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Piano Course: Grade 3, Studies

Sherwood Music School

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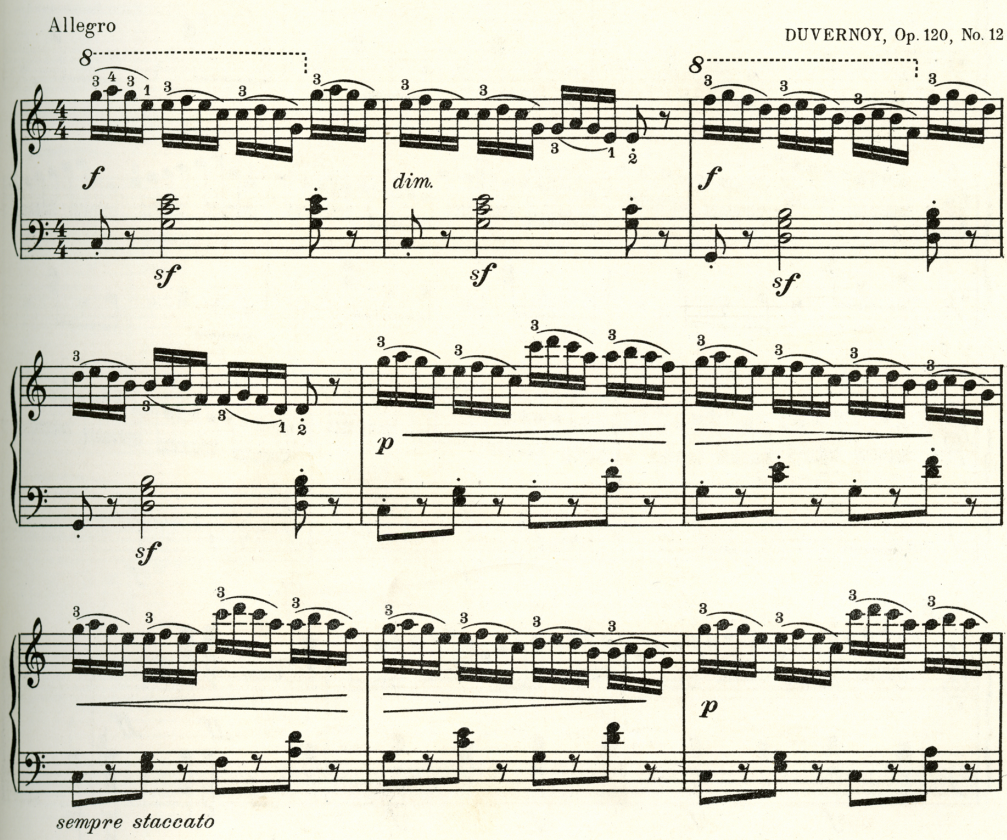
PIANO — Study **301**

This excellent study has various features often found in piano literature. It is essentially a study in accentuation and finger control. The syncopated chords in the first four measures of the left hand part, and the detached chords, later, in the same part, illustrate different ways in which accompanying chords can be used.

All through the first part, we find repetitions, in various forms, of the figure of four sixteenth notes appearing on the very first beat of the study. In the second part, the groups of sixteenths are chromatic in character. In playing them, the fingers must be kept close to the keys, with the phrasing movements only sufficient to separate the groups.

All details should be studied and practiced slowly, and the speed increased by degrees.



