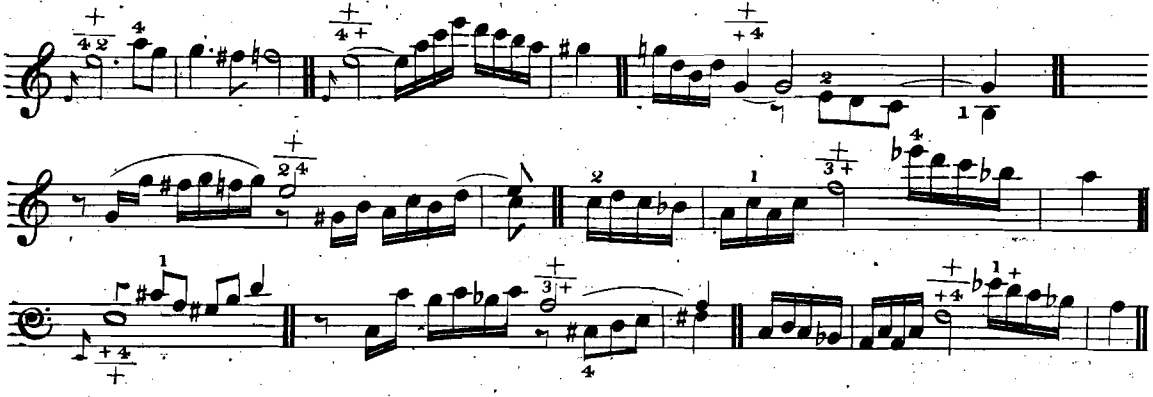
(a.) ON CHANGING THE FINGERS.

§ 1.

This takes place in two ways; either without *restriking* the note, or with the actual reiteration of it.

§ 2.

The change of finger without striking the note again, happens usually *before* or *after* an extension, and serves, during the holding down of the note, to prepare for advancing in the performance by a fresh position of the fingers. The fingers must draw very closely together, and that which first strikes the note, must not quit it, till the one to be substituted has already taken its place; this must be managed with quickness, and so that the note may be heard but once. for Ex:

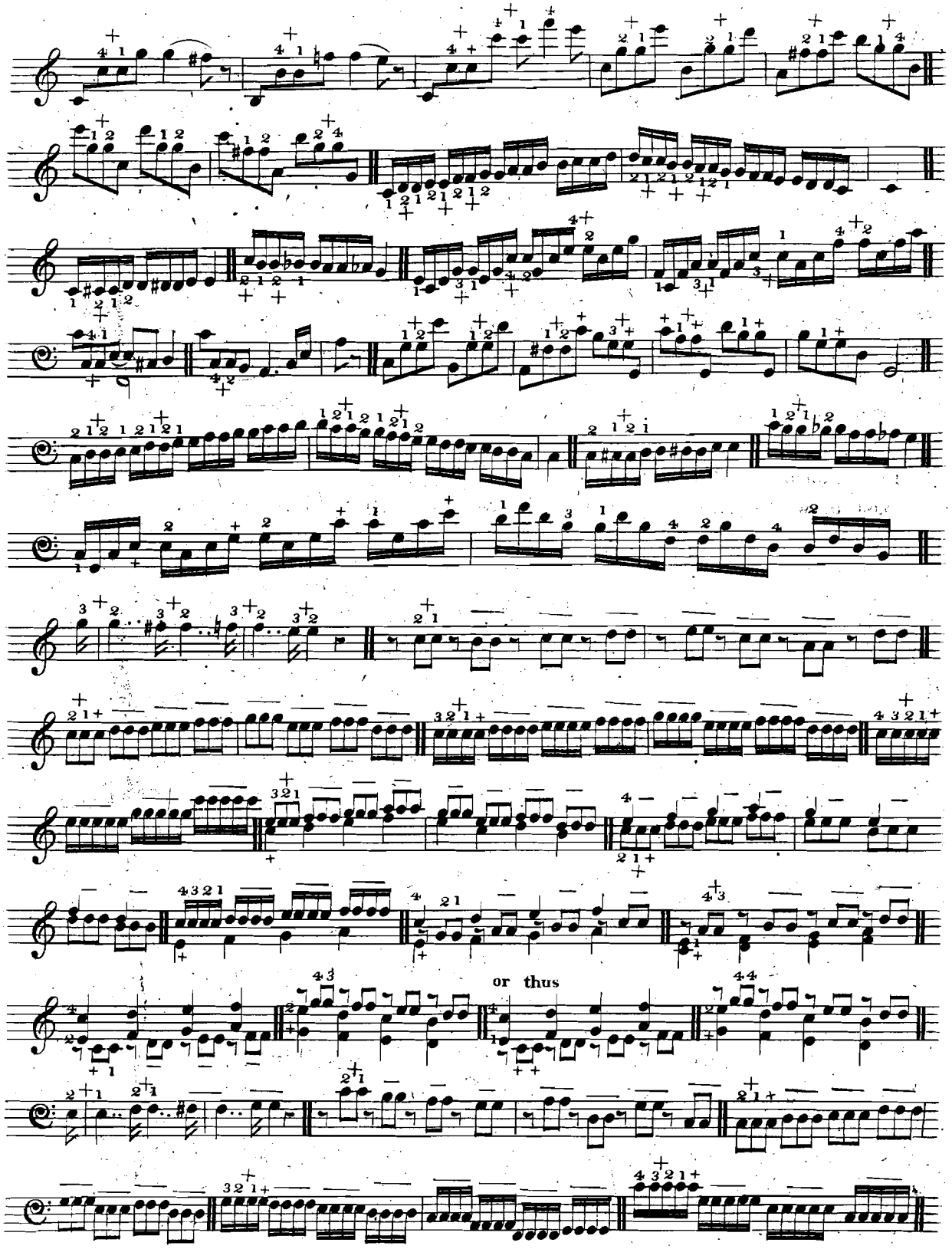


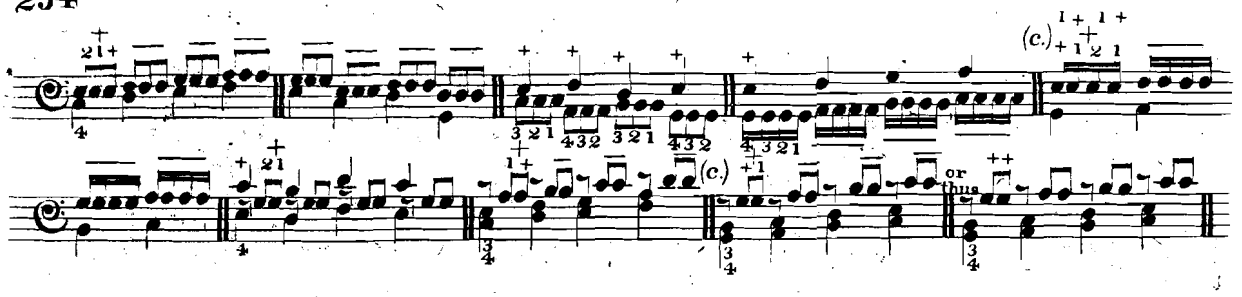
§ 3.

By changing fingers on the actual repetition of a note, we partly gain a fresh position of the fingers, and partly an increased degree of facility in restriking the note; the frequent repetition of a note with the same finger, would too much fatigue the hand.

§ 4.

In such quick reiterations of a note, the fingers required must be held over each other, almost in a perpendicular position, and hurried from the key, one after the other, in a direction from the little finger toward the thumb, seldom in the reverse order.


or thus



(b.) ON THE SUCCESSIVE APPLICATION OF THE SAME FINGER TO TWO OR MORE KEYS.

§ 5.

This process also in part supplies the place of the passage of the thumb under the fingers and of the fingers over the thumb, facilitates the performance of many passages, and gives to the delivery of them a greater degree of roundness and connexion.

§ 6.

It is employed:

(a.) in passages where the same finger *glides* from a black key down to the white one immediately adjacent, either above or below;

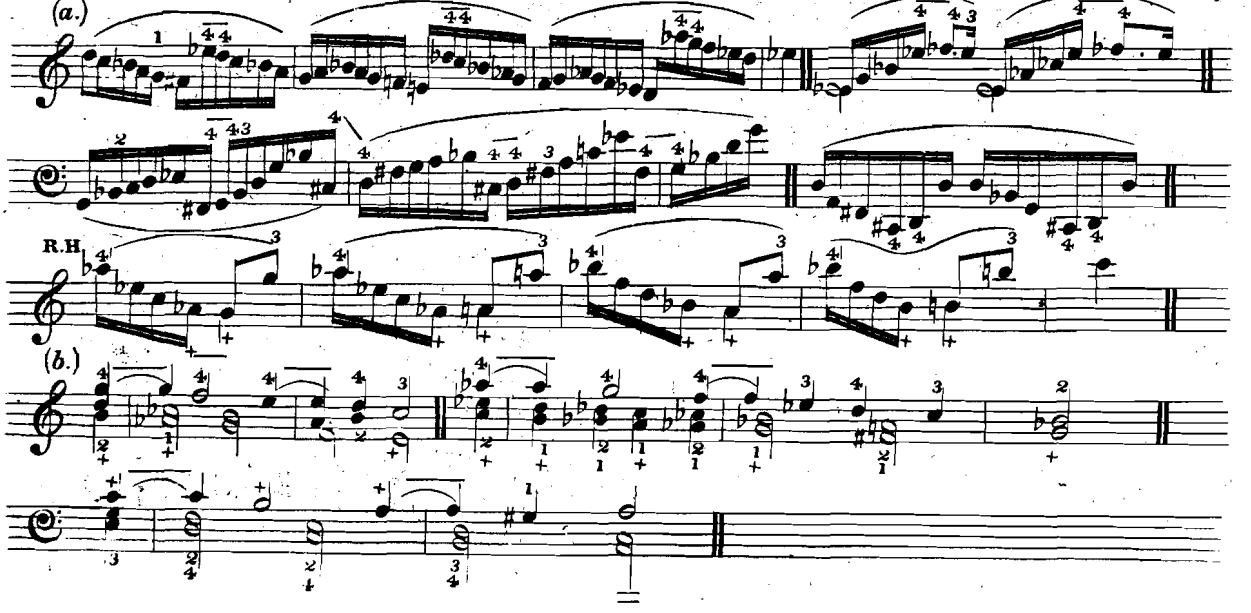
(b.) in *passages in several parts*, on occasion of extensions and syncopations, where the same finger is *drawn* from one white key to another, without being lifted up between them;

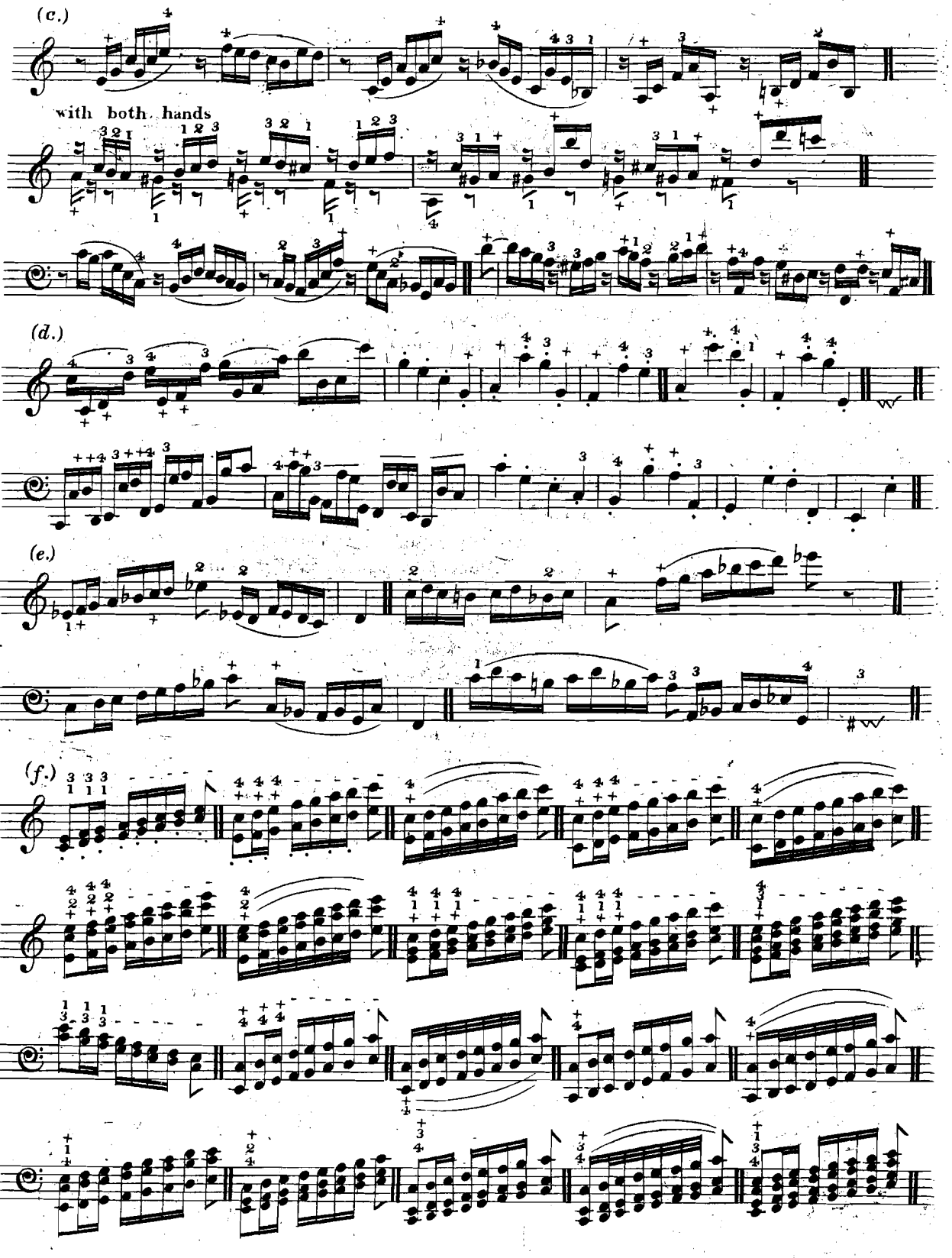
(c.) on two *different* keys, separated by a rest, in which case the fingers are to be but slightly lifted up:

(d.) on notes played *staccato*;

(e.) after a skip without an intermediate rest, where it is to be considered as a new position of the hand; and lastly,

(f.) in scales of *double or triple notes* on the white keys, where a whole series of notes are to be played, either *staccato*, or by drawing the hand along.

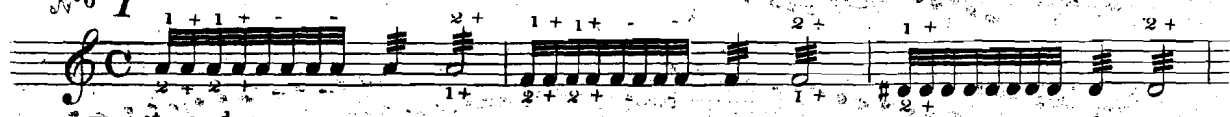



(c.)
with both hands
(d.)
(e.)
(f.)

VIII.

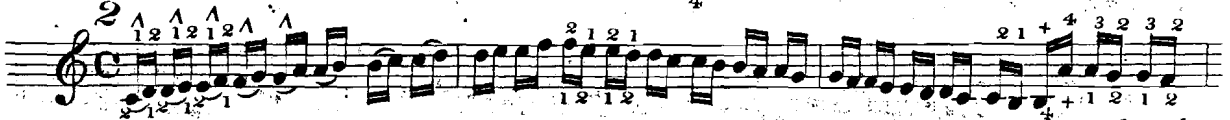
CHANGING ONE OR MORE FINGERS ON THE SAME KEY UPON THE REITERATION OF THE NOTE.

N°o 1

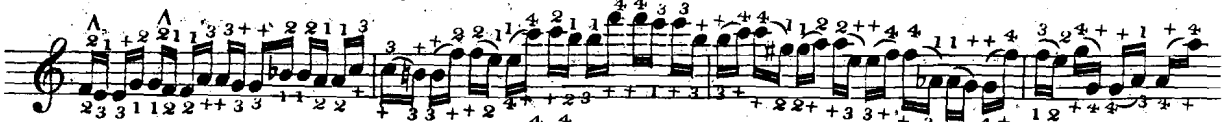


The 1st and 2d finger must stand perpendicularly over the thumb, which itself must be somewhat bent.

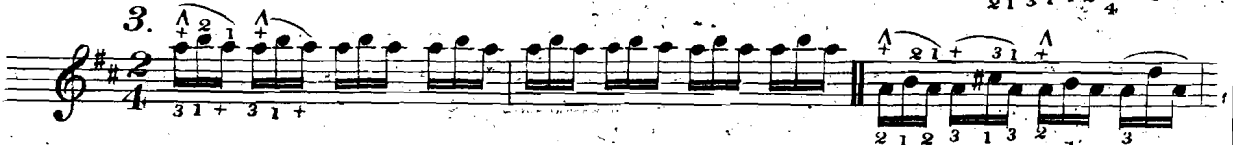
2



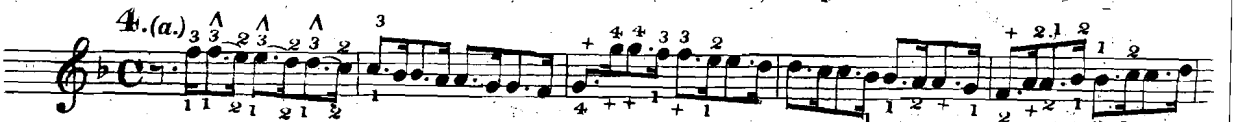
In changing fingers, the finger must be lifted from the key lightly, and so far only, that the one to be substituted may be able to take its place, and restrike the key.



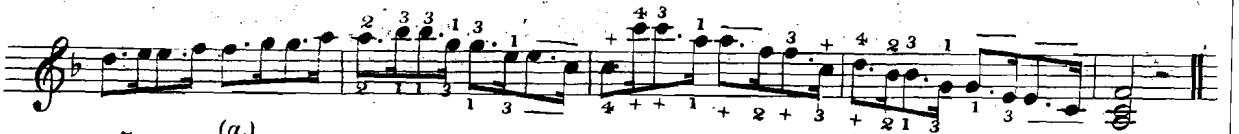
3.



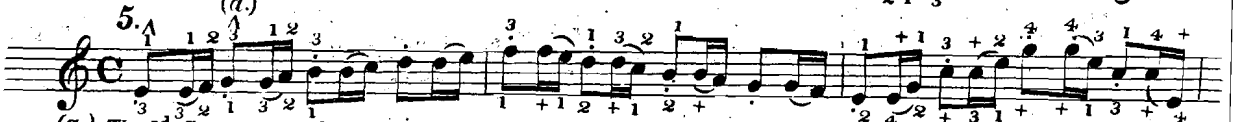
4. (a.)



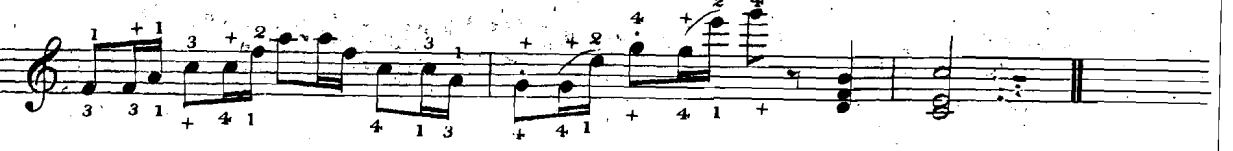
(a.) The 3d finger glides away from the key, while the 2d takes its place.

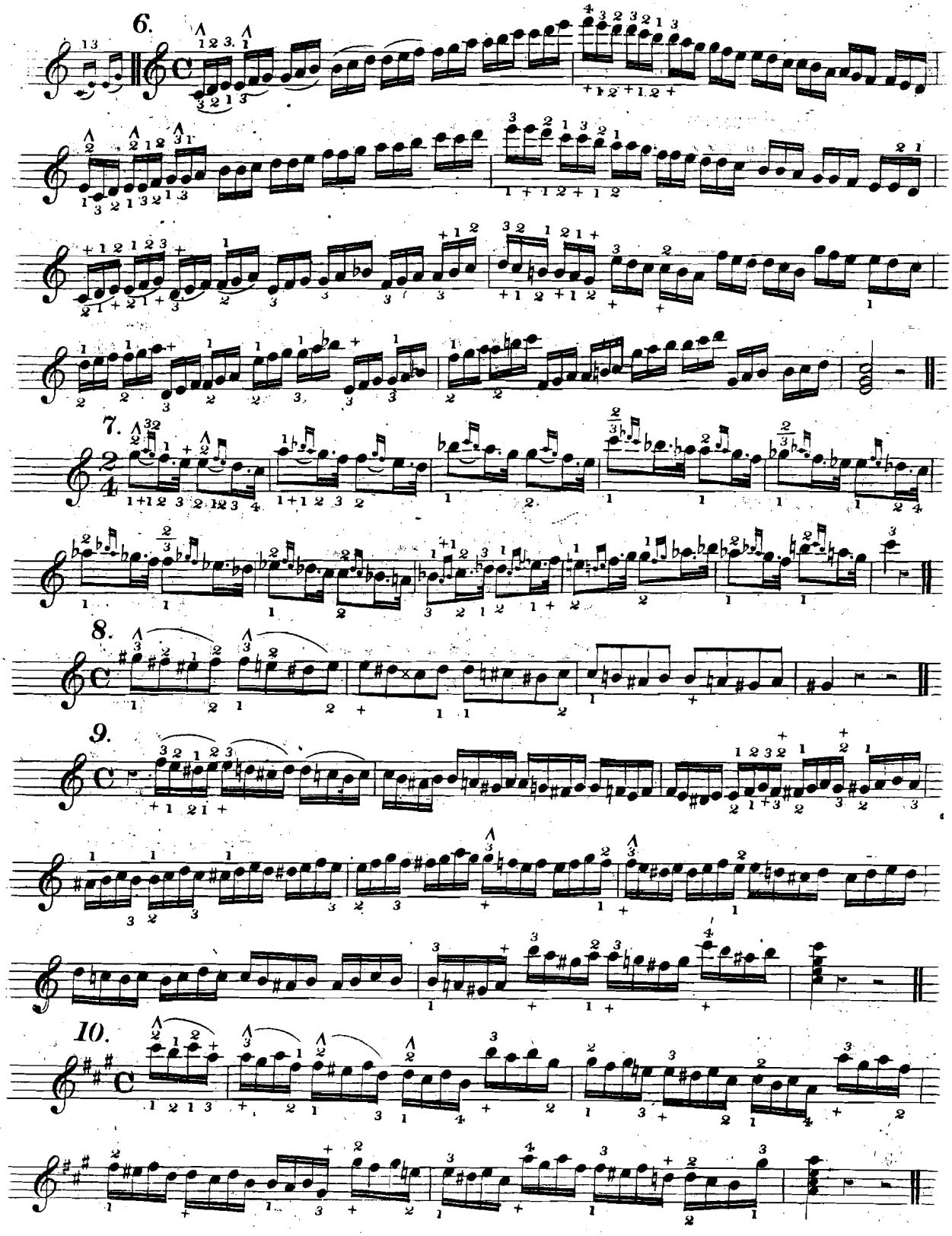


5. (a.)

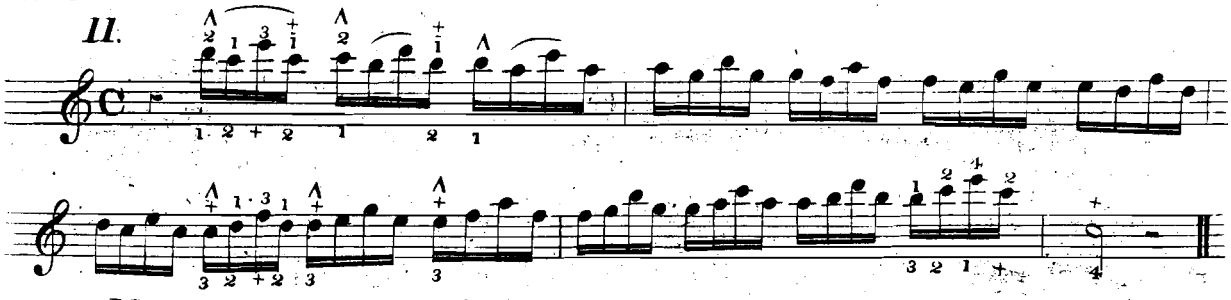


(a.) The 3d finger gently drawn away, without the hand being much lifted up from the keys.




6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

11.



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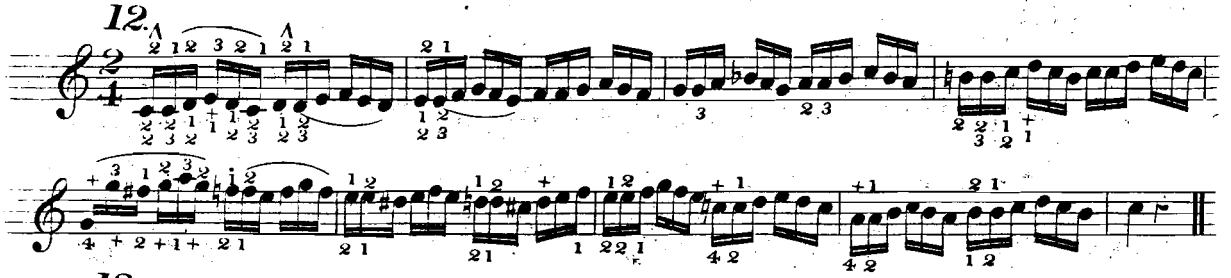

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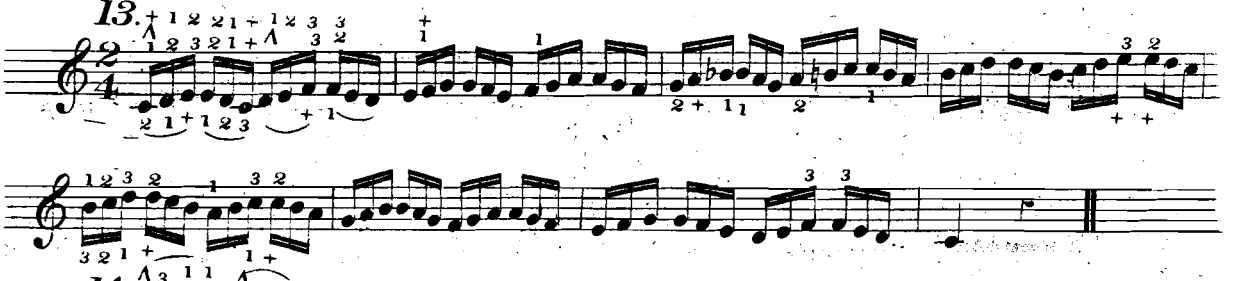

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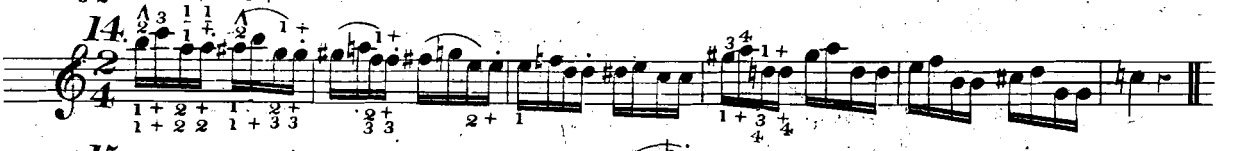

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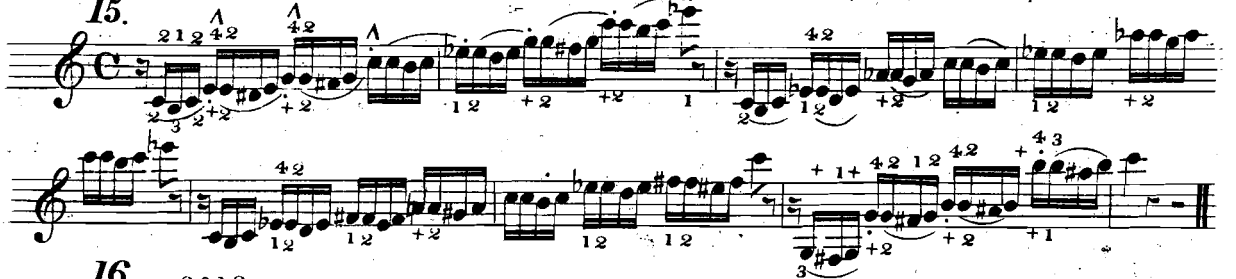

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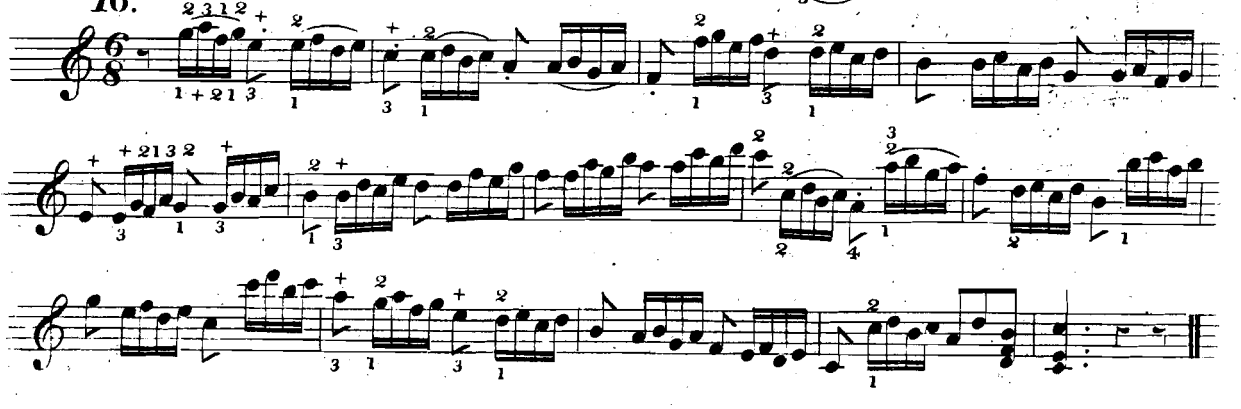

