BOOK TWO

1.25

FUNDAMENTALS of PIANO TECHNIQUE

by LEON CONUS

BOOK TWO
ADVANCED TECHNIQUE

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FUNDAMENTALS OF PIANO TECHNIQUE

Music
MT
225
.C67
F82
1953

BOOK TWO ADVANCED TECHNIQUE by LEON CONUS*

* see page 44 for biographical sketch

FOREWORD

I dedicate this work of my long life to advanced pupils and aspiring teachers. The exercises here are the result of careful thought and experiment during the many years which I have spent teaching. In order to facilitate study and systematize these contents, I have divided the exercises into seven categories, first according to their classification, and second according to technical difficulty:

EXERCISES FOR EXTENSIONS..... Page 3

FIVE-FINGER EXERCISES..... Page 11

THE PASSAGE OF THE THUMB..... Page 17

EXERCISES FOR THE TRILL..... Page 23

SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS..... Page 27

EXERCISES FOR THE WRISTS..... Page 33

EXERCISES IN DOUBLE-NOTES..... Page 40

Thus, each of these series has a special aim or purpose:

The EXTENSION EXERCISES are designed to facilitate stretches, loosen the hand, strengthen the fingers and give them independence.

The FIVE-FINGER EXERCISES are designed to develop agility, strength and independence.

continued page 2

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The **THUMB** must be specially trained, for its responsibility in piano playing is very great in so far as skilfulness in changing positions and maintaining legato are concerned.

The **TRILL** is the best exercise of all for equalizing the fingers and for acquiring the "jeu perle".*

The usefulness of **SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS** is universally recognized, and their preponderant role in most piano pieces is excellent proof of the wisdom of working at them regularly.

Good **DOUBLE-NOTES** are among the most outstanding accomplishments of the virtuoso, and steady practice of them is required.

An agile, mobile and subtle **WRIST** is the key which opens all doors and helps to conquer technical difficulties.

Three basic human faculties must be employed and developed if one is to attain proficiency of technique; they are **WILL POWER, MENTAL AND MUSCULAR COORDINATION, AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE FINGERS.** I consider the possession of these three faculties as a necessary foundation for all successful technical study. To obtain the best result in practicing exercises, one must vary the method of work. This can be accomplished by the following:

1. Play all exercises at different speeds and keys
2. Use different touches and nuances
3. Change all exercises by utilizing various rhythms and by displacing the accent
4. Invent different figures in addition to the ones illustrated
5. Memorize all exercises

To conclude, I should like to express my conviction that even the musical genius, possessed of inspiration, intuition, and all the other gifts of nature, still can have no real success unless at the same time he possesses a knowledge of how to work and a love of the work itself. This also appears to be a devine gift. For without this, there would have been no great men - neither scholars, nor poets, nor painters, nor architects - and certainly no great composers or interpreters.

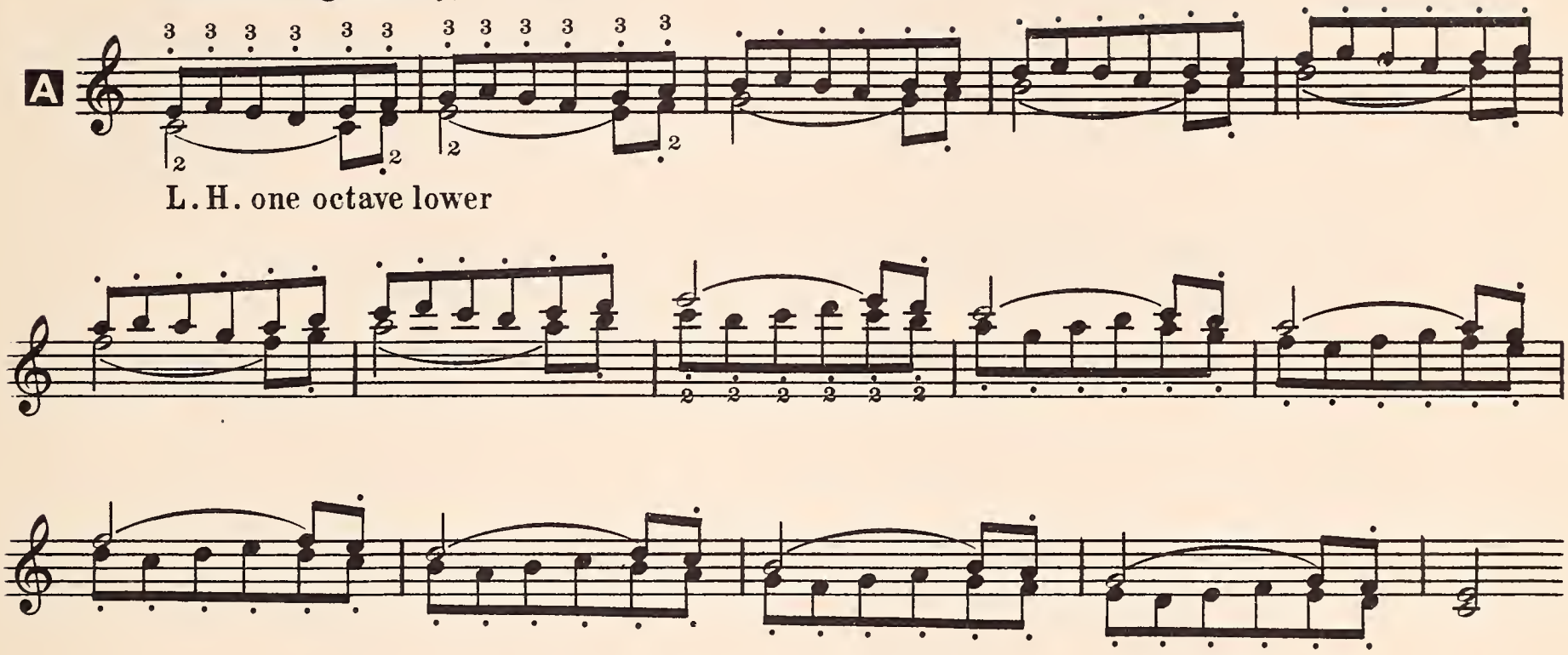
. . . . Leon Conus

*Pearl-like playing

SECTION I - EXTENSION

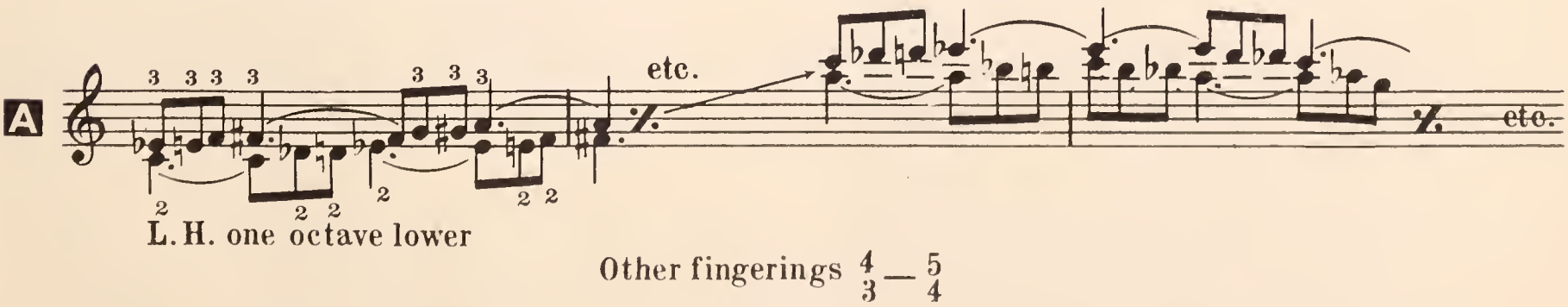
Example I

For two fingers only, low wrist.



Example II

Consider the size of your own hand in practicing this exercise; a large hand may add one or more notes, and a small hand may diminish the extension.



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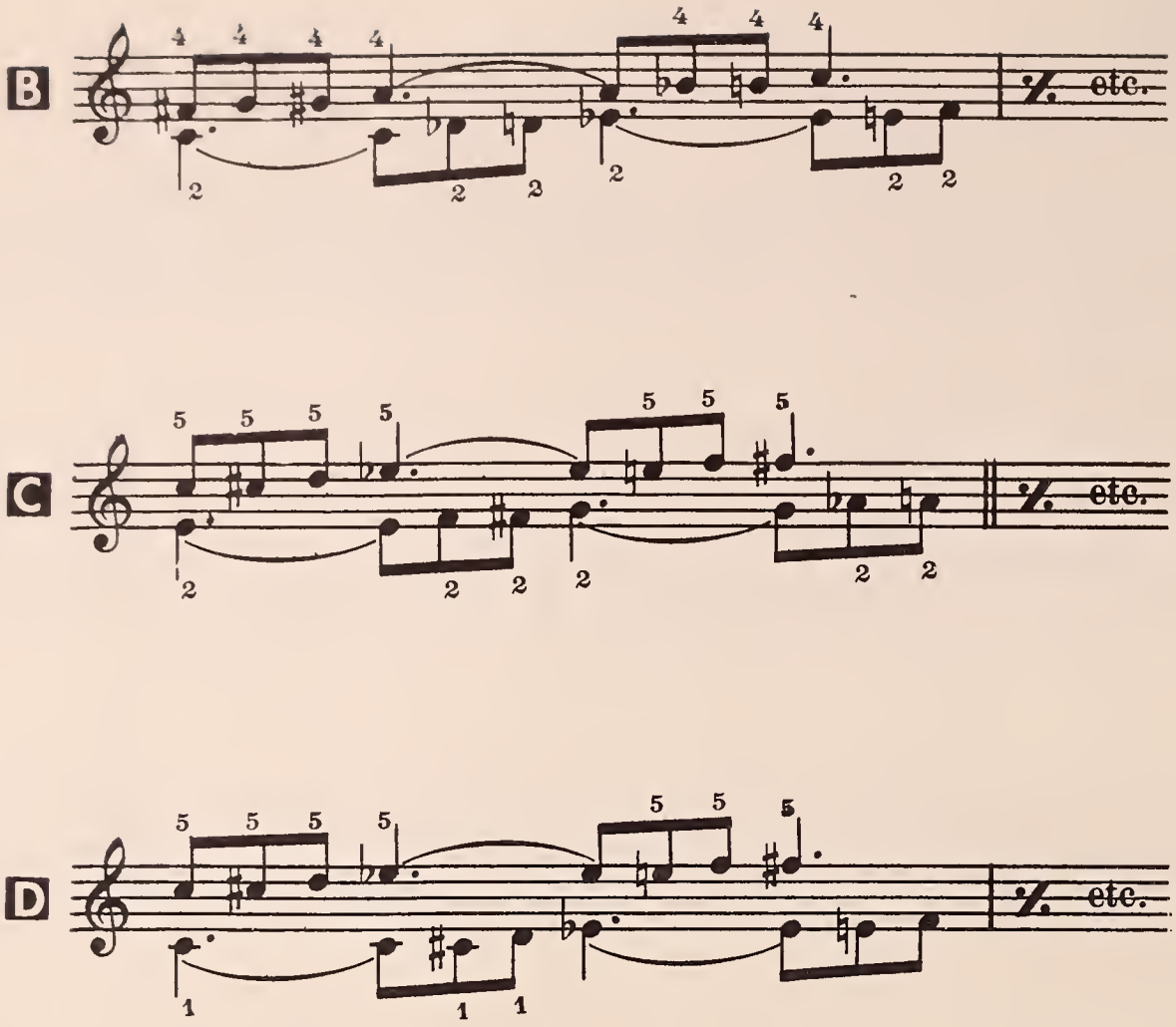
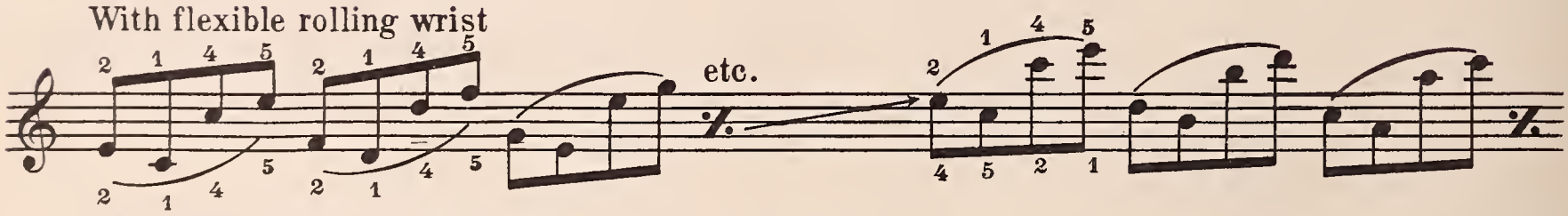
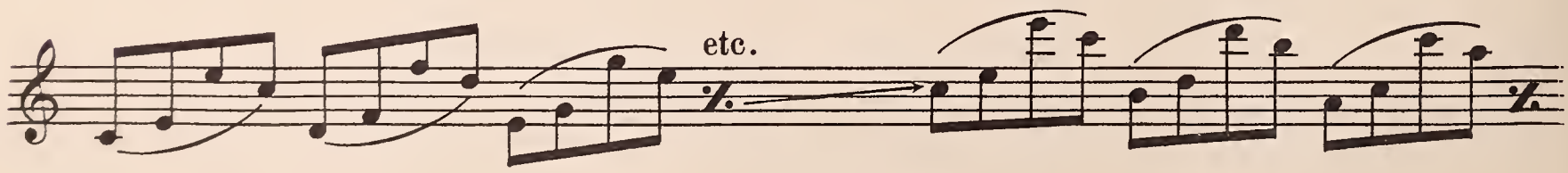


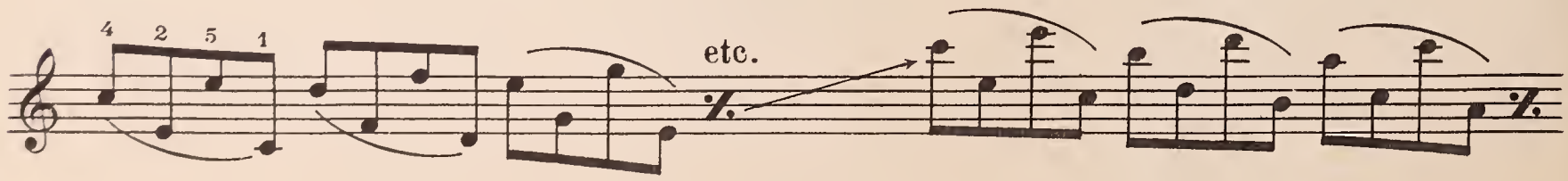
Example III

With flexible rolling wrist



The Left Hand two octaves lower



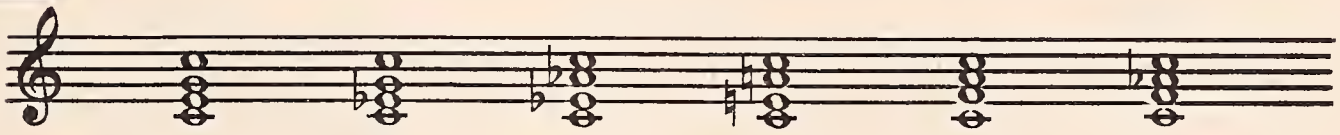


Example IV

Those persons who have small hands must be especially careful in practicing extensions, and not sustain notes which make the stretch too difficult.

STEP I

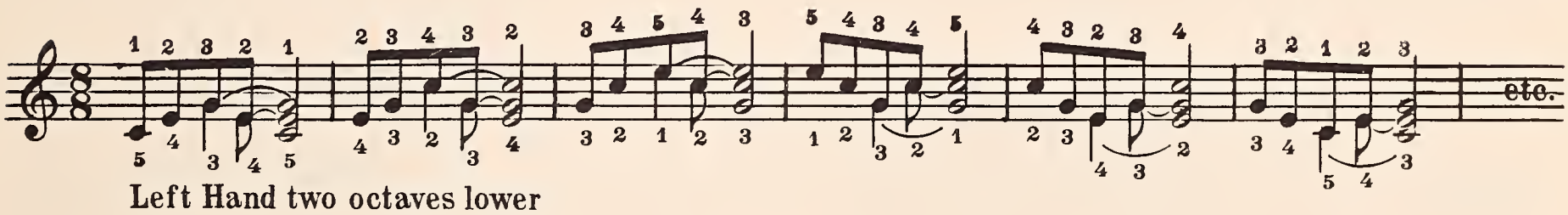
PRACTICE THESE SIX CHORDS IN ALL KEYS



STEP II

Play the following exercises slowly, emphasize the action of each finger, keeping the wrist low; while holding the half-notes at the end of each measure, control the flexibility of the wrist by moving it up and down.

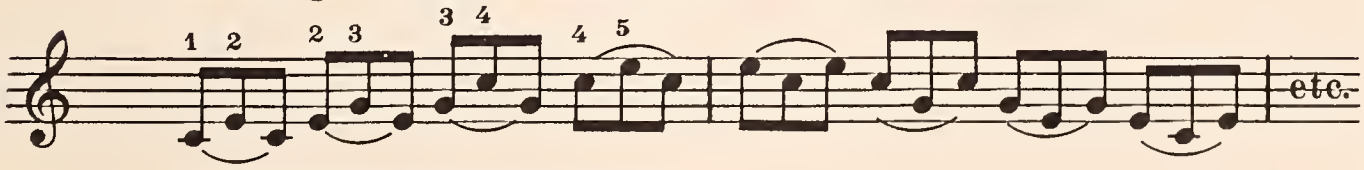
PLAY THIS EXERCISE ON THE SIX GIVEN CHORDS



Left Hand two octaves lower

Faster, lighter, exact raising of each finger, flexible wrist

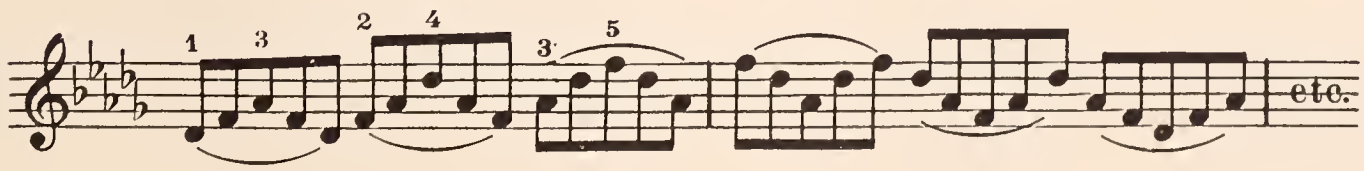
A



On all six chords

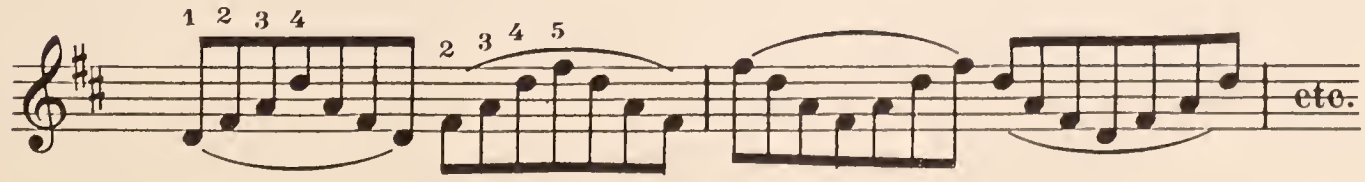
Left Hand two octaves lower

B



On all six chords

C



On all six chords

Slower, after the stretch, the hand resumes its normal position

D

etc. on all six chords

Legato with flexible rolling wrist

E

etc. on all six chords

F

etc.