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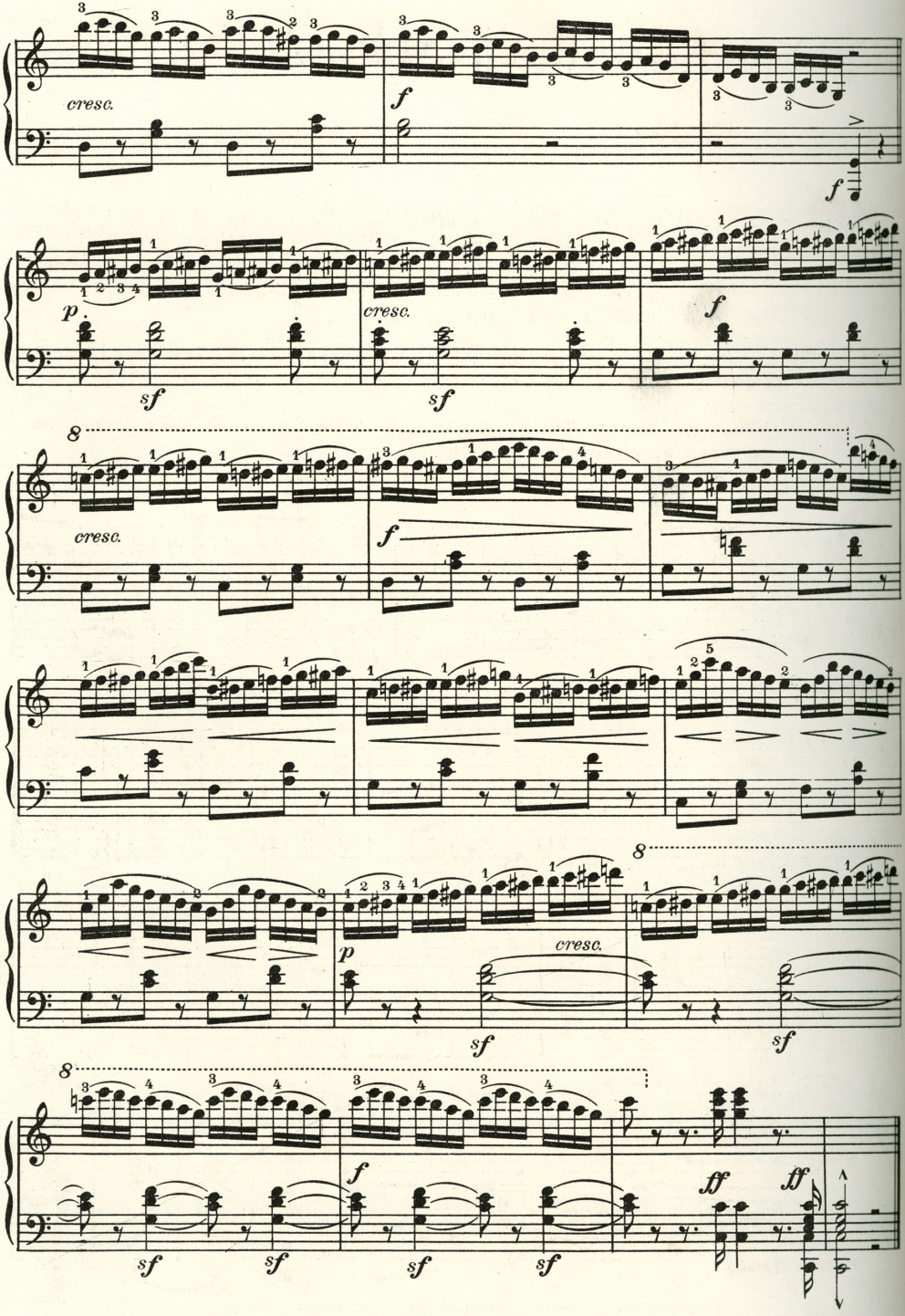
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sf
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ff