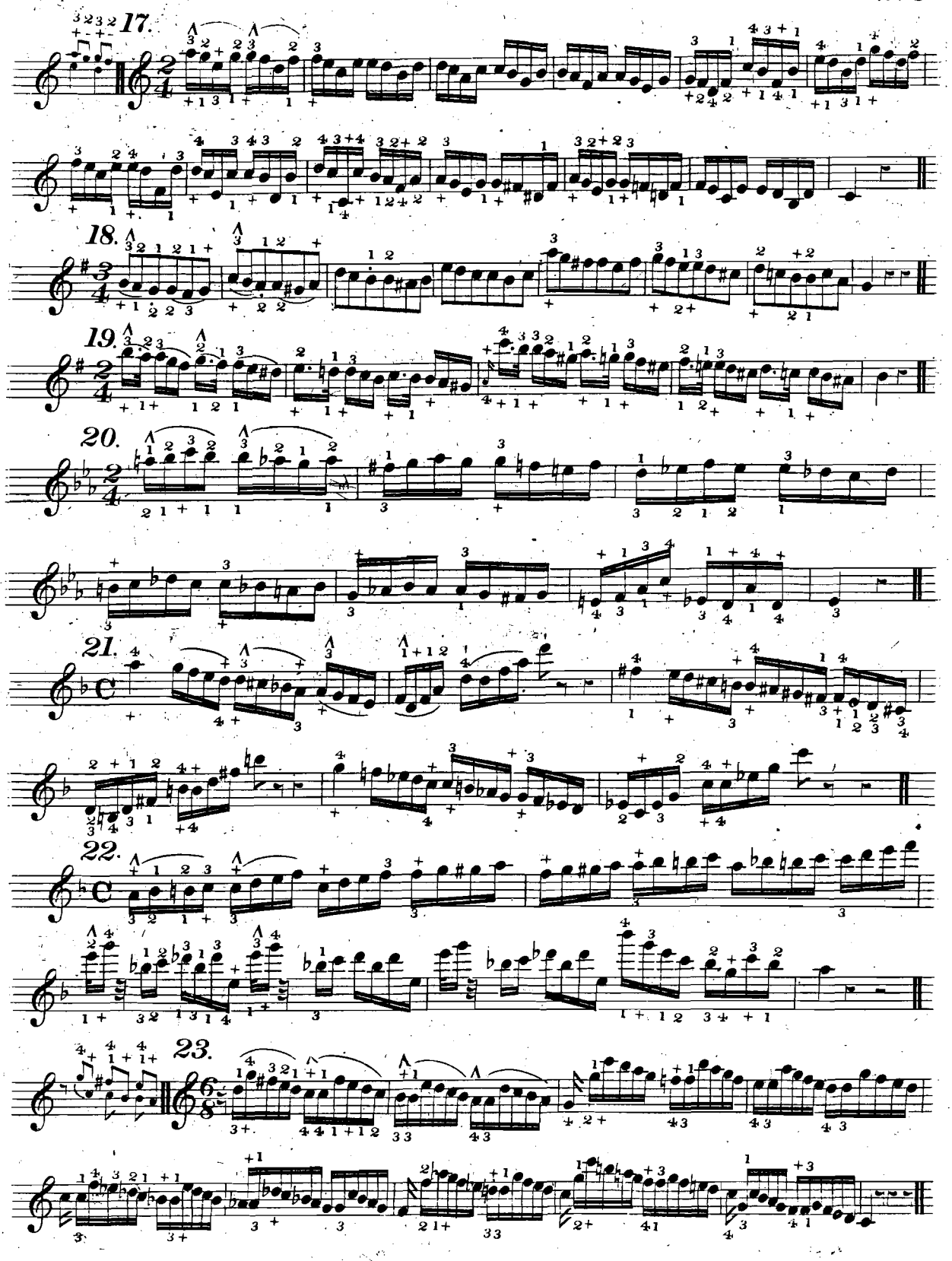
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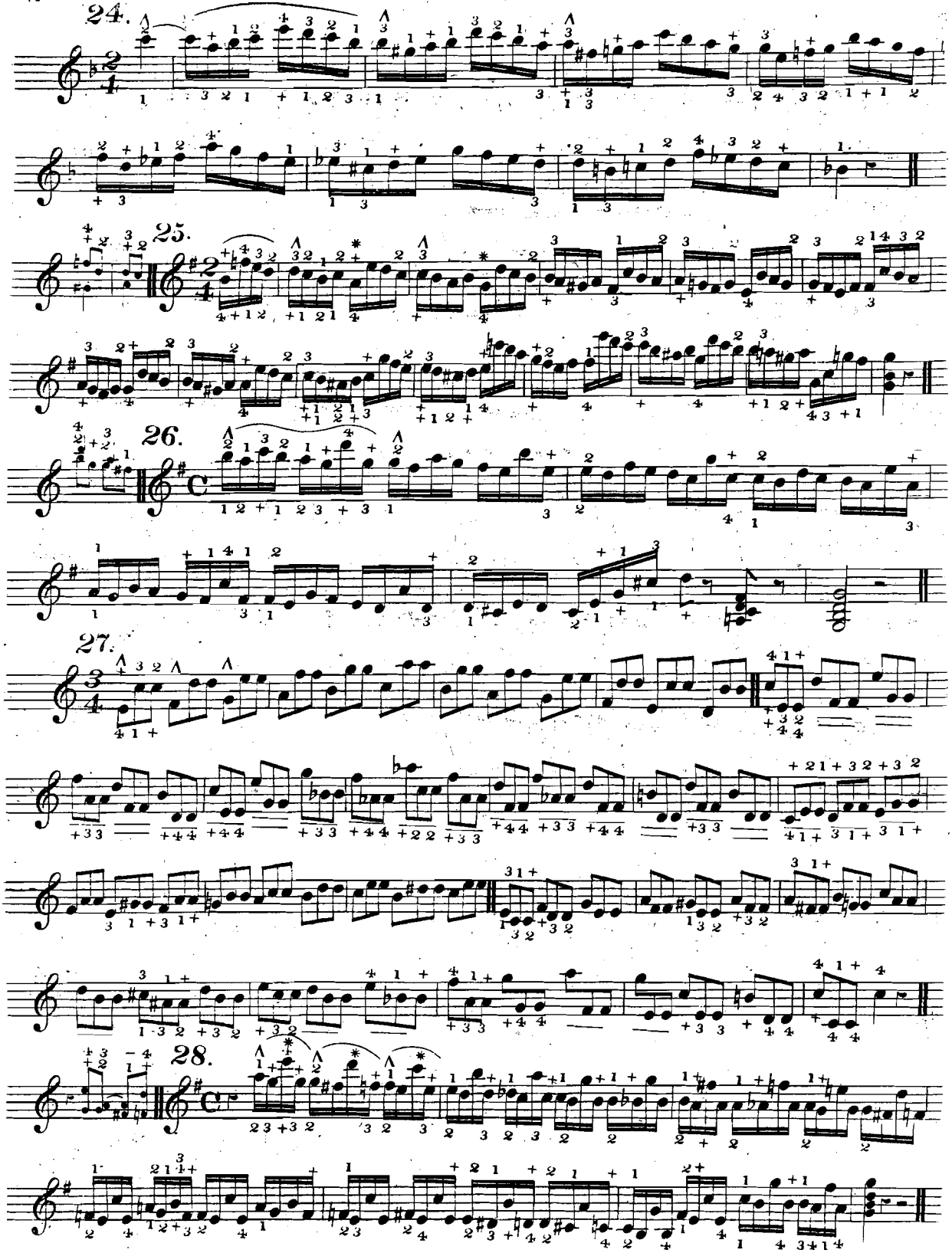
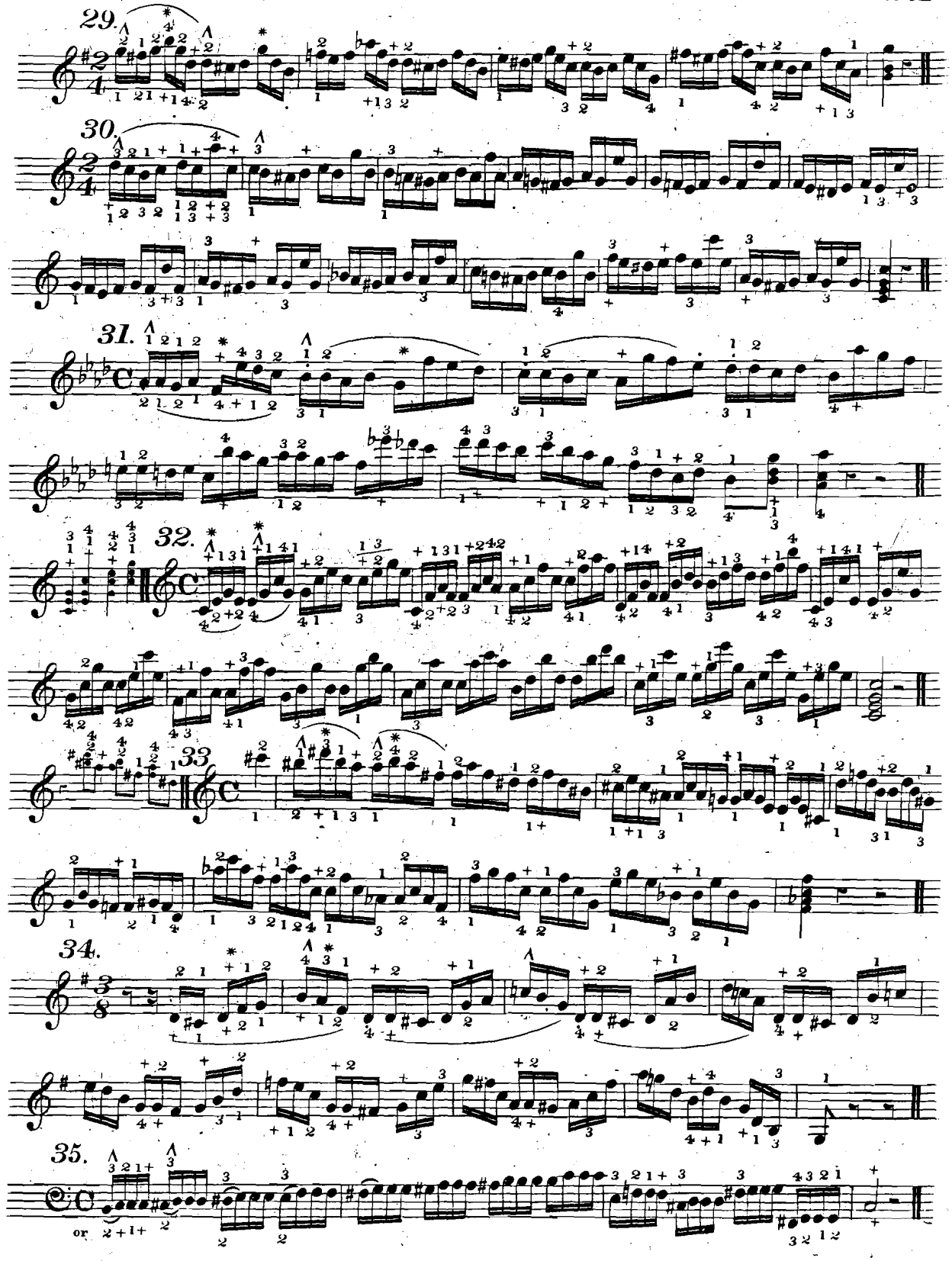



29.
30.
31.
32.
33
34.
35.
or

36.

37.

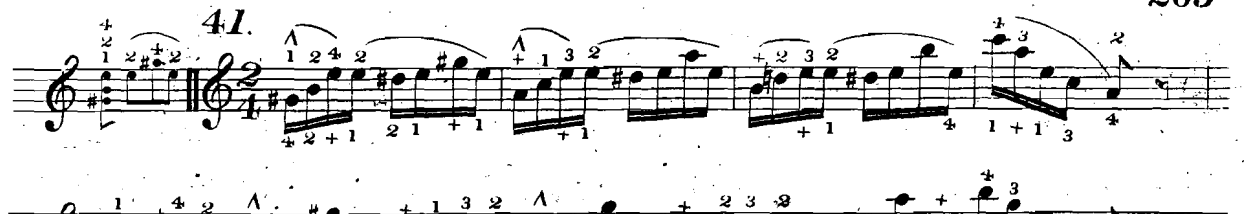
38.

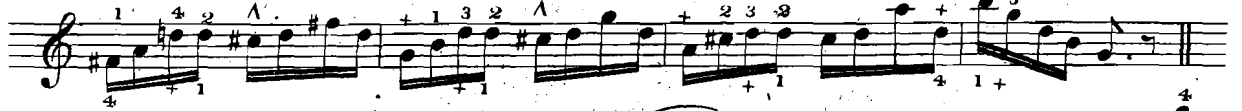
39.

40.

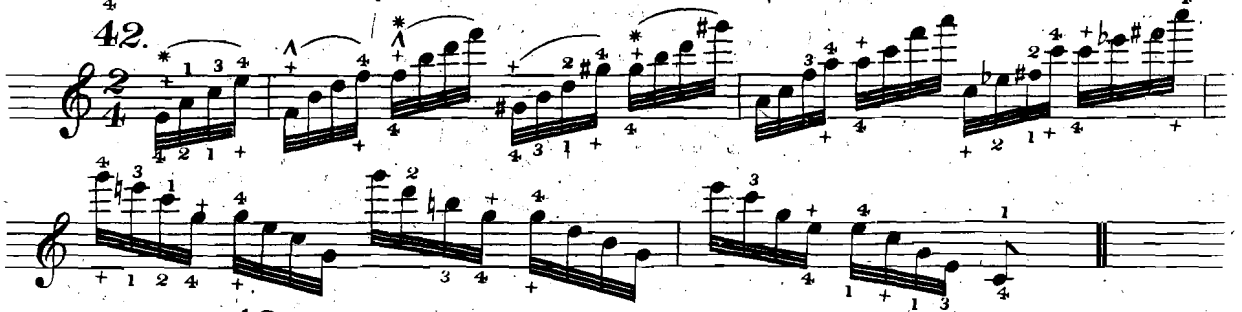
(a.) The thumb approaches constantly towards the other fingers, to be in readiness when next required.

41.





42.



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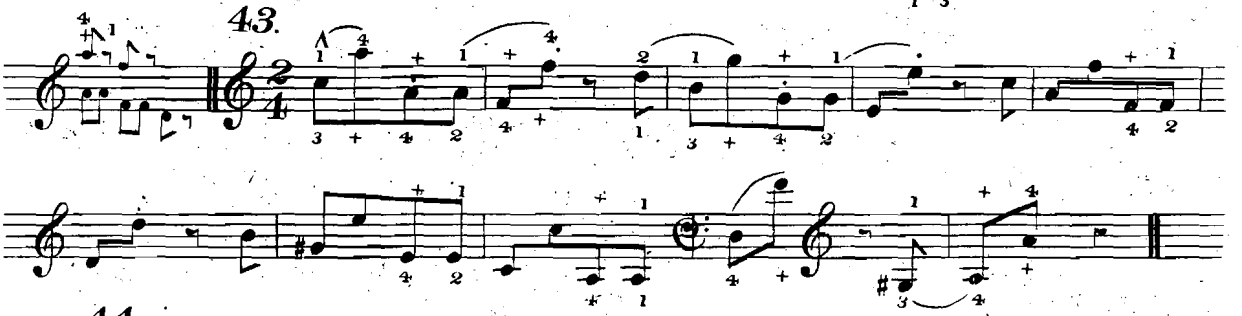

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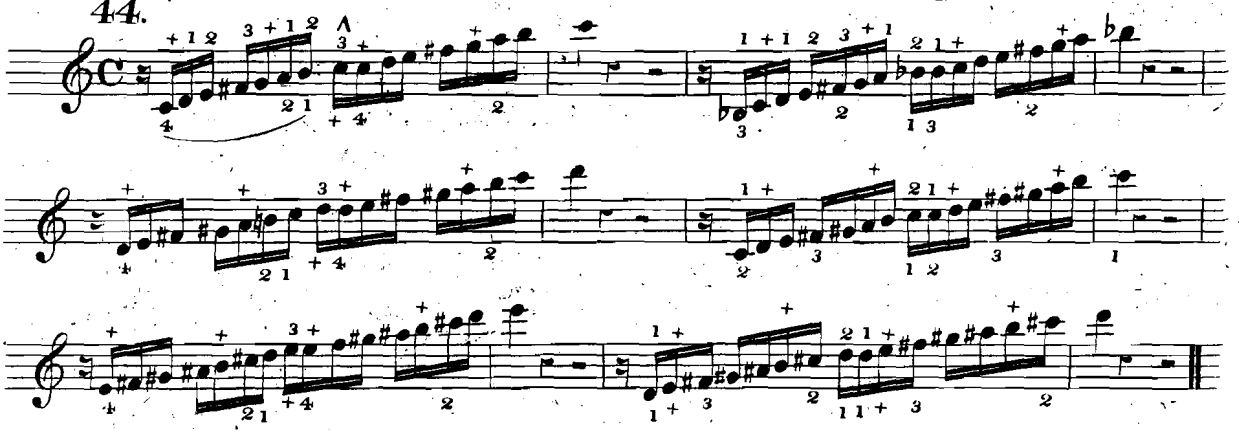

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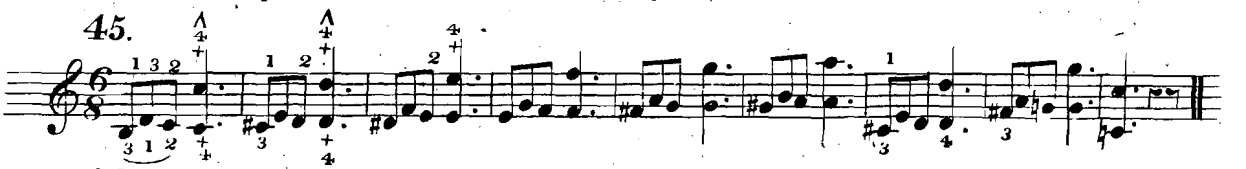
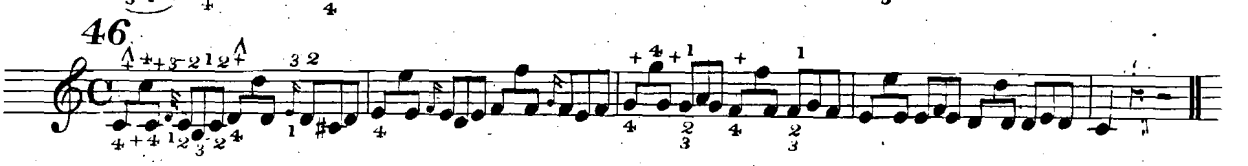
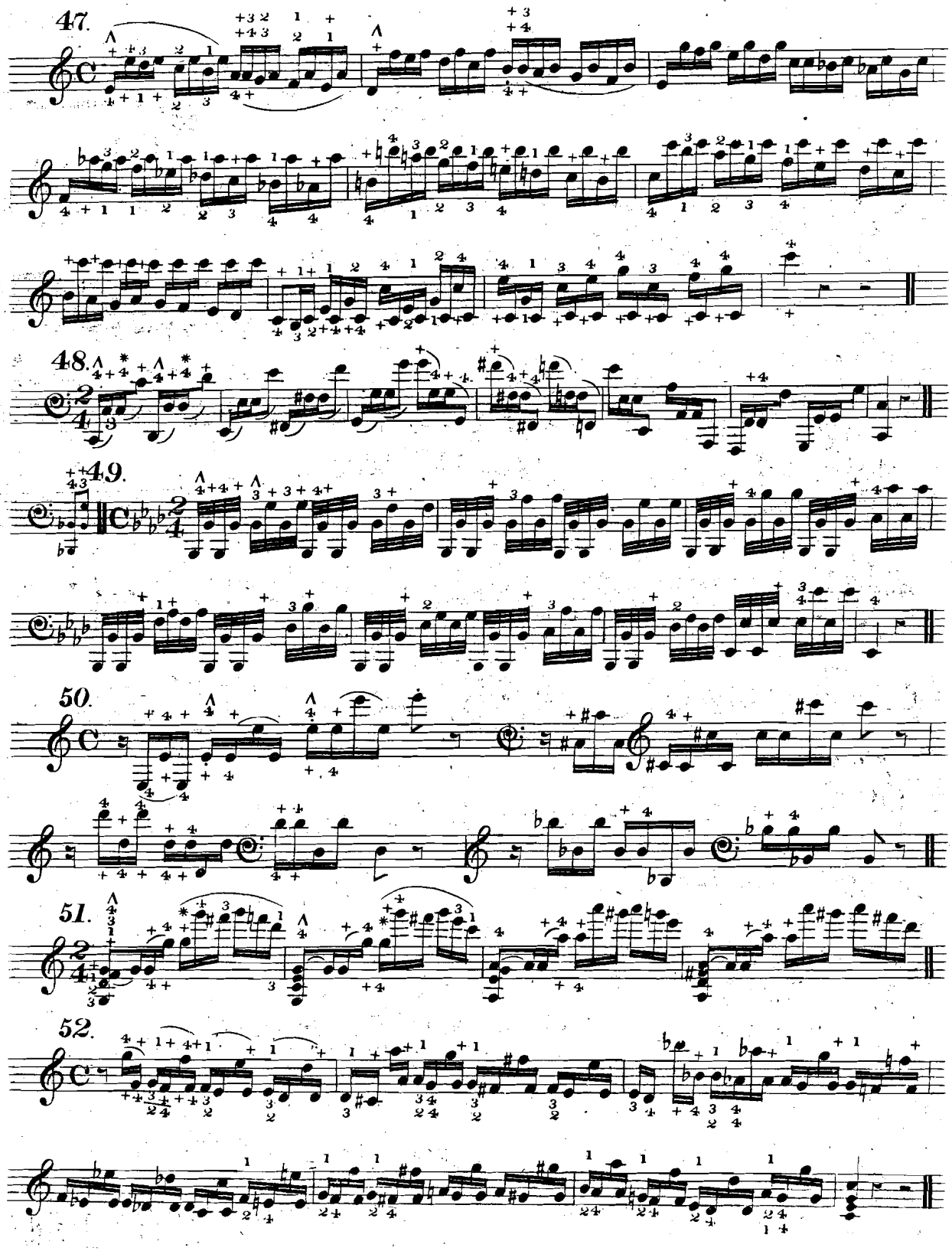
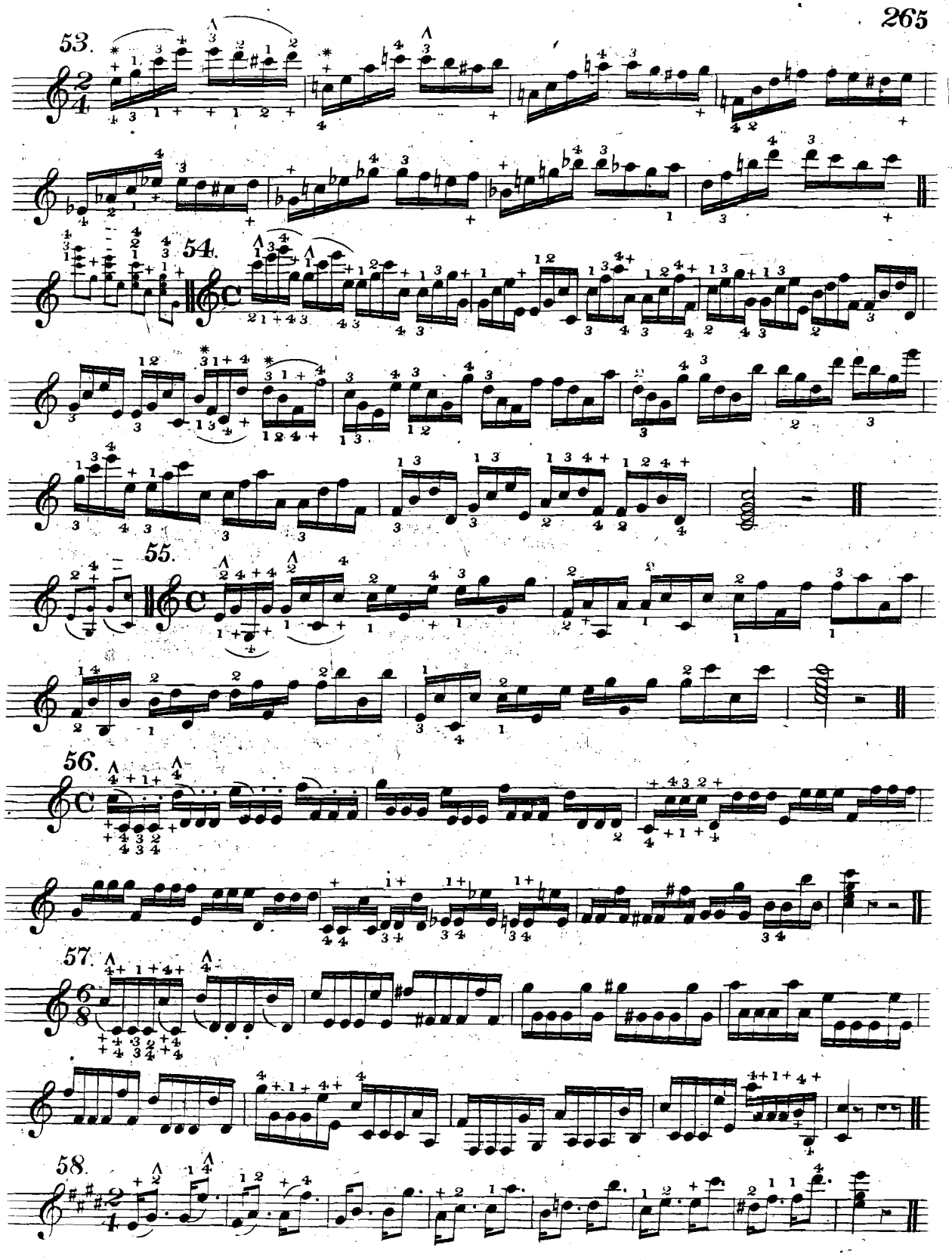


46.




47.
48.
49.
50.
51.
52.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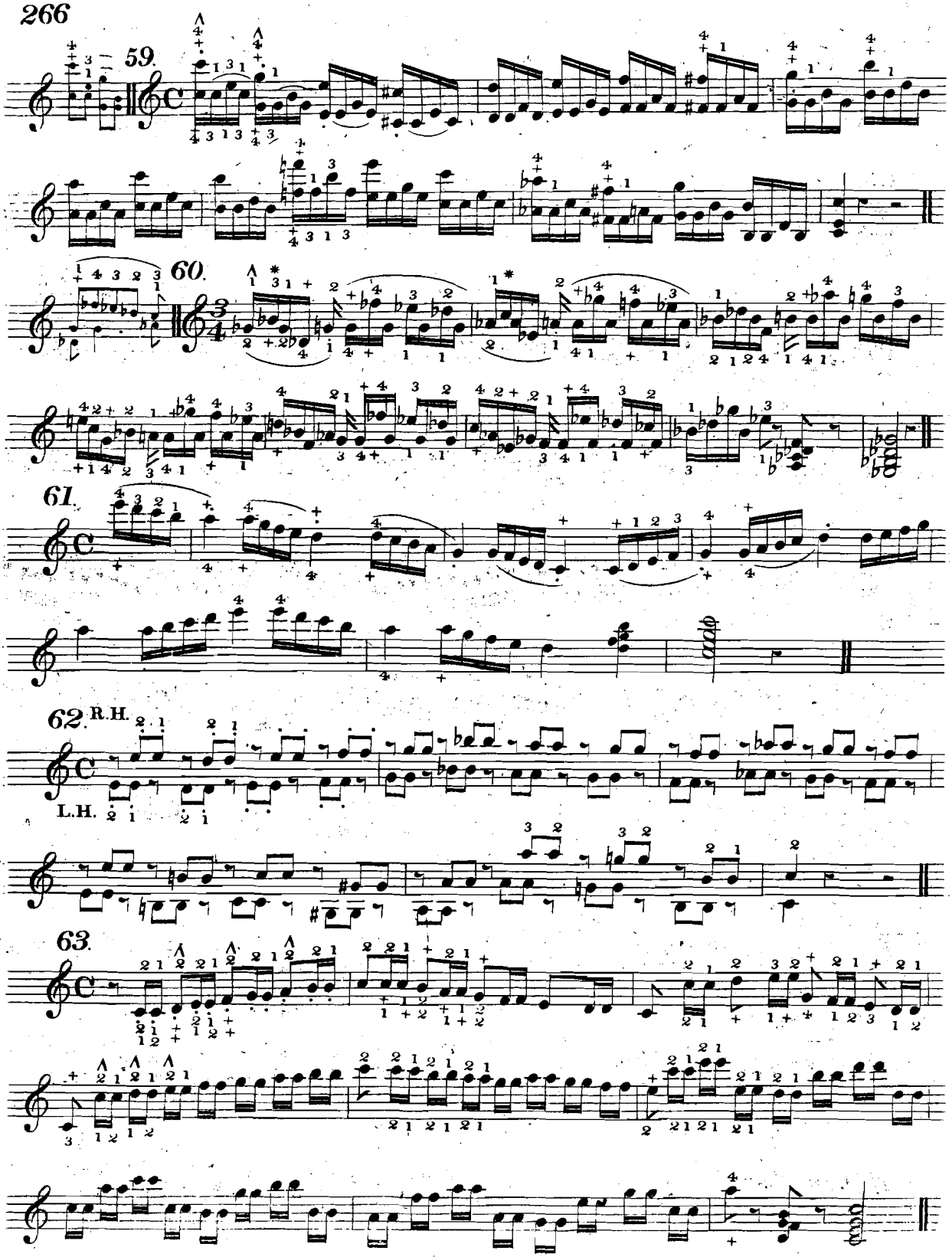
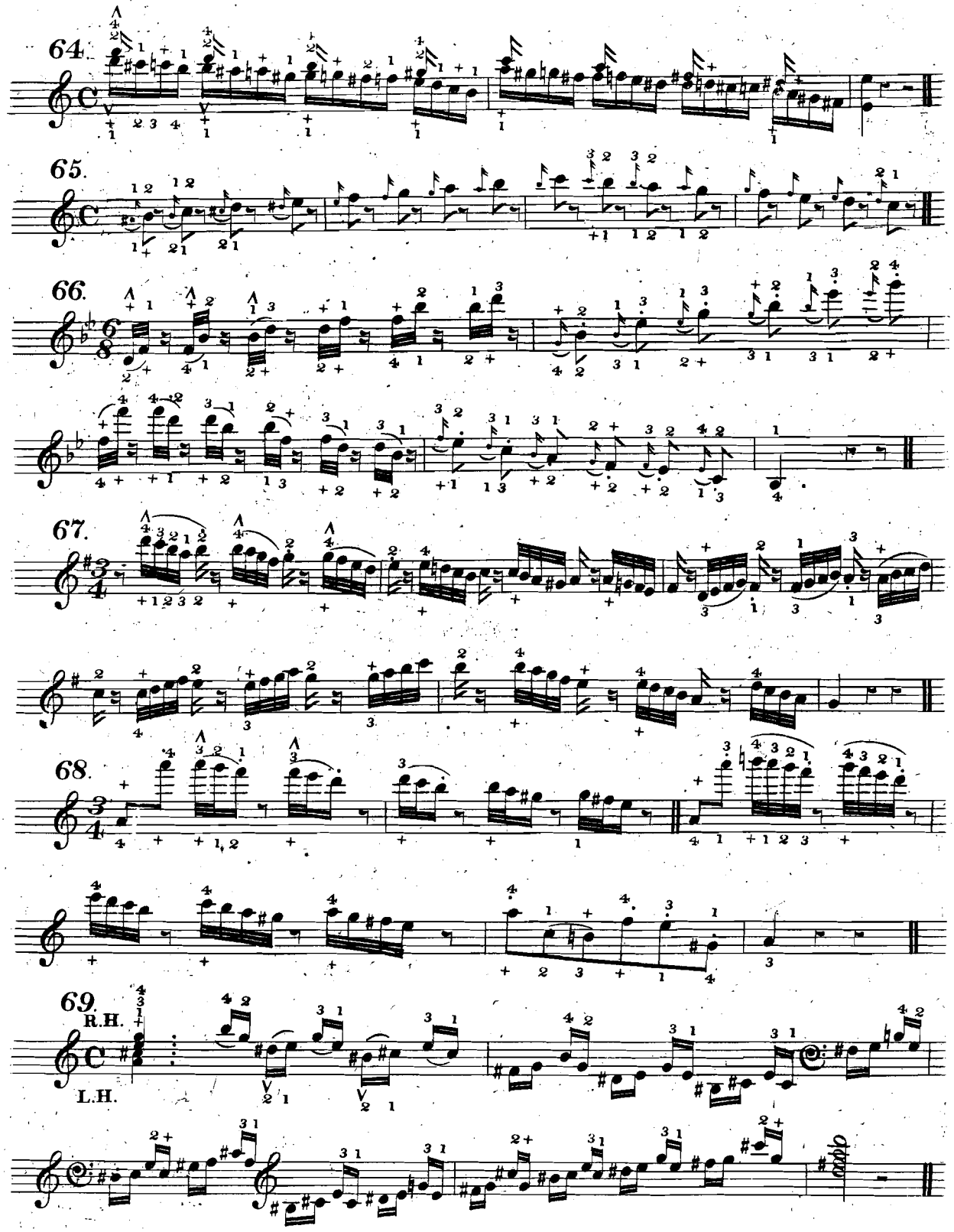
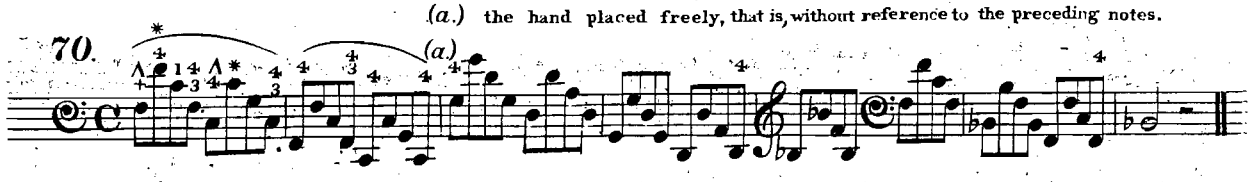
56.
57.
58.