G

etc.

H

etc.

With rolling wrist, pivoting on quarter note

Example V

Legatissimo, slow and mezzo forte, holding all notes of each measure, raising only one finger with a quiet movement, always controlling the complete relaxation of the arm and wrist.

A

Left Hand two octaves lower

Leggiero, fast, piano, without holding any notes

B

L. H. two octaves lower

C

Example VI

A

Twice

Four times

Four times

L. H. two octaves lower

B

Slowly

turn

L. H. always two octaves lower

C

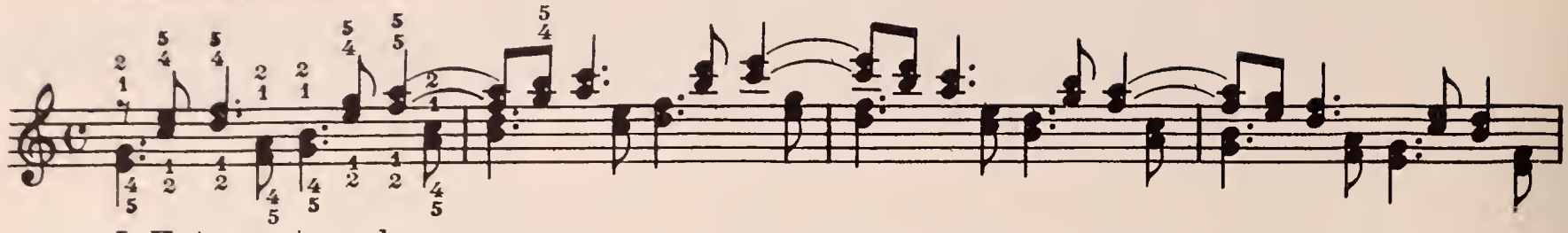
Leggiero

D

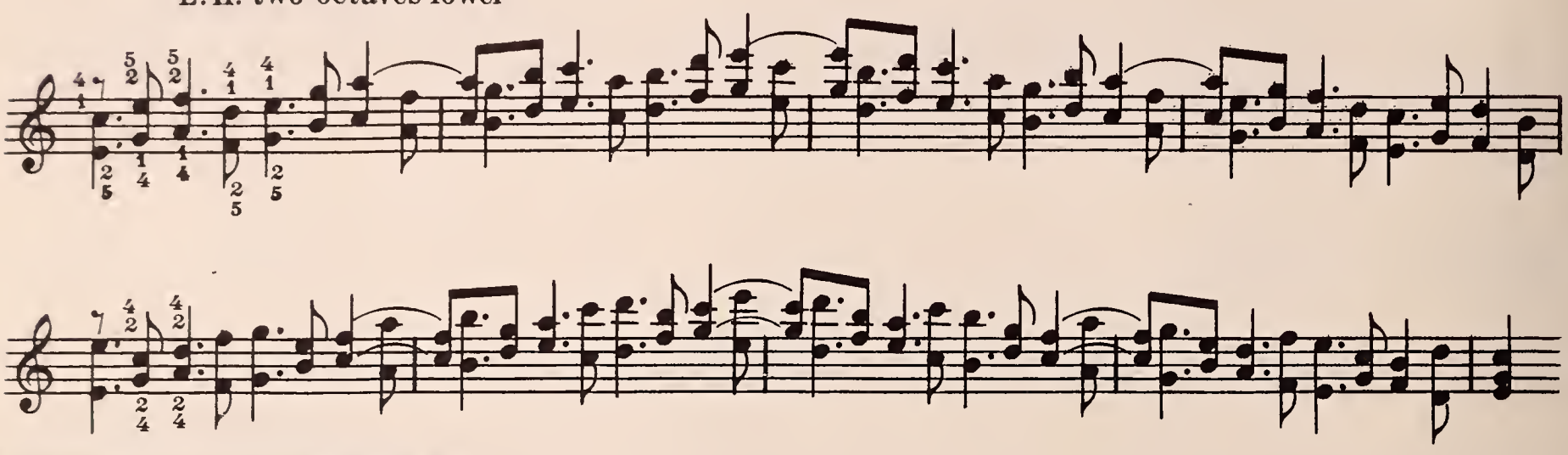
Slow, legato

Example VII

If the extension is too difficult, hold only one finger

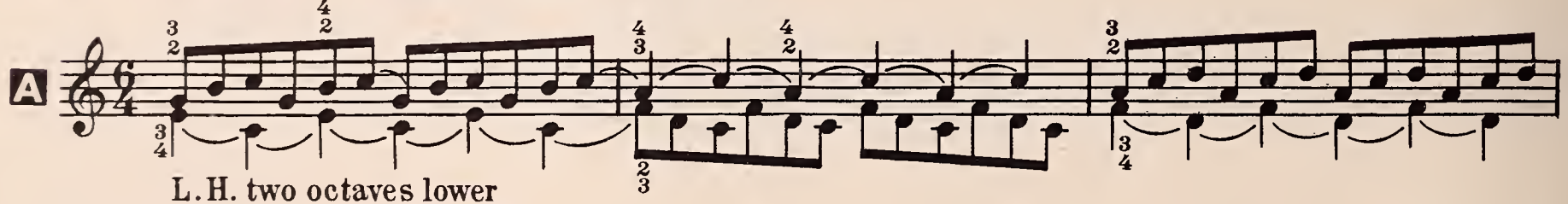


L. H. two octaves lower

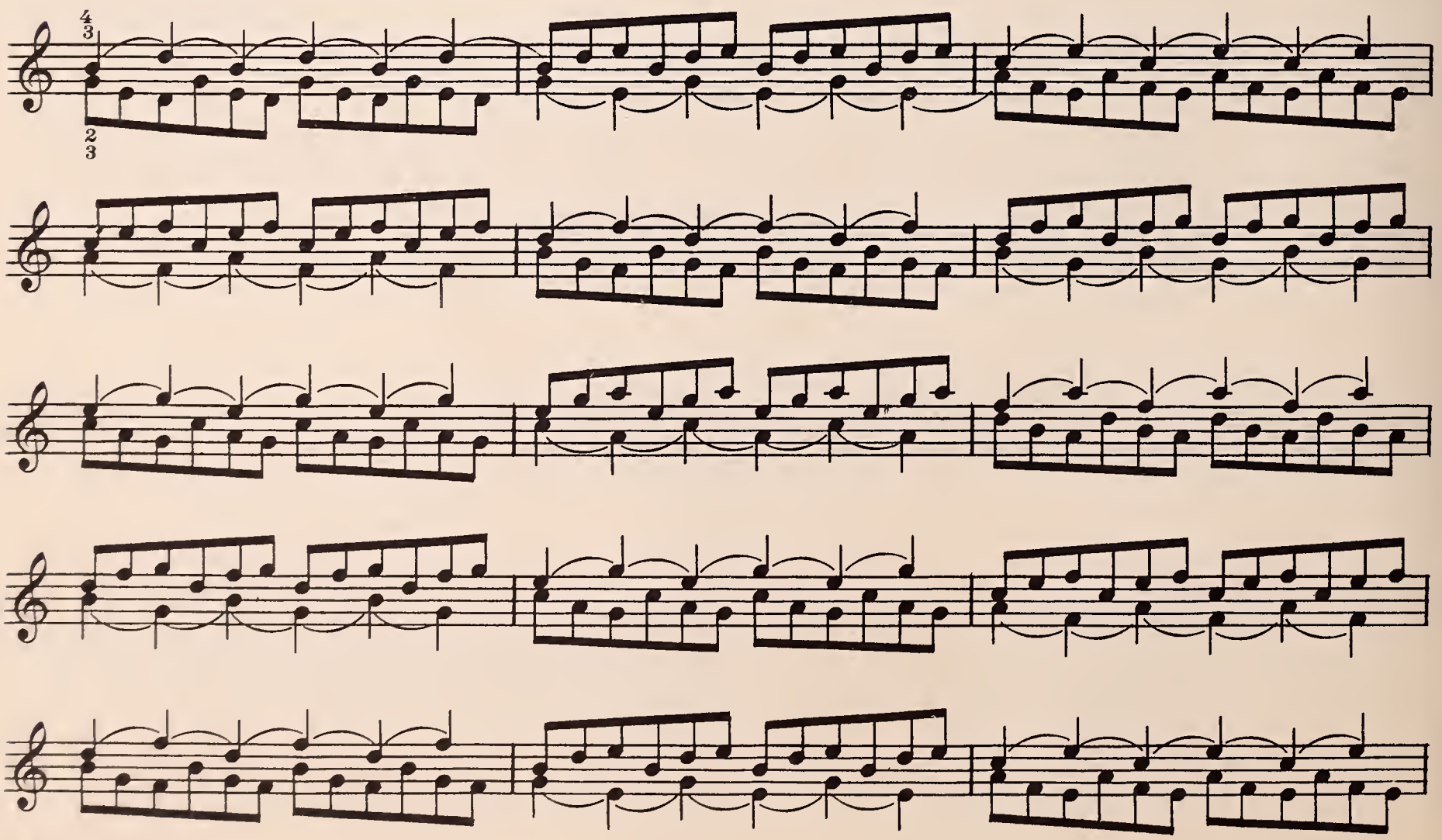


Example VIII

Legato, wrist flexible, both voices legato



L. H. two octaves lower



B

etc.

Legato; after the stretch the hand resumes its normal position

C

legato

Example IX

First, practice the following group of three chords in chromatic sequence

Legatissimo, slow, holding all the notes of each measure

A

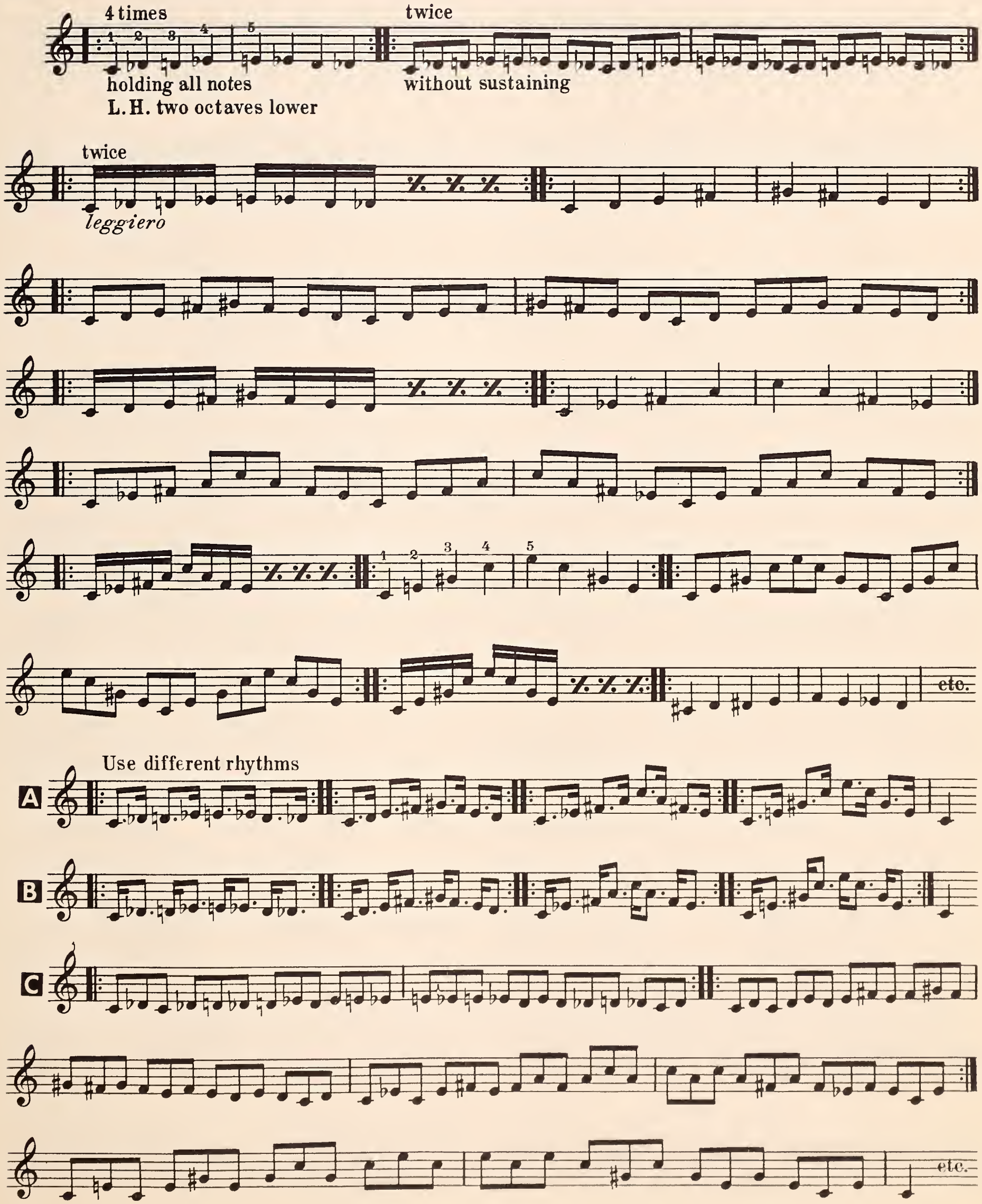
B

etc.

C

SECTION II - FIVE FINGER EXERCISES

Example I



D

E

F

p *p* *p* *p* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten*

ten *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* *ten* etc.

G

a) *b)*

L. H. always two octaves lowers

c)

d)

a)

b)

c)

d)

a) *b)*

c)

d)

a)

b)

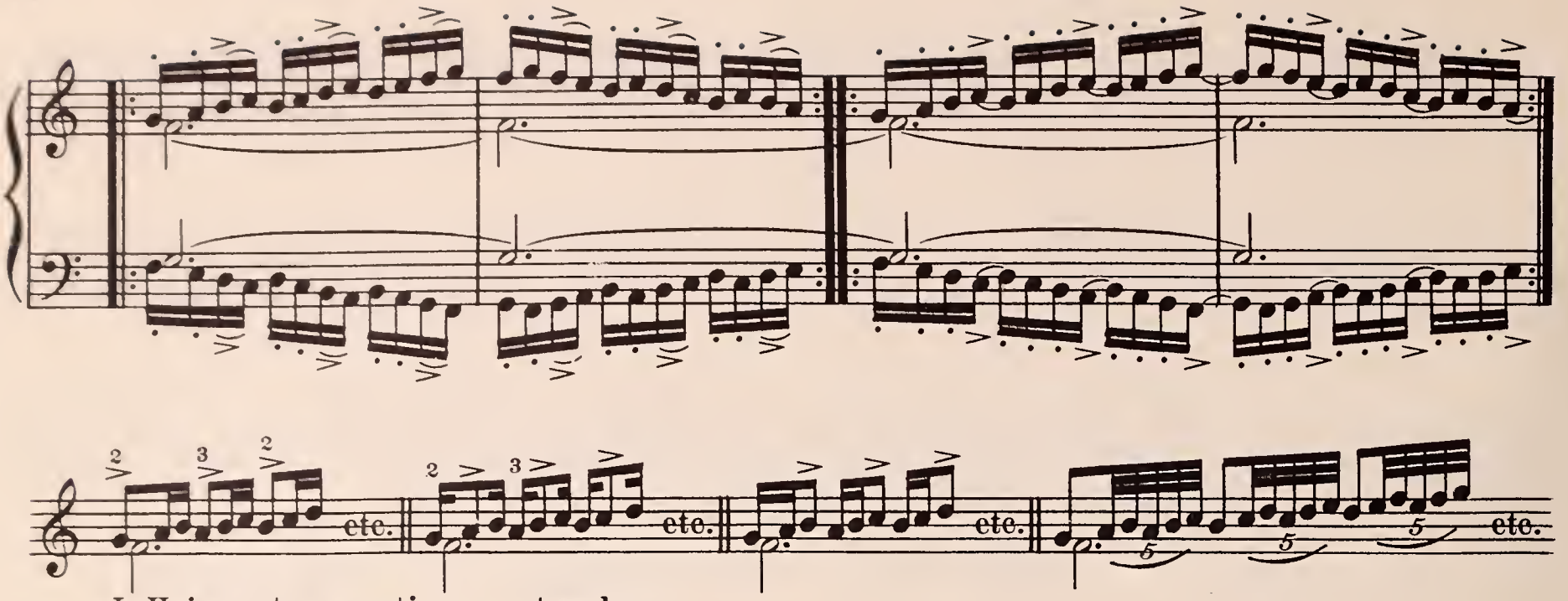
c)

d)

Example 11

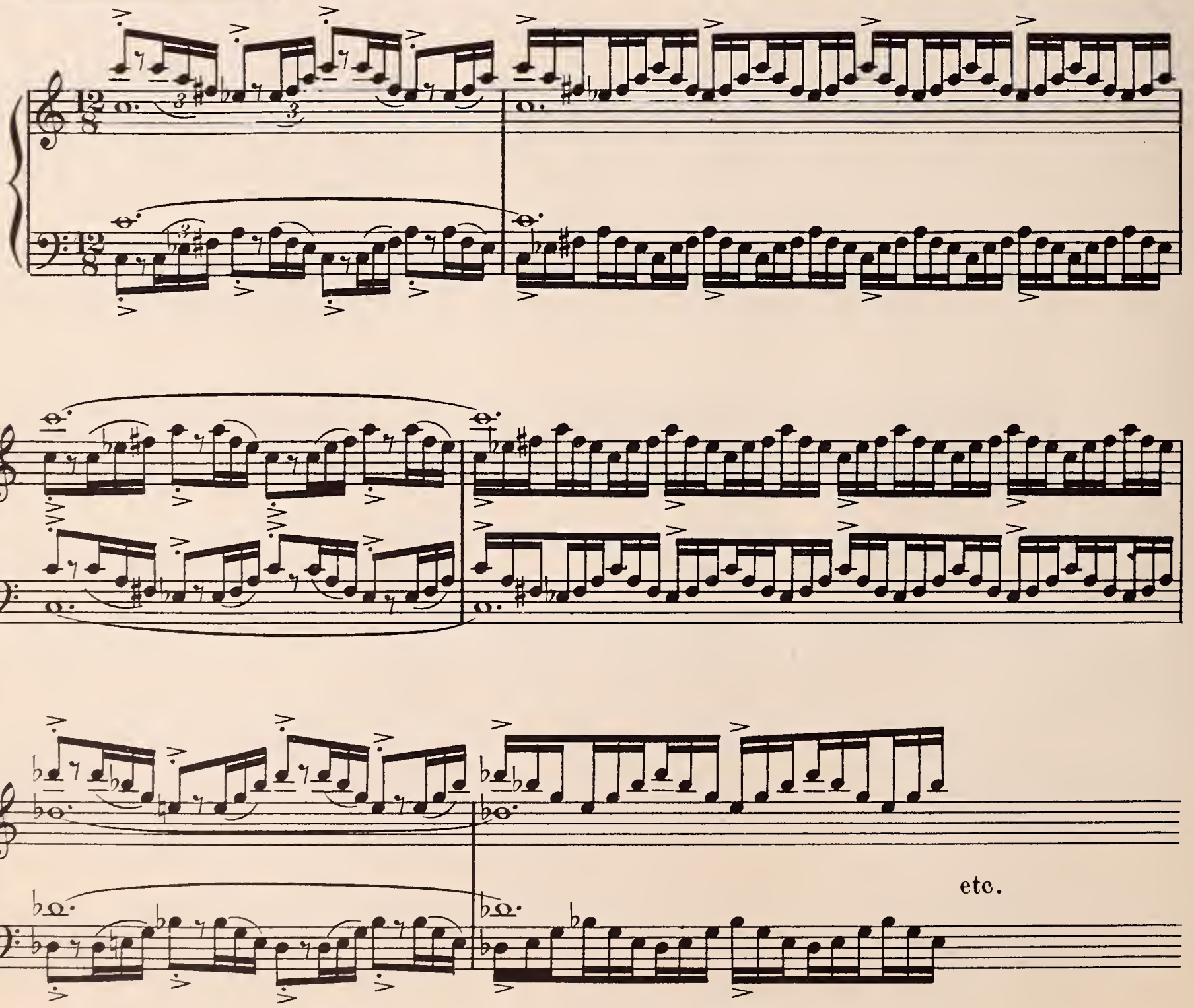
etc.