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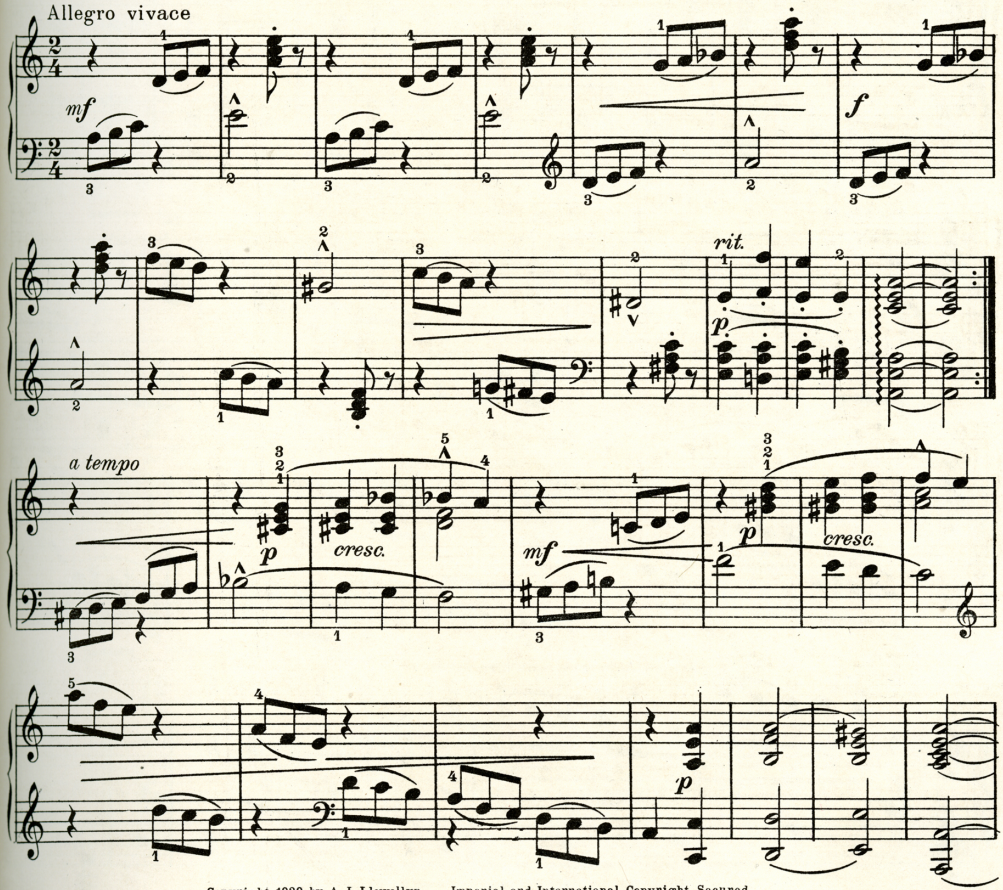
PIANO — Study 302

This study not only presents a number of oft-recurring elements of practical piano playing, but is a fine study in interpretation also. Various titles have been given to it; in one edition, "The Goblin's Frolic," in another, "The Avalanche." The former title may be derived from the fantastic and playful character that pervades most of the study. The descending six groups of eighth notes in succession, in two places, are suggestive of the other.

Each slurred triplet must be phrased by the lift of the hand, but this should only be slight, so that the effect will not be "choppy."

Observe the difference between the chords which are marked legato, and those marked mezzo staccato, and make this difference distinct to the hearer.