59.
60.
61.
62. R.H.
L.H.
63.


64.
65.
66.
67.
68.
69.
R.H.
L.H.

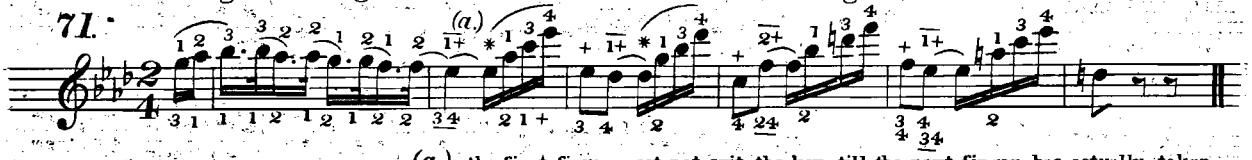
(a.) the hand placed freely, that is, without reference to the preceding notes.

70.



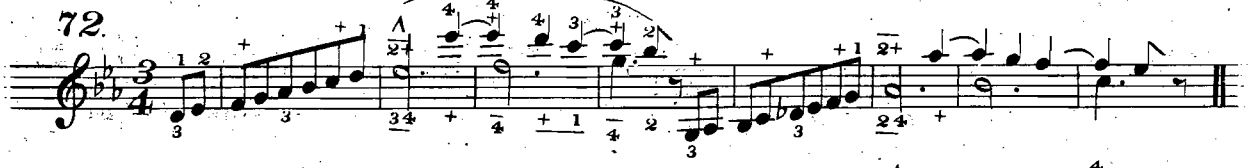
Change of finger on a note without restriking it.

71.

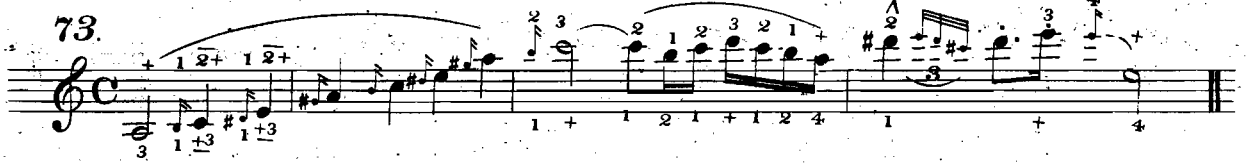


(a.) the first finger must not quit the key, till the next finger has actually taken possession of it.

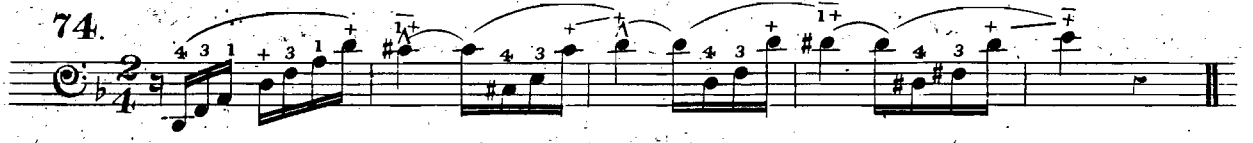
72.



73.

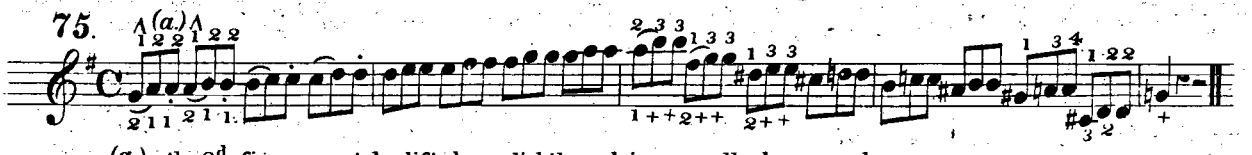


74.



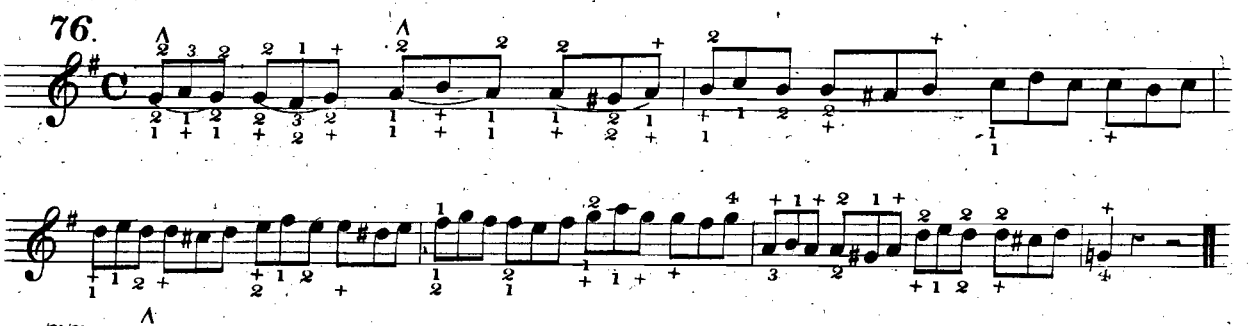
Employment of the same finger, on restriking the same note.

75.

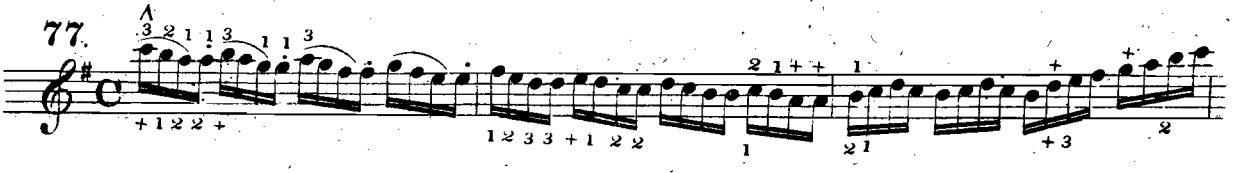


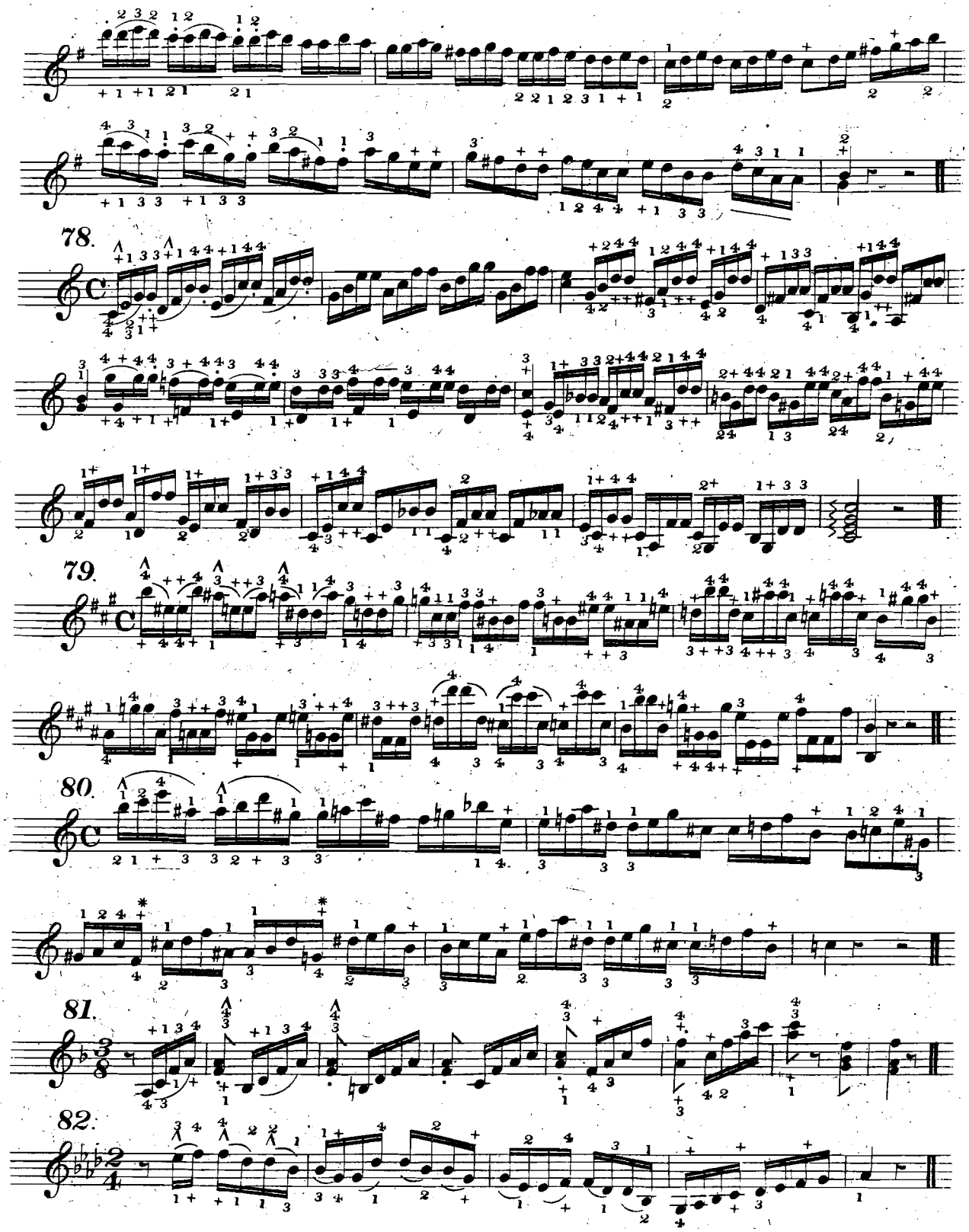
(a.) the 2d finger must be lifted up lightly and in a small degree only.

76.

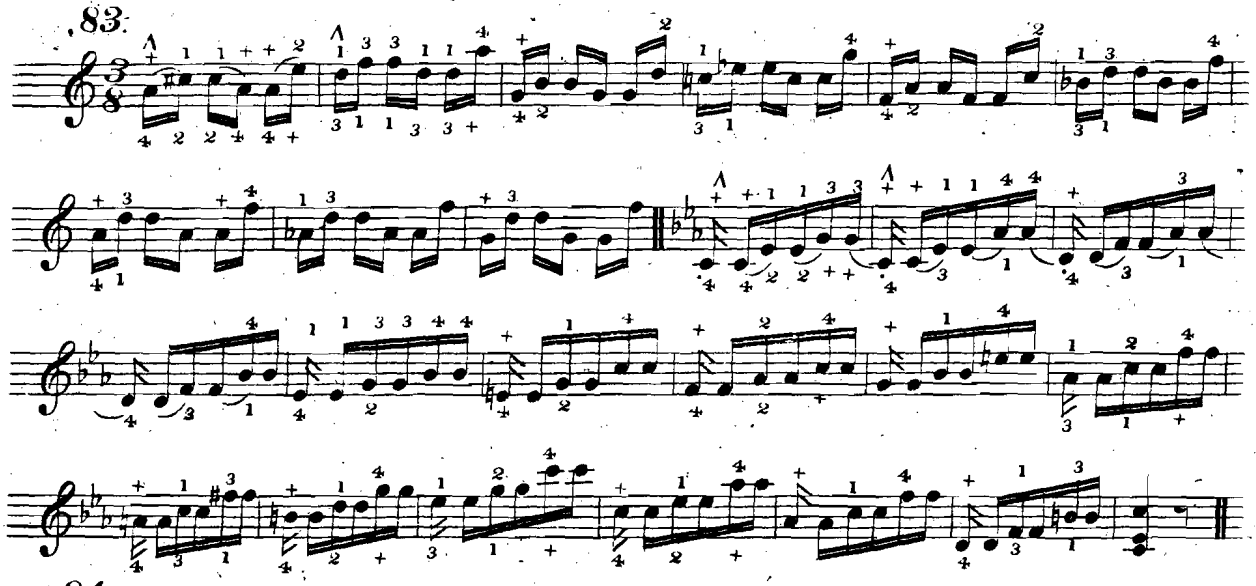


77.

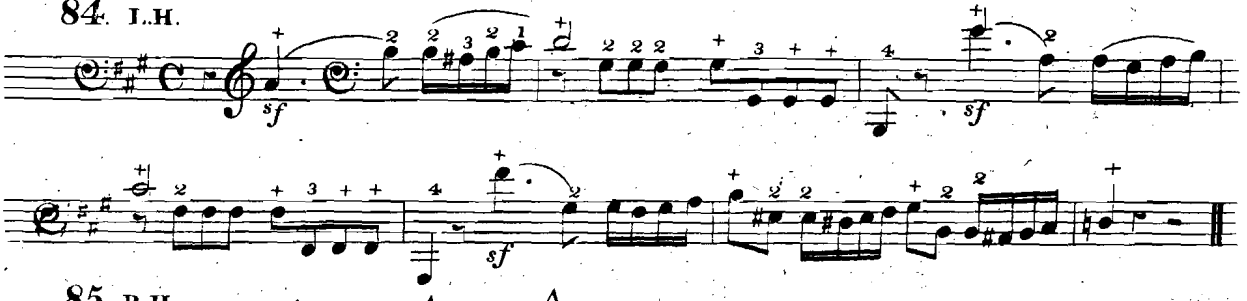



78.
79.
80.
81.
82.

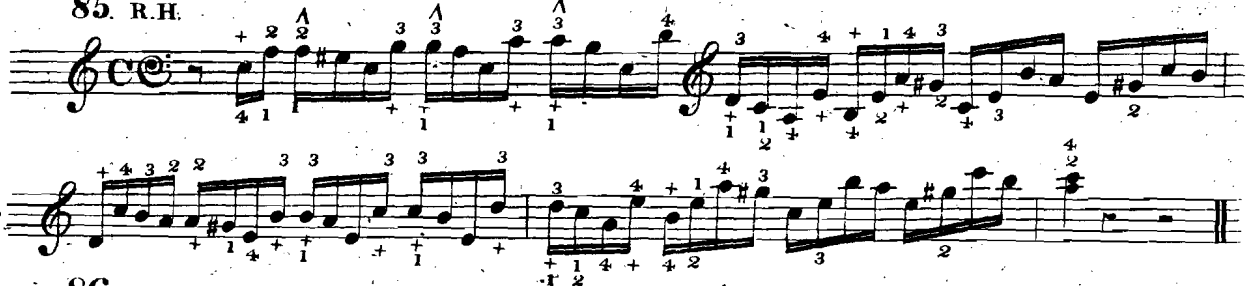
83.



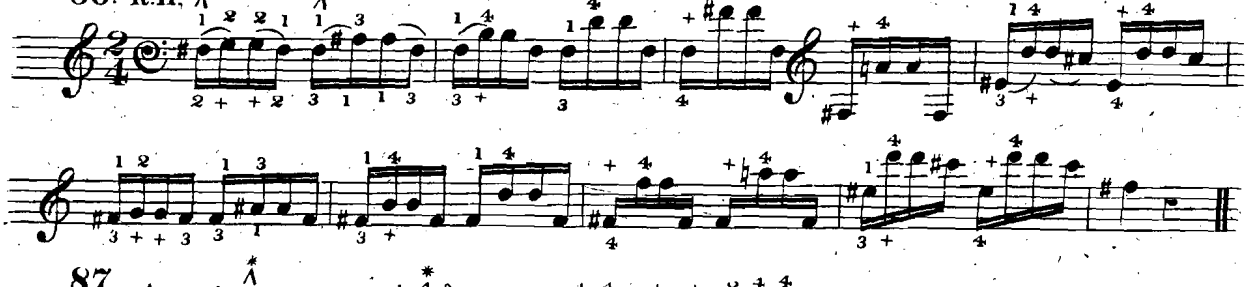
84. L.H.



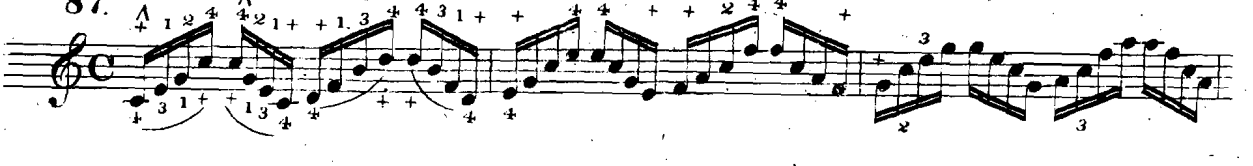
85. R.H.

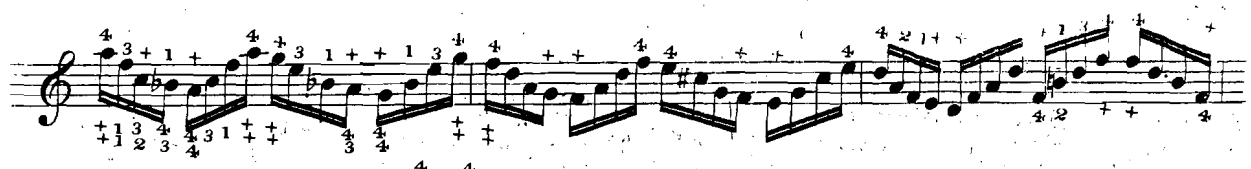


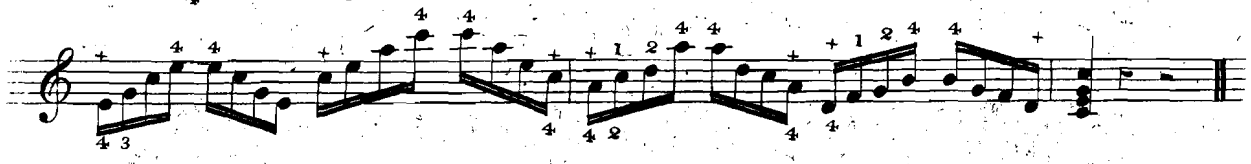
86. R.H.



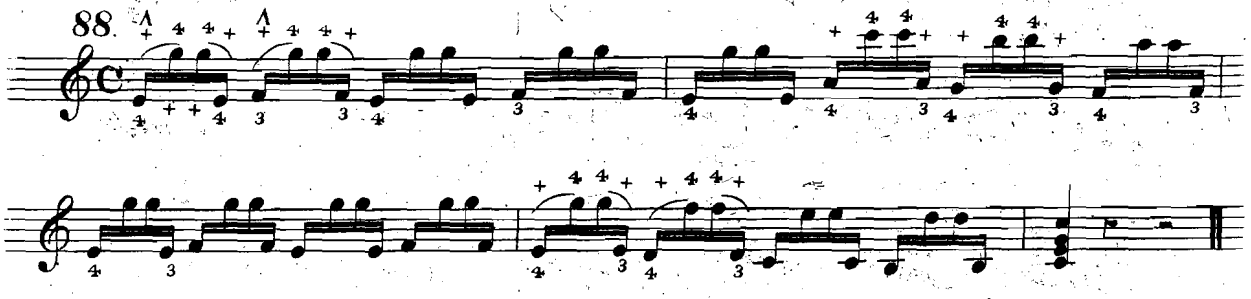
87.





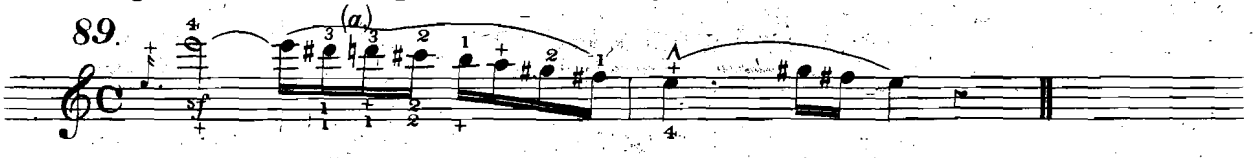


88.

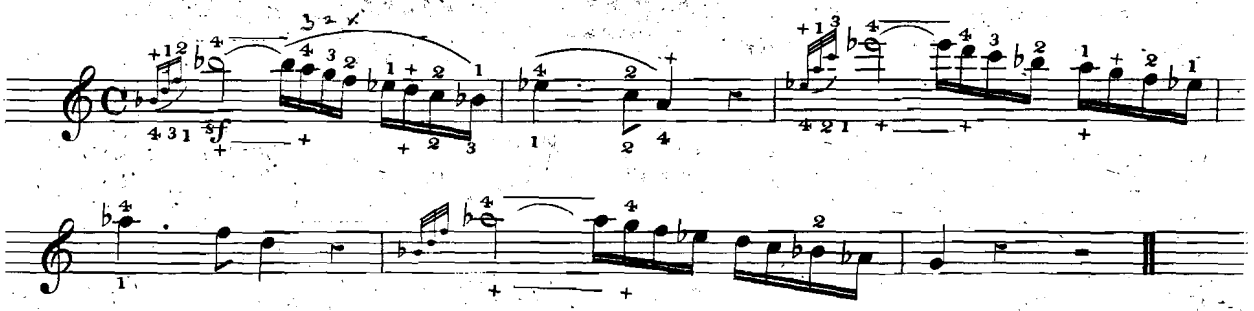


Sliding with the same finger, from a black key to the adjacent white key, above or below.

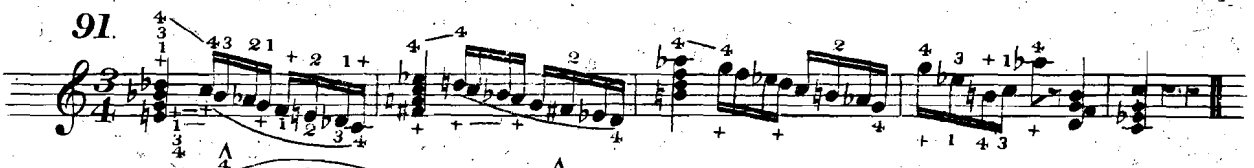
89.



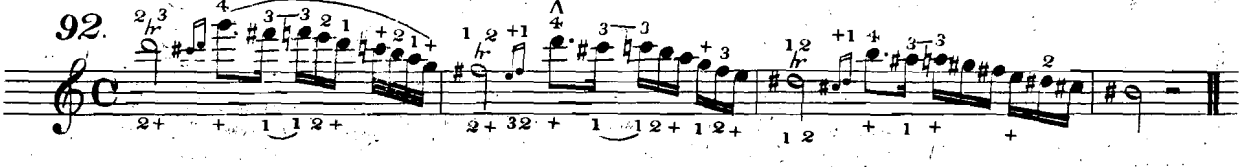
a. the finger, in gliding down is, drawn somewhat backwards



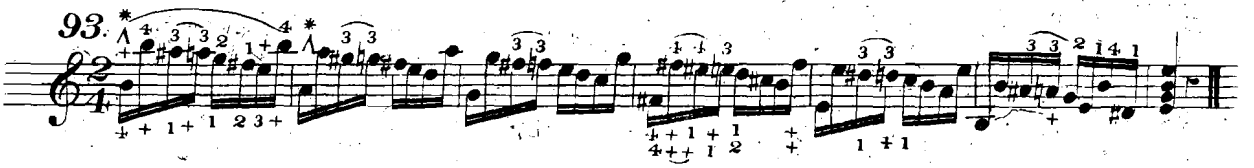
91.



92.



93.



94. (a)

a. The finger is lightly drawn from one key on to the other, without being lifted up.

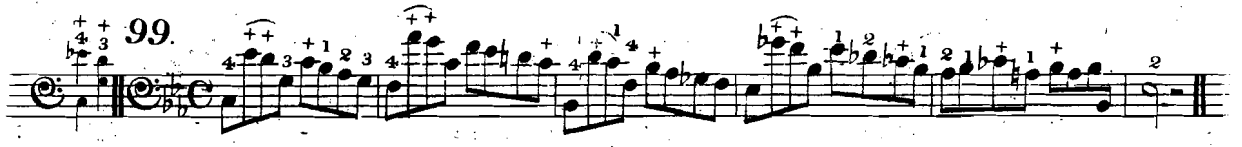
95.

96.

97.

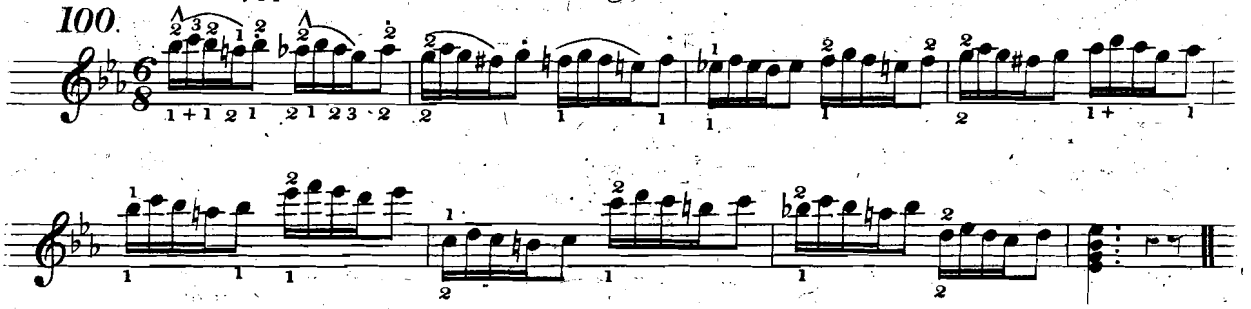
98.

99.

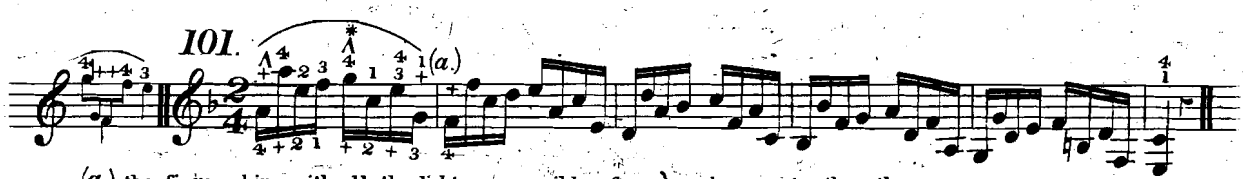


Successive application of the same finger on two or more different keys.

100.

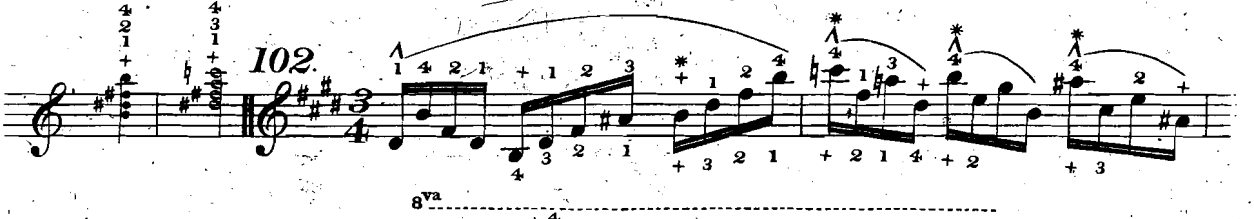


101.

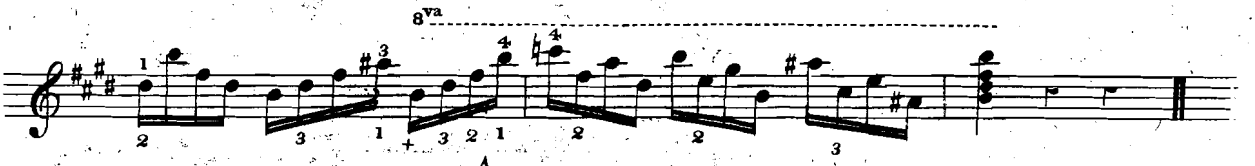


(a.) the finger skips with all the lightness possible from one key on to the other.

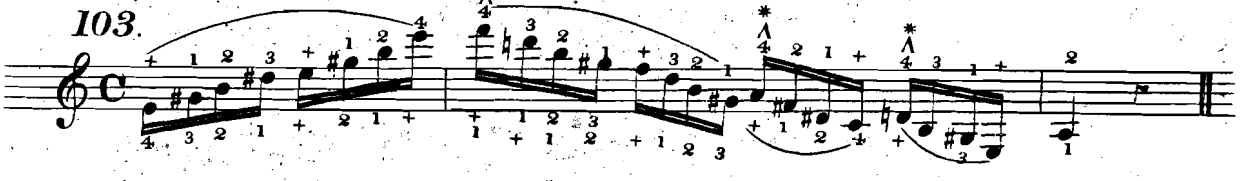
102.



8va



103.



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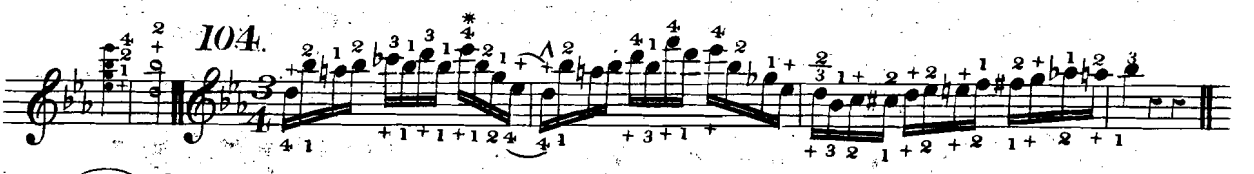
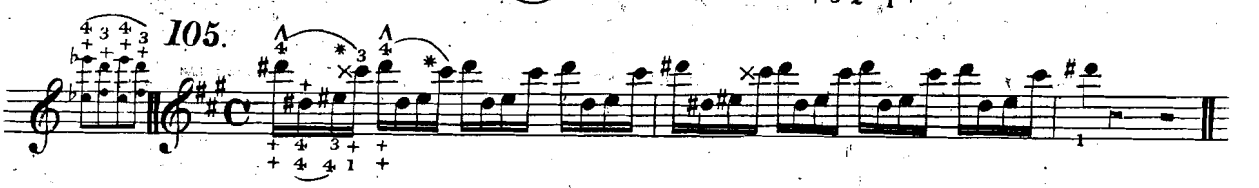
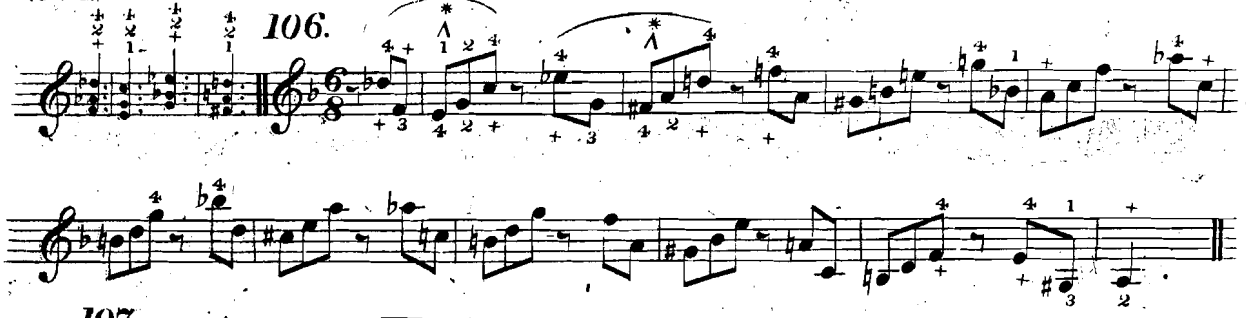


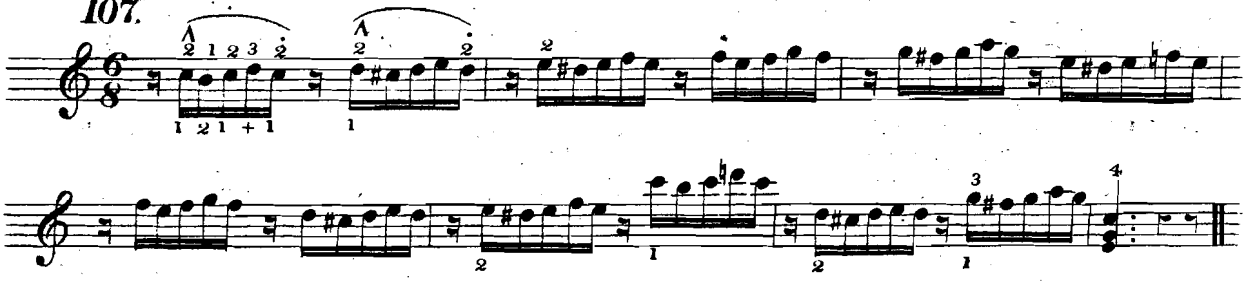
105.