Varying accents



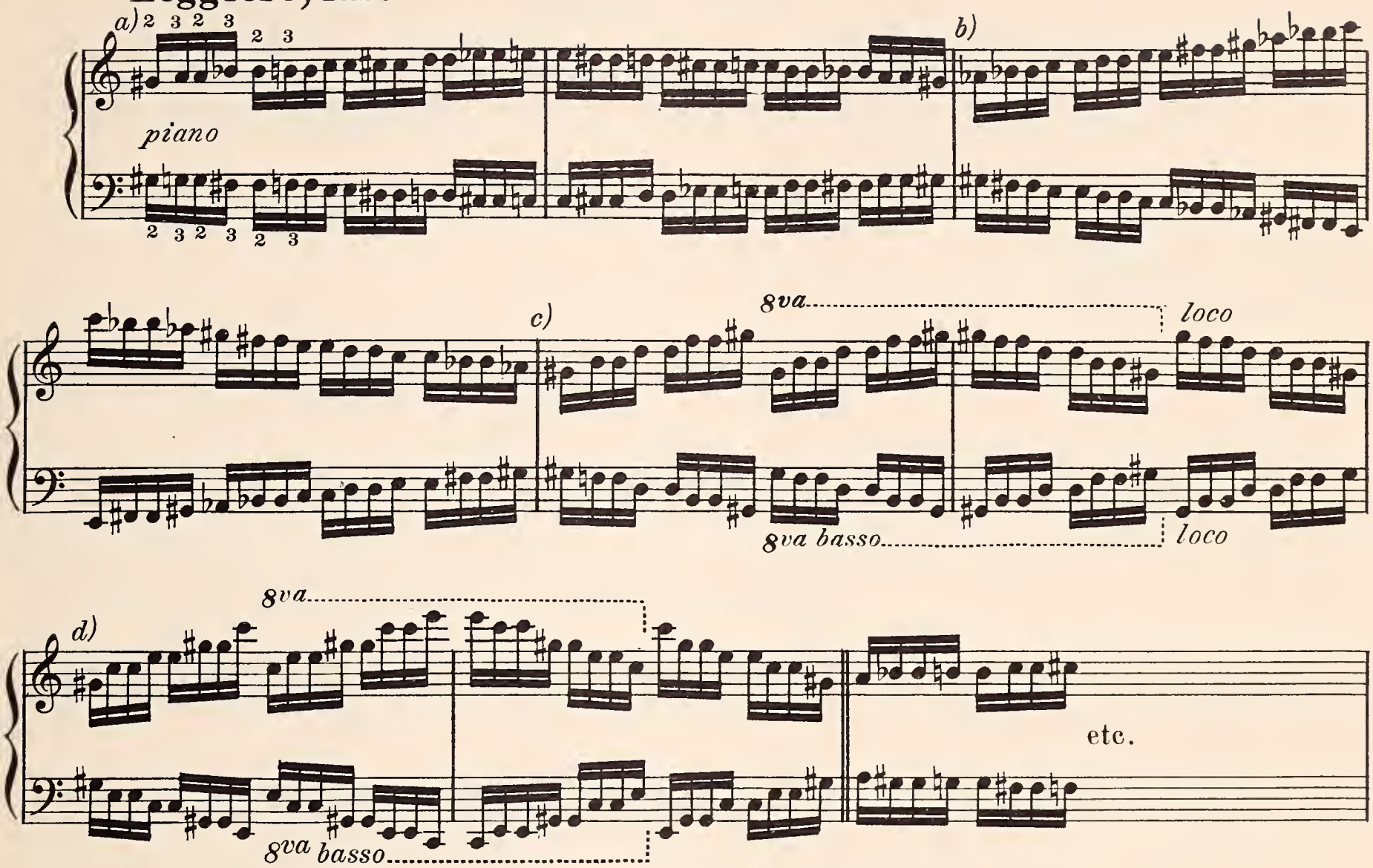
L. H. in contrary motion an octave lower

Example III



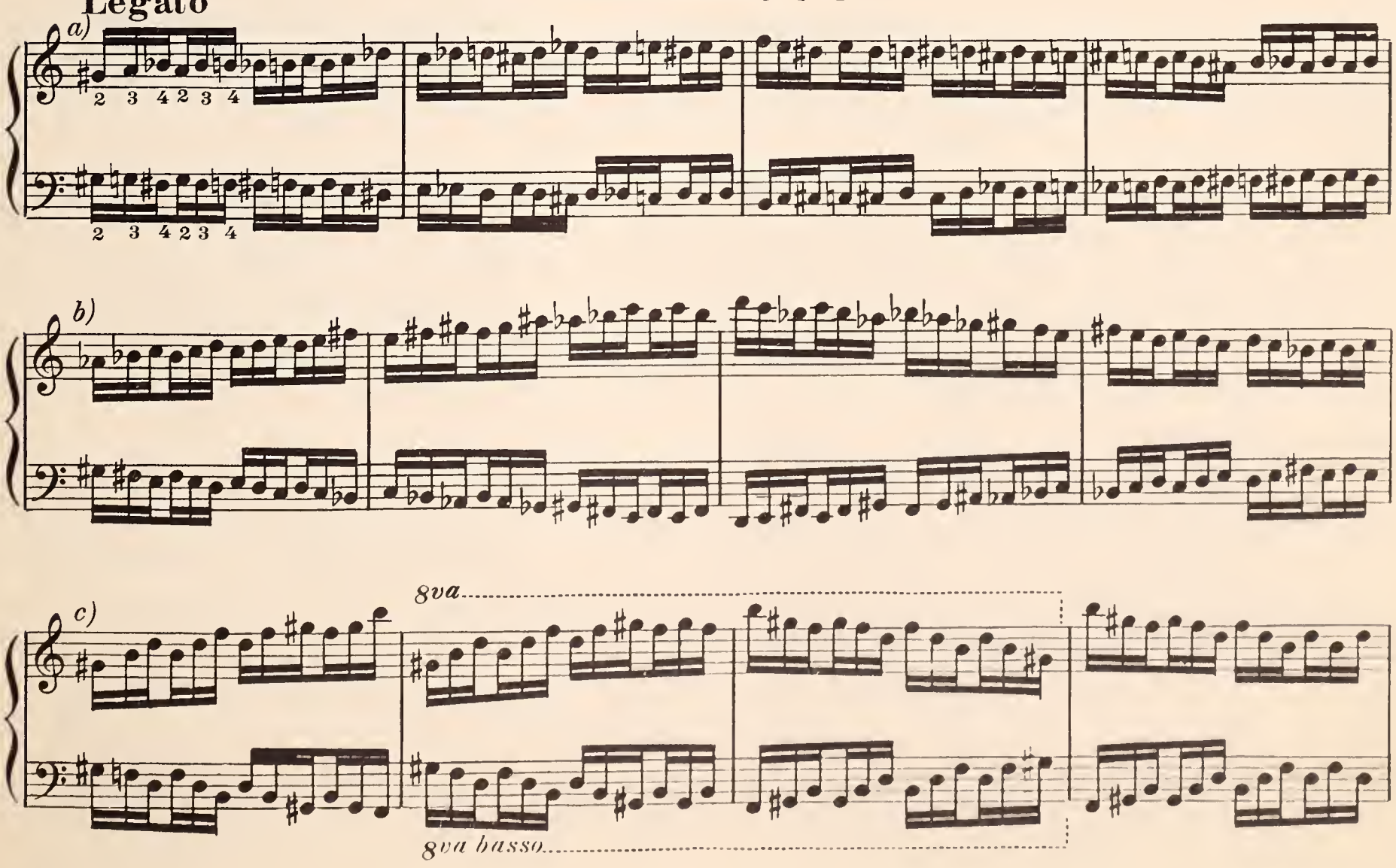
Example IV

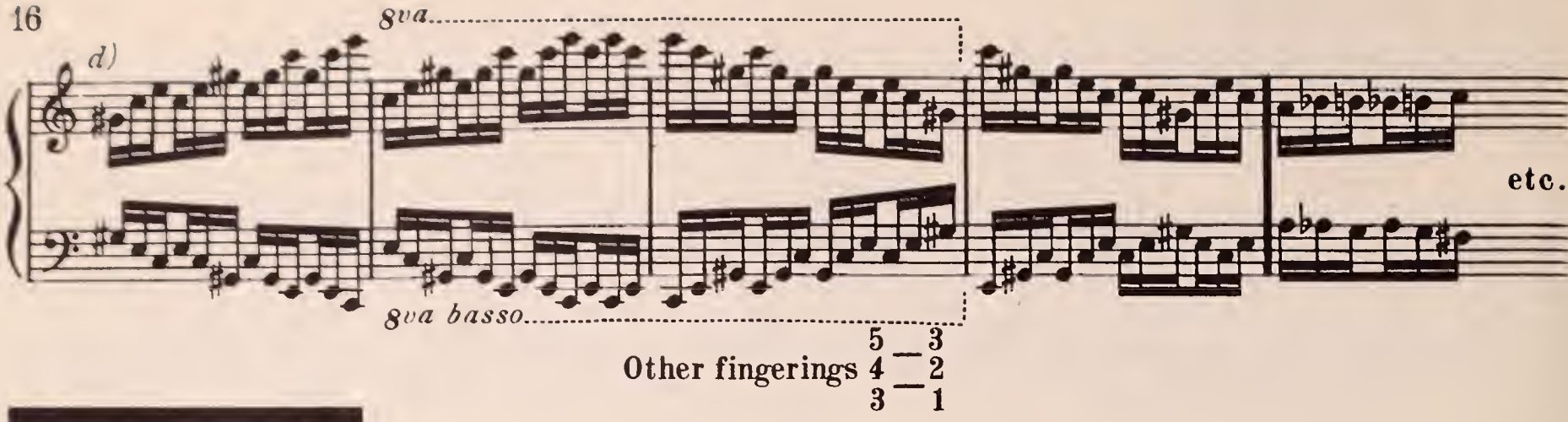
Leggiero, fast



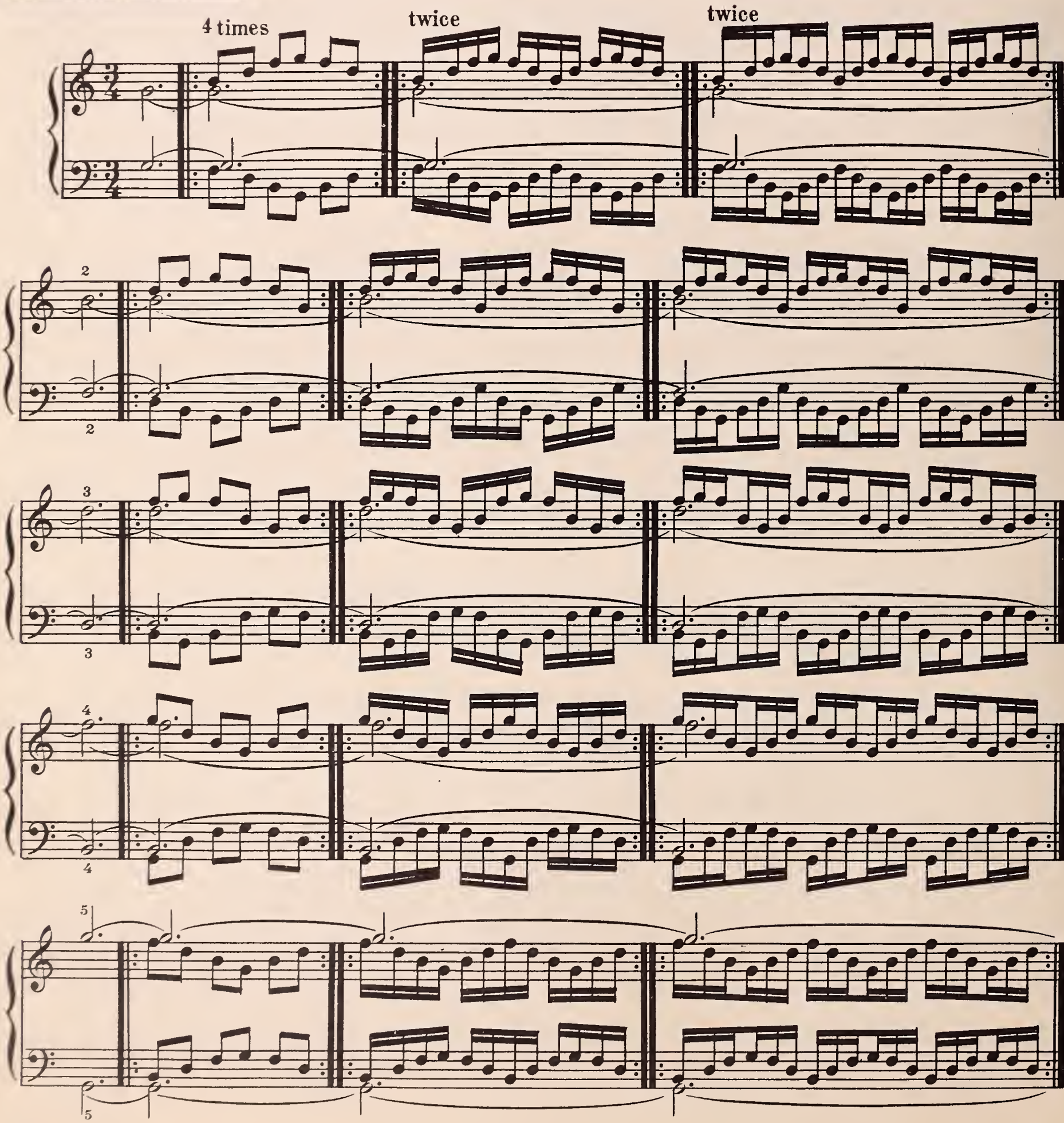
Other fingering $\begin{matrix}4\\3\end{matrix}-\begin{matrix}5\\4\end{matrix}-\begin{matrix}2\\1\end{matrix}$