HELLER, Op. 45, No. 2



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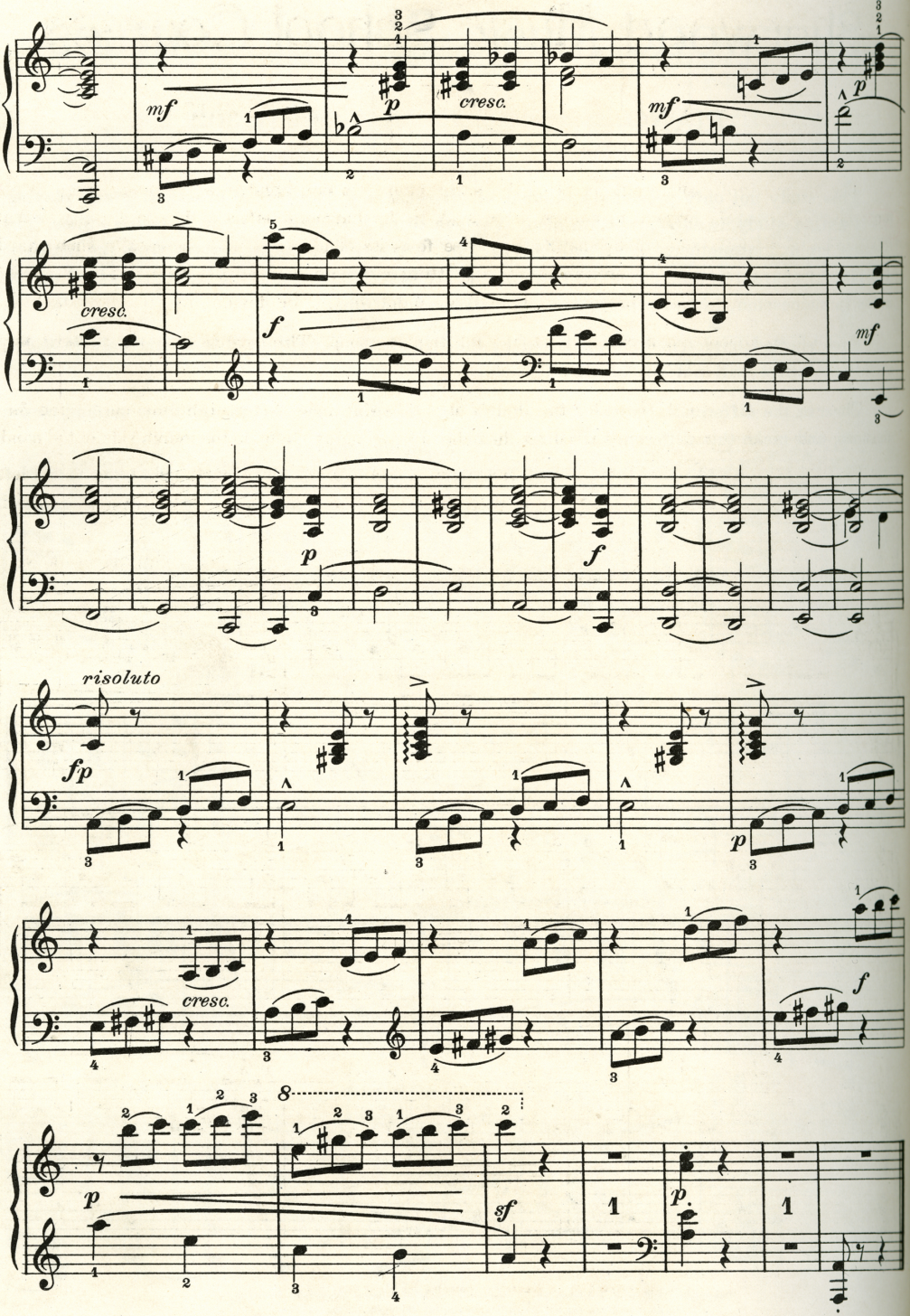
mf
p
cresc.
mf
p
cresc.
f
mf
p
f
risoluto
fp
p
cresc.
f
8
p
sf
p

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PIANO — Study 303

The alternation of different parts of the same chord, in one hand, is a frequent device in piano composition. The object, of course, is to sustain the harmonic effect of the chord in a way that gives some variety, instead of by merely repeating it in its complete form. Technically, such chord treatment requires control and evenness of attack, together with the abilility to maintain the wrist in a relaxed condition. The present study affords opportunity for developing this chord technic.