106.



107.



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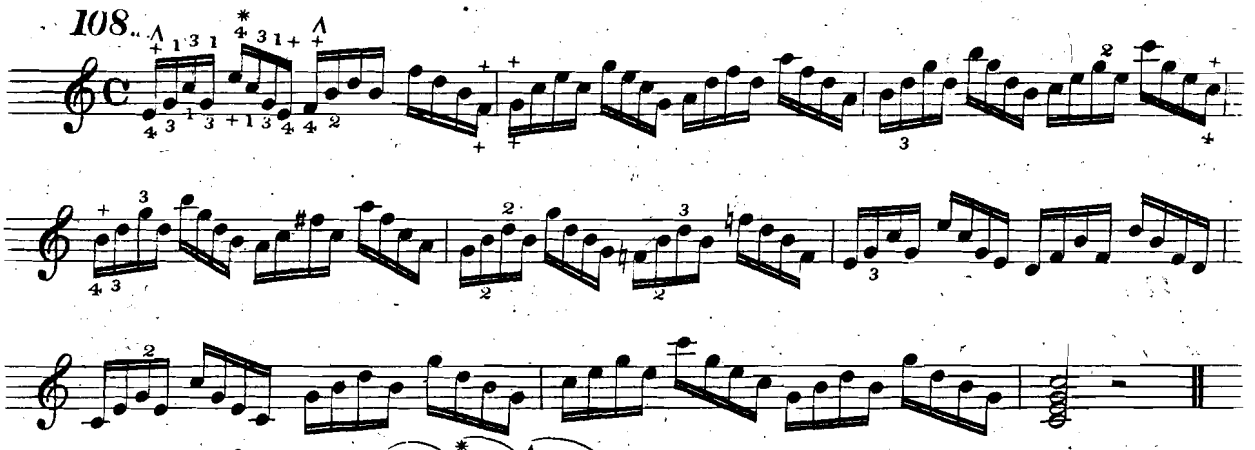
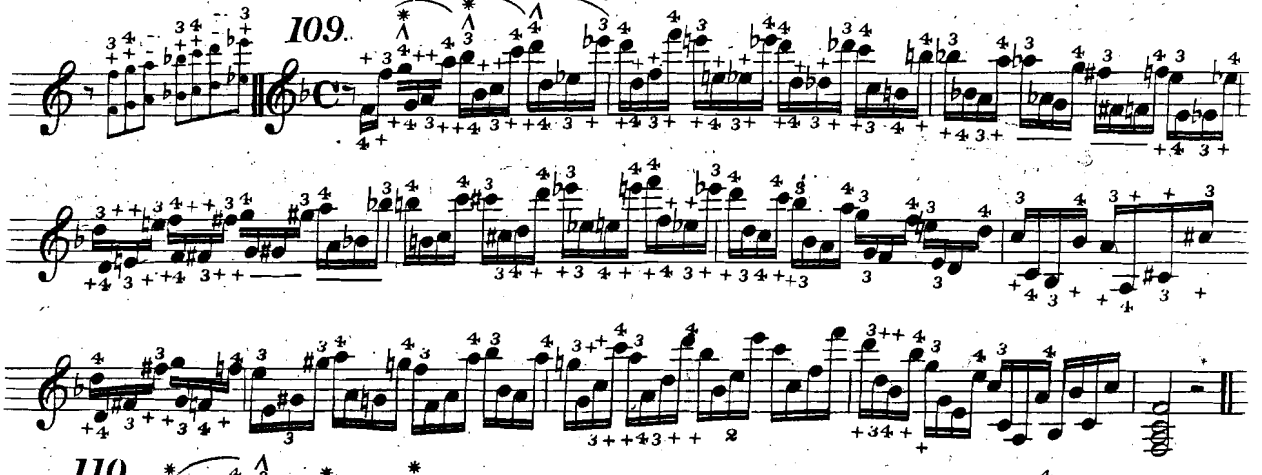
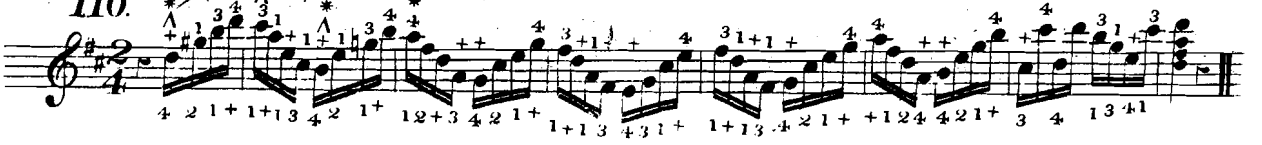
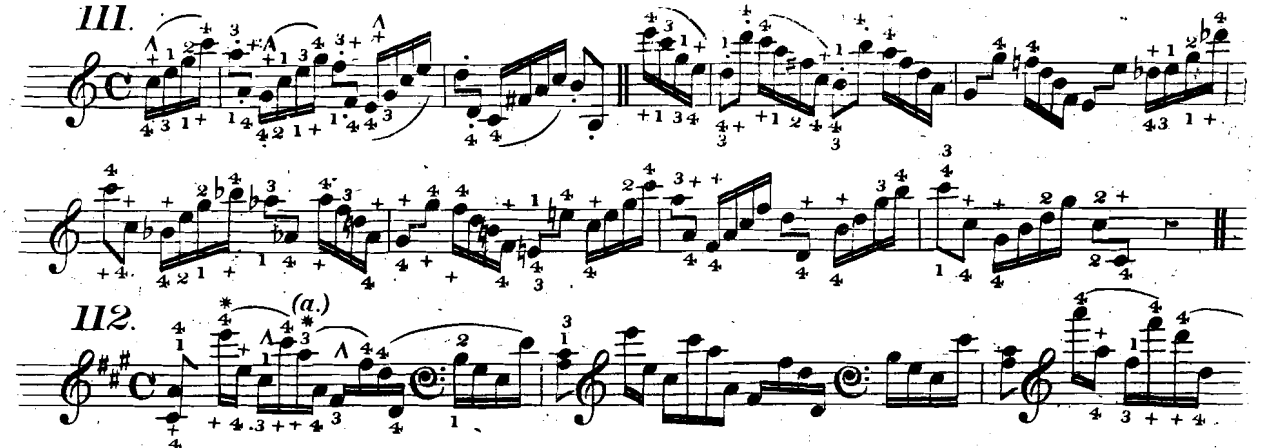


109.

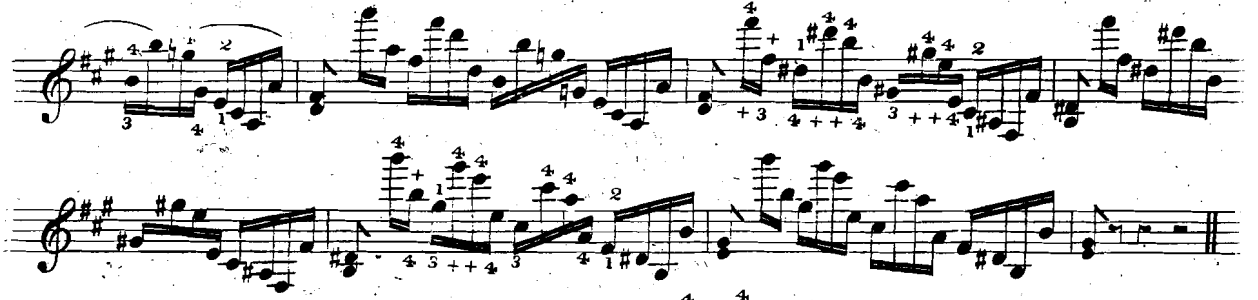


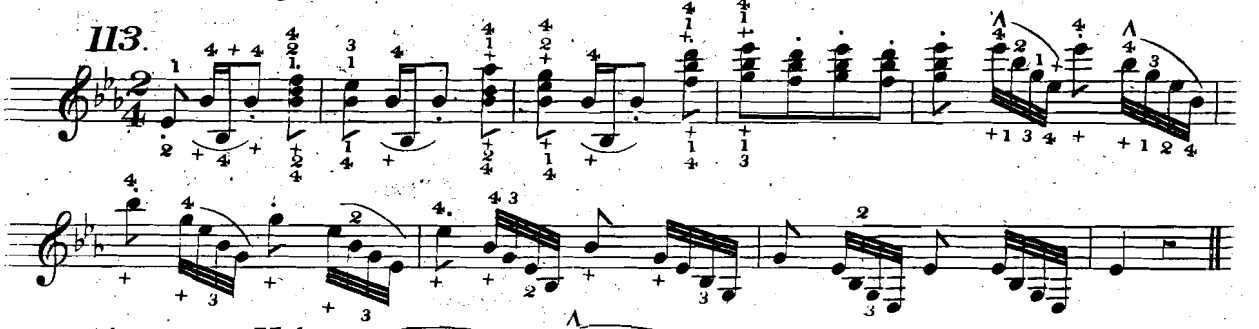
110.

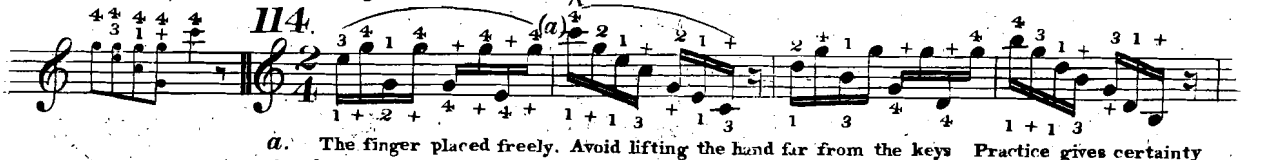




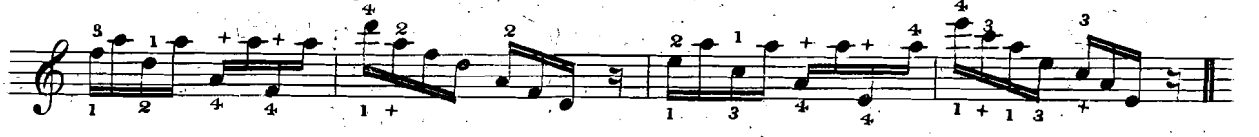
(a.) The finger is imperceptibly lifted up, and, as it were, slidden over to the other key. The hand must avoid all unnecessary movement.

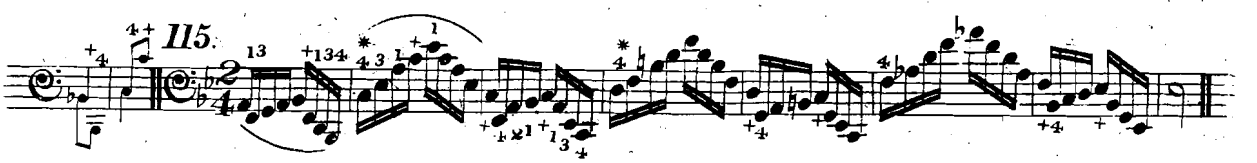






a. The finger placed freely. Avoid lifting the hand far from the keys. Practice gives certainty in the performance.





116.

117.

118.

119.

120.

ten.

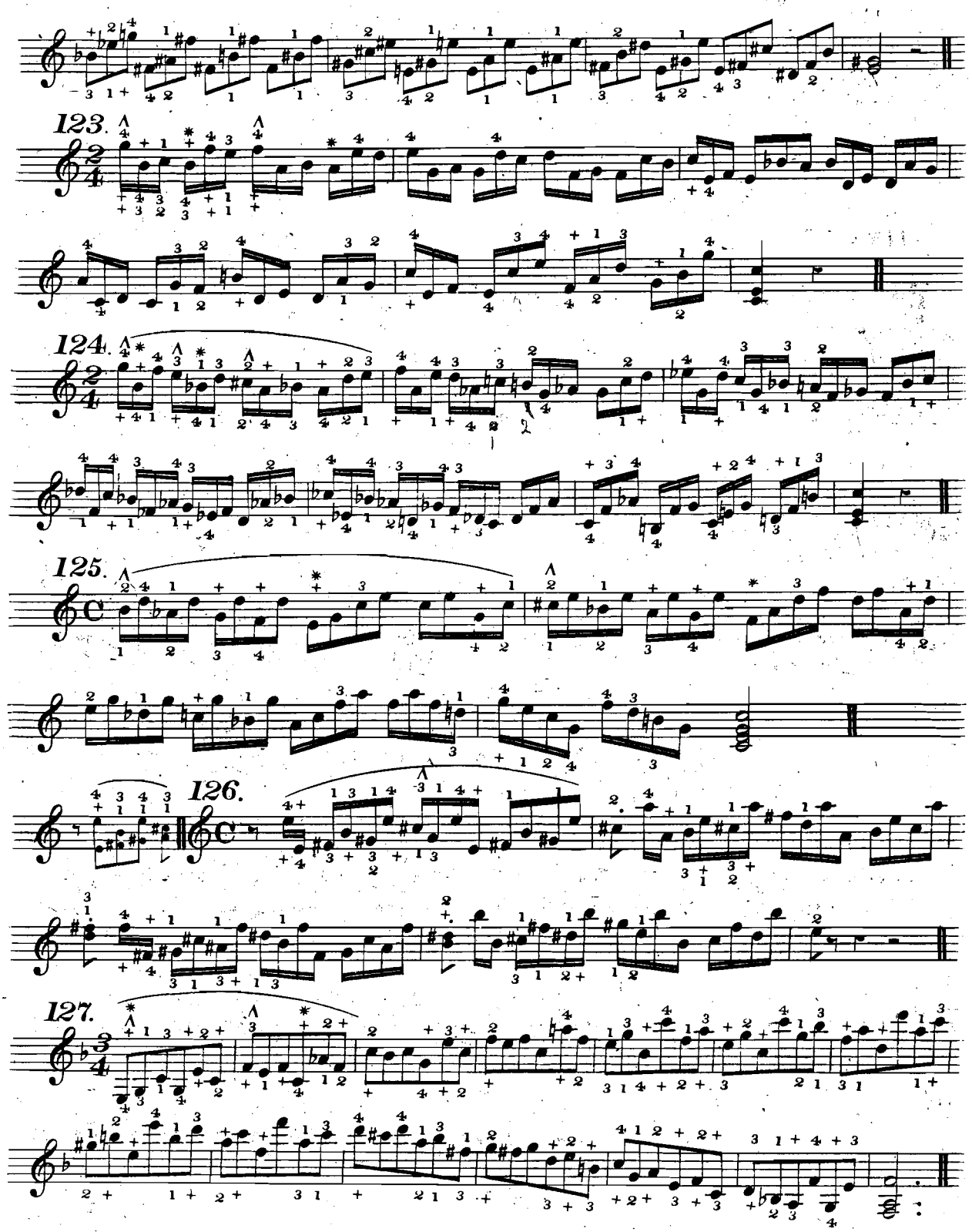
Moving forwards with the same finger on two different keys.

121.

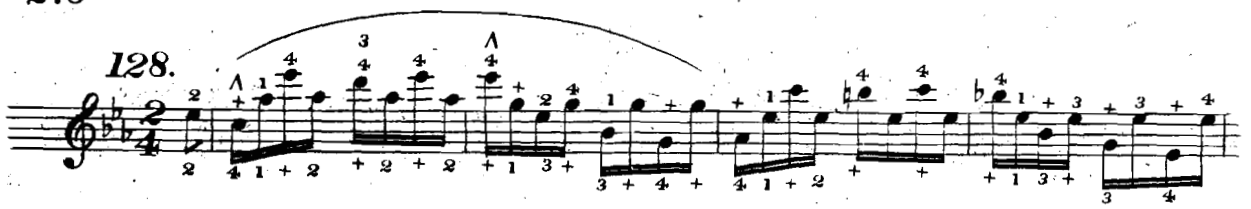
(a.)

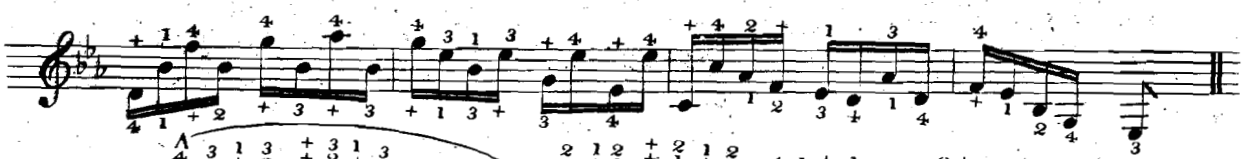
(a.) The finger to be moved forwards, must hardly be lifted up, but rather made to glide on to the other key.

122.

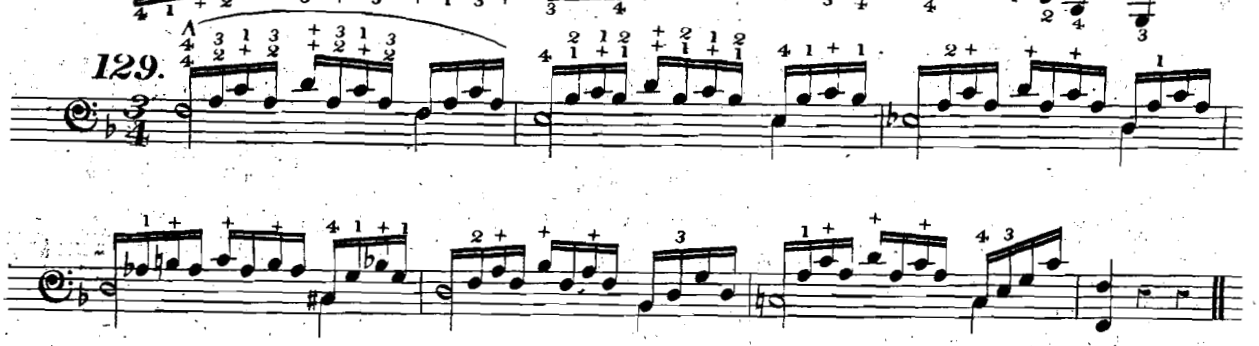

123.
124.
125.
126.
127.

128.





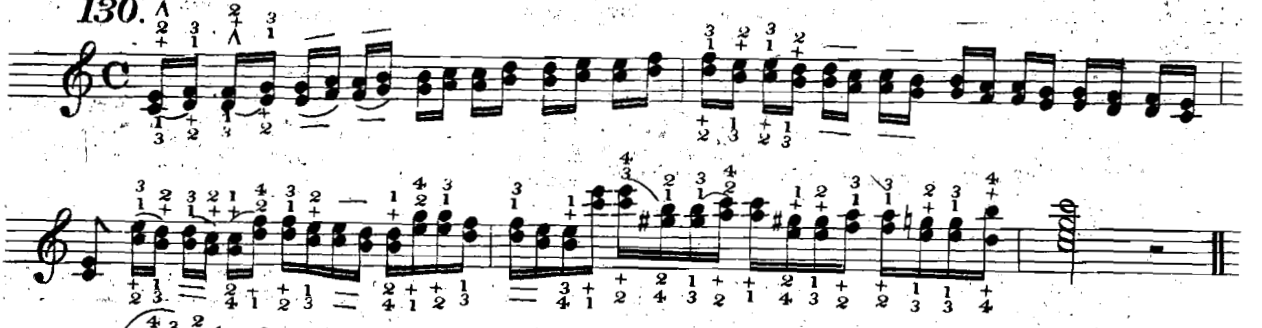
129.



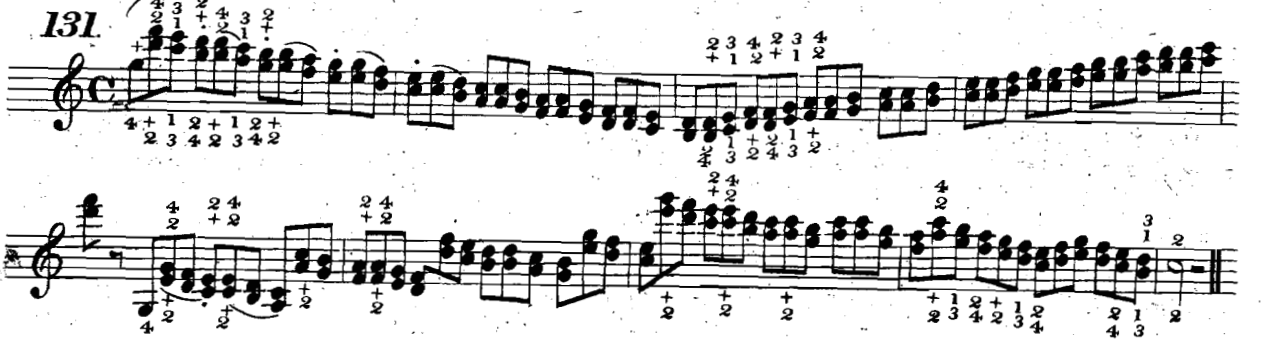
Examples in several parts.

Changing fingers on the same notes upon restriking them.

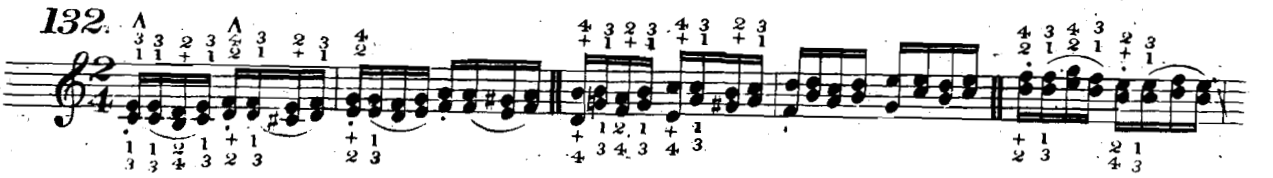
130.

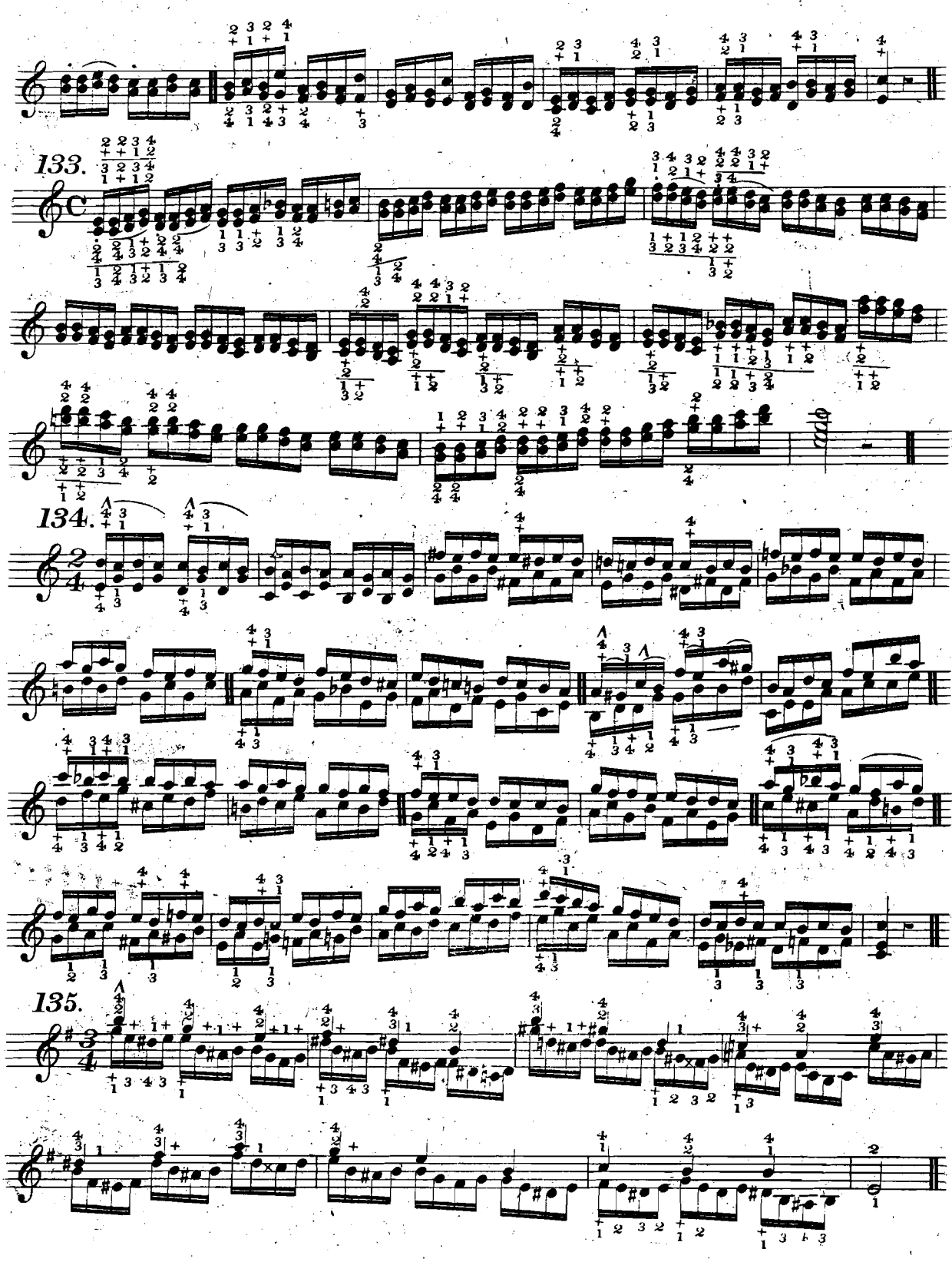


131.



132.




133.
134.
135.

136.

137.

138.

139.

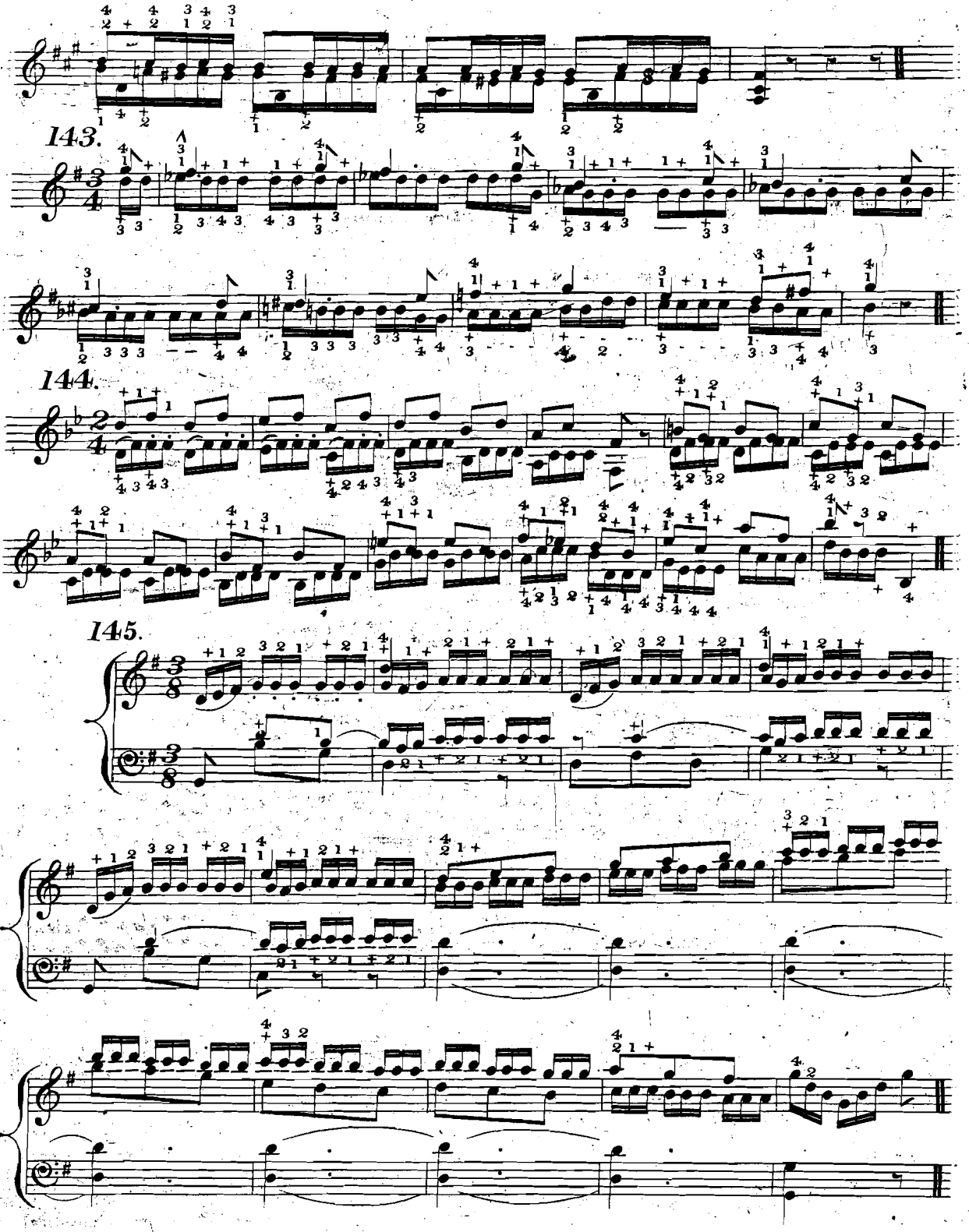
(a.)

140.

(a.) the hand must be lifted up quite imperceptibly.

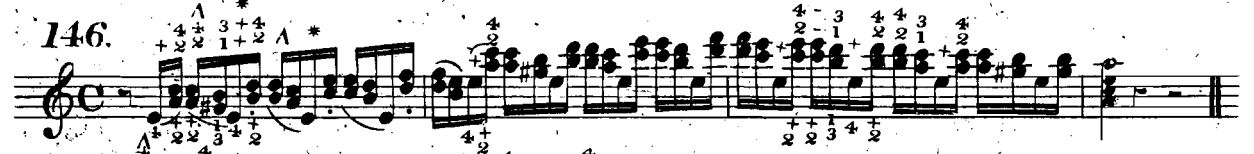
141.

142.


143.
144.
145.

 Using the same fingers upon reiterating the notes.

146.