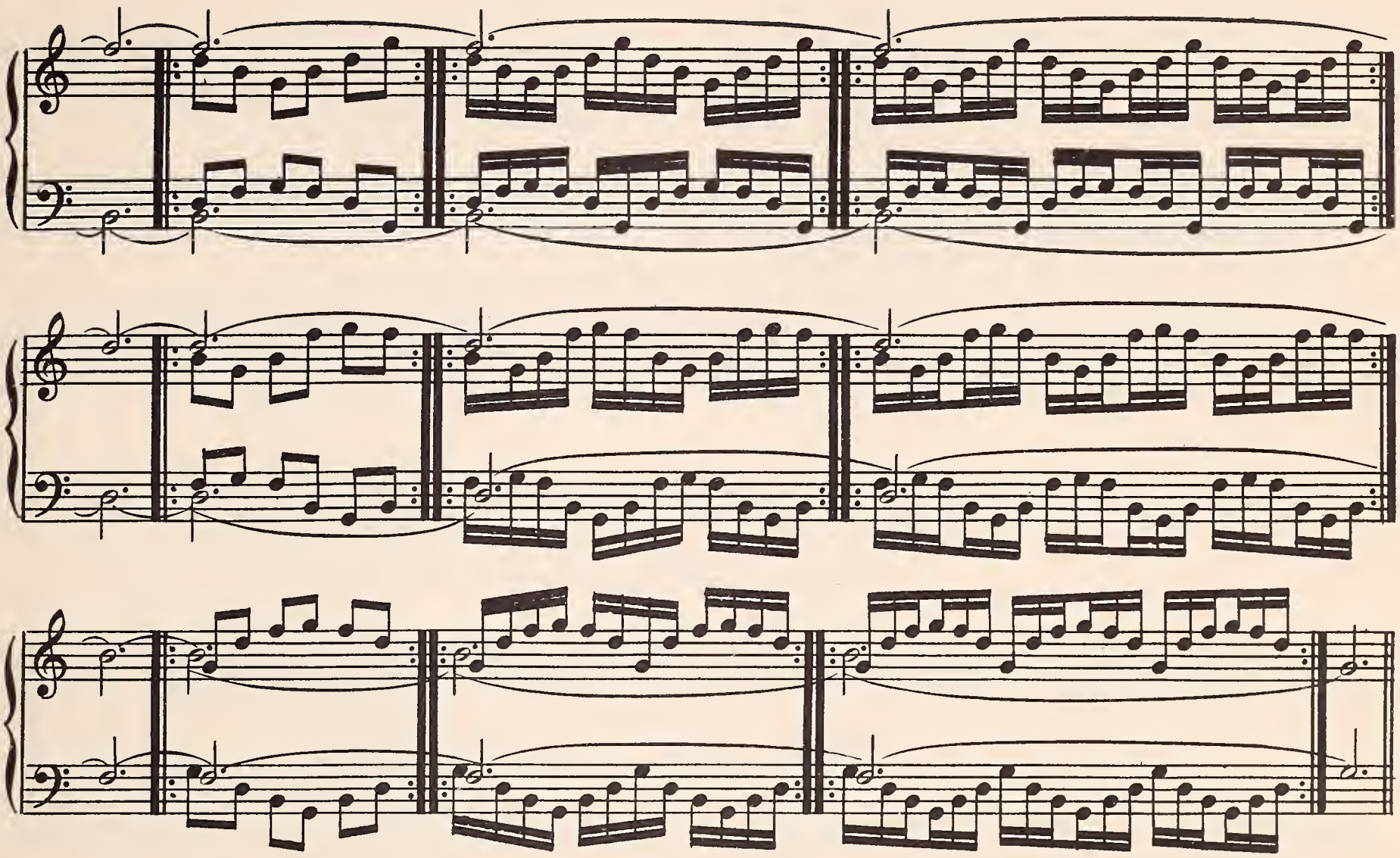
Legato




8va
d)
etc.
8va basso
5 — 3
Other fingerings 4 — 2
3 — 1

Example V

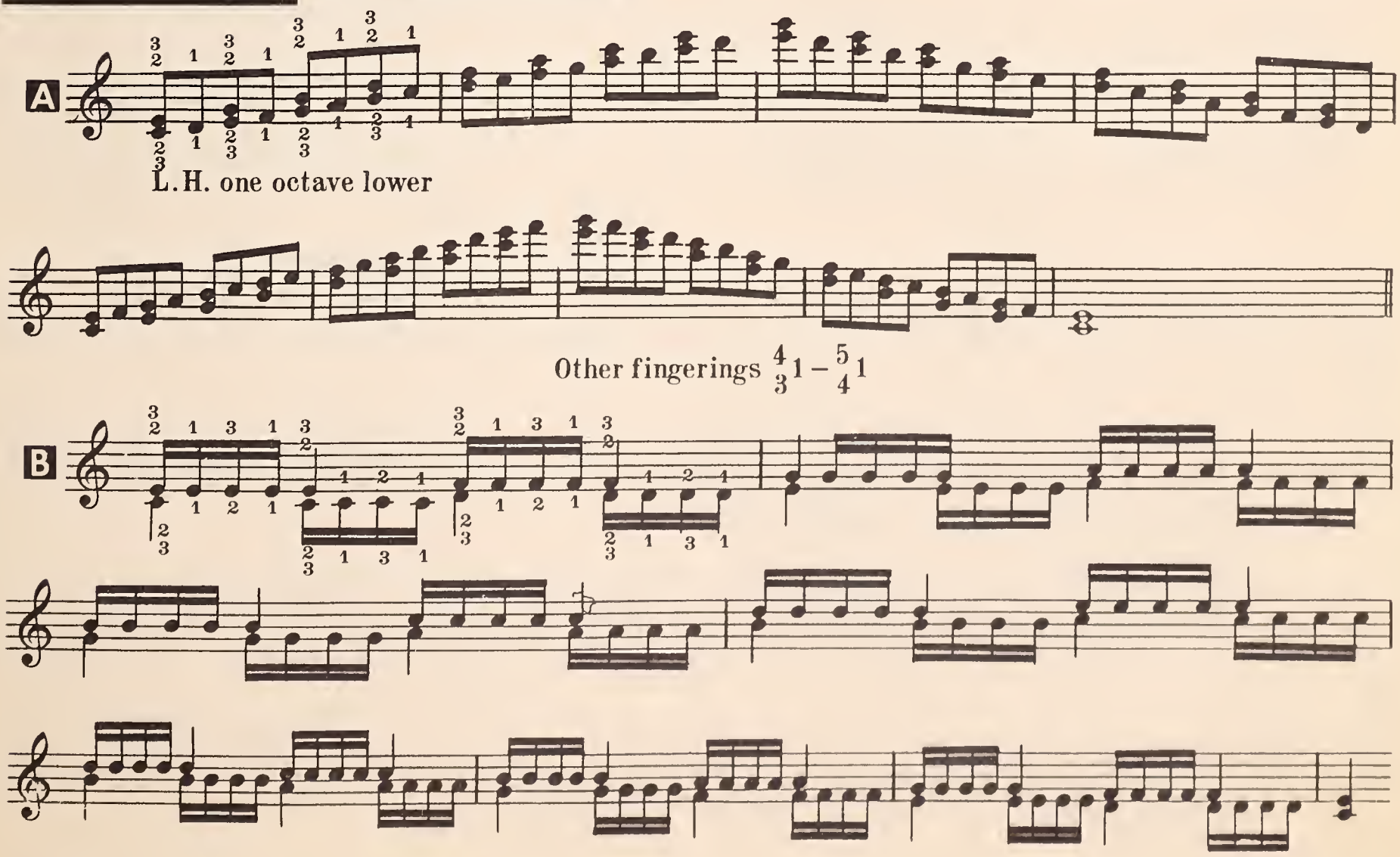

4 times
twice
twice
2
2
3
3
4
4
5
5



SECTION III - PASSAGE of the THUMB

Example 1

First practice legatissimo, slow, holding three notes, then leggiero, fast without holding



C

Also in groups of six

etc.

and

In groups of eight

etc.

D

In all keys

etc

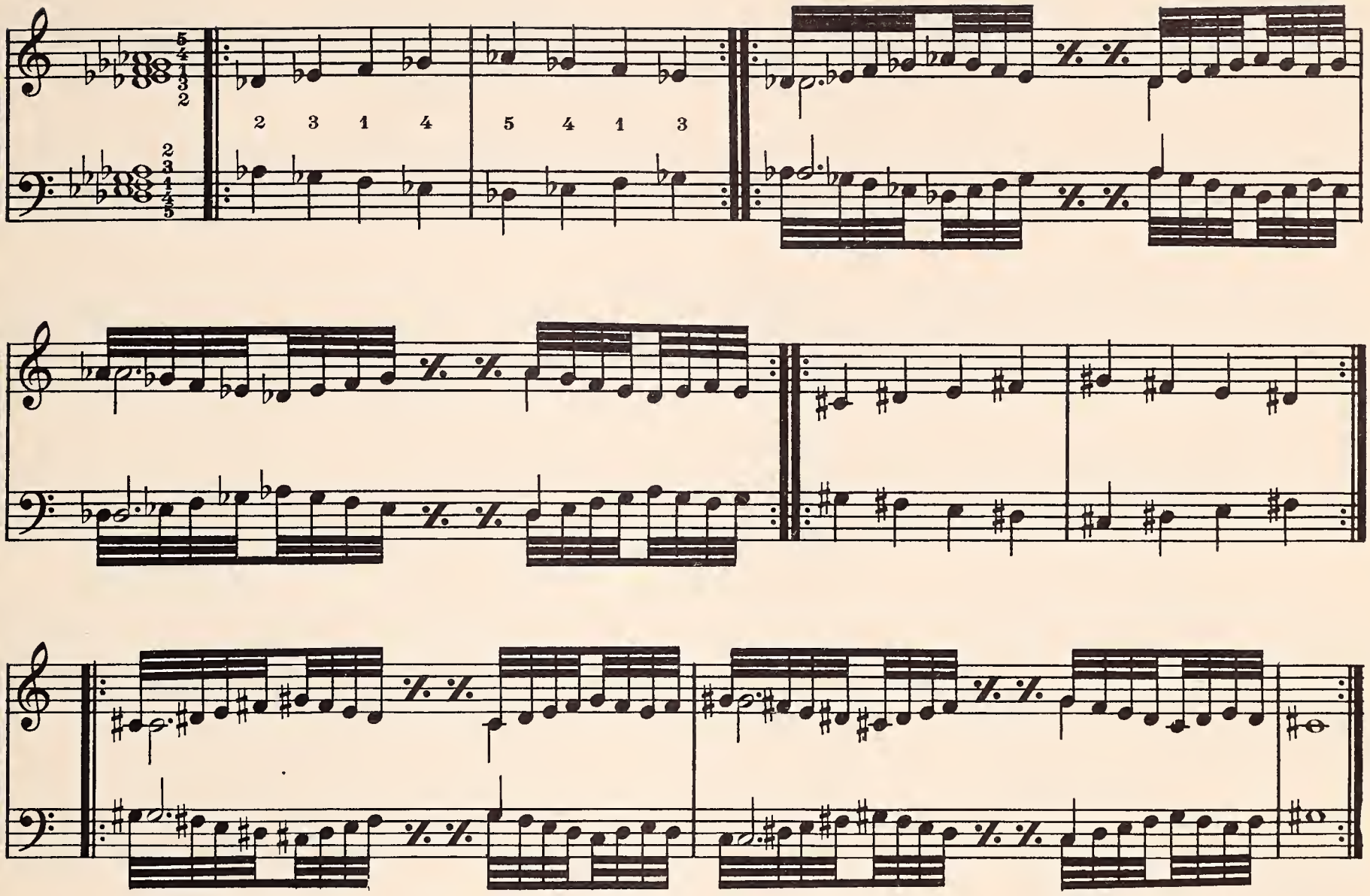
Example 11

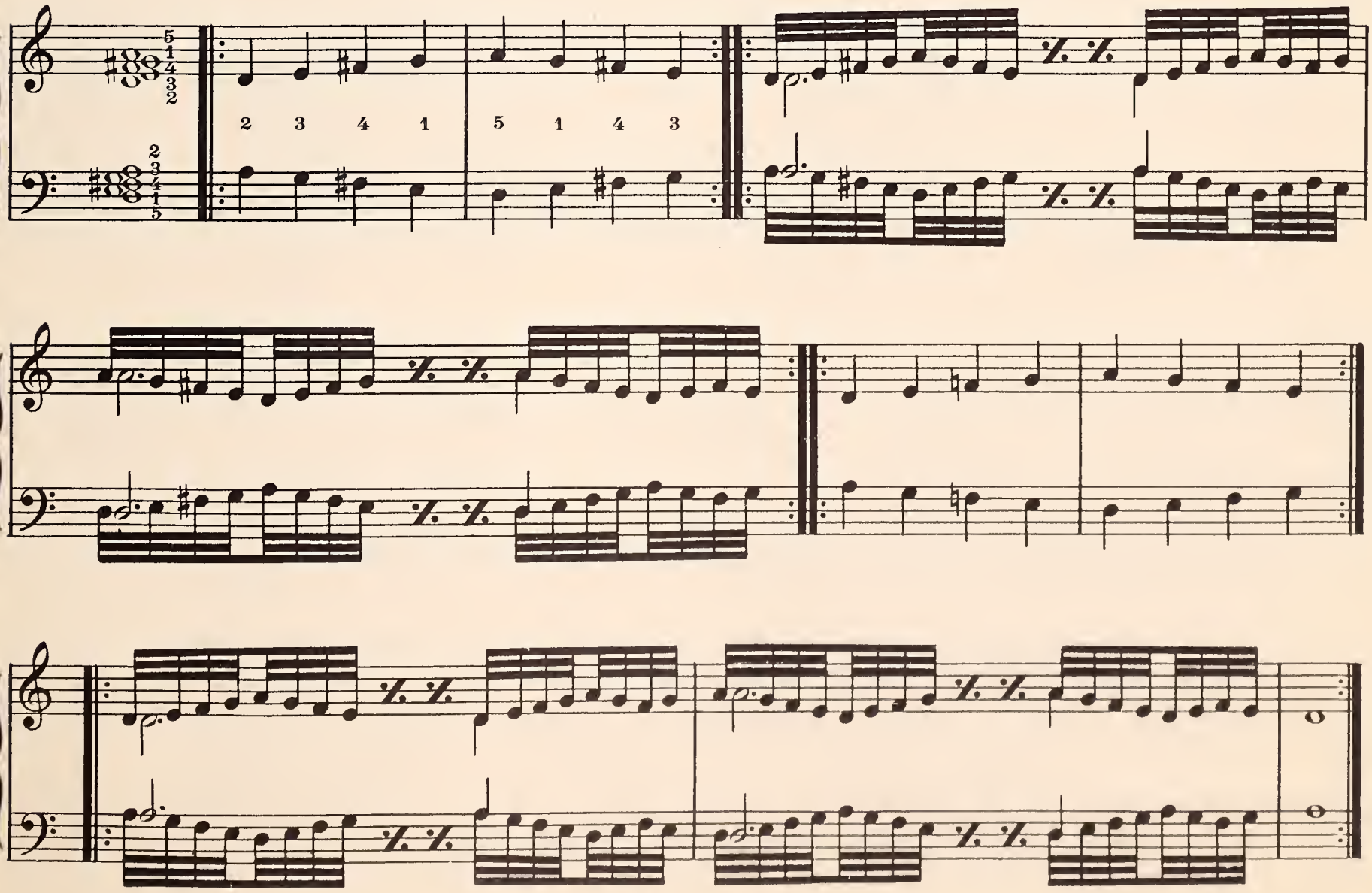
ten

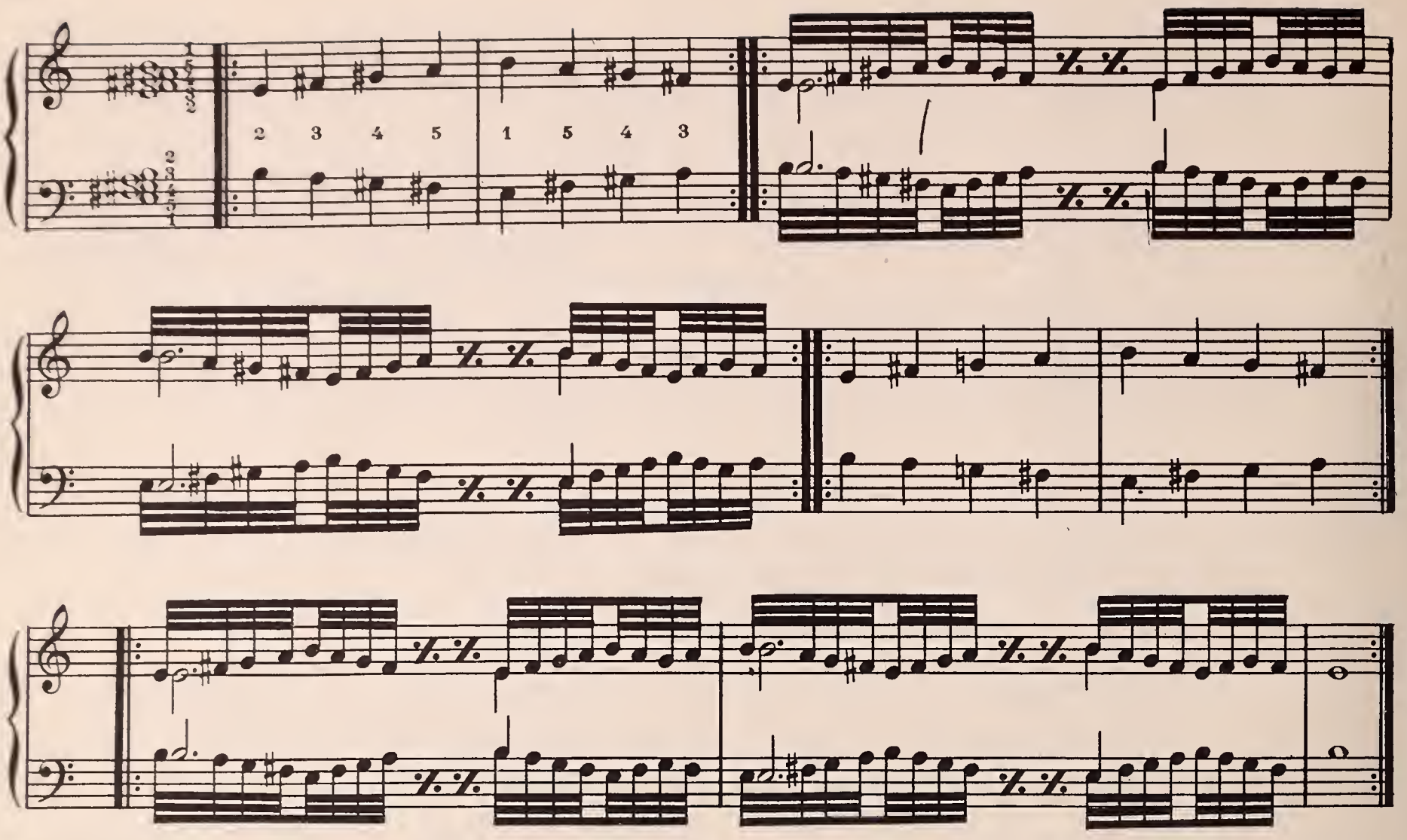
Holding notes

Holding 2nd fingers only

Holding 5th fingers only

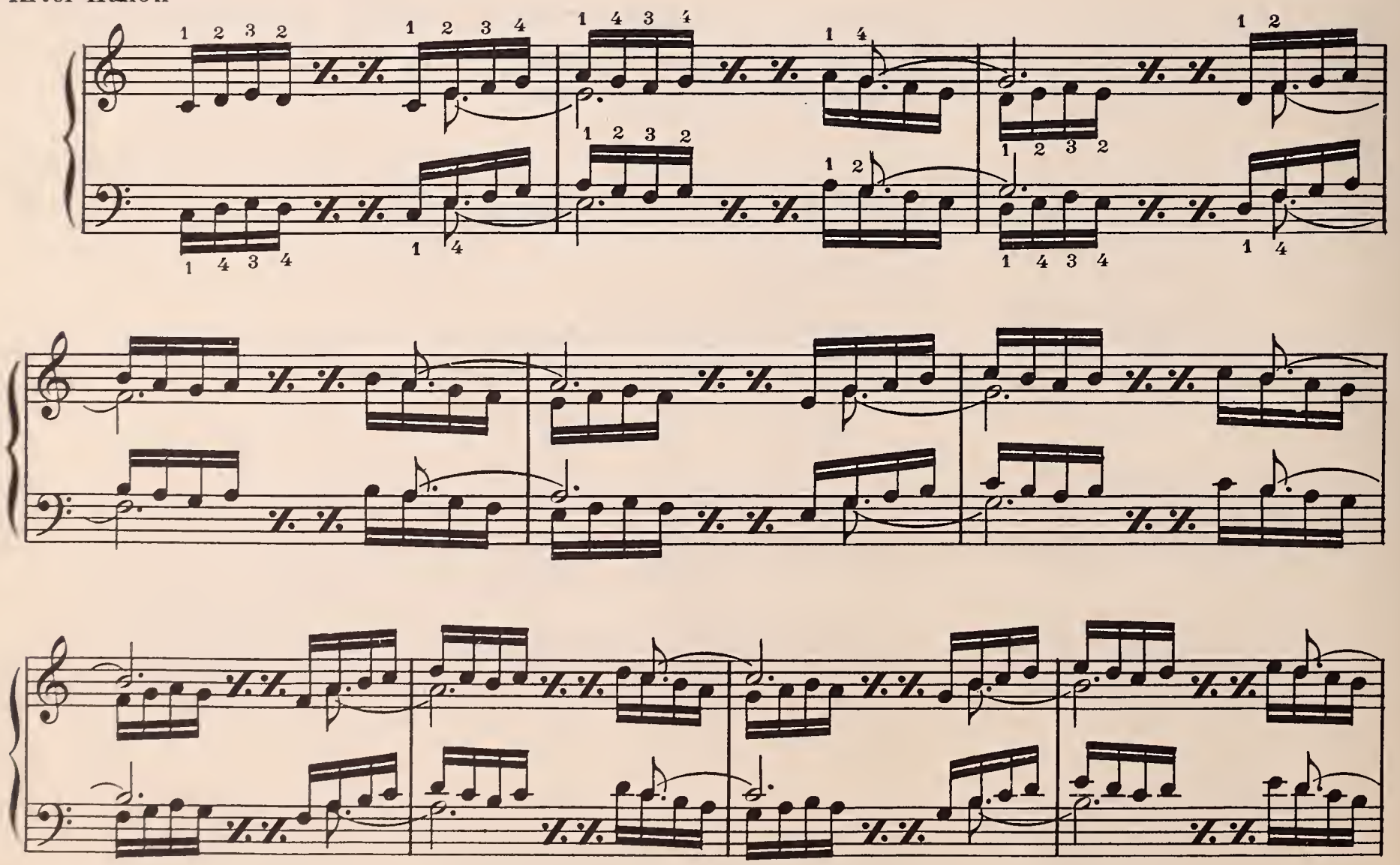

2 3 1 4
5 4 1 3


2 3 4 1
5 1 4 3



Example III

After Hanon



etc.