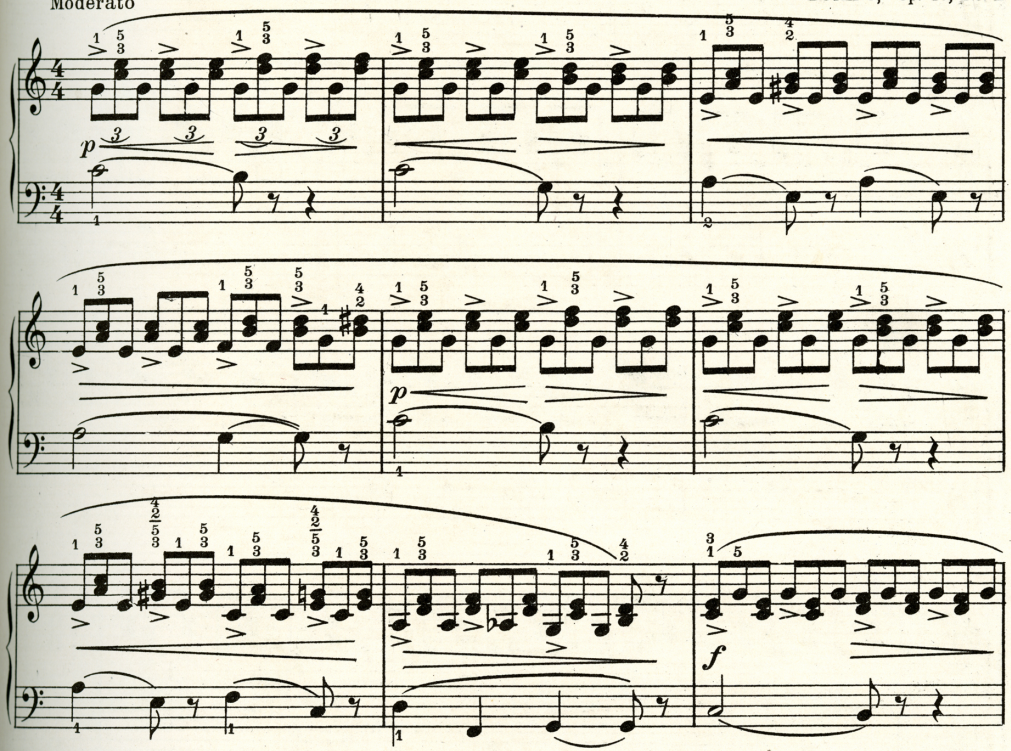
We find an accent mark on the first of each triplet group. This swings the accent alternately from the thumb side to the outer side of the hand.

The study has a single note for the thumb at the beginning. After eight measures, the formation of the triplet group is reversed, so that the double notes come on the thumb side of the hand.

Practice with decided accents, and at first slowly and *forte*. Observe the phrasing in the left hand. After technical mastery has been gained, play with close observance of the dynamics marked.