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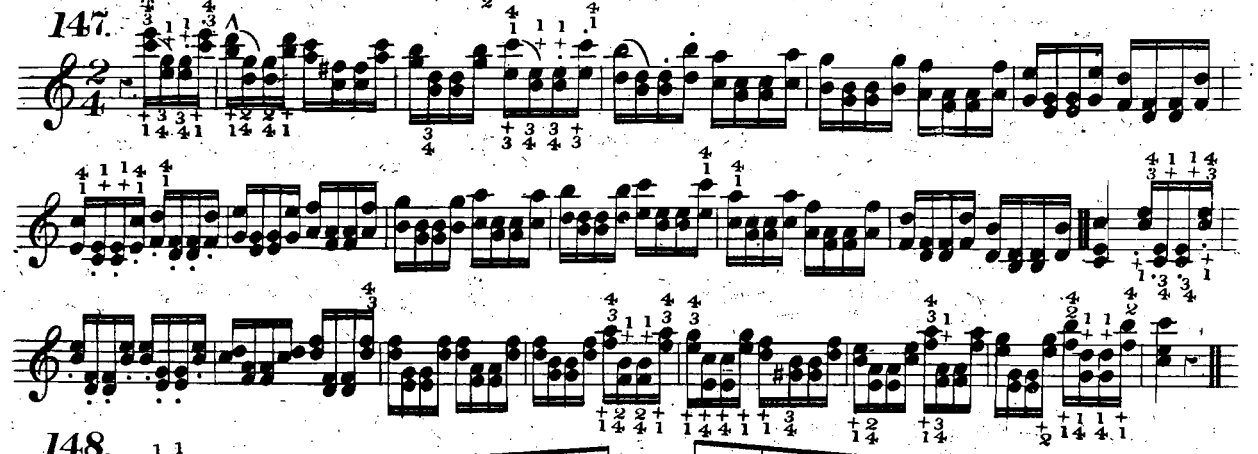

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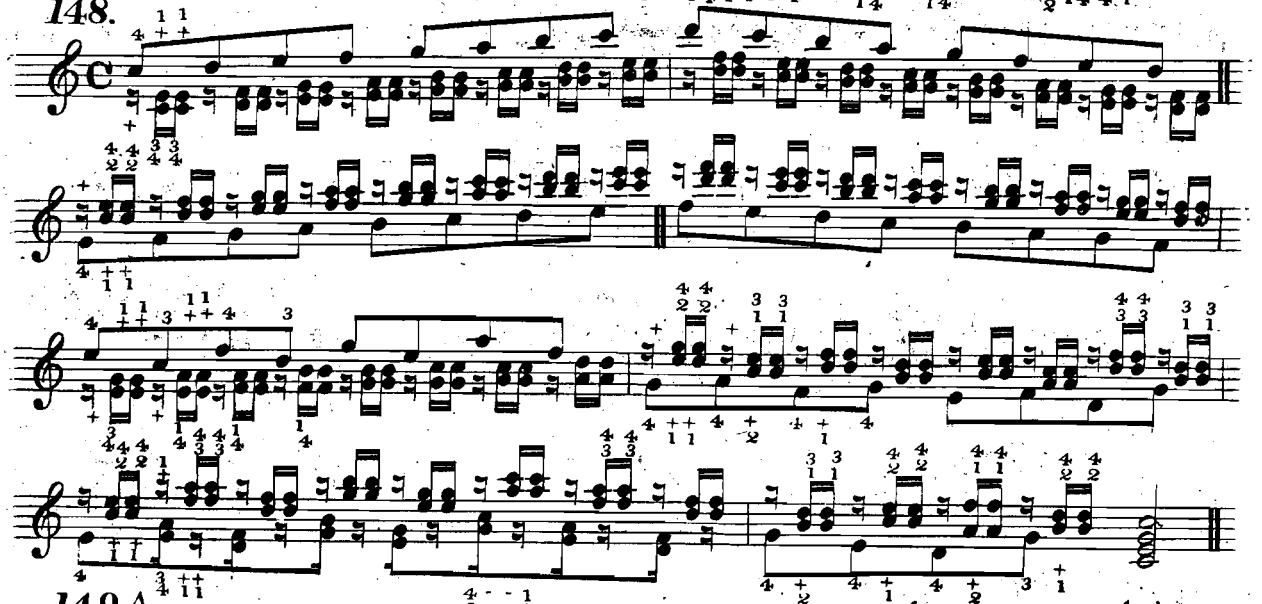

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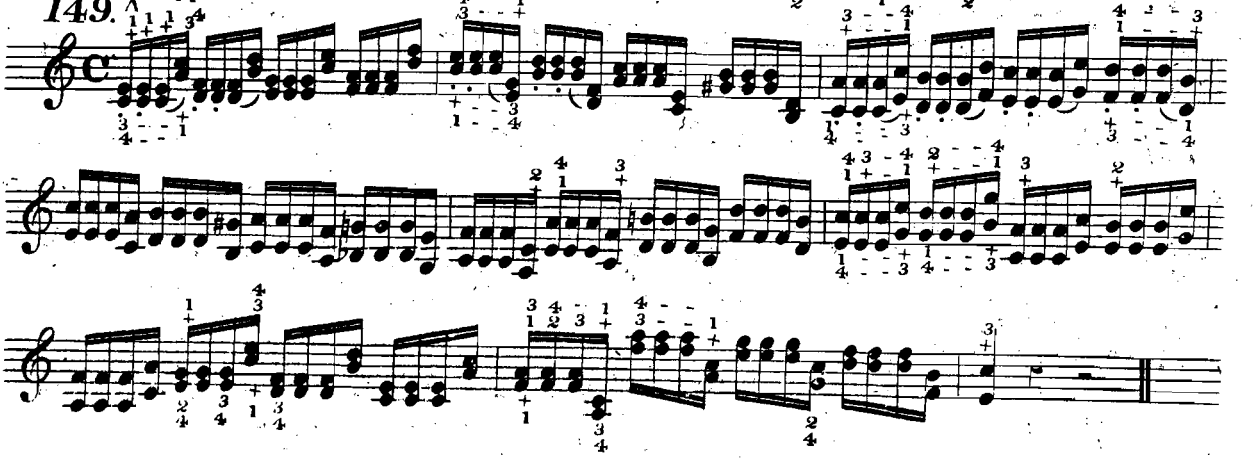

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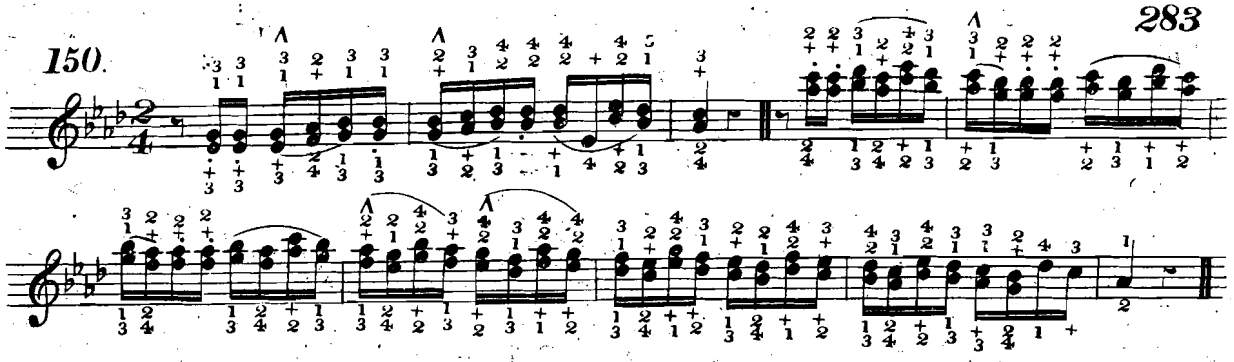
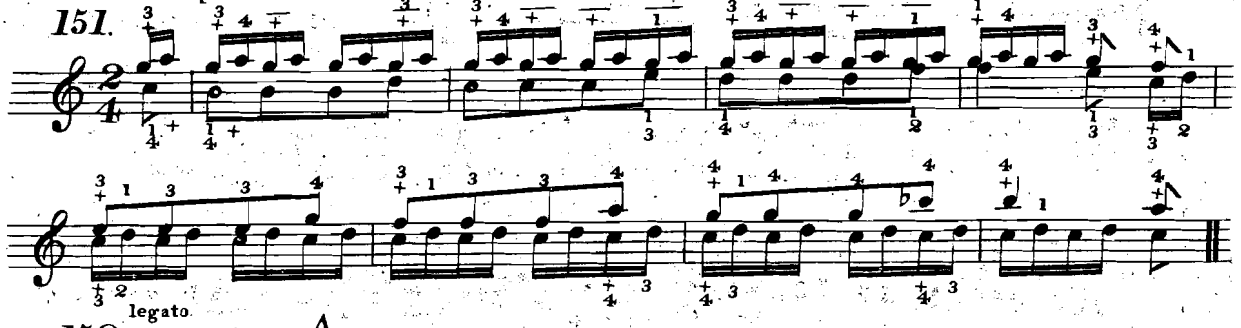


Repeated and successive use of the same finger on different keys.

151.



legato.

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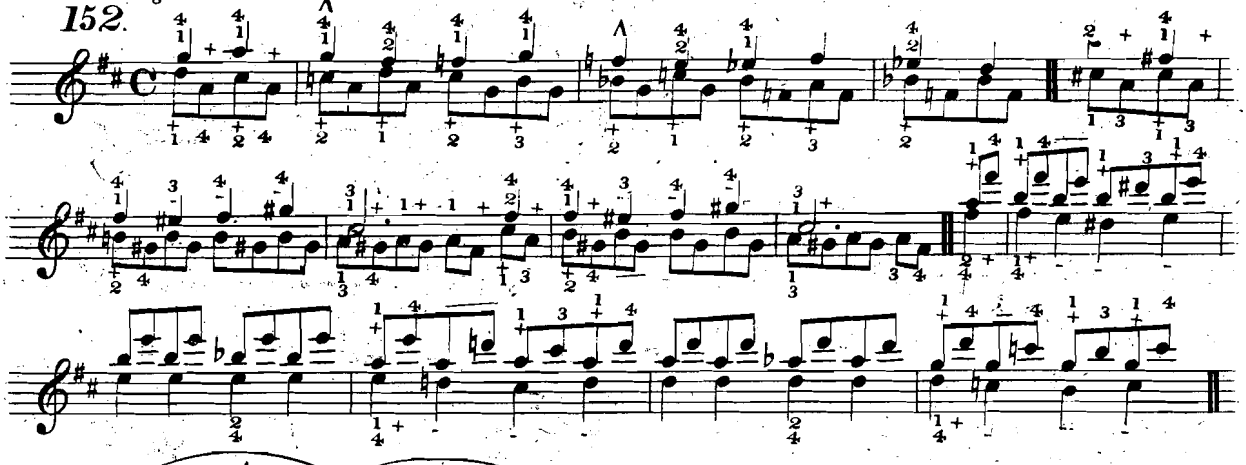

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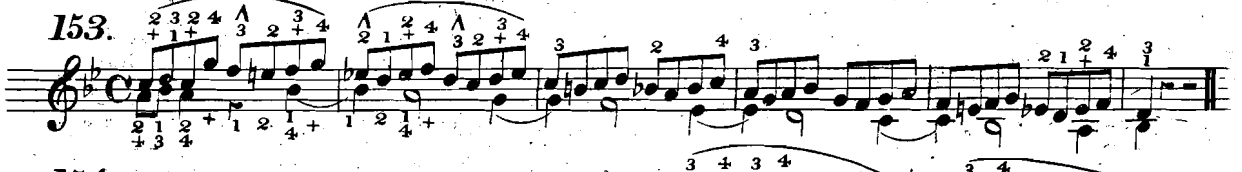

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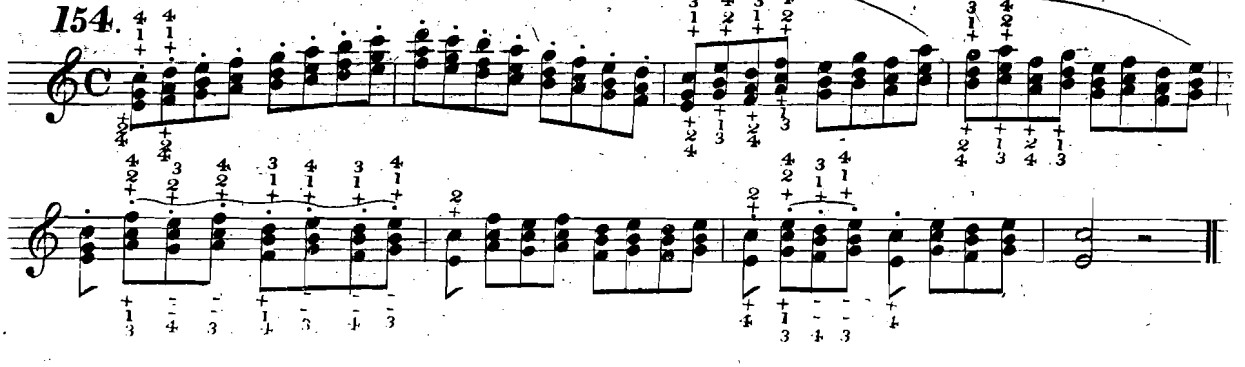

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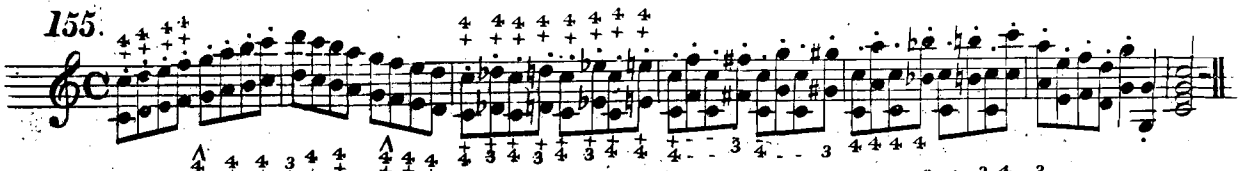

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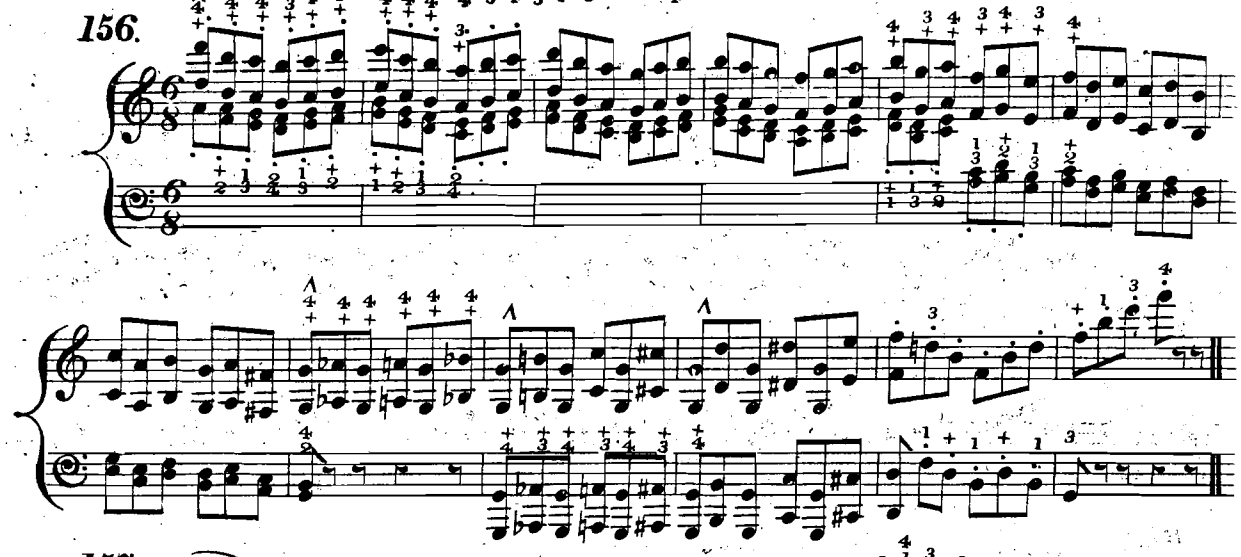

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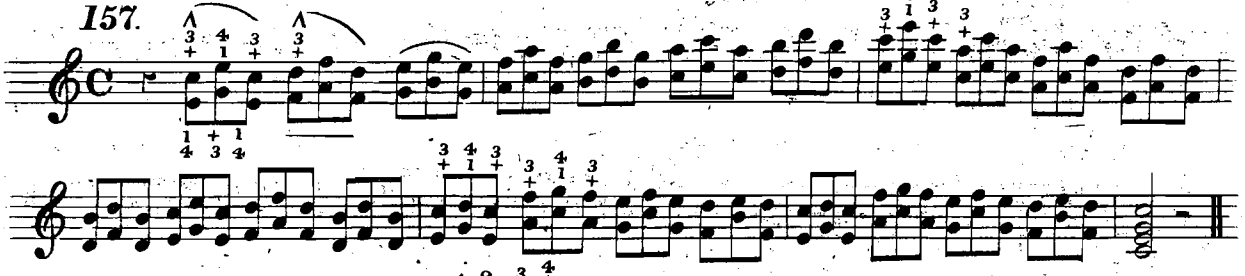

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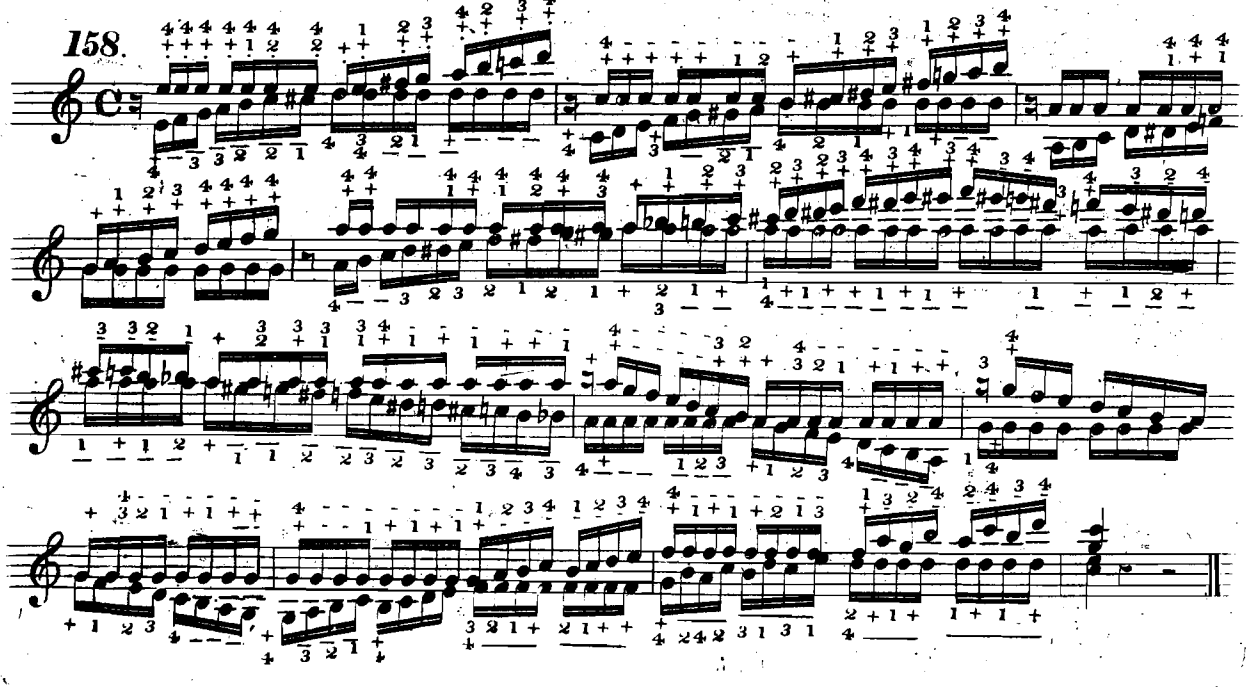

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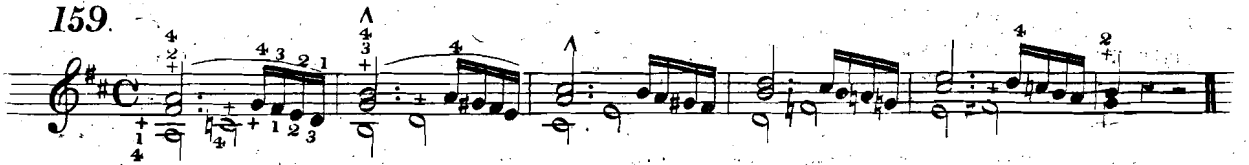

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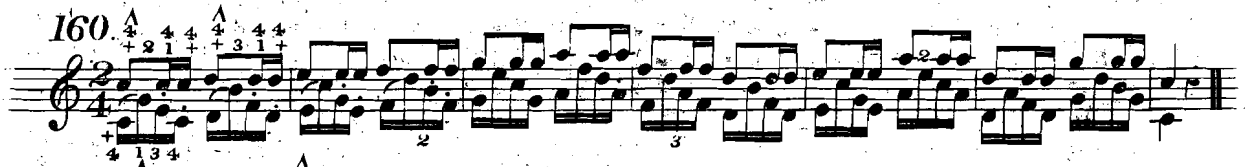

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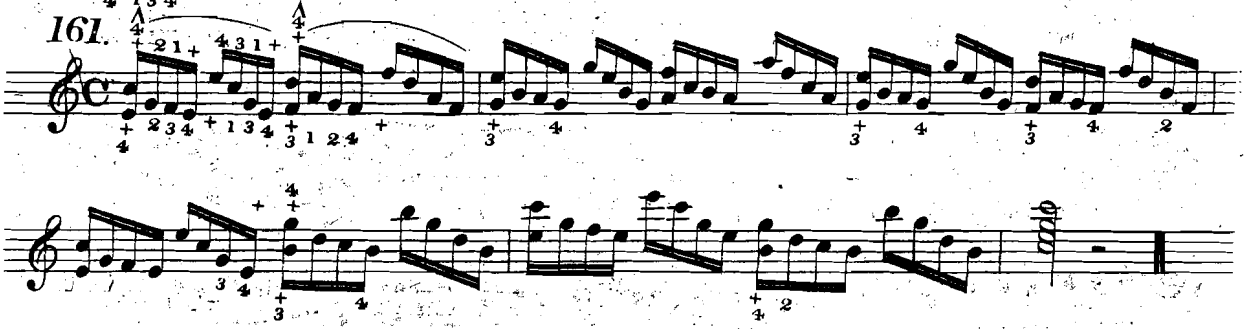

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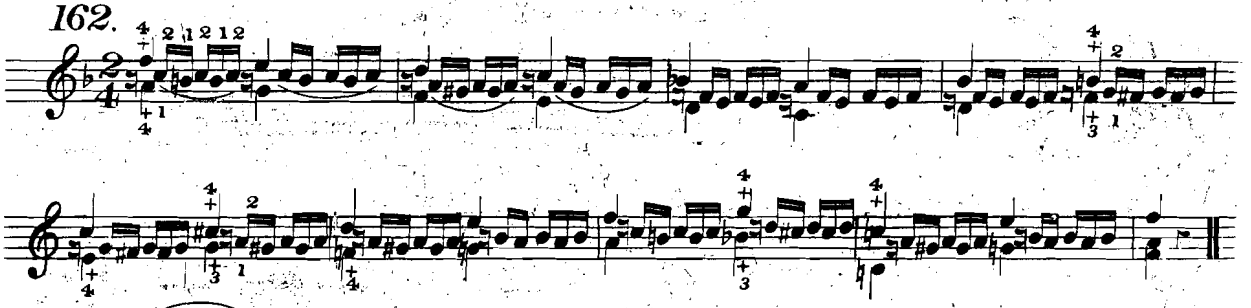

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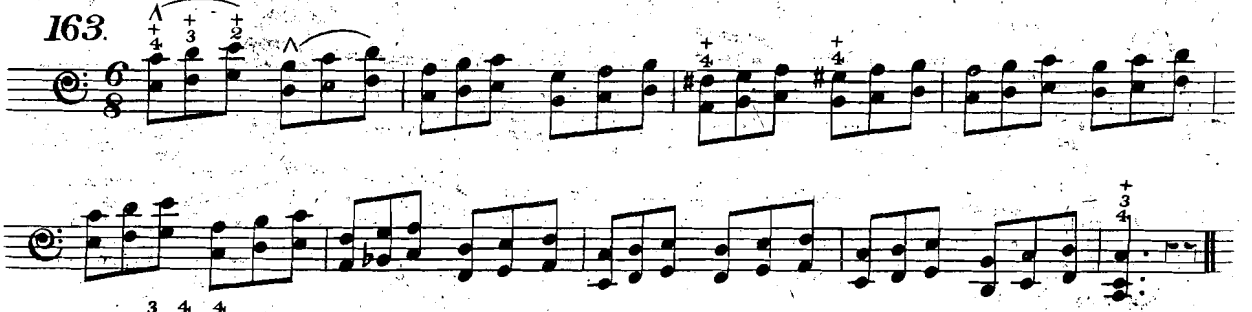

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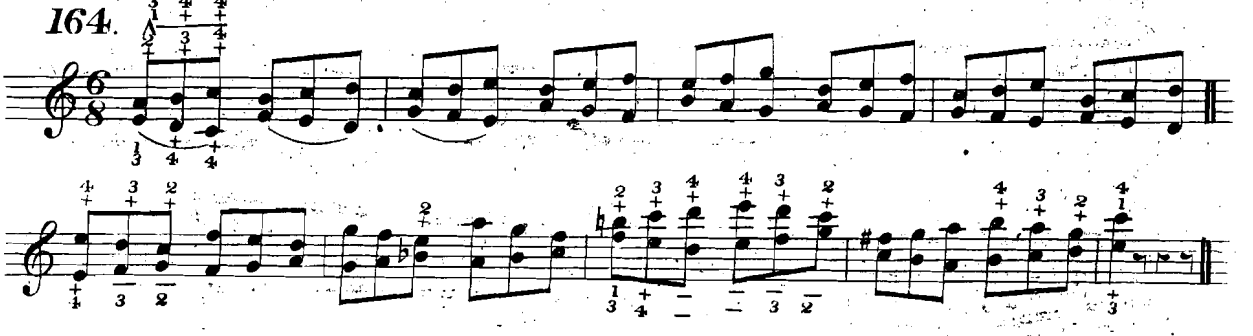

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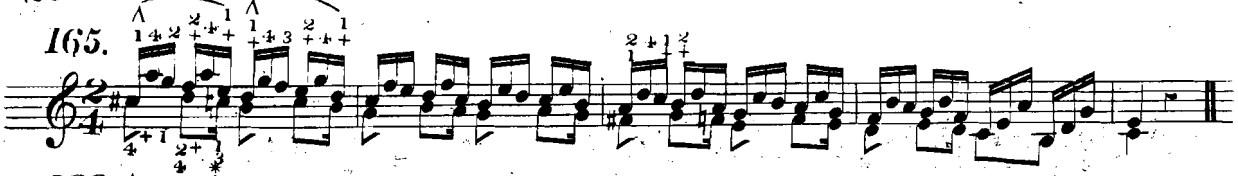

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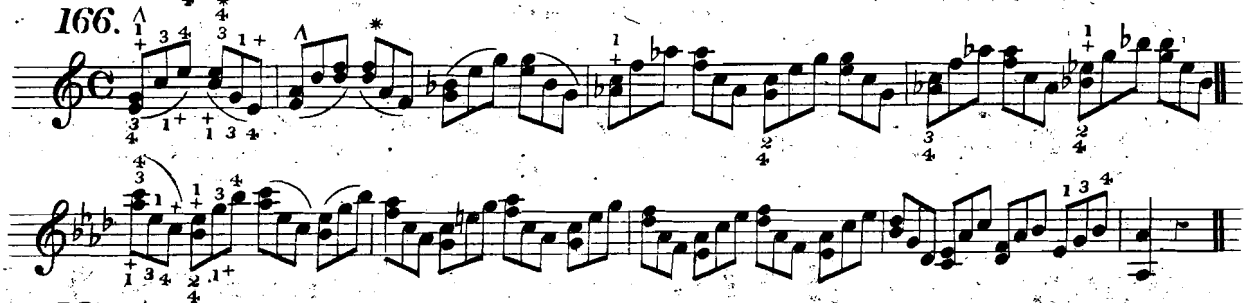

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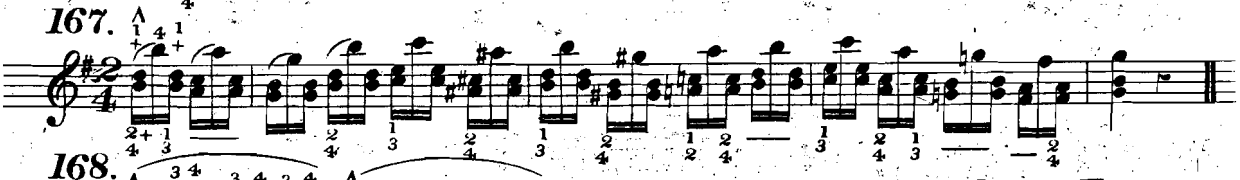

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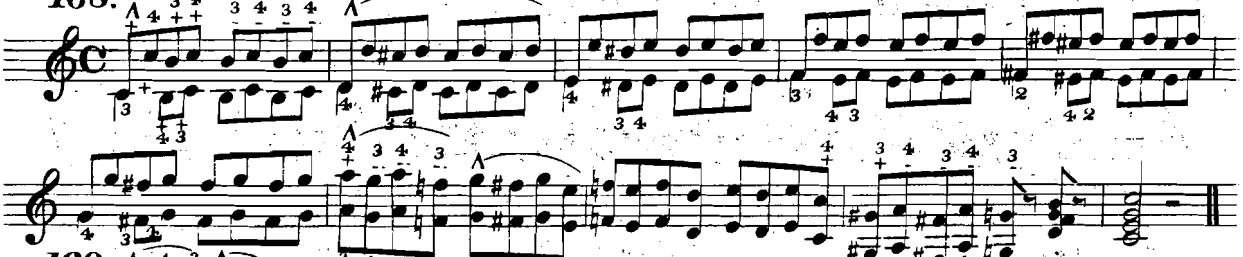
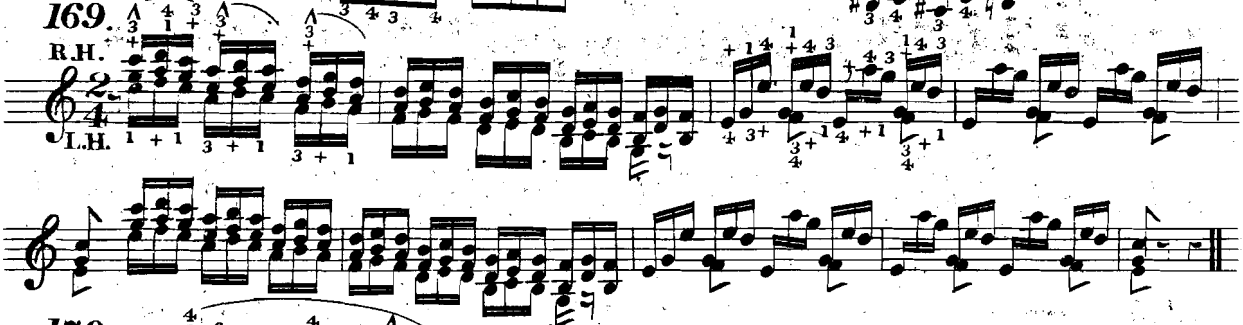


169.

R.H.

L.H.