R.H.

L.H.

Example IV

R.H.

A

L.H.

L.H. one octave lower

B

C

etc.

Example V

A

8va

B

8va

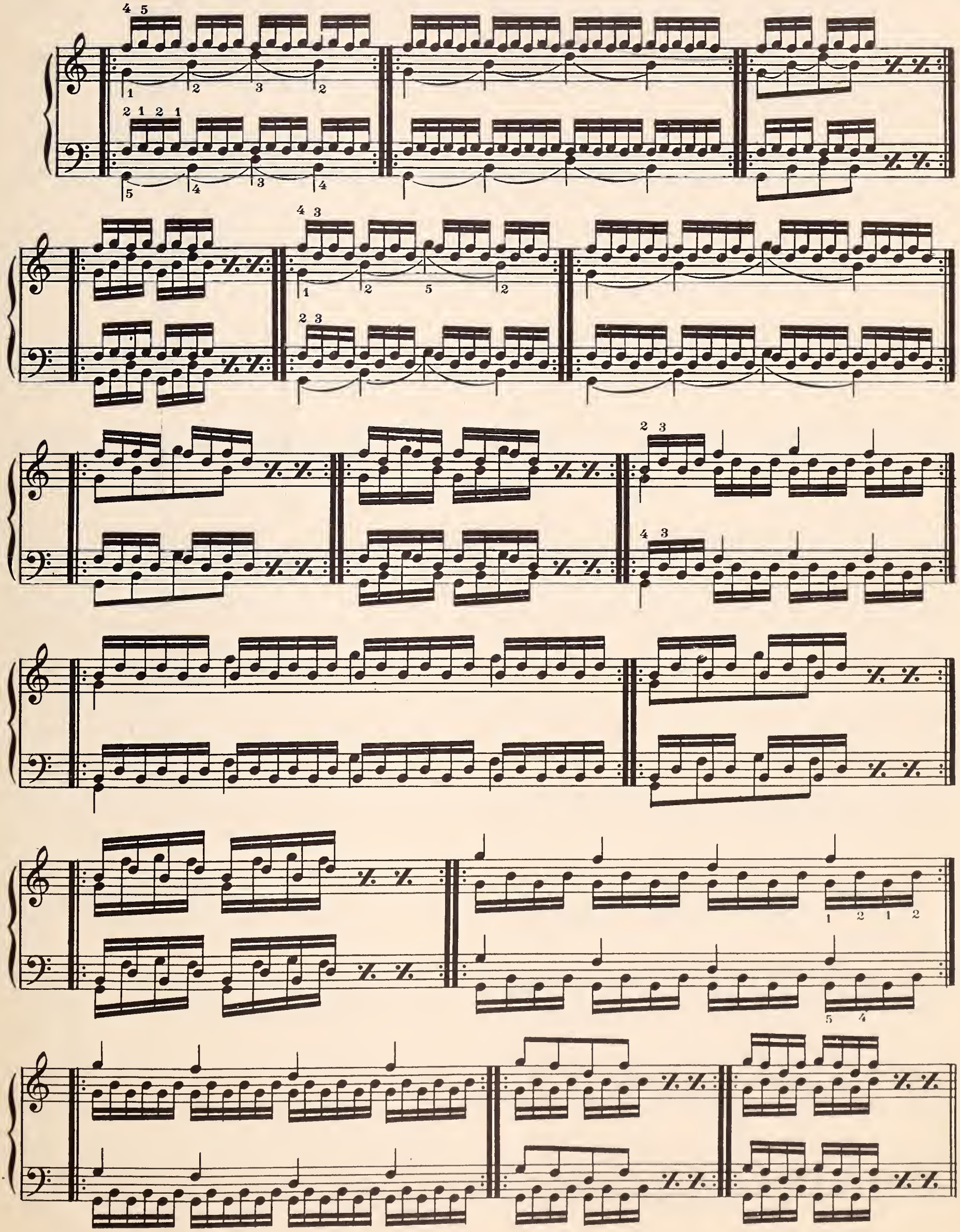
etc.

Play the above exercise on the following six chords

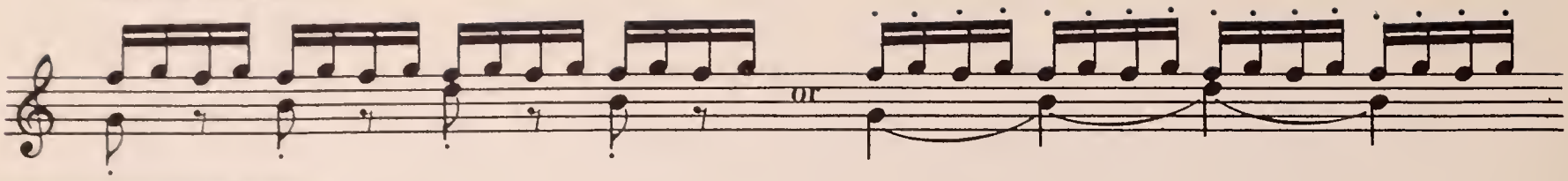
R. H.

L. H.

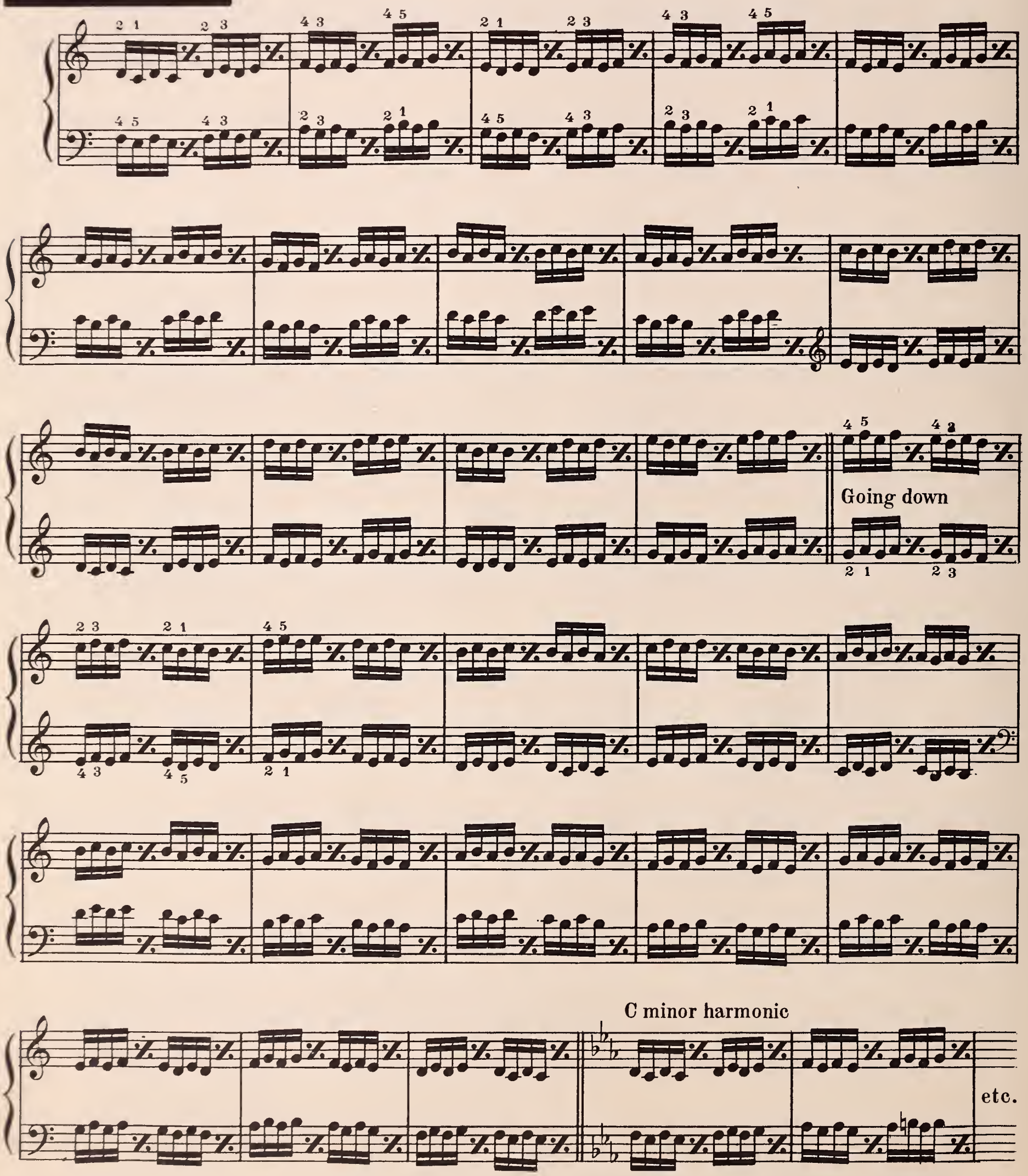
SECTION IV - TRILL STUDIES



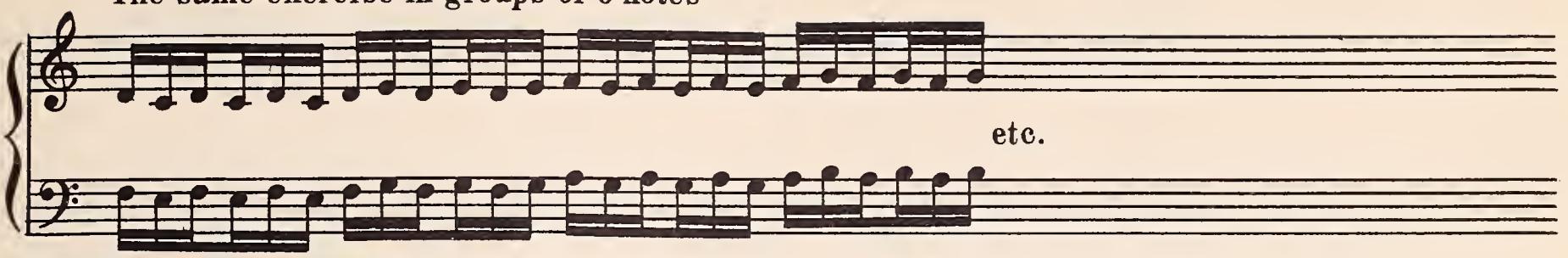
Different touches



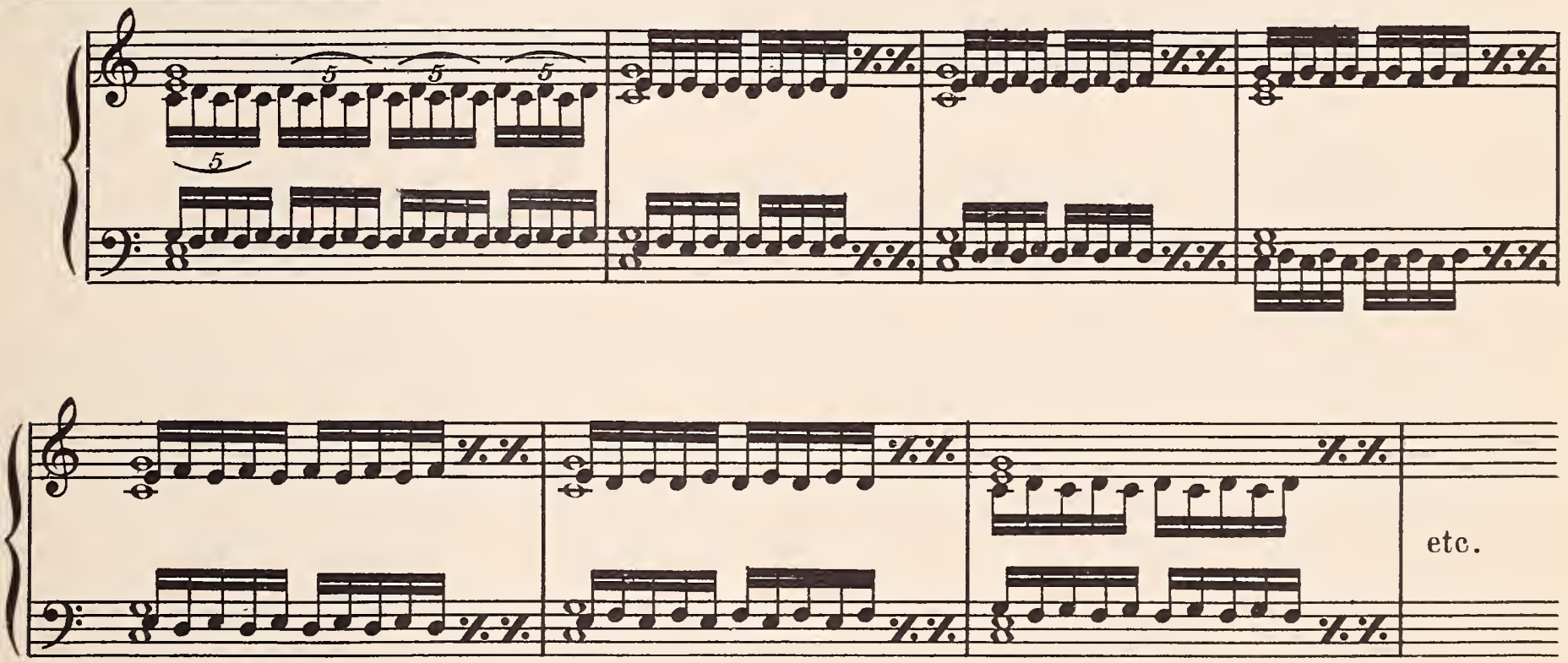
Example 11



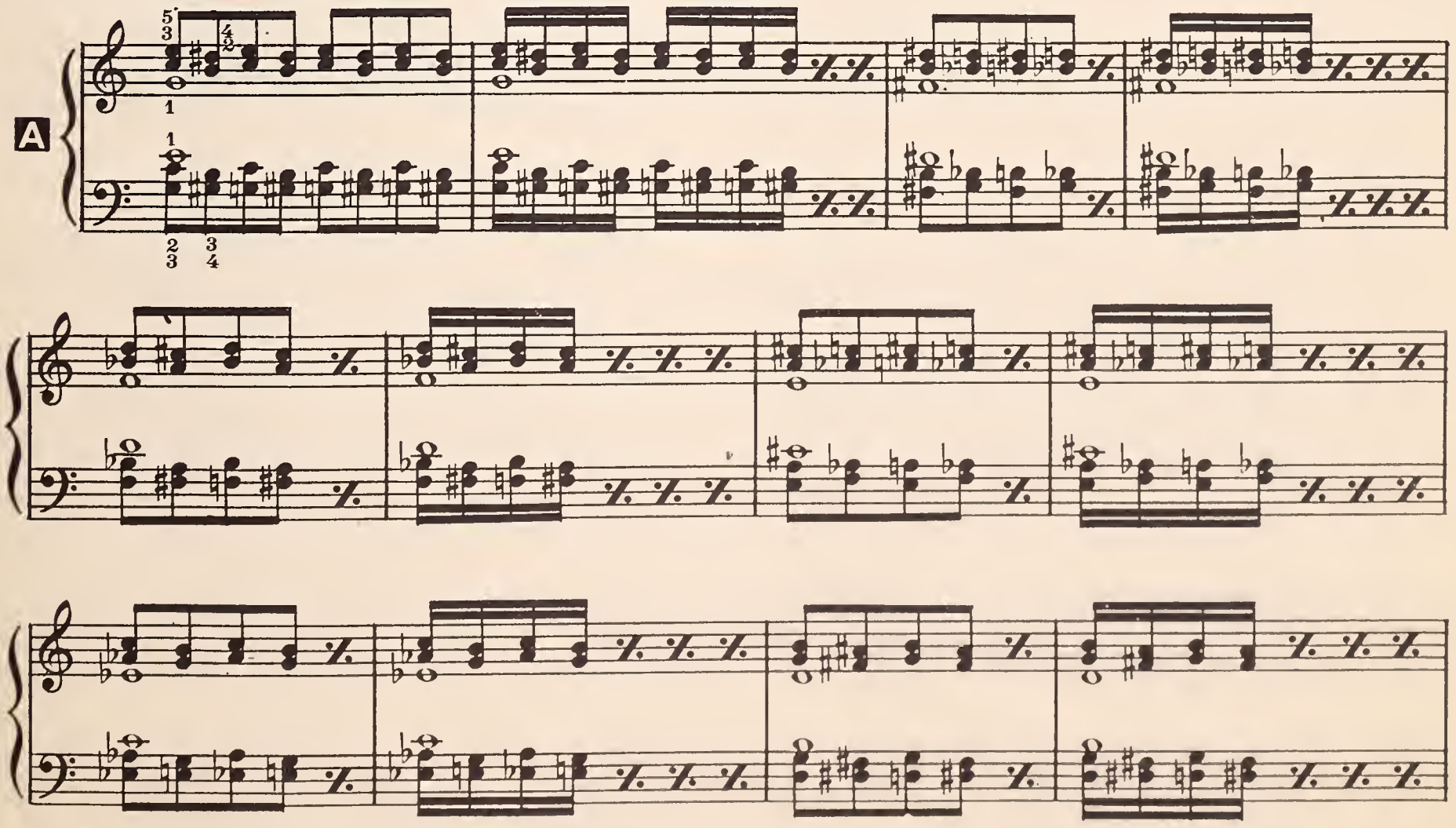
The same exercise in groups of 6 notes



Example III



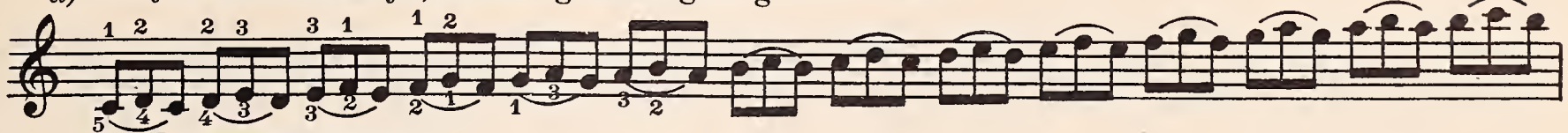
After S. Rachmaninoff



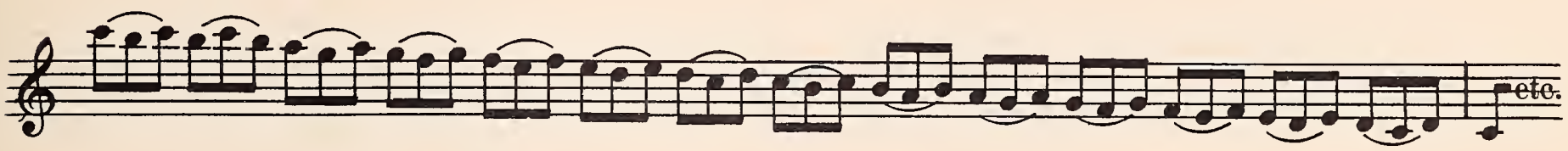
B

SECTION V - SCALES and ARPEGGIOS

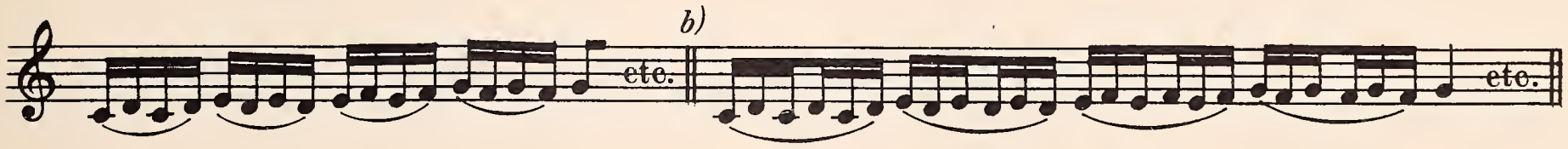
a) **Play in different keys, retaining the fingering of the scale**