Moderato

DÖRING, Op. 46, No. 1



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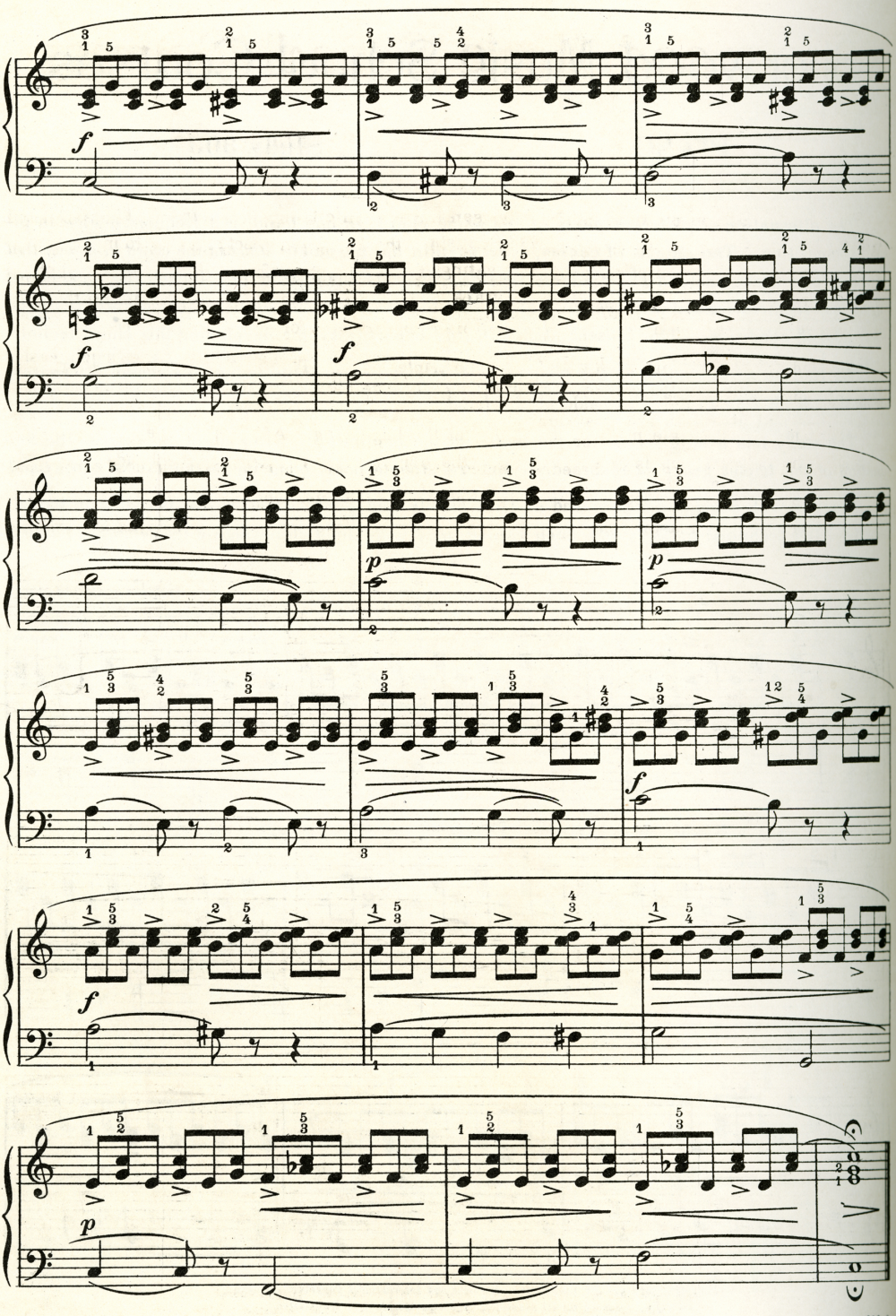

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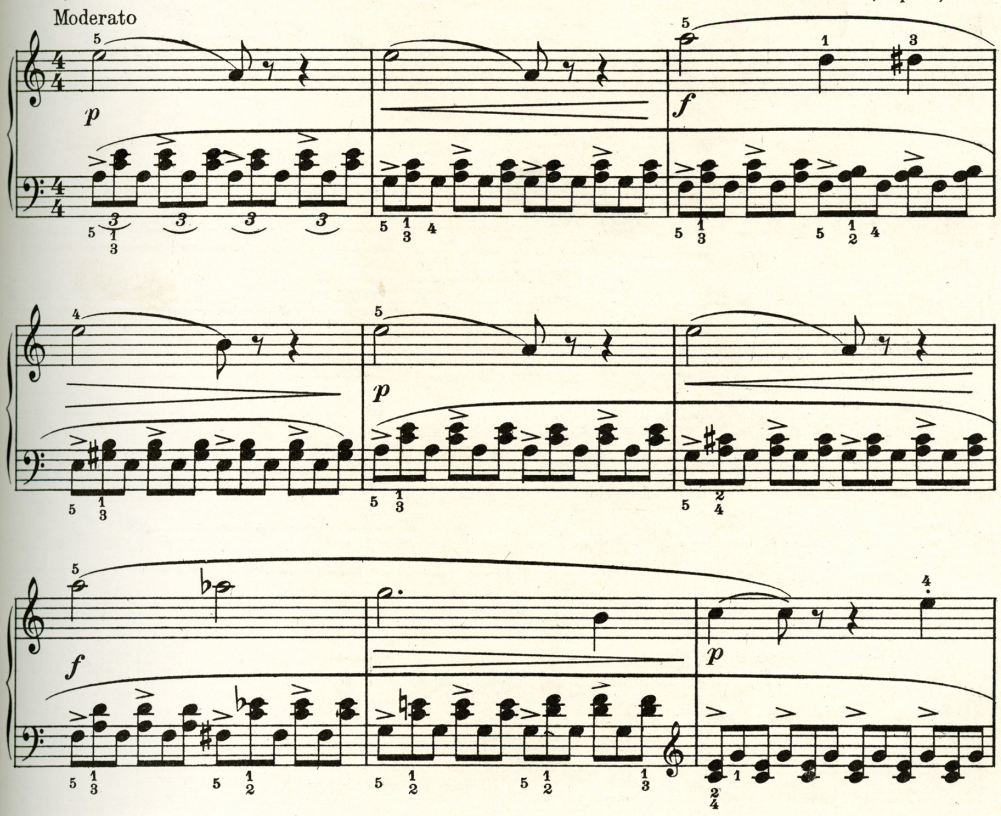
PIANO — Study 304