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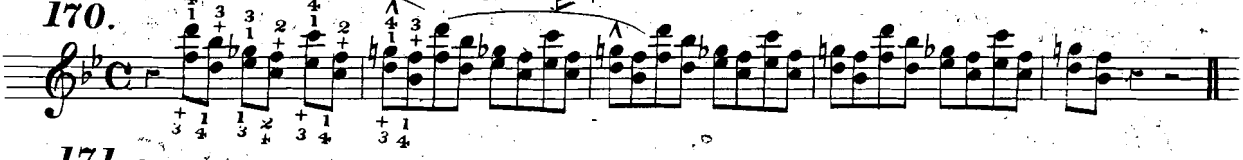

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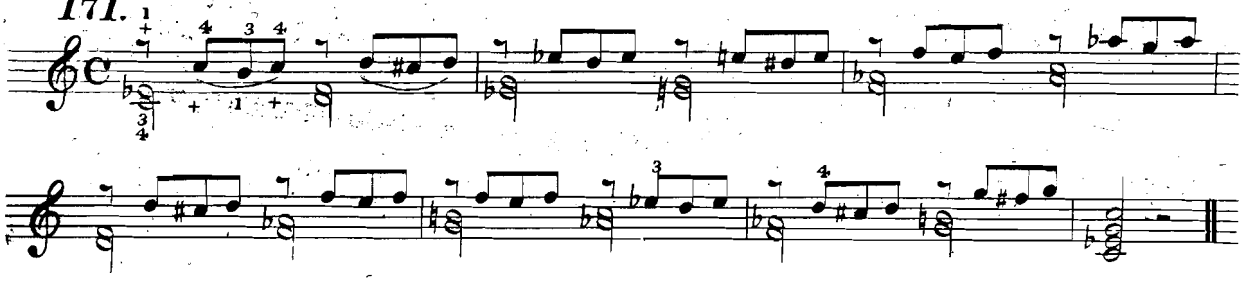

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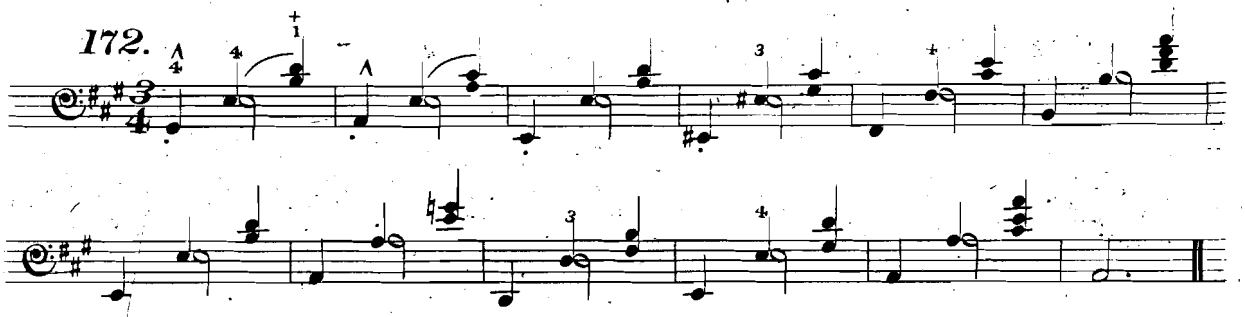

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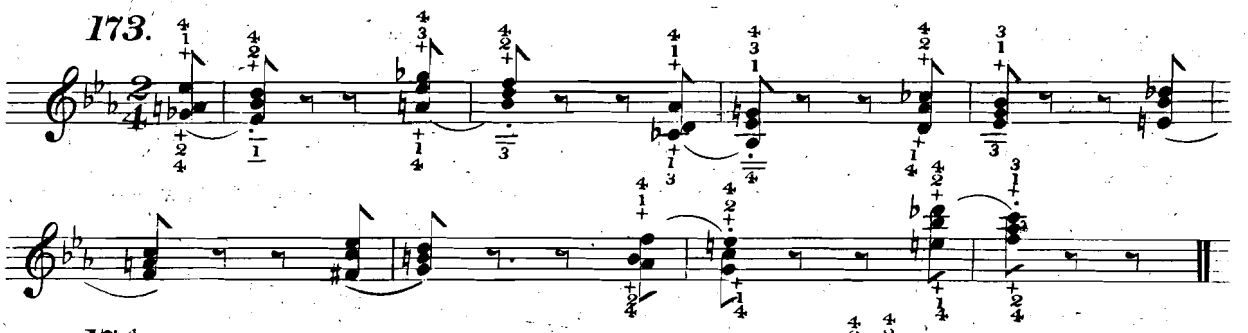

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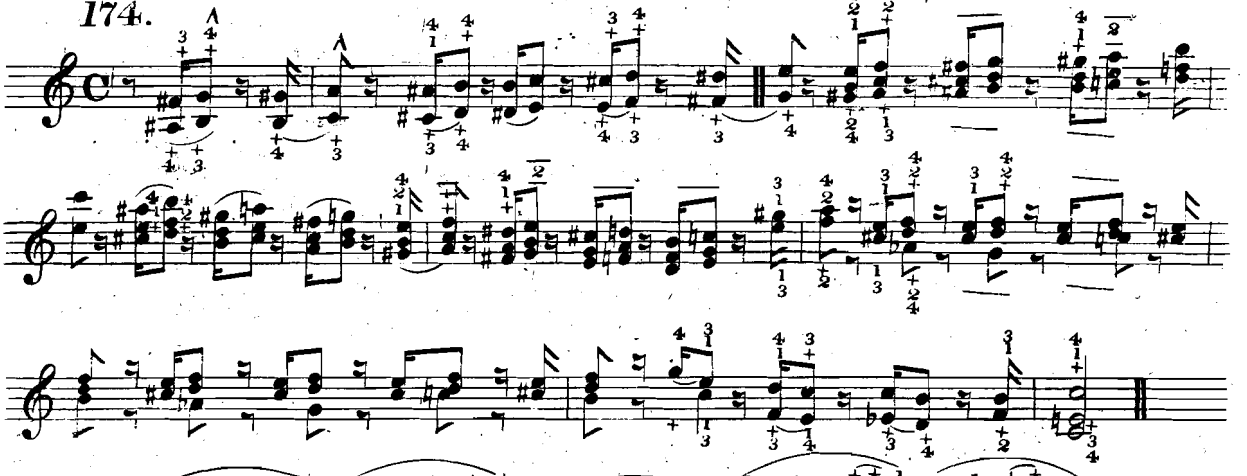

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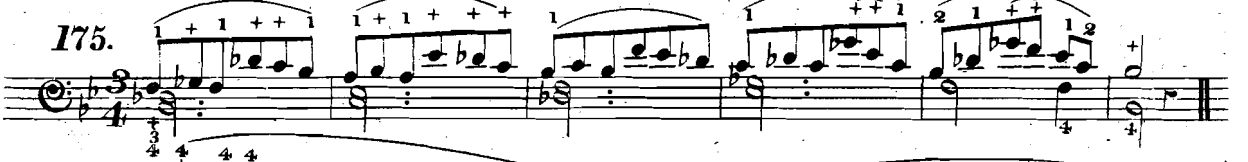

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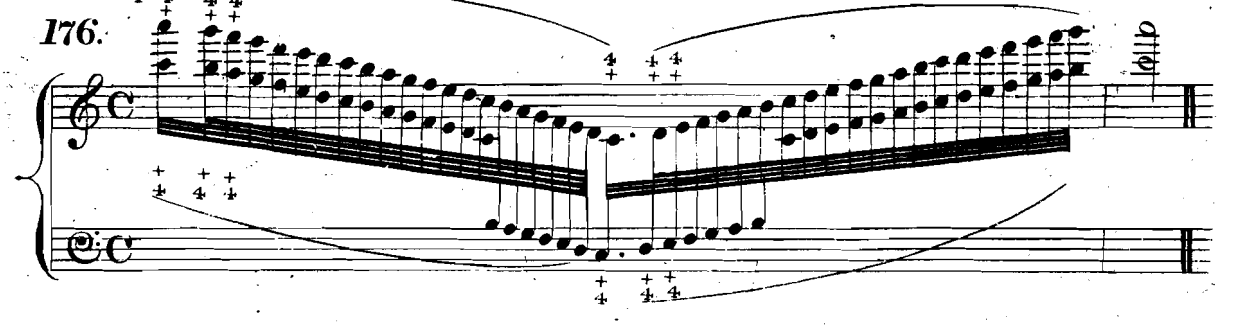


CHAP. IX.

ON CHANGING AND CROSSING OVER THE HANDS, AND ON PLACING THEM ONE UNDER THE OTHER.

These modes of fingering occur at the present day much seldomer than formerly, as they may often be accomplished by one hand only, and are rather a slight of hand addressed to the eye, than a difficulty for the fingers. However, as the Pupil must necessarily become acquainted with these varieties, I shall not omit giving an explanation of them.

§ *1.*

The changing, crossing over, and placing of the hands under each other, is generally indicated by the notation; for in such passages, it is to be considered as a rule, that the notes of which the tails are drawn downwards belong to the left hand, and those with the tails drawn upwards, to the right; though in placing the hands under each other, such is not always the case, as this sometimes gives rise to confusion, particularly when the notes of both hands are written on the same stave.

§ *2.*

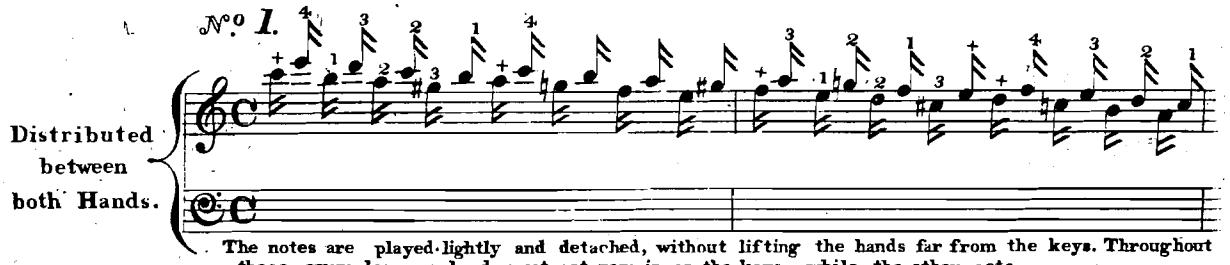
We also frequently recognise passages of this description by the omission of rests in the stave; or, the necessity of crossing hands is shewn by the impossibility of playing the passage otherwise; or, lastly, for greater clearness, the hands to be crossed over are indicated by the terms:

Mano dritta ..... right hand, or abbreviated **R.H.**

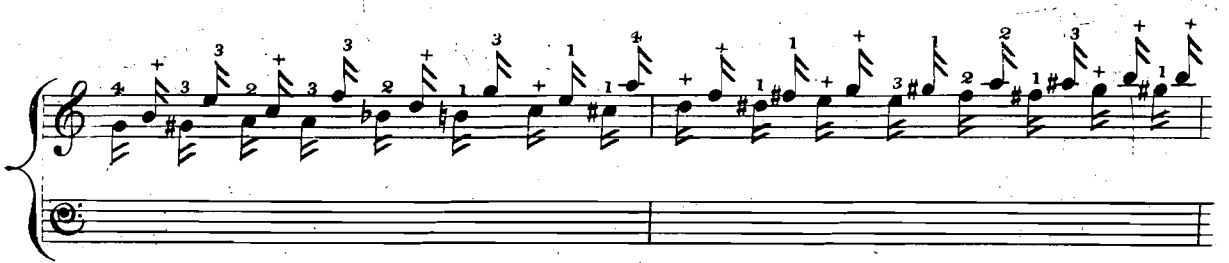
Mano sinistra..... left hand, ... **L.H.**

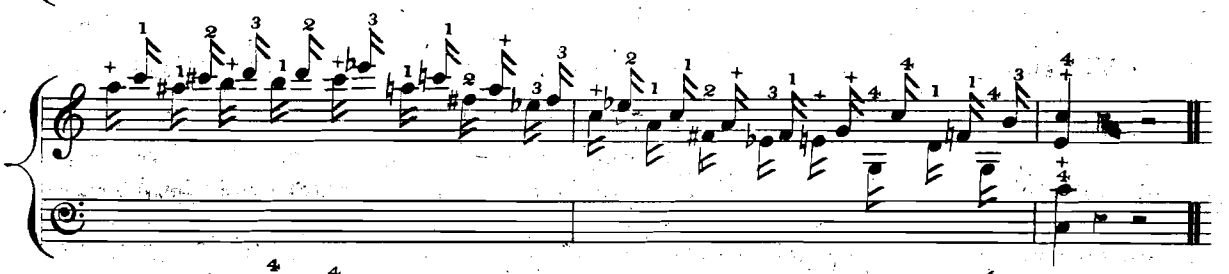
The Germans use rechte hand, linke hand; and the French main droite, main gauche, respectively for the same purpose.

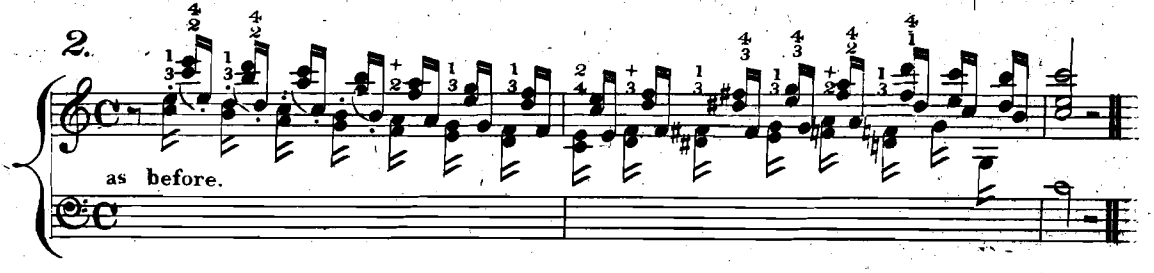
CHANGING, CROSSING OVER, & PLACING THE HANDS UNDER EACH OTHER.

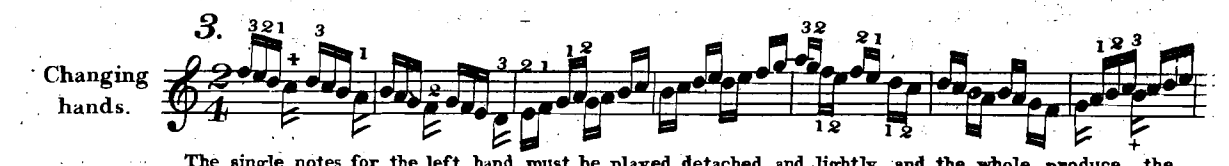


The notes are played lightly and detached, without lifting the hands far from the keys. Throughout these examples, one hand must not remain on the keys while the other acts.

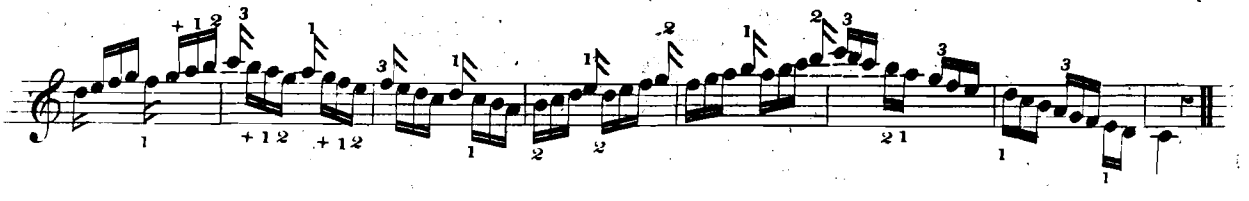


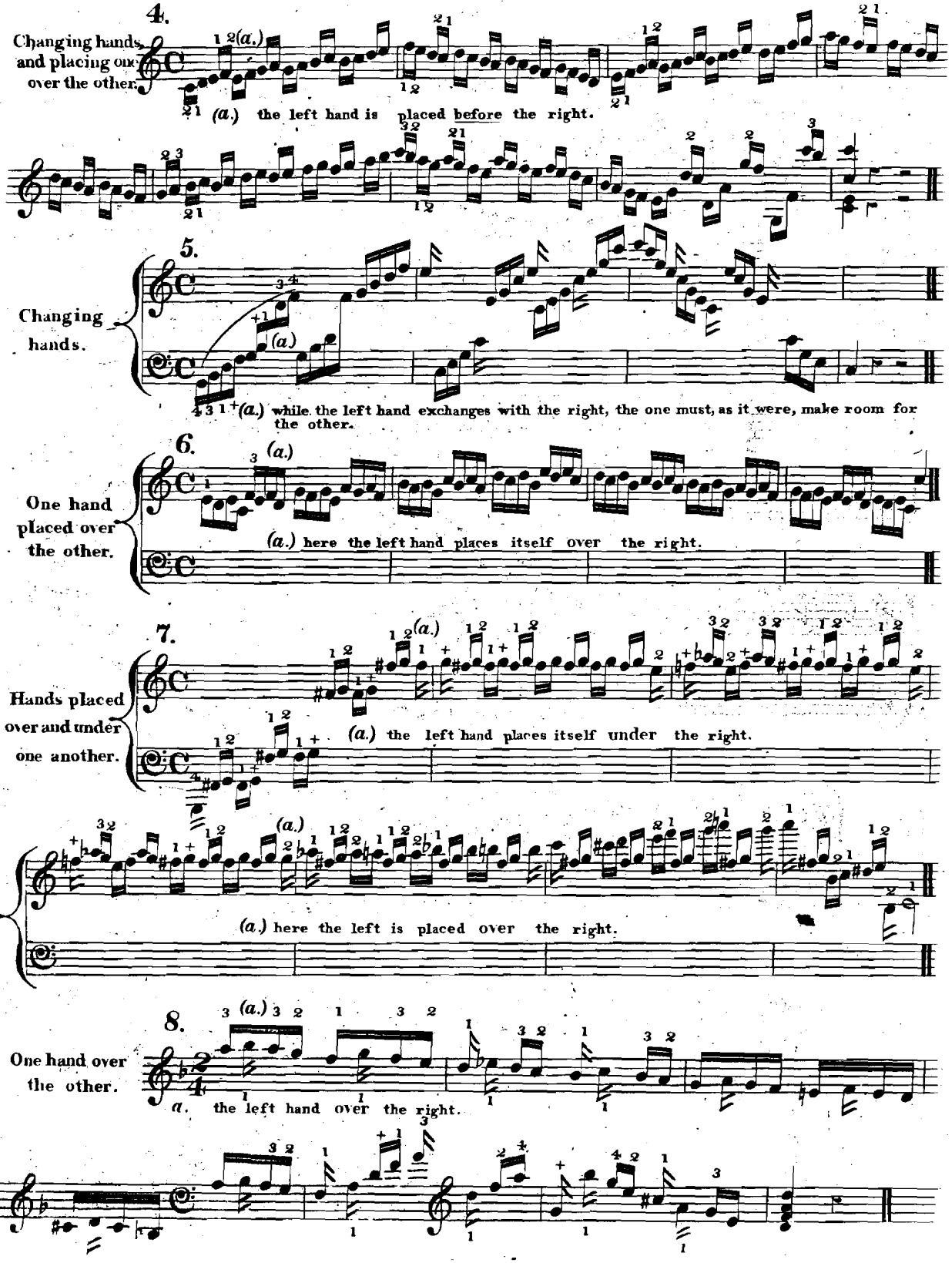


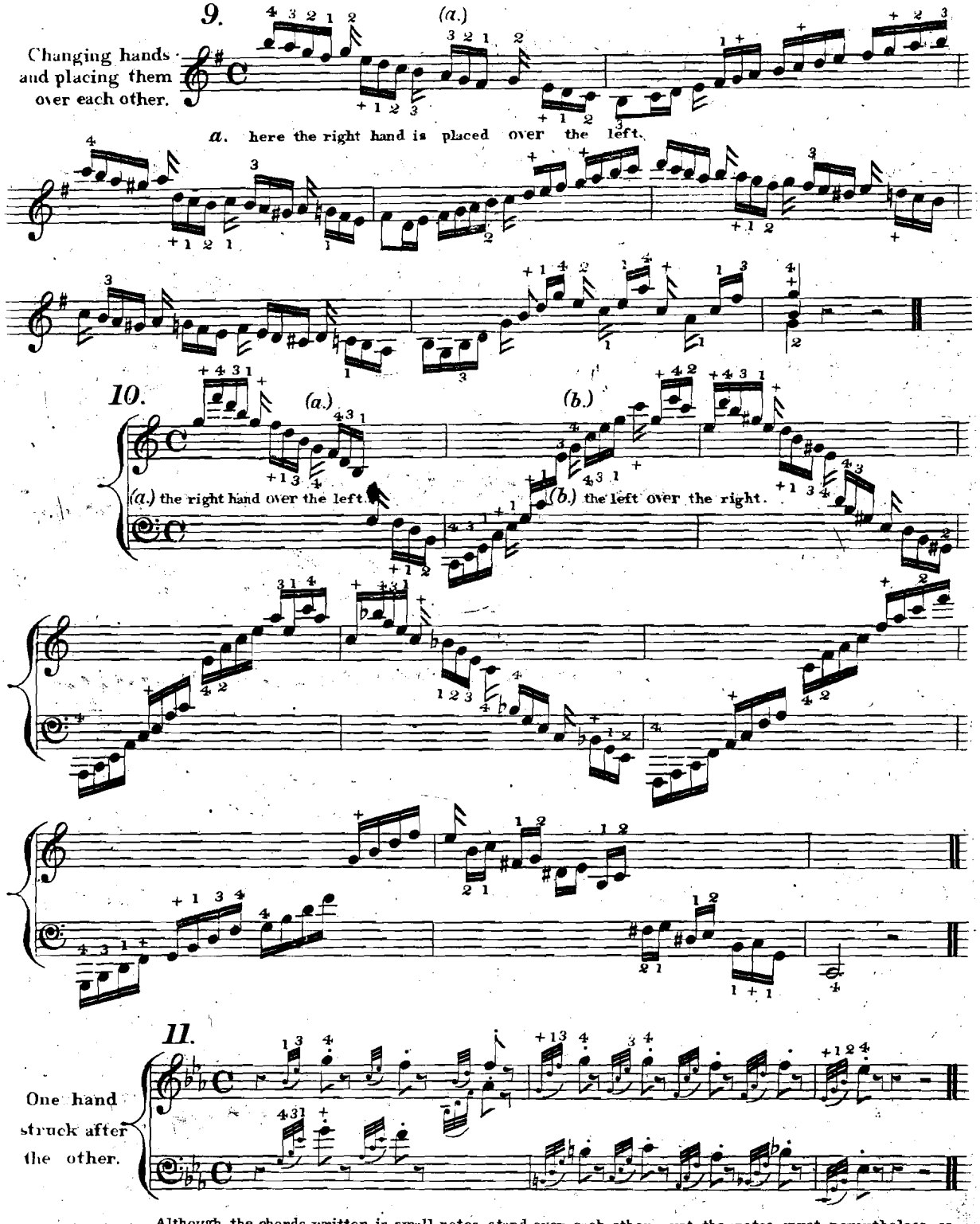




The single notes for the left hand must be played detached and lightly, and the whole produce the same effect, as if the four semiquavers were played smoothly with one hand only.



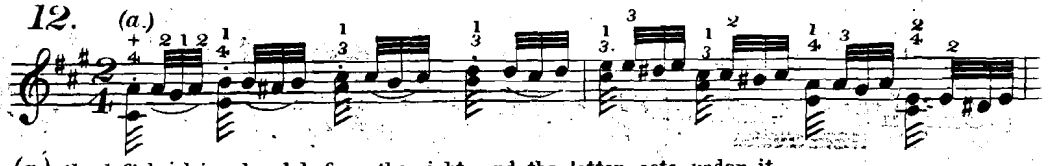

4.
Changing hands and placing one over the other.
(a.) the left hand is placed before the right.
5.
Changing hands.
(a.) while the left hand exchanges with the right, the one must, as it were, make room for the other.
6.
One hand placed over the other.
(a.) here the left hand places itself over the right.
7.
Hands placed over and under one another.
(a.) the left hand places itself under the right.
(a.) here the left is placed over the right.
8.
One hand over the other.
a. the left hand over the right.



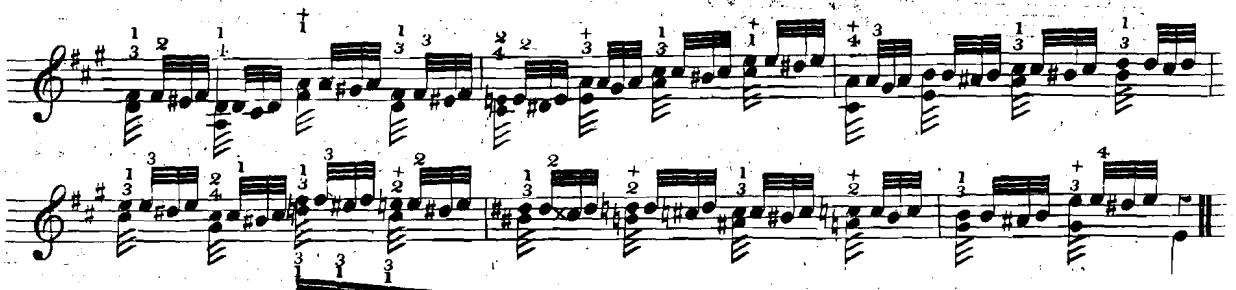
Although the chords written in small notes stand over each other, yet the notes must nevertheless, as in sprinkled chords, be played rapidly one after the other from the lowest to the highest, and the upper note must be struck short.

Placing the hands within each other.

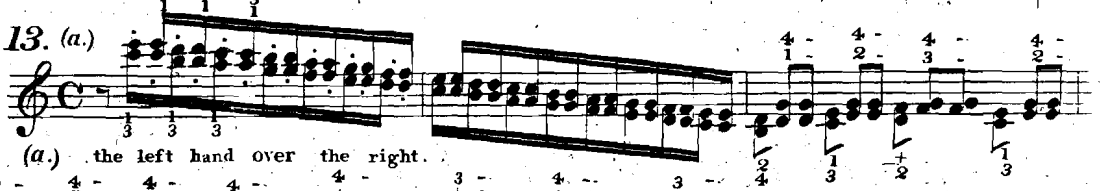
12. (a.)



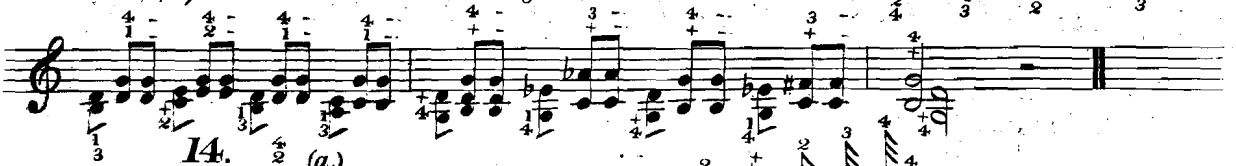
(a.) the left hand is placed before the right, and the latter acts under it.



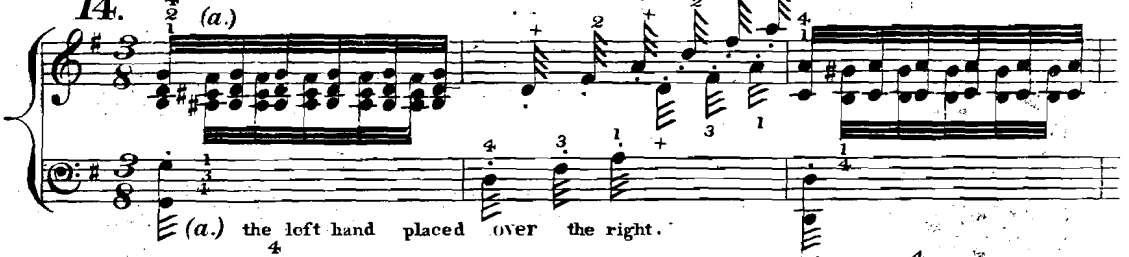
13. (a.)



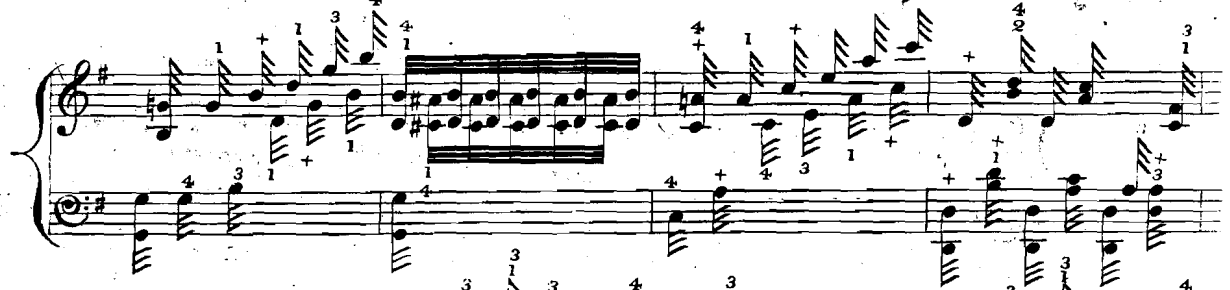
(a.) the left hand over the right.

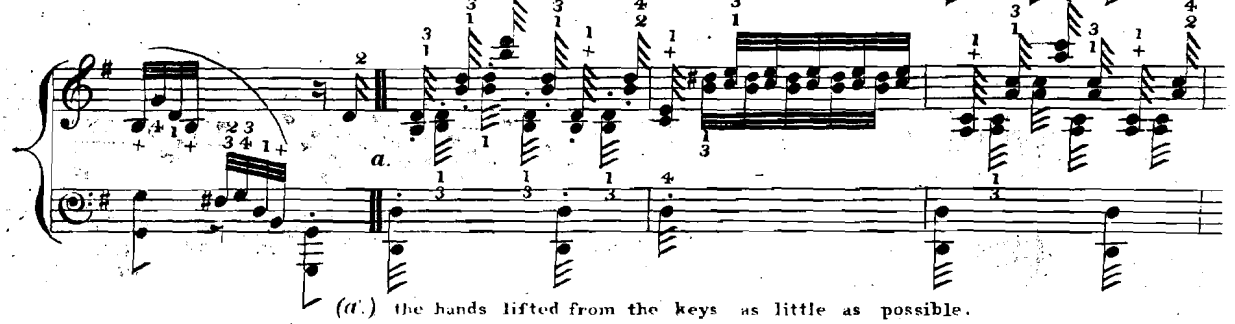


14. (a.)

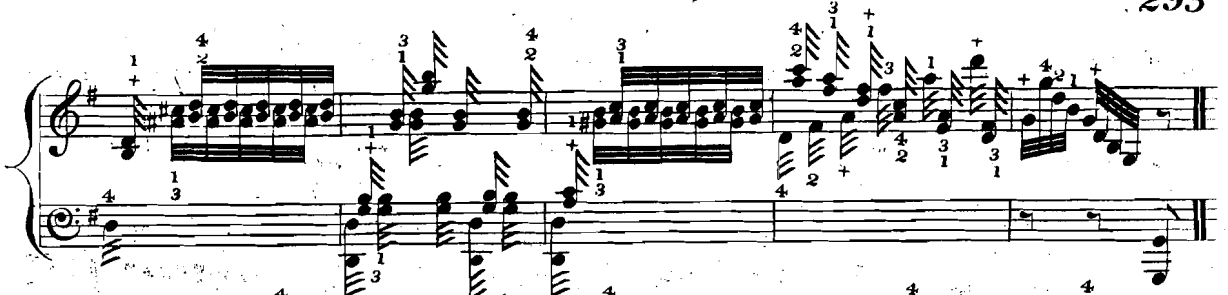


(a.) the left hand placed over the right.





(a.) the hands lifted from the keys as little as possible.