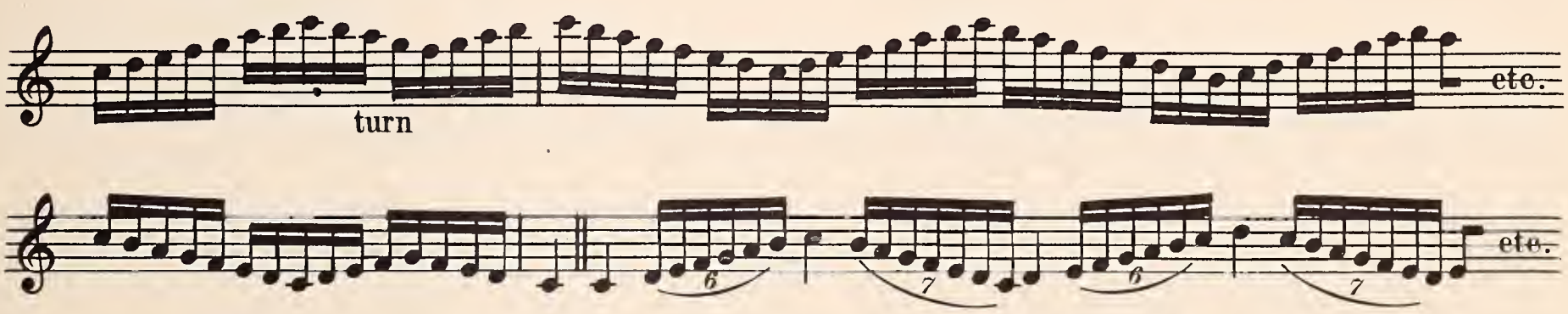
L. H. one octave lower

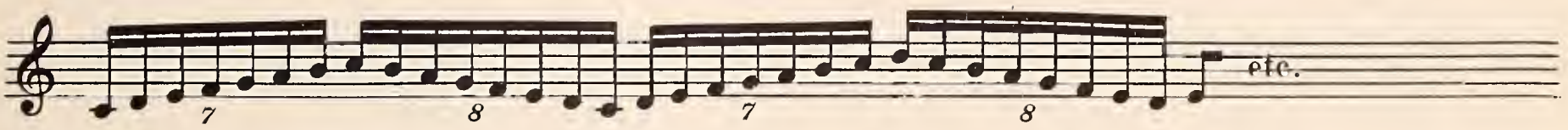


b)

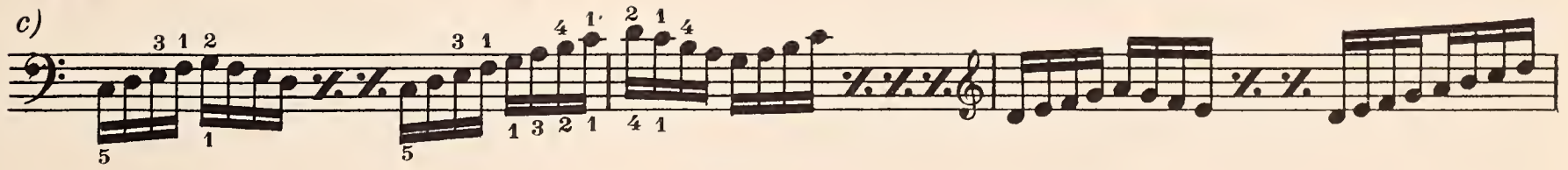


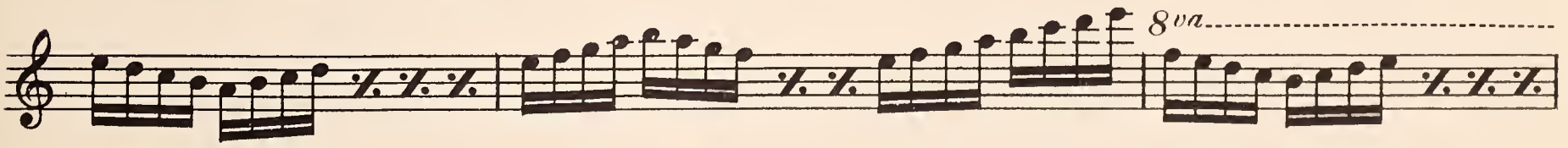
turn

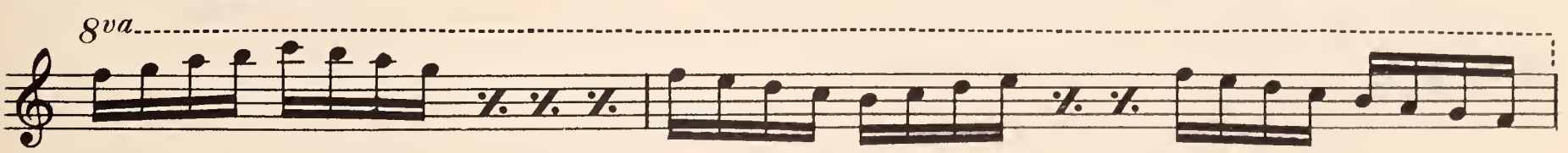


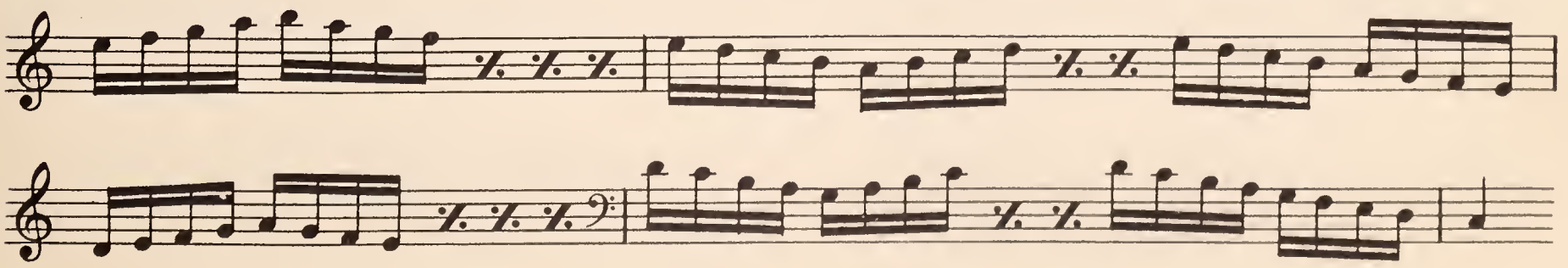


c)









d)

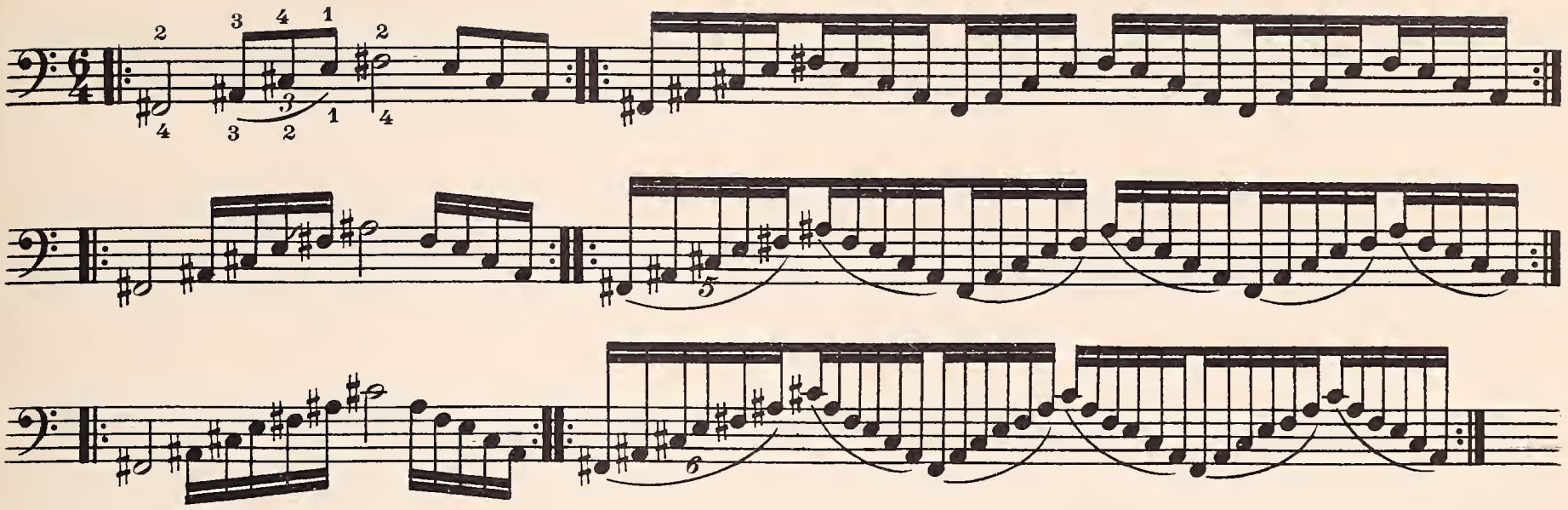
The same in C min. harmonic

Example 11

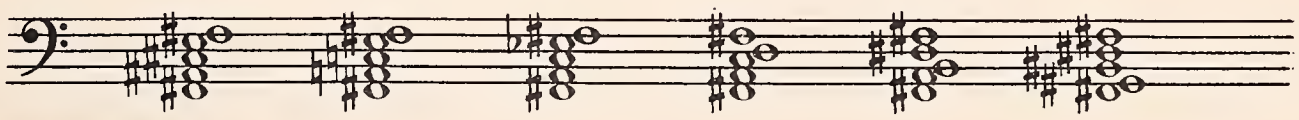
4 times

twice

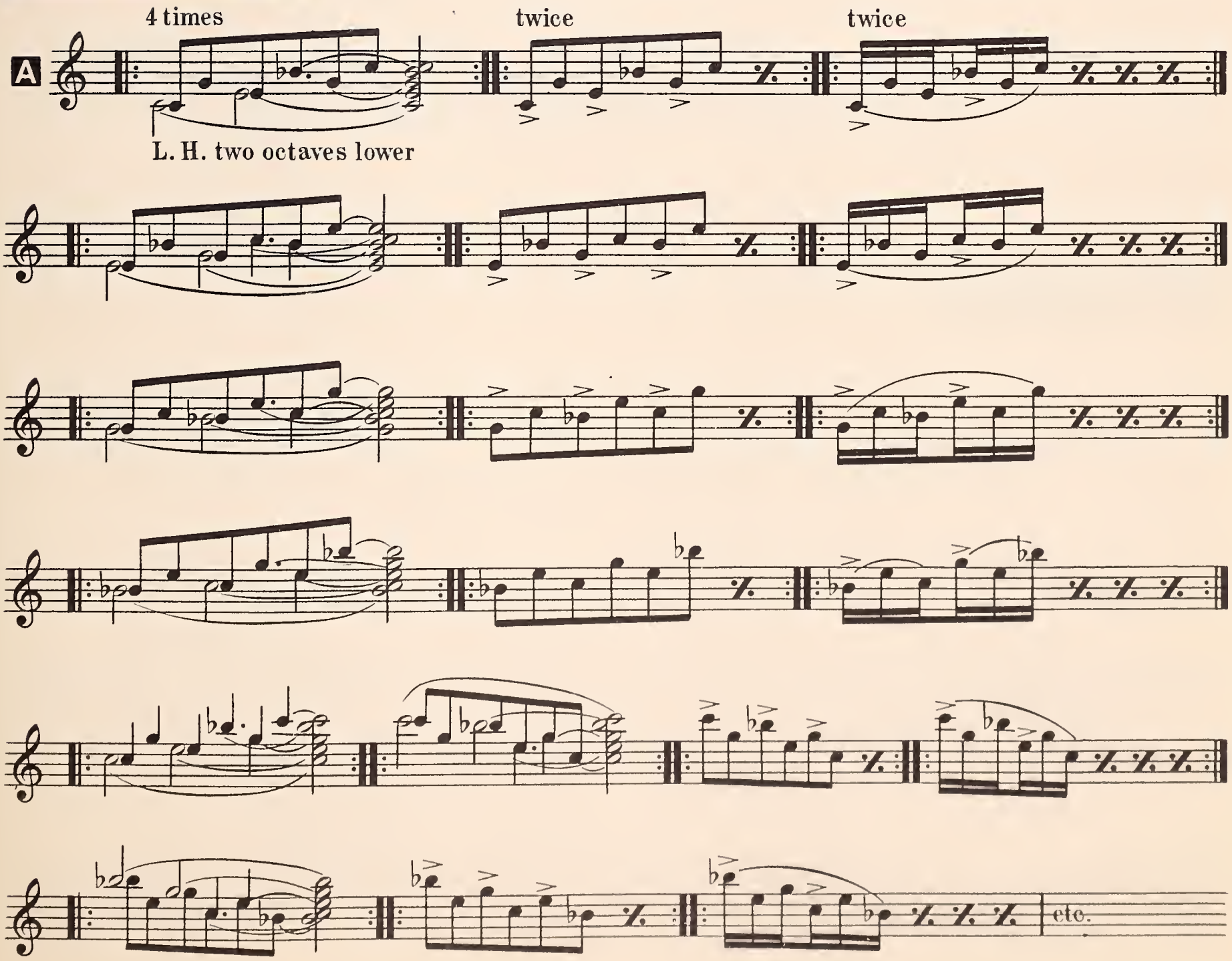
etc.



Play the next exercise on these six chords



Example III



B

etc.

C

D

Example IV

Use these two chords in sequence as a basis for the following exercises

etc.

A

8va

L. H. one octave lower

8va

etc.

Wrist flexible

B

8va

etc.

C

8va

etc.

etc.

D

etc.

etc.

8va

etc.

8va

etc.

Different rhythms

etc.

etc.

etc.

etc.

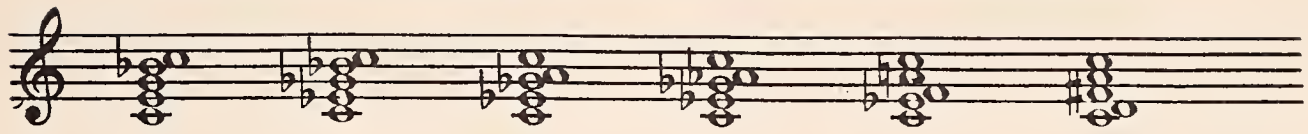
Example V

Retain the fingering of the chord

turn

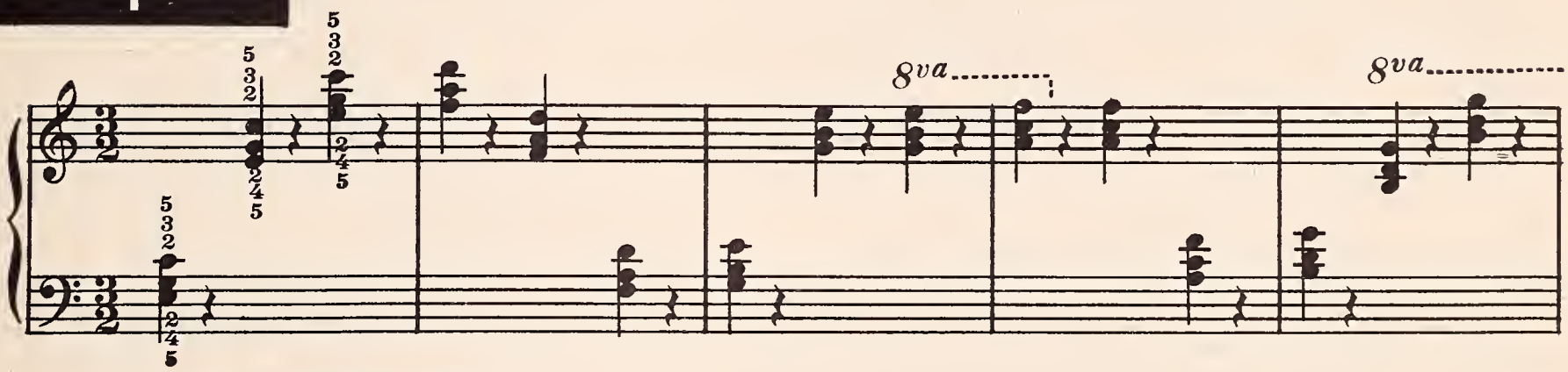
etc.