This is a companion piece to Study 303, the broken chords being now given to the left hand. What was said before, about the accents being alternately on the lower and upper portions of the broken chord, applies here. Care must be taken to keep the rhythm perfectly even, as well as to accent the first note or notes of each group.

The arrangement (for either hand) with the single note for the thumb, is very much easier than when the double notes are on the thumb side of the hand. The latter, when it occurs, must be given special attention and practice.

In this study the right hand has the varied phrasing, and the left hand an almost continuous legato.

DÖRING, Op. 46, No. 2



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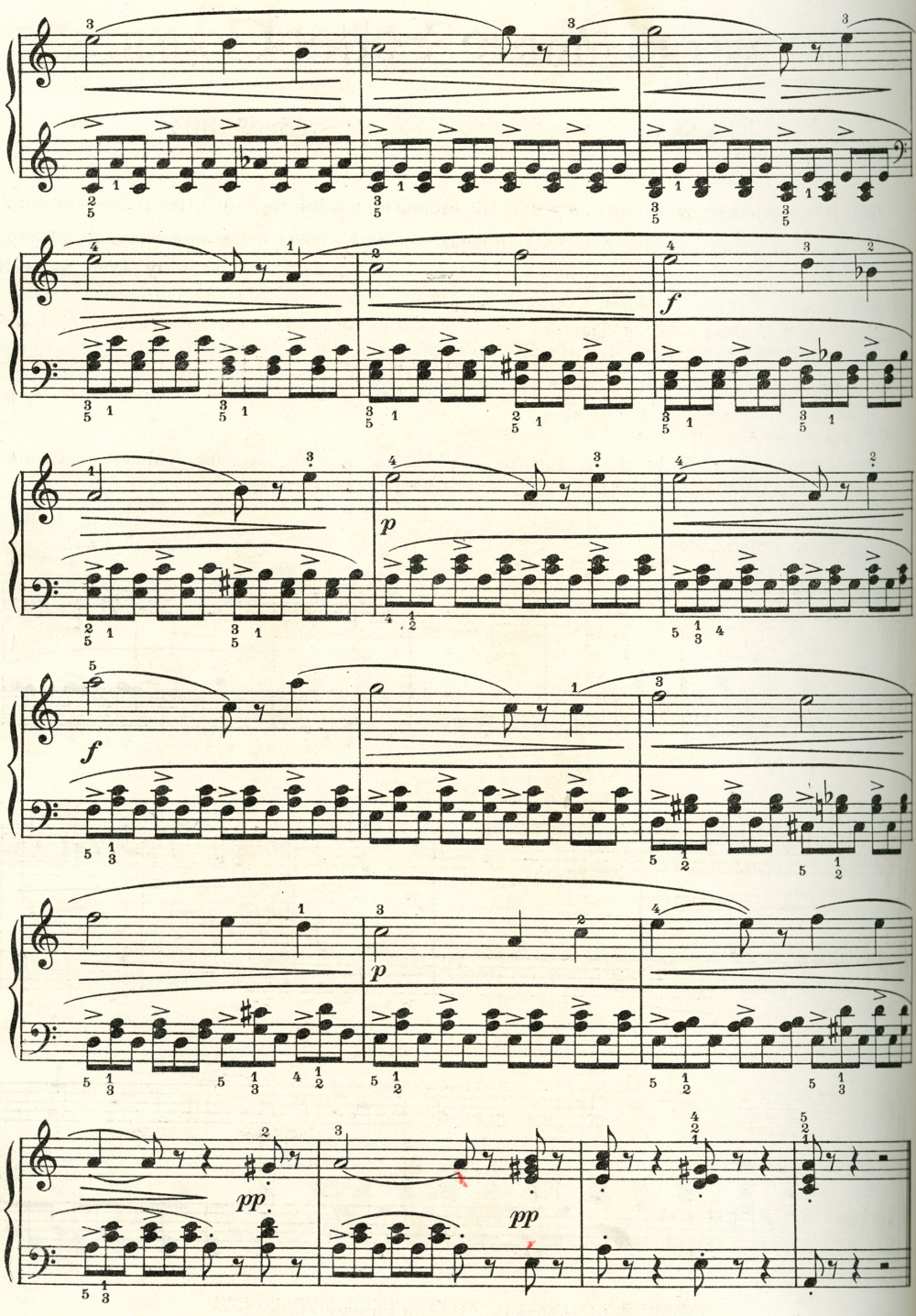
f
p
f
p
pp.
pp