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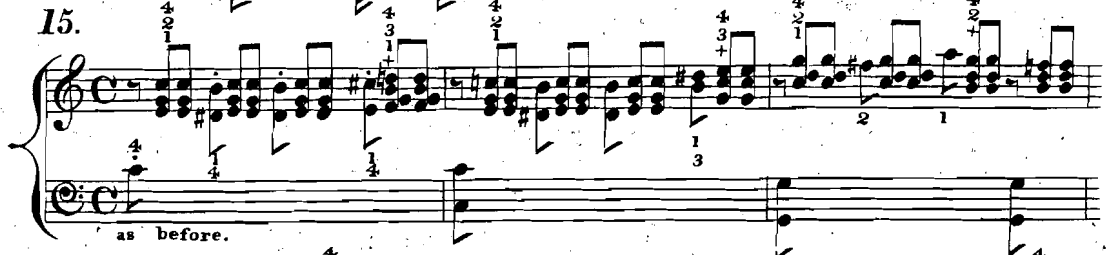
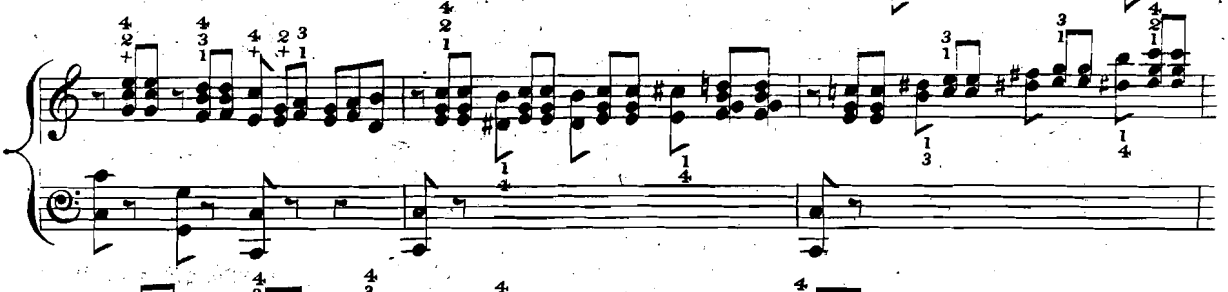
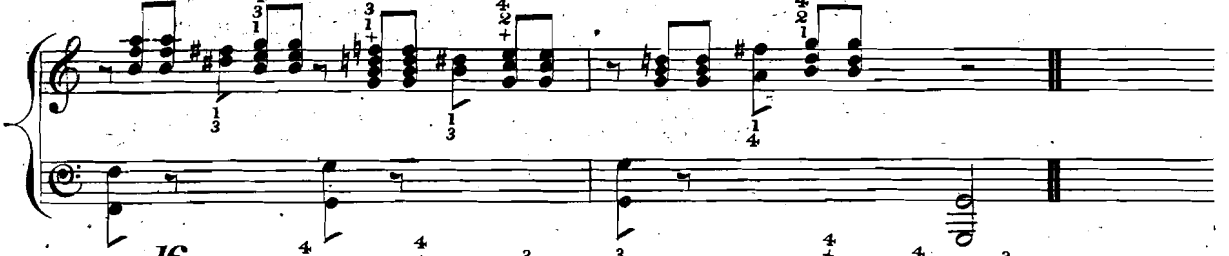
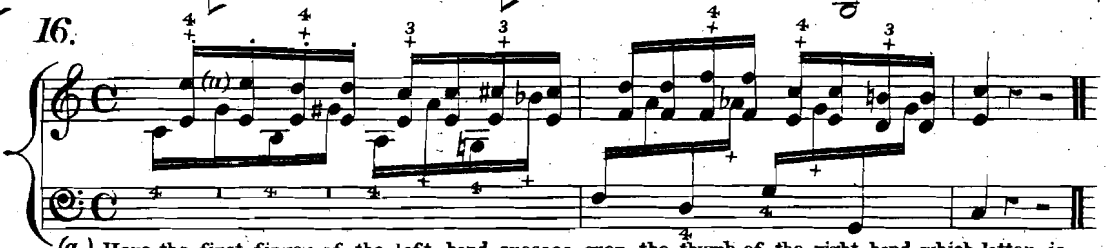


as before.



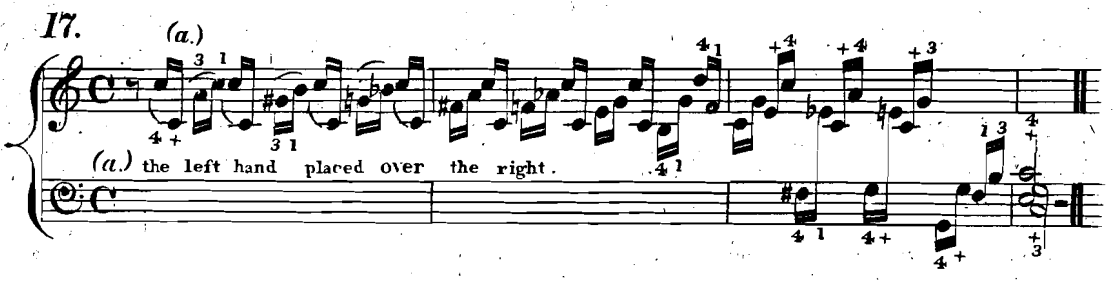


16.

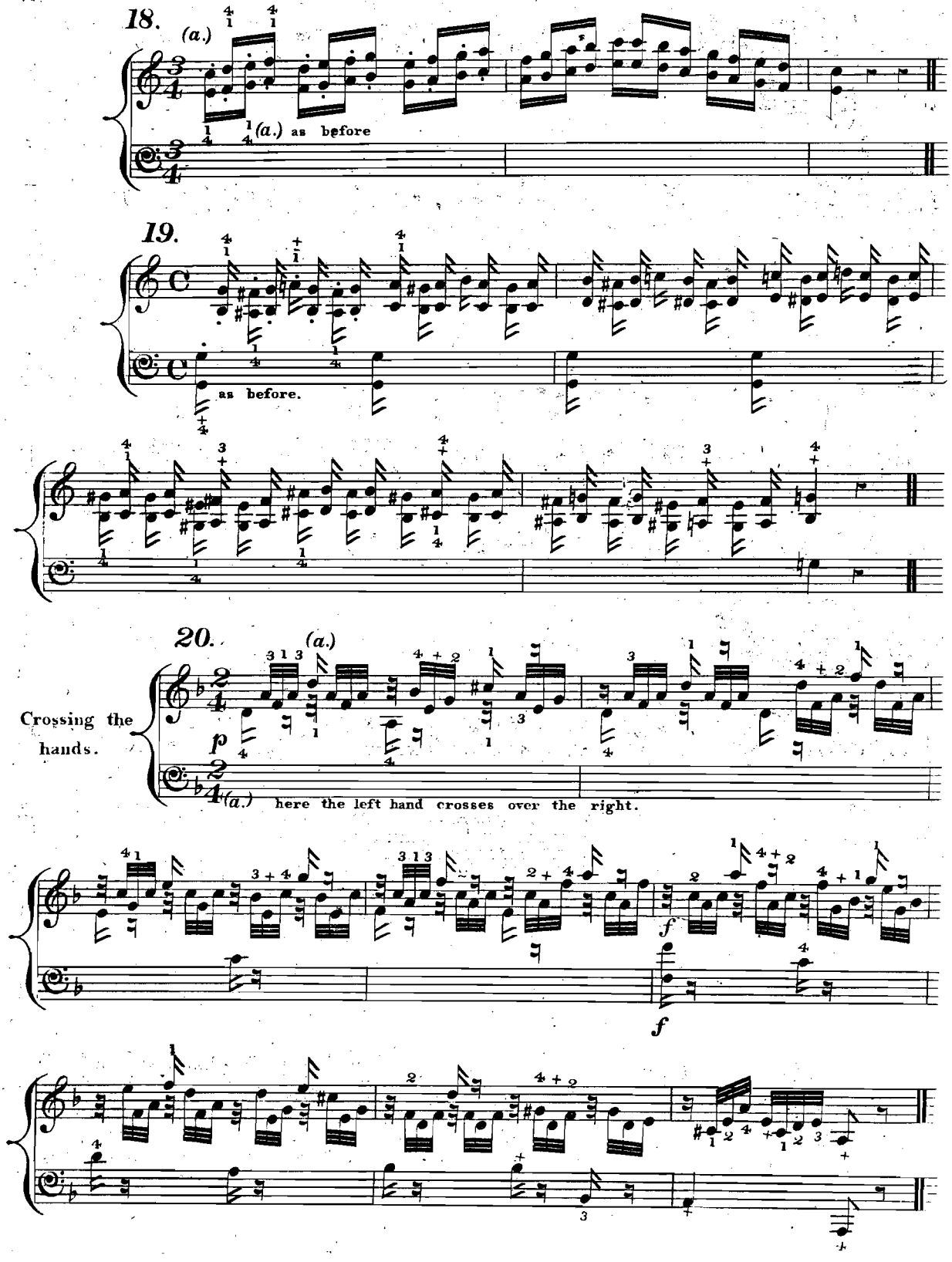


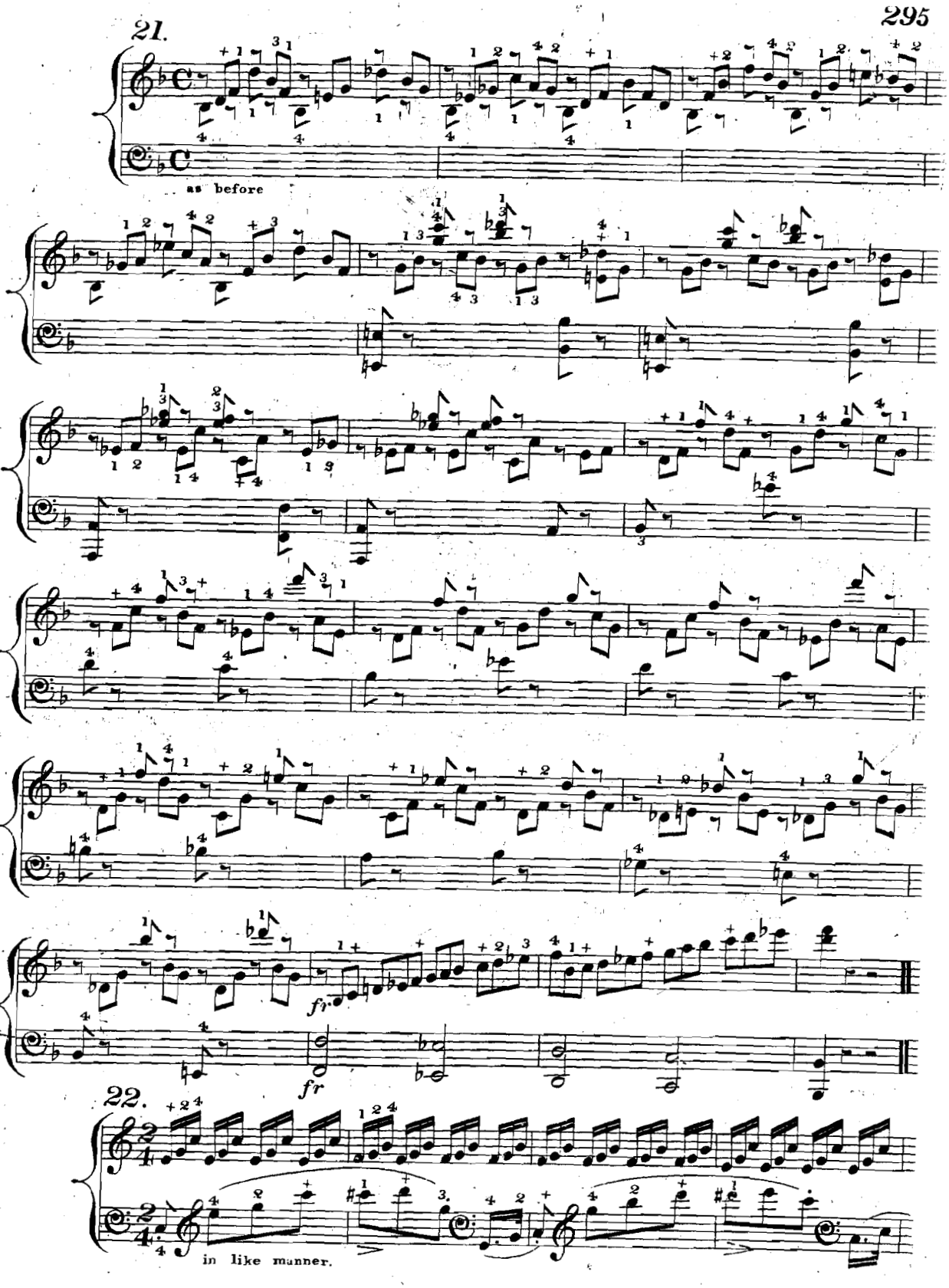
(a.) Here the first finger of the left hand crosses over the thumb of the right hand, which latter is somewhat drawn back, that the left may have more room for acting within it. The left hand is constantly kept in an extended position.

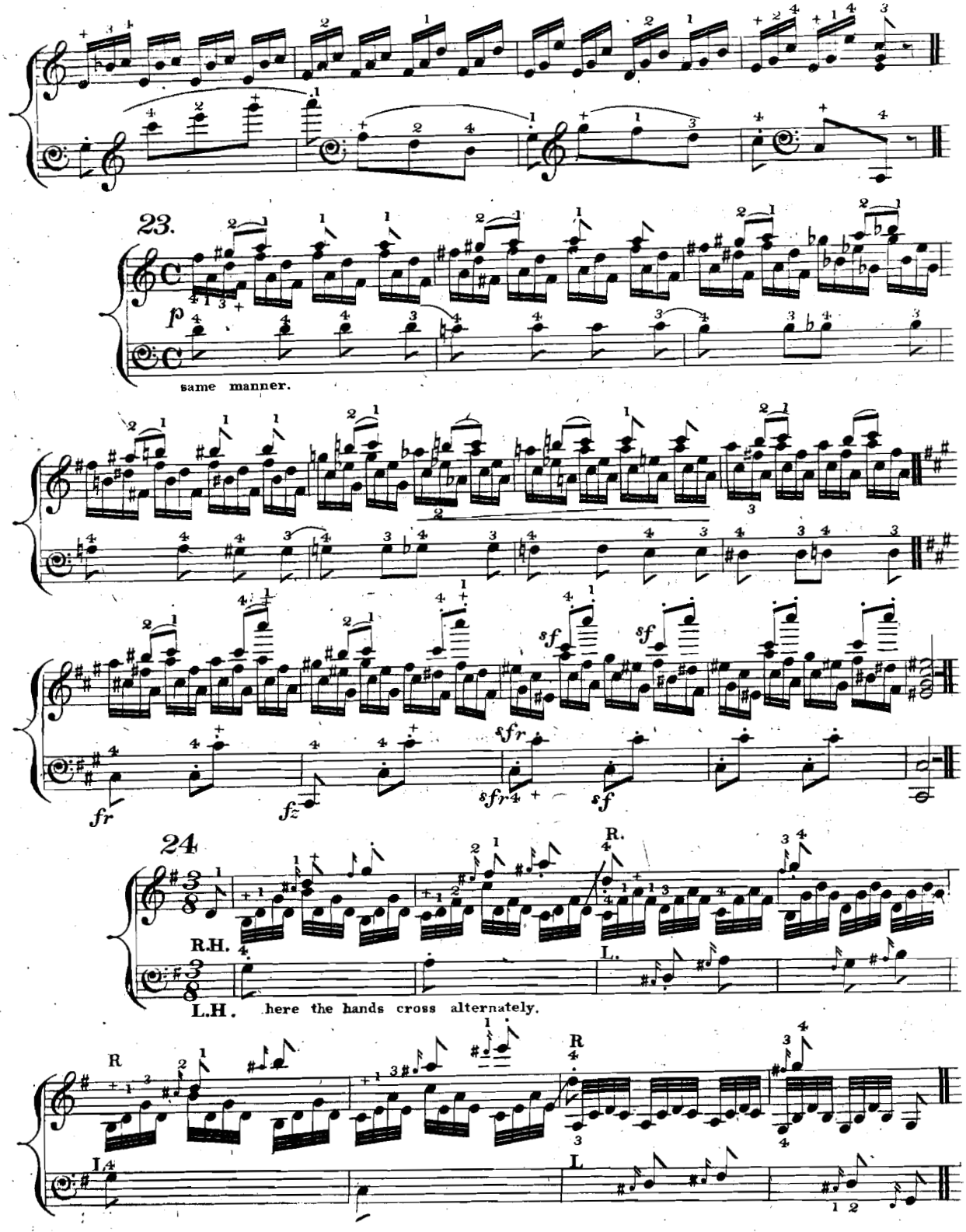
17.



(a.) the left hand placed over the right.


18.
(a.)
(a.) as before
19.
as before.
20.
(a.)
Crossing the hands.
p
(a.) here the left hand crosses over the right.
f
f


21.
as before
fr
fr
22.
in like manner.


23.
p
same manner.
sf
sf
fr
fz
sfr
sfr
sf
24
R.H.
L.H.
here the hands cross alternately.
R
L
R
L

CHAP. X.

ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTS BETWEEN THE TWO HANDS, AND ON LICENCES OF FINGERING IN THE STRICT STYLE.

§ 1.

In the strict style of composition, all kinds of fingering may be said to take place; whoever desires to play a fugue properly, must before hand be intimately acquainted with them, and have the entire mechanism of fingering perfectly at his command.

§ 2.

In the following examples, a peculiar mark is made use of to direct the pupil in the performance of the different parts, that he may at once know how to divide them properly, and to distribute the inner parts between the two hands. He must not suffer the fingers to dwell on the keys, either longer or shorter than the exact time of the notes; otherwise he will introduce a number of sounds, false and not appertaining to the harmony, and which, particularly in playing on the organ, produce at all times an injurious, and sometimes even an intolerable effect.

§ 3.

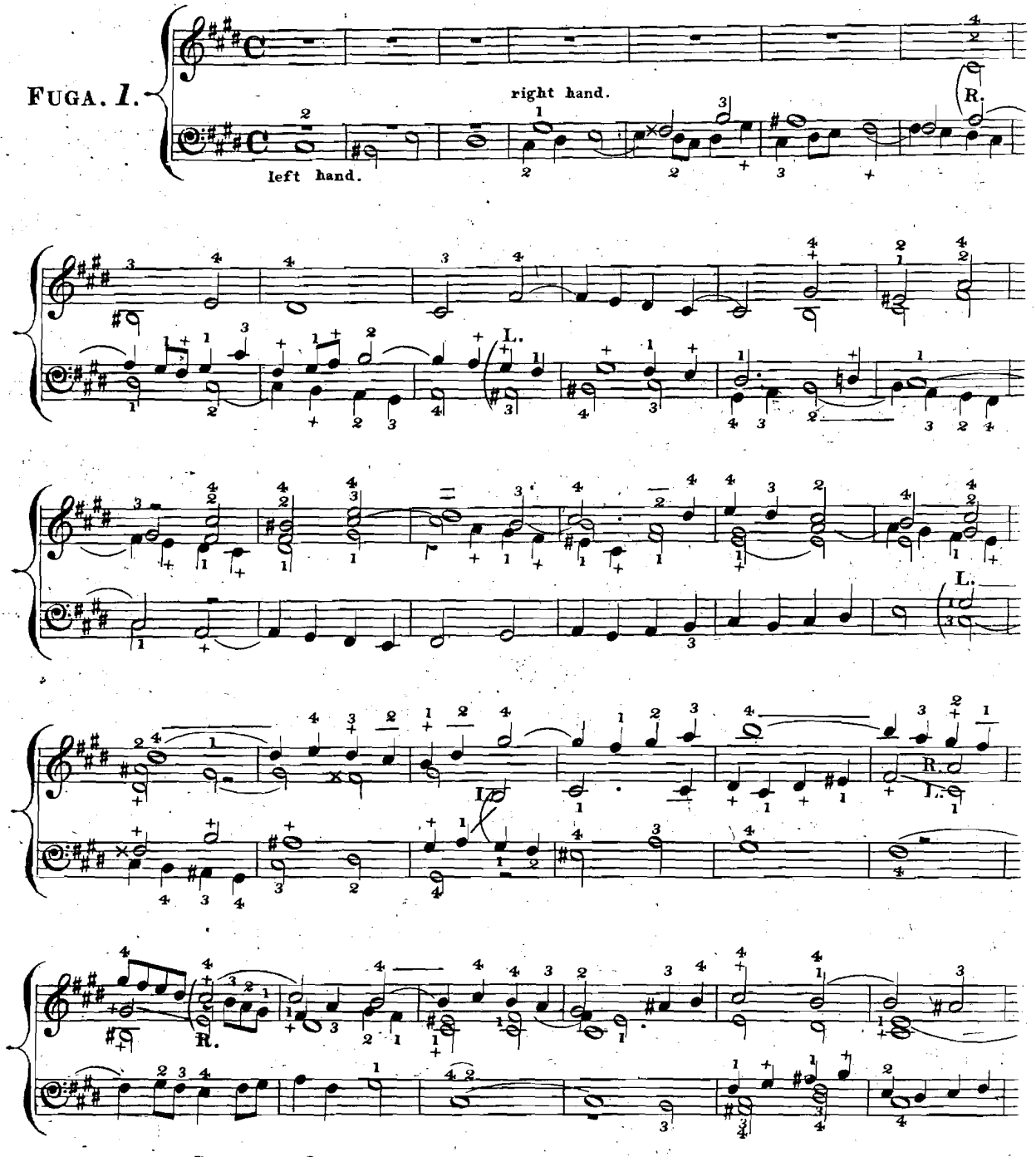
The performance must throughout be connected and flowing; and the entrances of the subjects must be somewhat forcibly marked, that they may not escape the observation of the ear.

X.

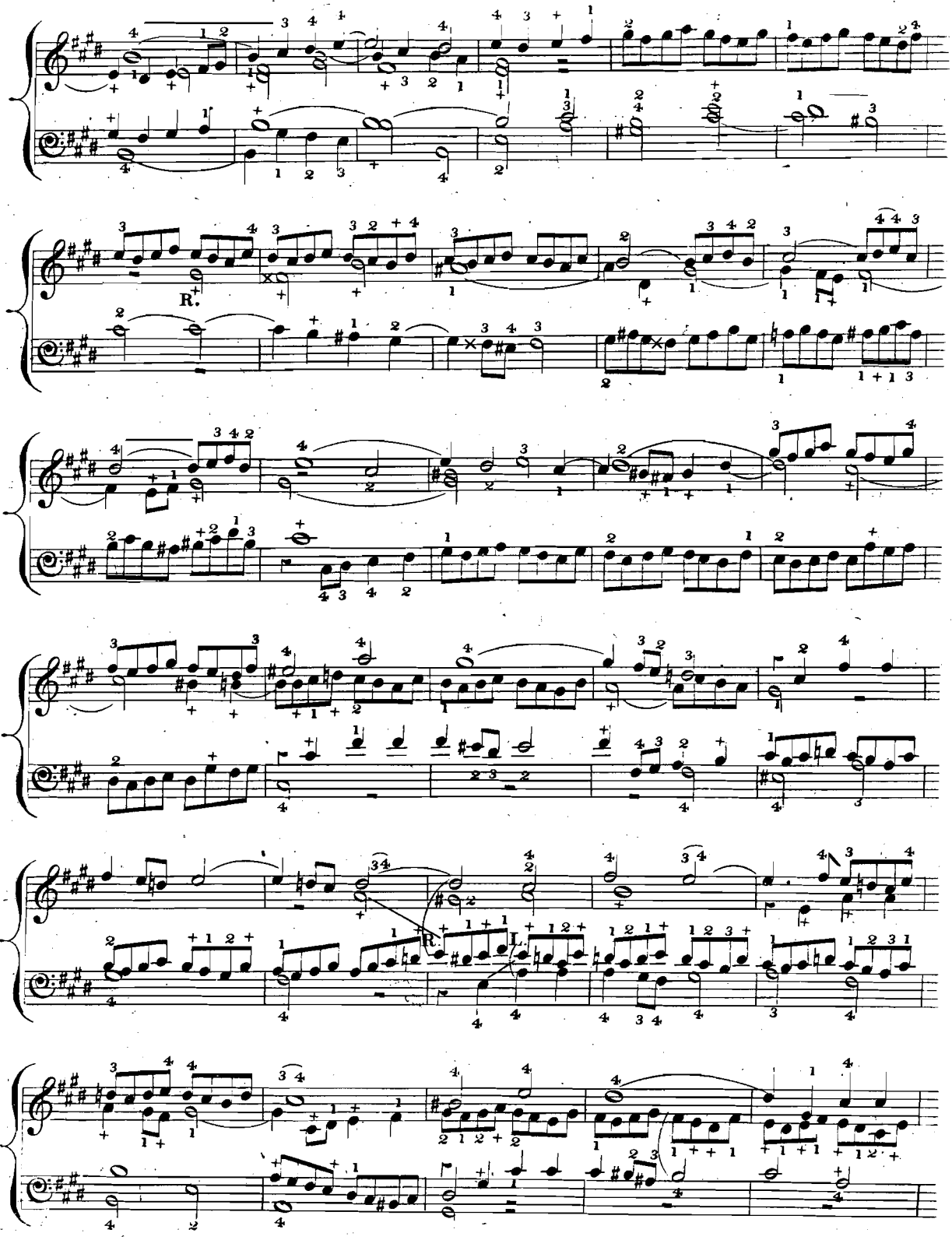
IN THE STRICT STYLE.

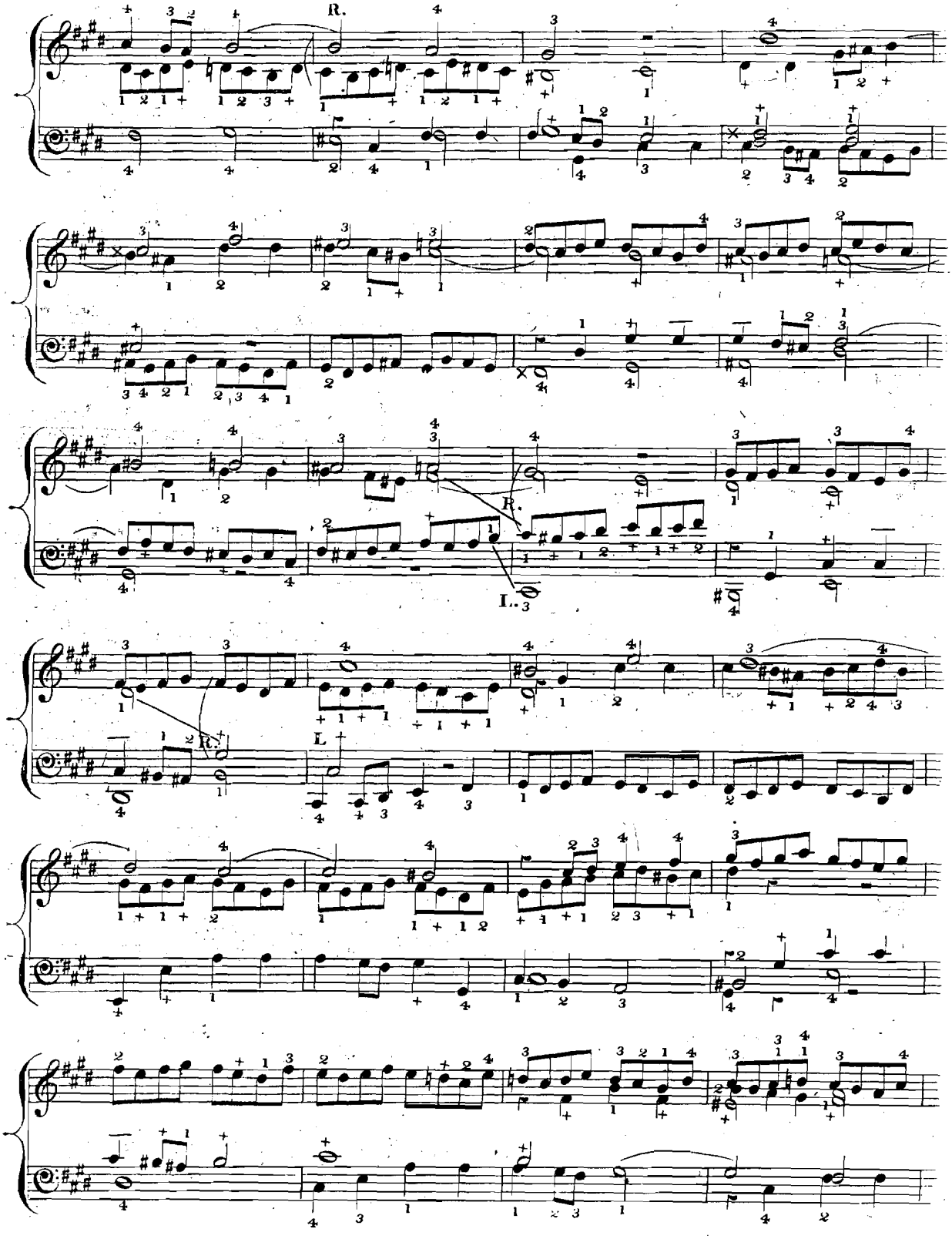
J. S. BACH.

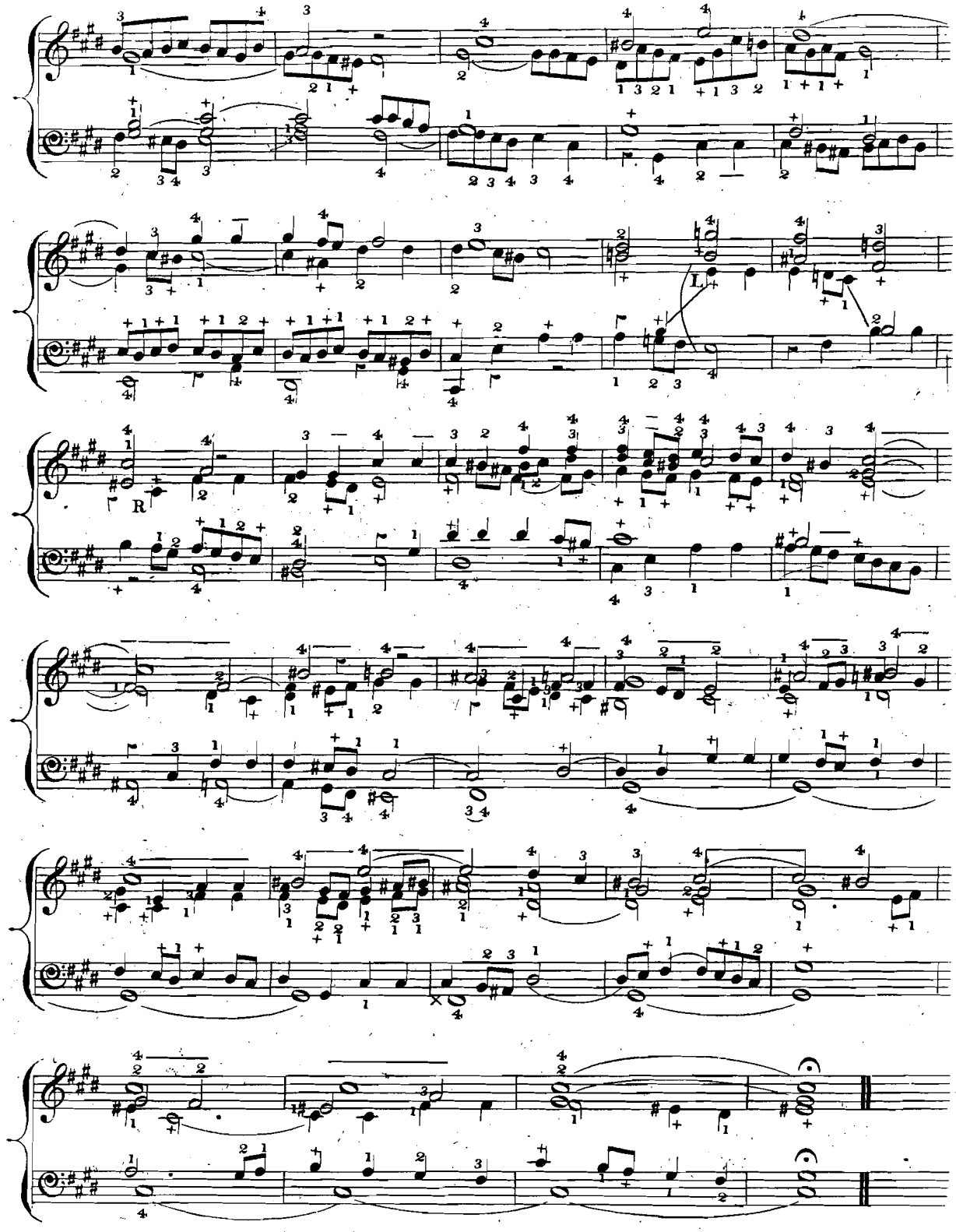
FUGA. *I.*



Observation. — **R** right, or **L** left, points out to which hand the parts are assigned, and with which they are to be played.