Play the preceding exercise on these six chords

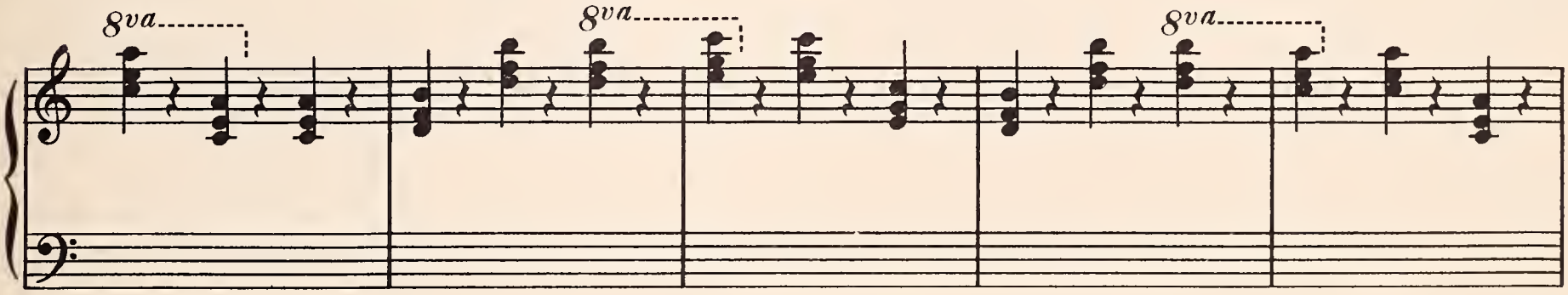


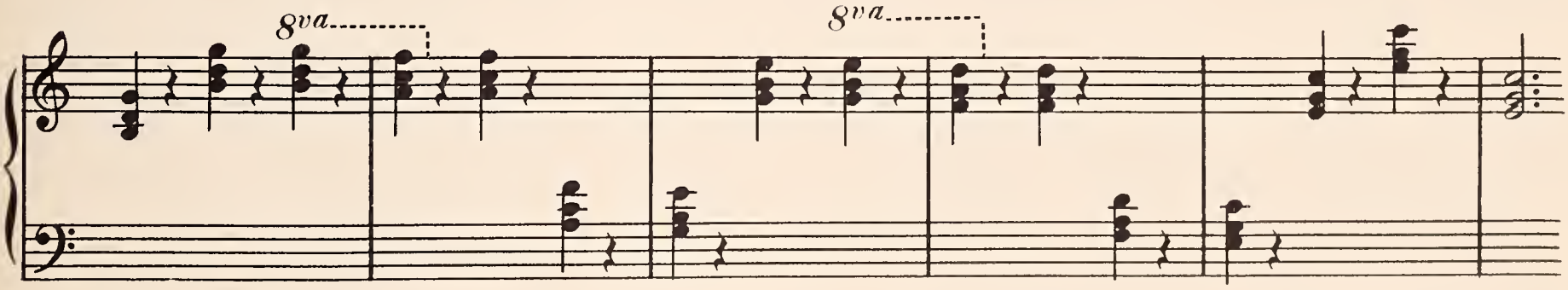
SECTION VI - WRIST EXERCISES

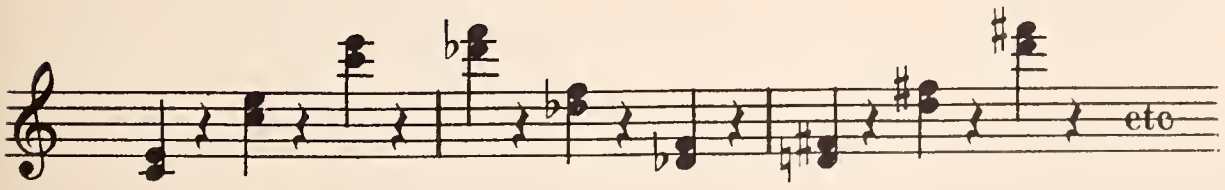
Example I



L. H. one octave lower

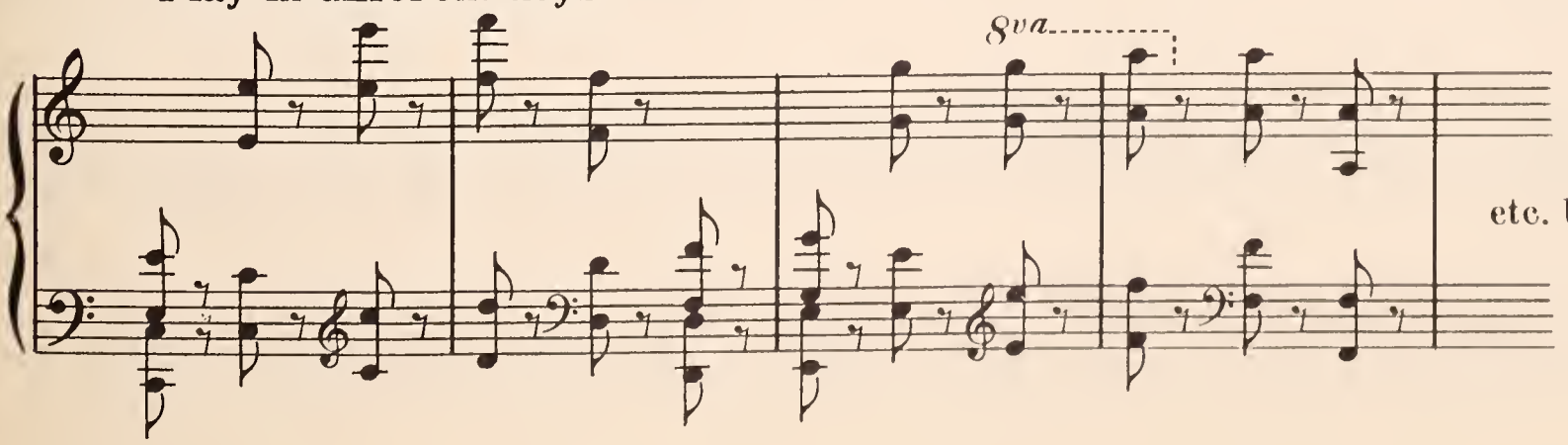




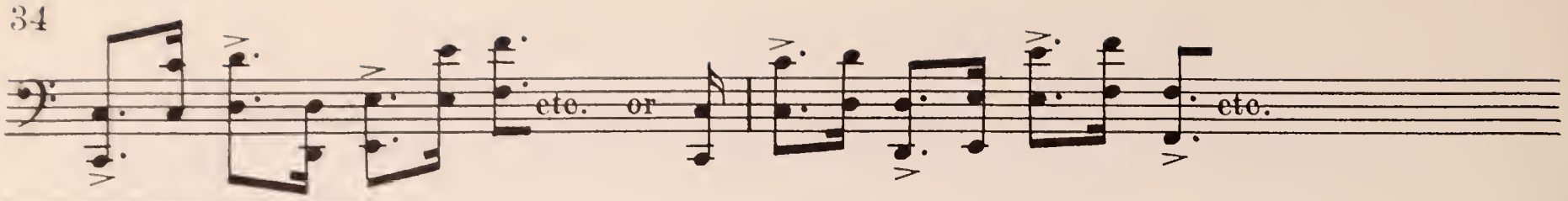


Fingering $\begin{matrix}4\\2\end{matrix} - \begin{matrix}5\\3\end{matrix} - \begin{matrix}3\\1\end{matrix}$