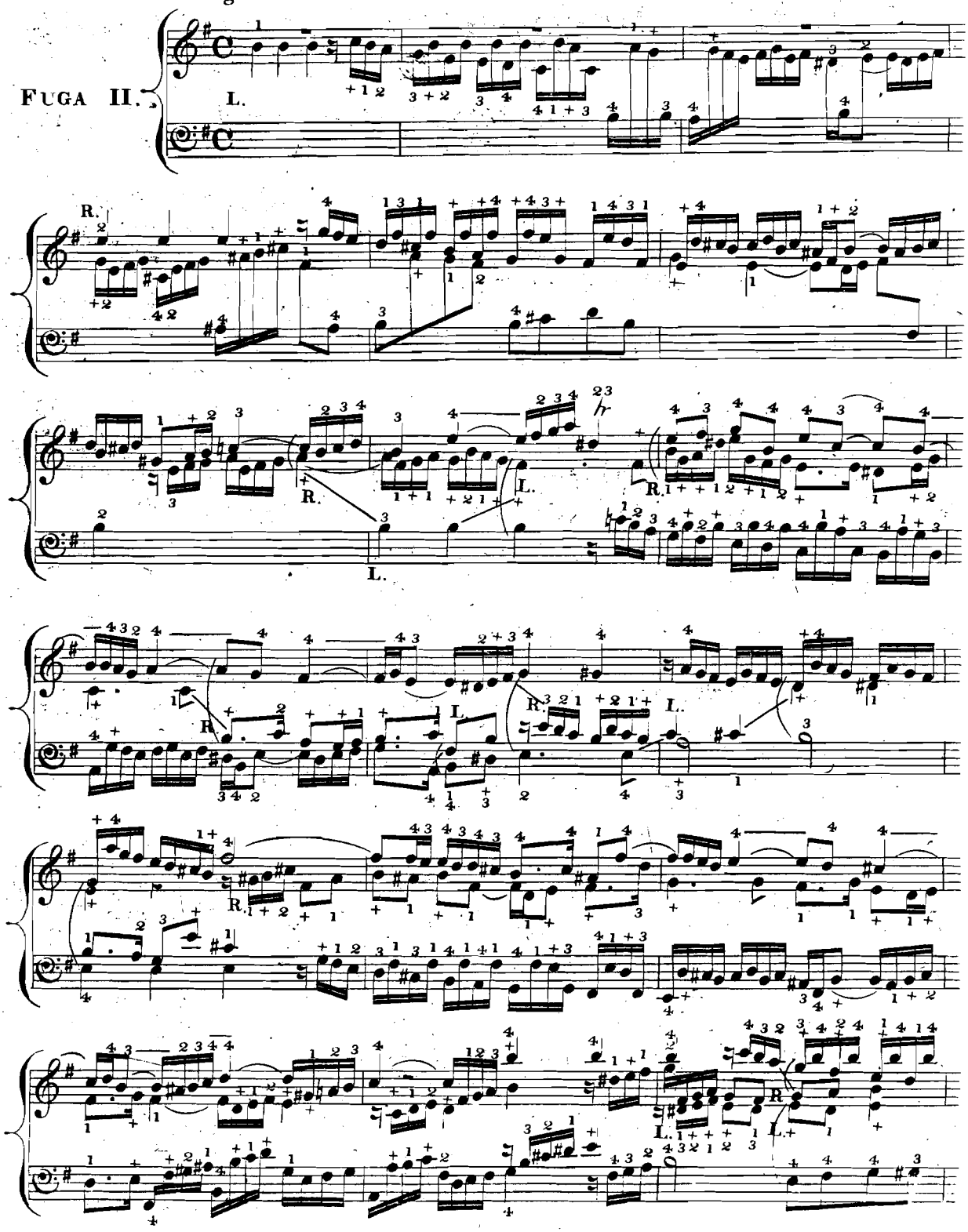


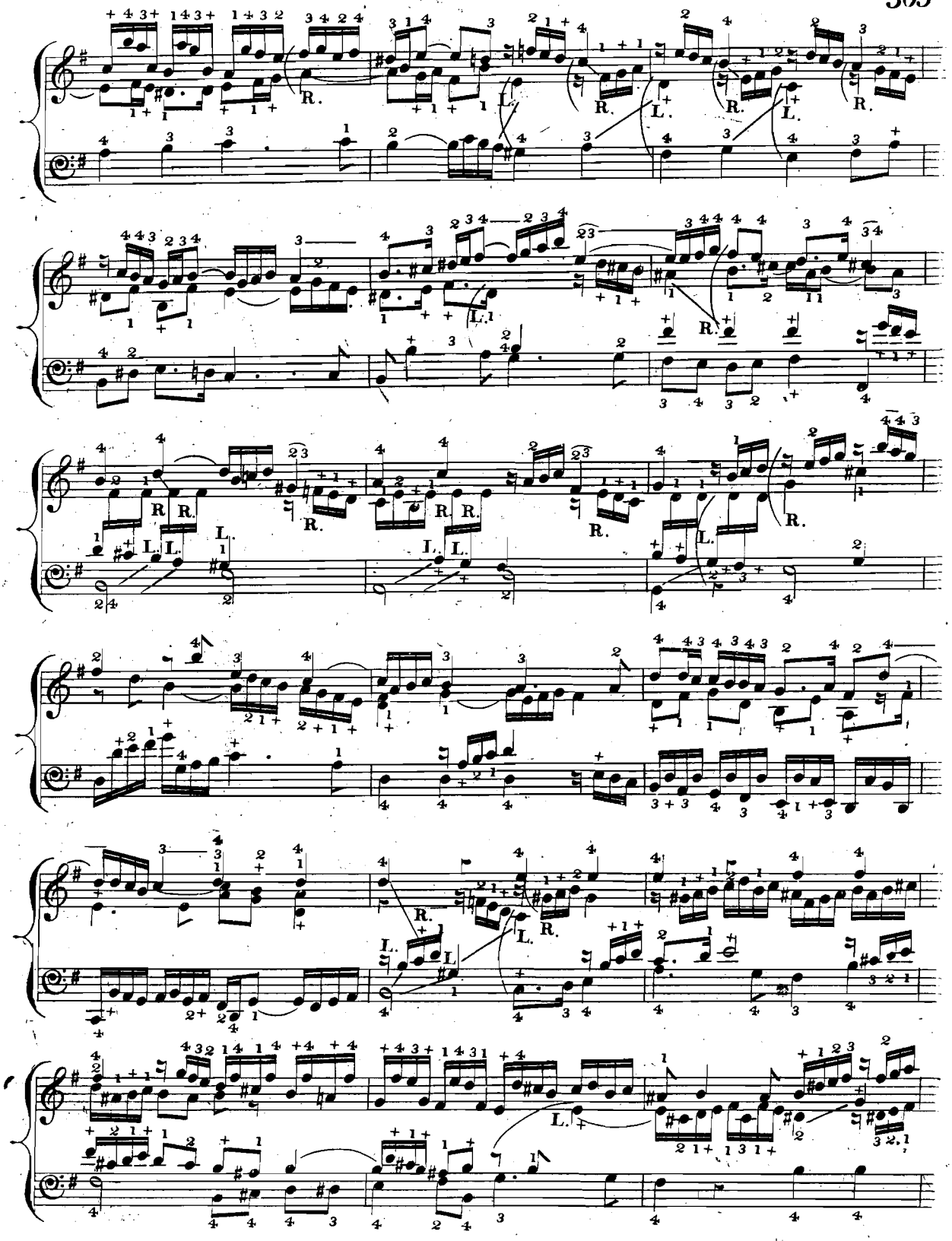

R.
R.
L.
L
R.

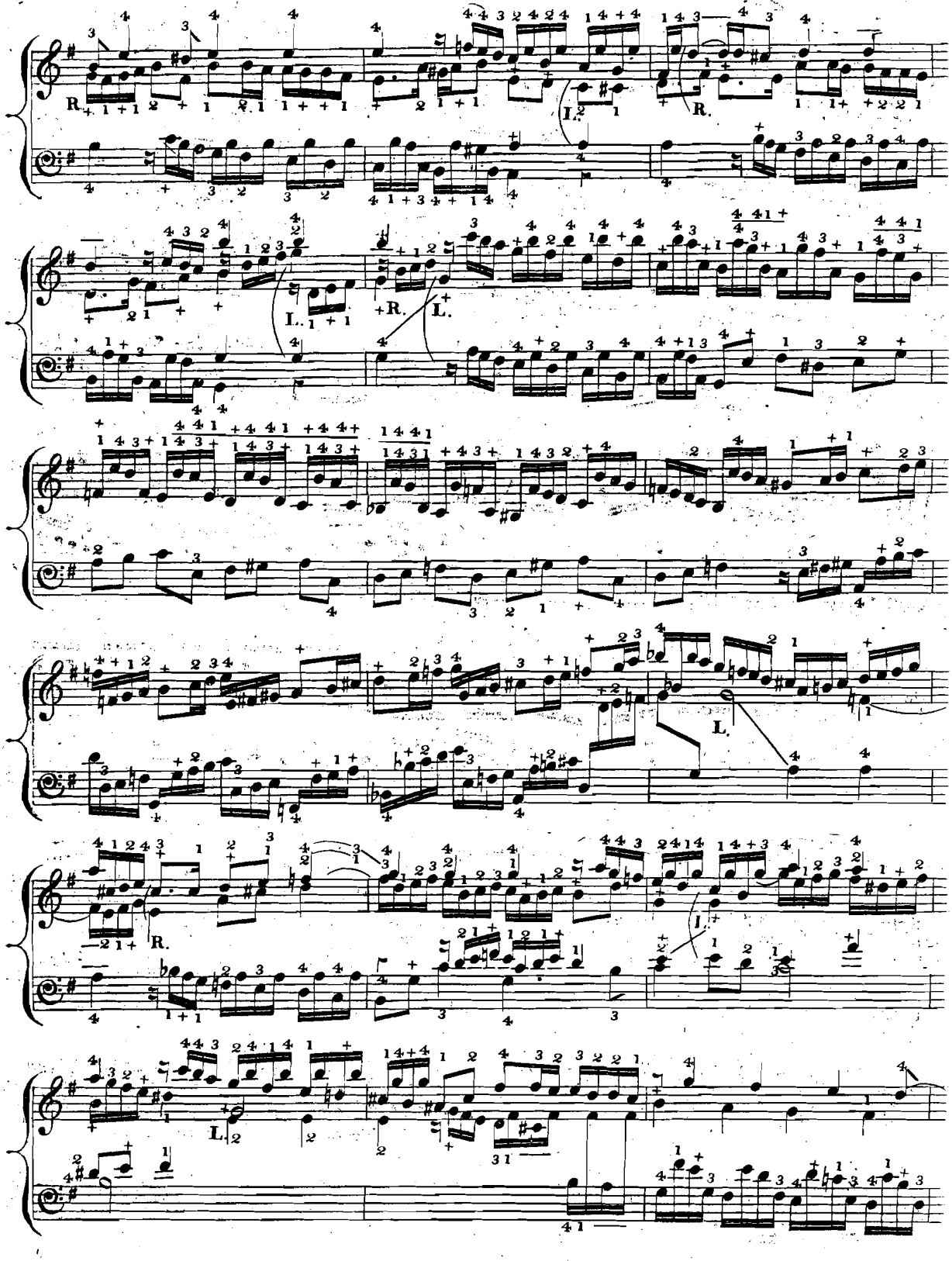


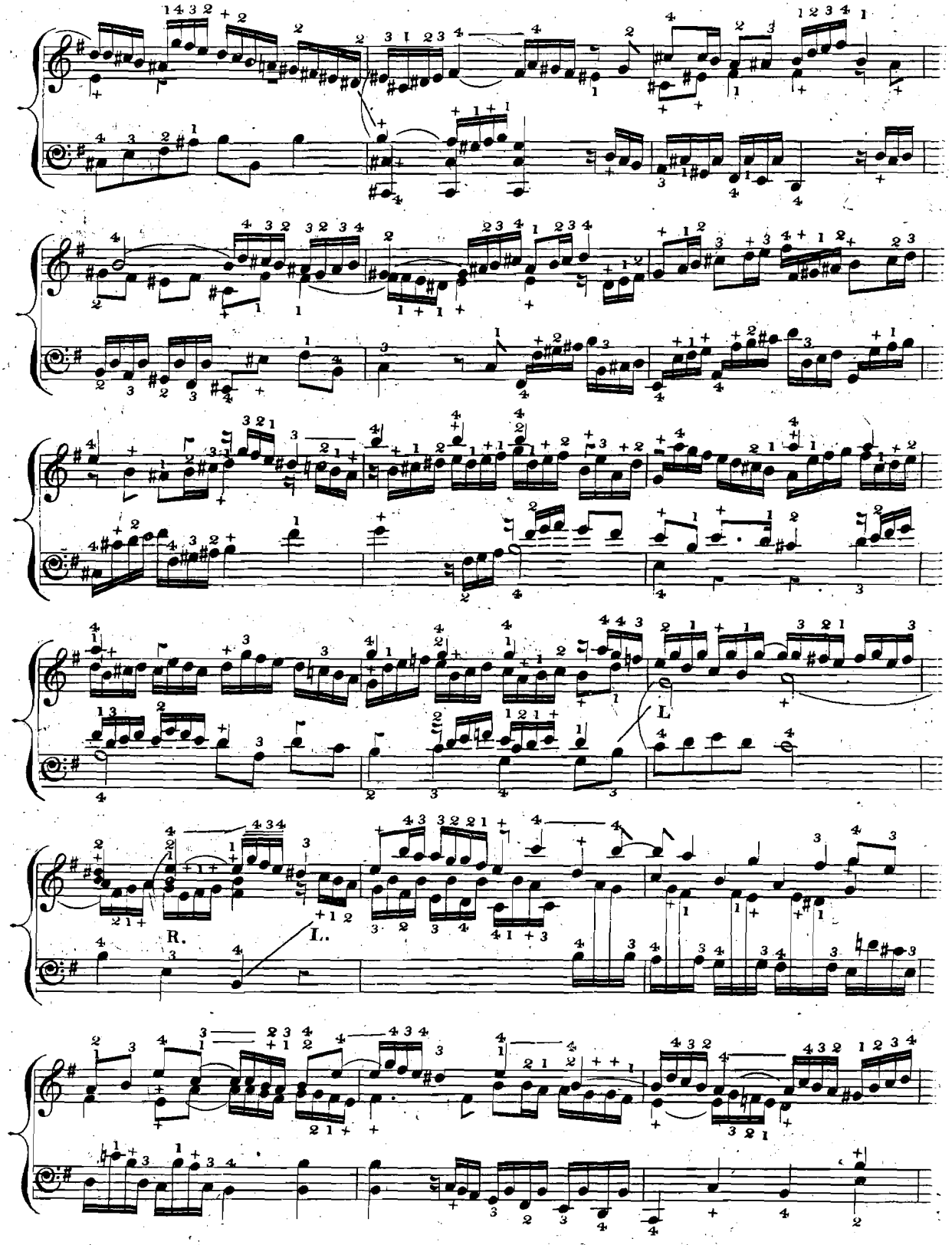
Allegro. G. F. Handel.

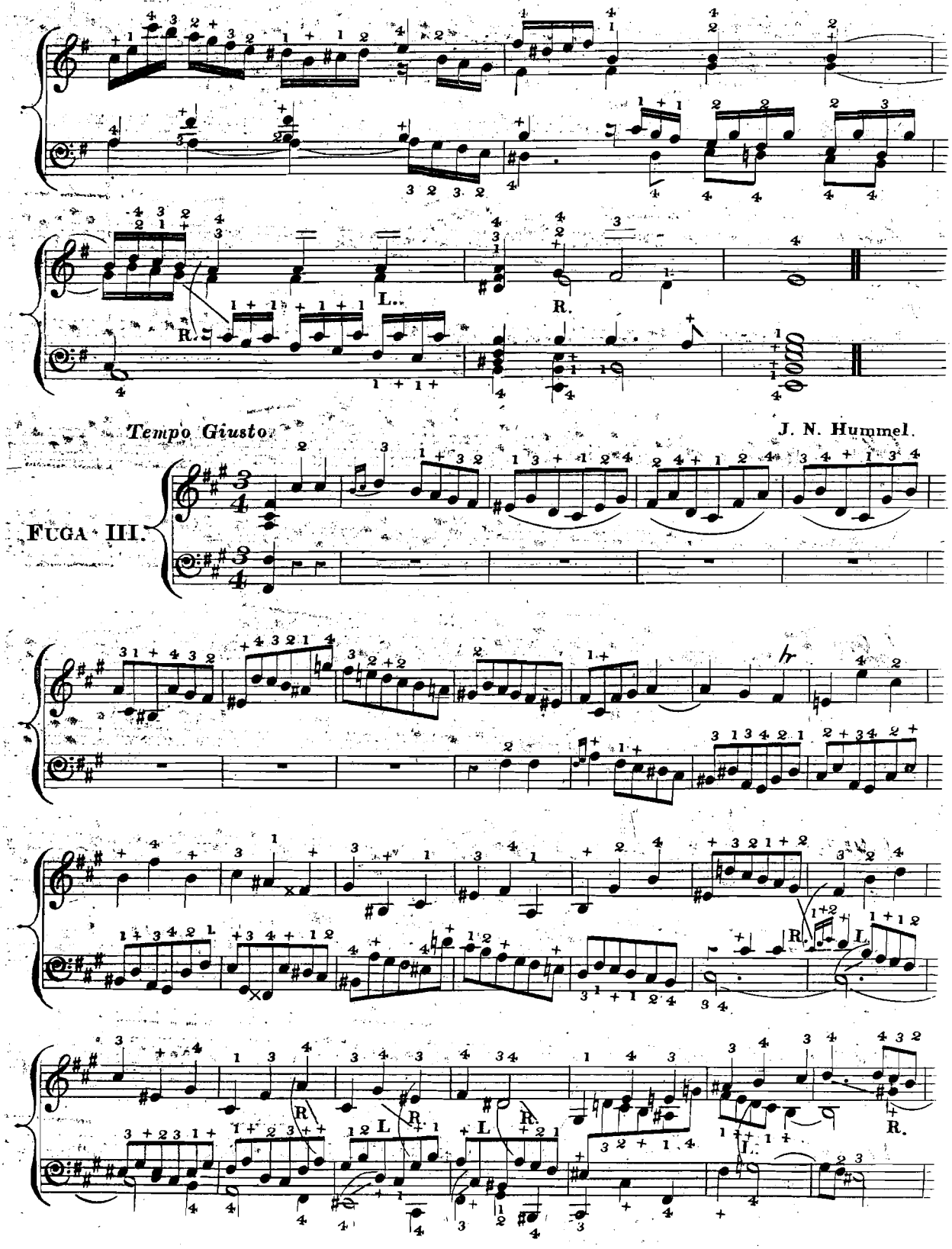
FUGA II.

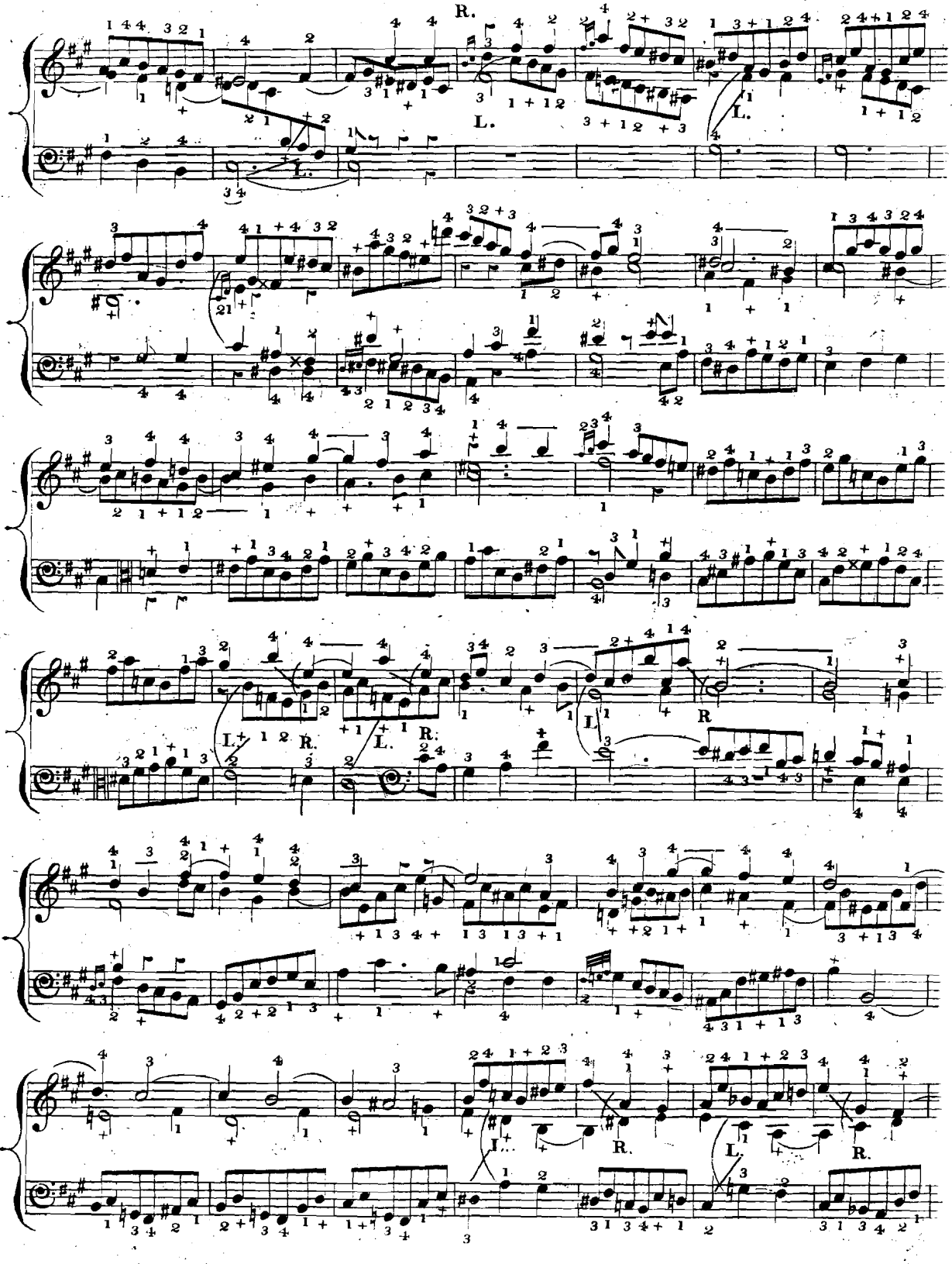


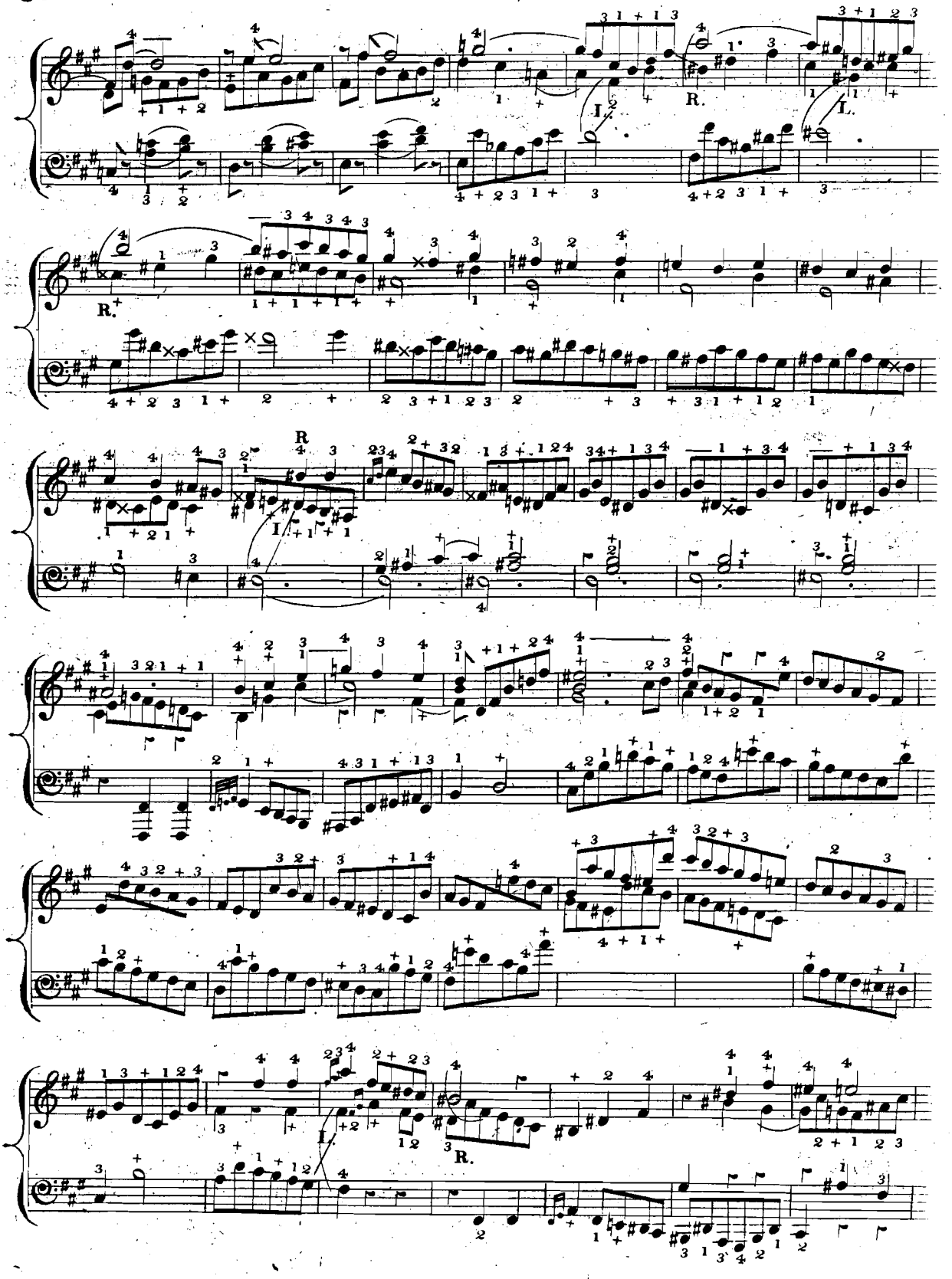


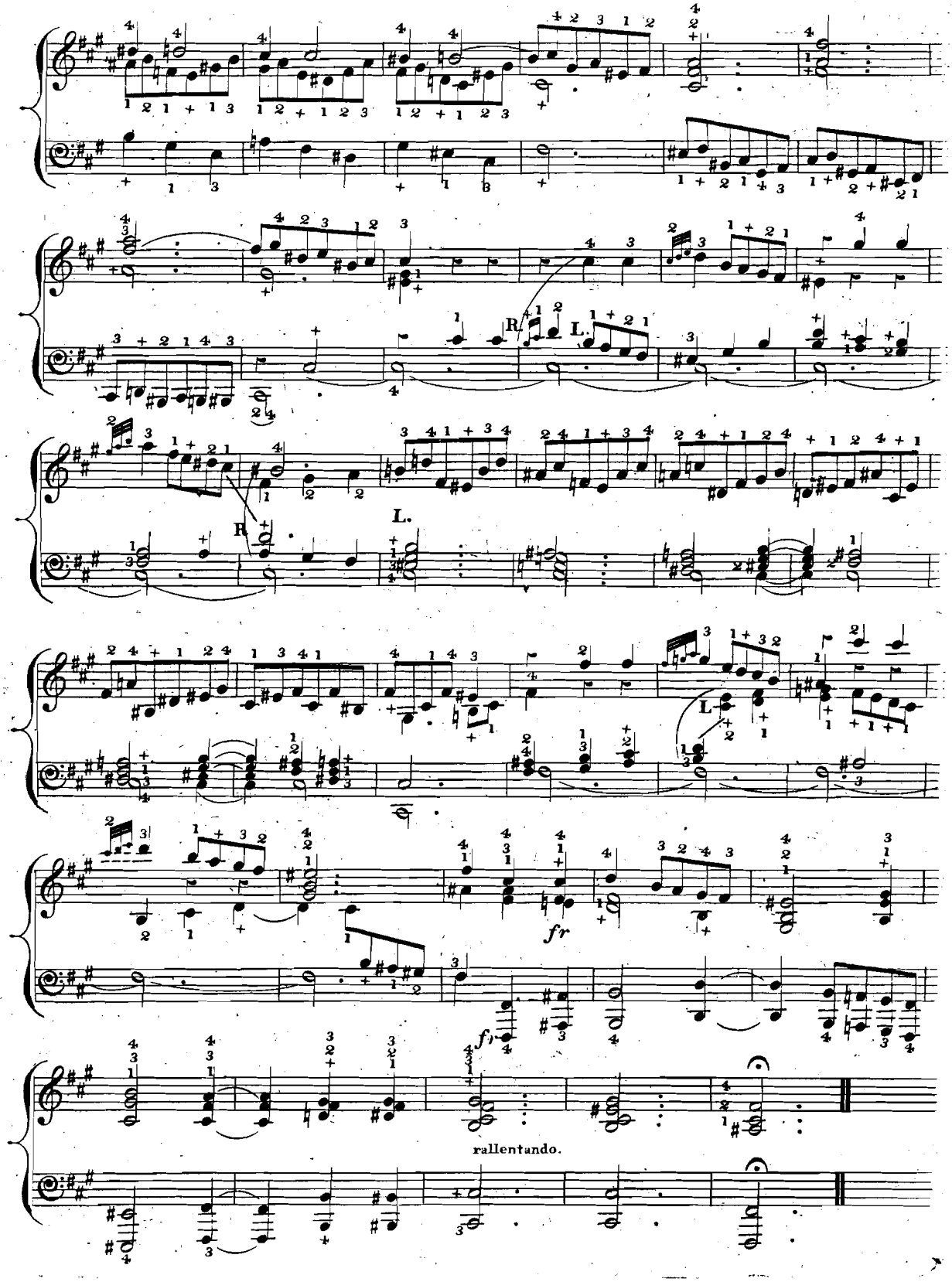

R.
L.
R.
L.
R.
L.
L.
R.
L.


L
R.
L.


Tempo Giusto.
J. N. Hummel.
FUGA III.






R.
L.
R.
L.
L.
fr
f
rallentando.