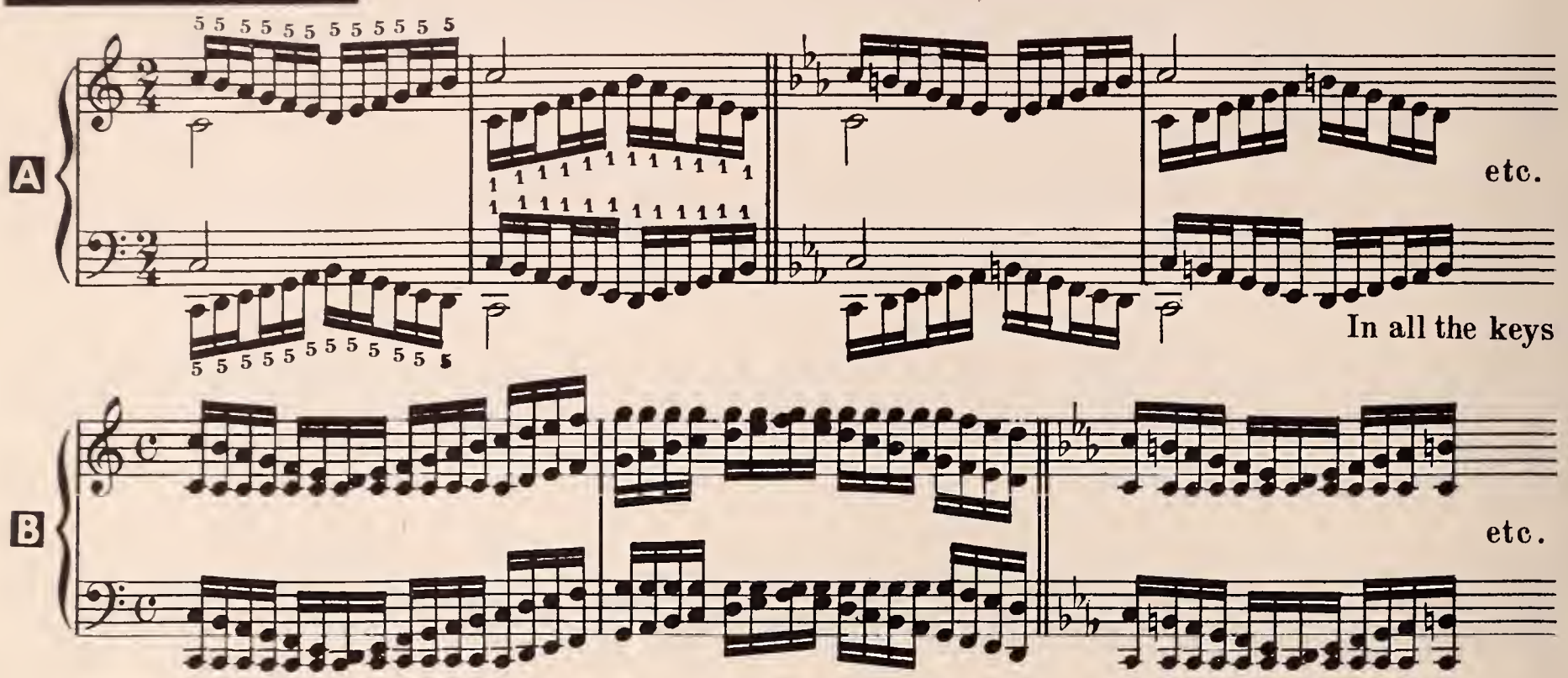
Play in different keys



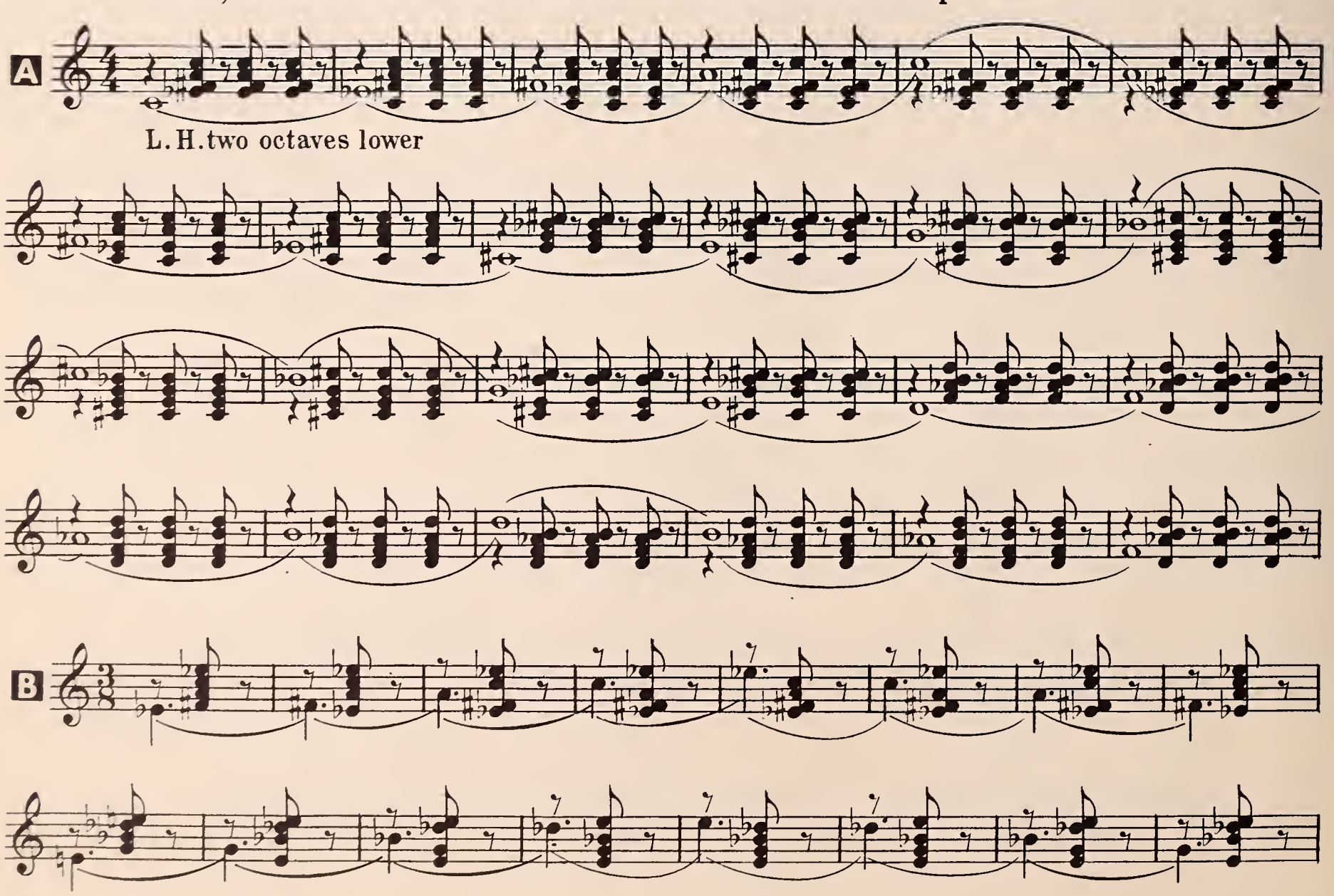
etc. Up and down



Example 11



Slow; after the stretch the hand resumes its normal position



Faster, legato with up and down wrist motion

C

8va

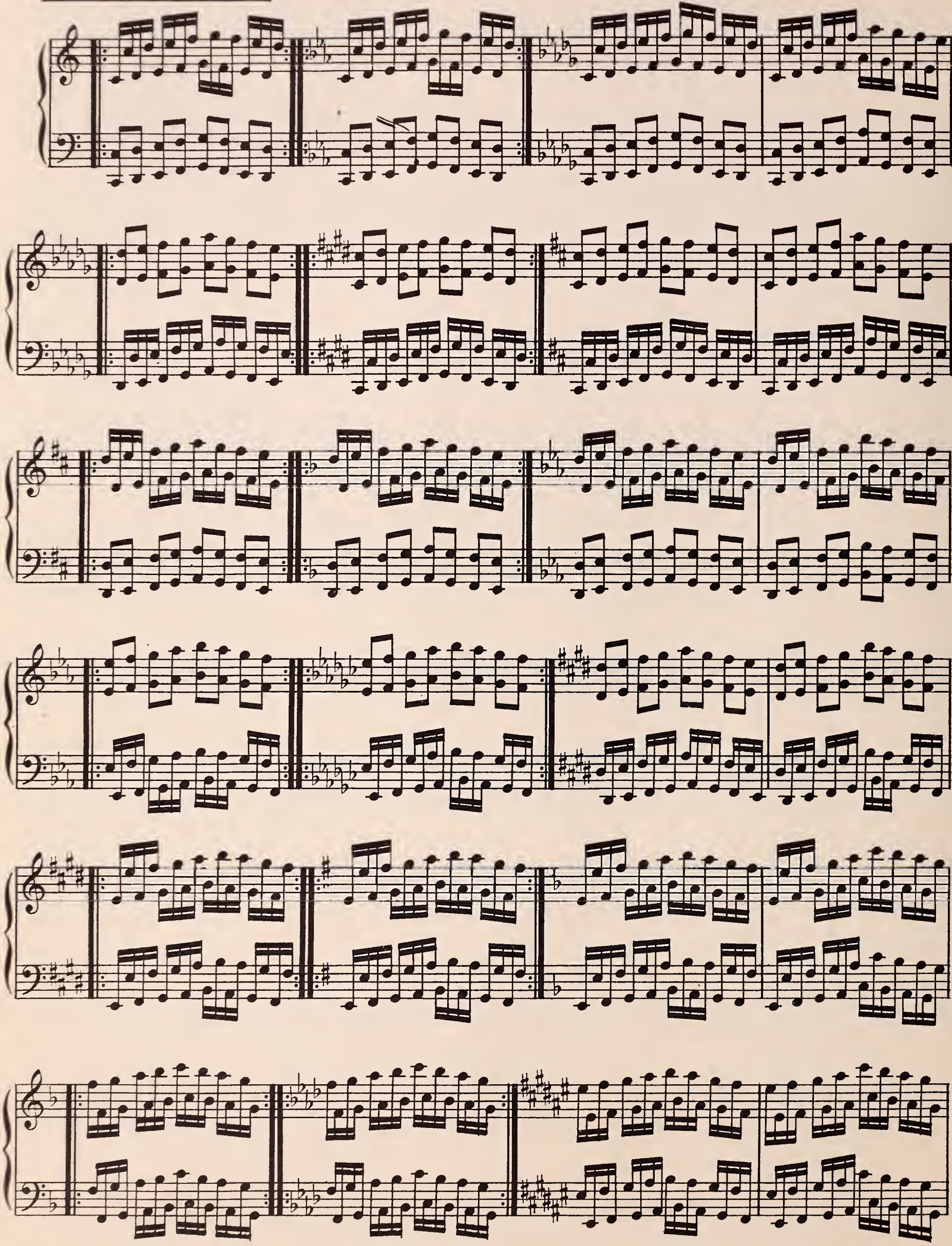
8va

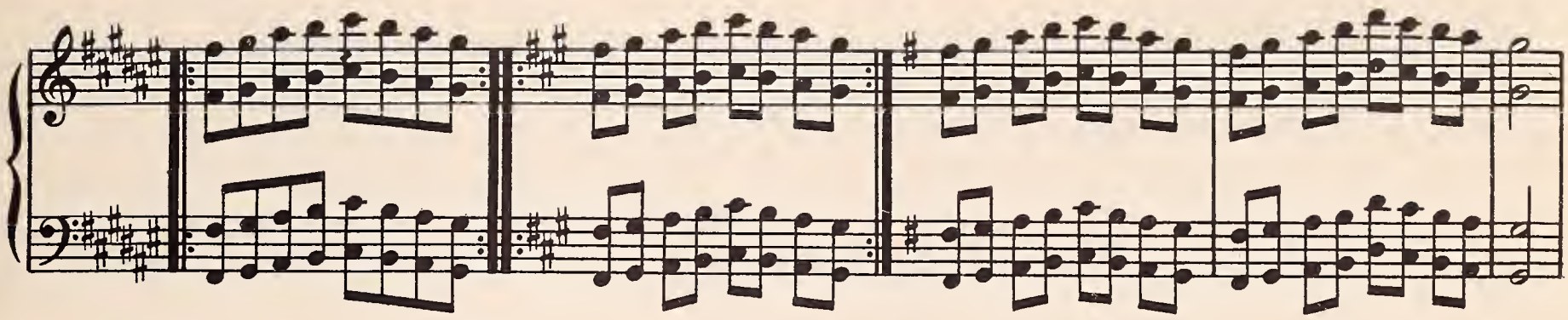
8va

8va

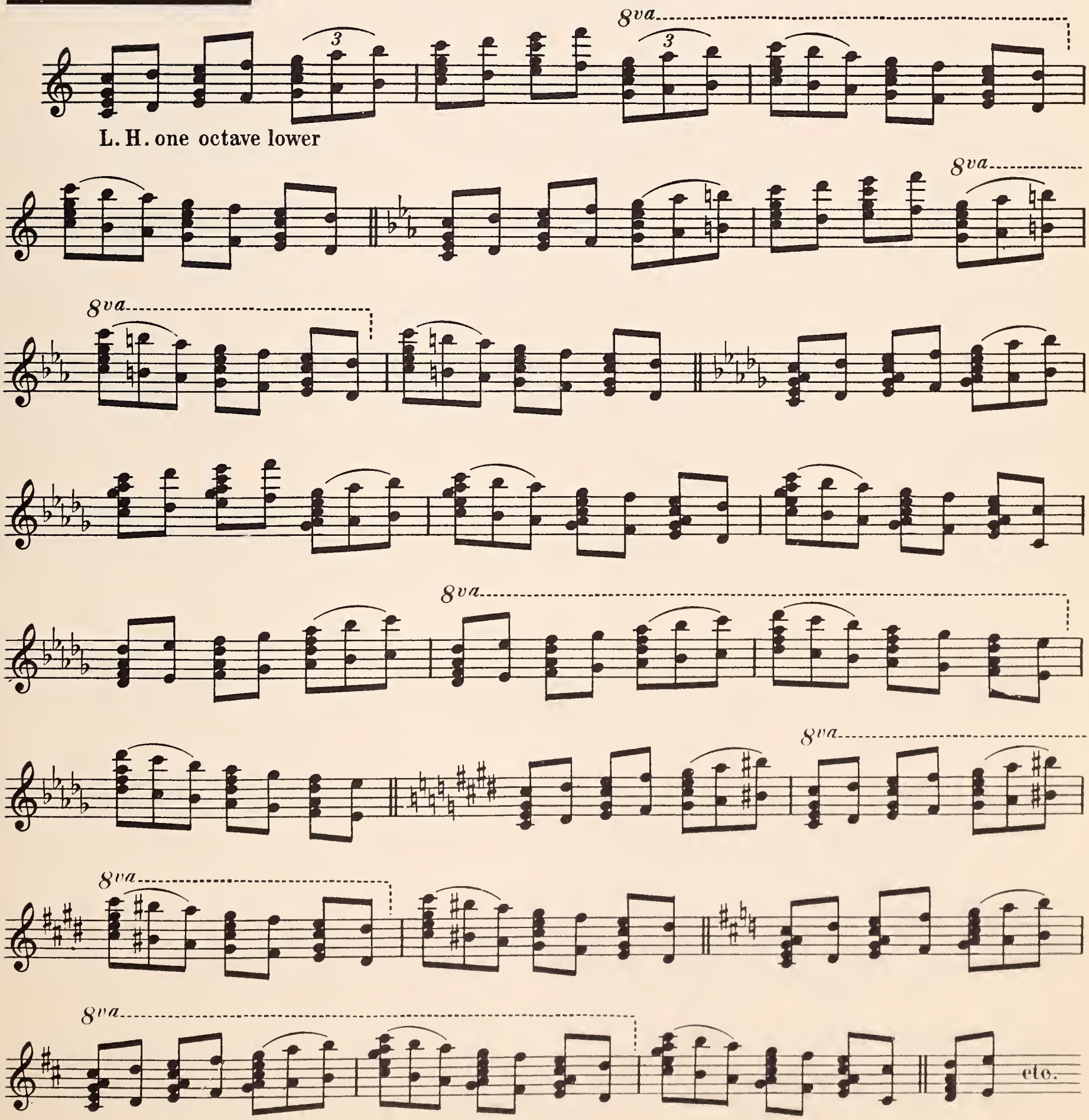
D

Example IV





Example V



Example VI

A

etc.,from all notes of Chromatic Scale

B

8va basso

twice

8va

8va

twice

etc.

C

Continue in octaves

etc.

C MAJOR

D

8 8 8 8 8 8 8 simile

8 8 8 simile

A MINOR

8 8 8 simile

F MAJOR

8 8 8 simile

D MINOR

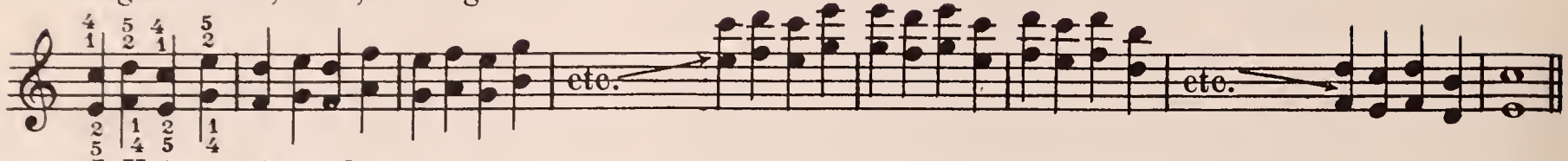
8 8 8 simile

etc.

SECTION VII - DOUBLE NOTES

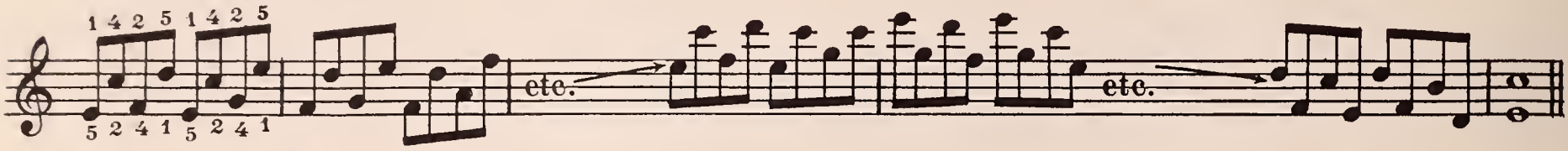
Example I

Legatissimo, slow, holding 4 notes

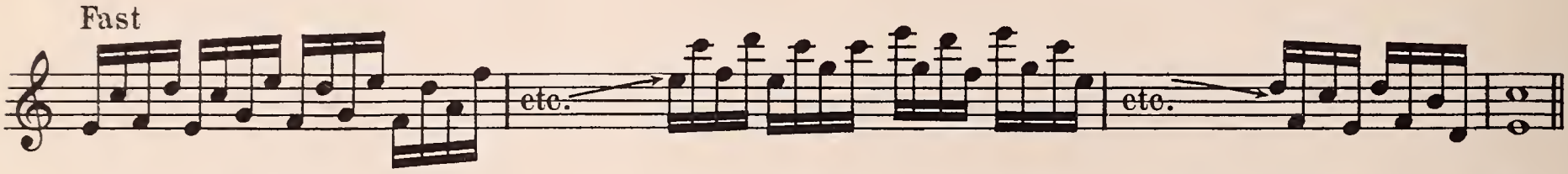


L.H. two octaves lower

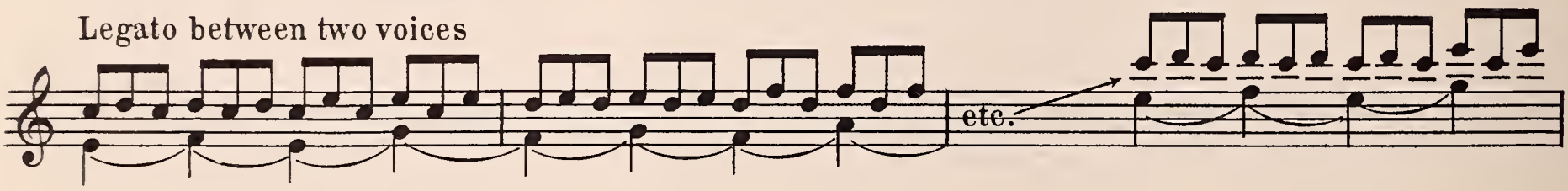
Leggiero faster without holding any notes

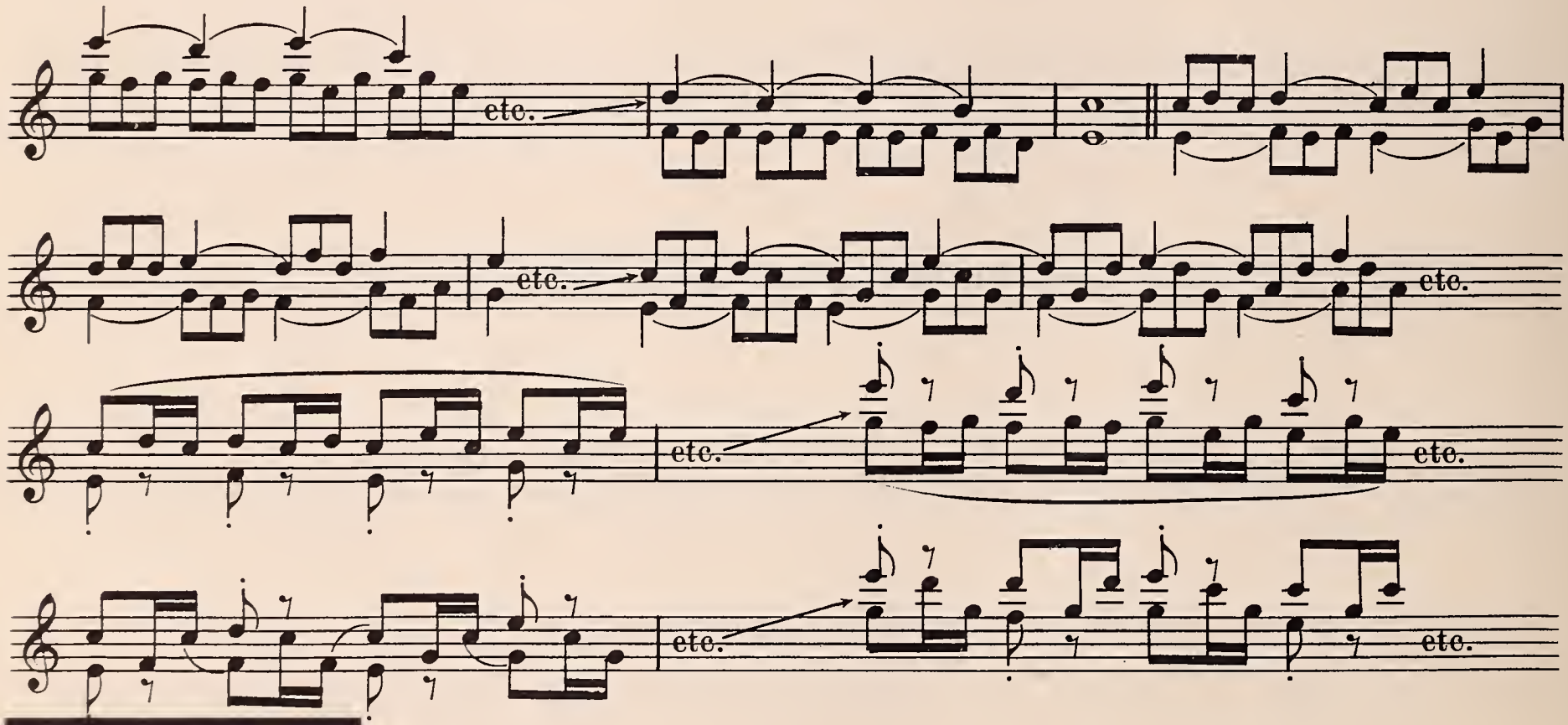


Fast

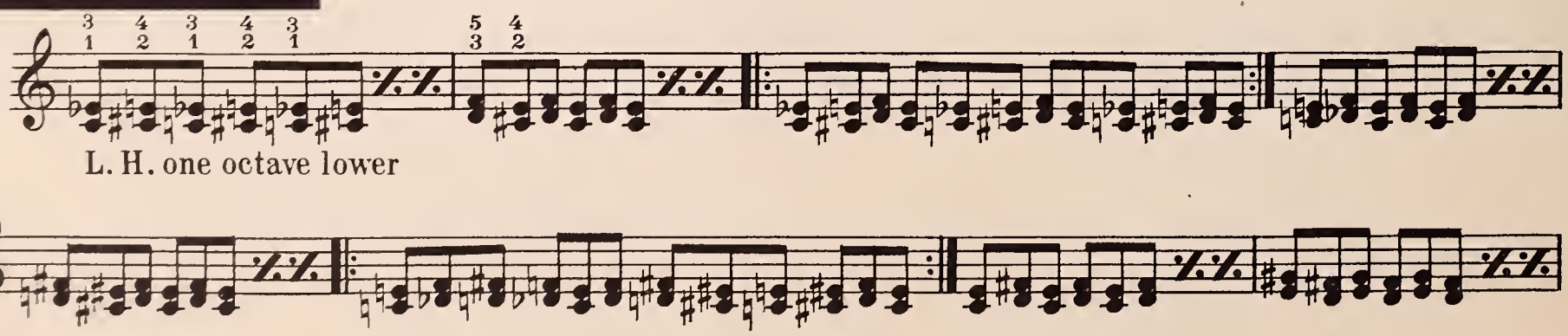


Legato between two voices





Example II



L. H. one octave lower

etc.

Use different rhythms

etc.

etc.

etc.

Example III

A

etc.

Faster, legato

B

legato

Slower, legato

C

etc.

Example IV

After N. Medtner

C MAJOR

L. H. one octave lower

C MINOR HARMONIC

MODULATION INTO D♭ MAJ.

D♭ MAJOR

C♯ MINOR HARMONIC

MODULATION INTO D MAJOR

etc.

Example V

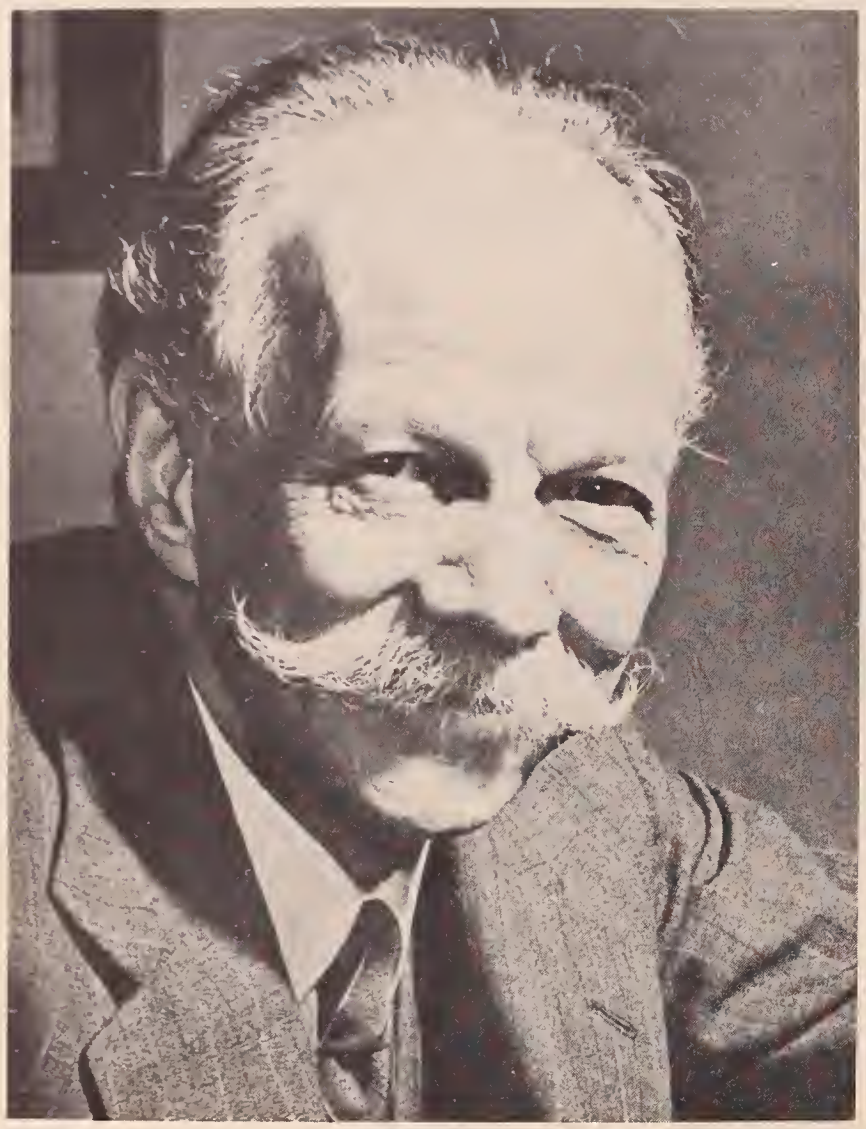
etc.

etc.

8va

etc.

etc.



During his long life, LEON CONUS was regarded as one of the best pedagogues in Russia. He came from a musical French family, who settled in Moscow, where the author was born. He received his earlier education from his father, and later, the Moscow Imperial Conservatory, where his associates as pupils were Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Medtner and Lhevinne. Upon graduating, he devoted his time to teaching for several years at the Imperial Conservatory of Moscow, and later in Paris at the Ecole Normale de Musique. In 1924 he helped found and establish the Russian Conservatory in Paris where he became the vice president of the institution. Leon Conus moved to the United States in 1936. Here, he became Professor of piano at the Cincinnati College of Music. He remained at this post until his untimely death, January 18, 1944.

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