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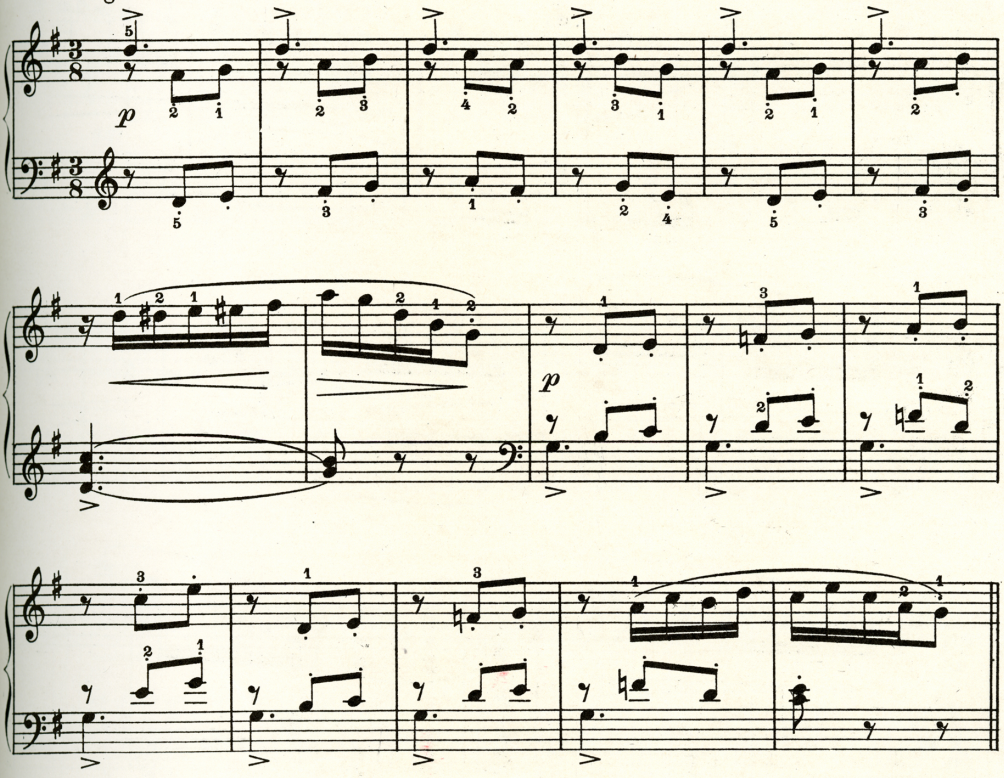
PIANO — Study 305

The dotted quarter notes must be accented, and sustained for their full time. The staccato eighth notes, forming a kind of accompaniment, are to be made quite detached, and played more softly.

After the double bar, dotted quarters are sustained in both hands, and the staccato accompaniment continues. Eight measures later, the accompaniment consists of three legato notes, phrased. The last note of this phrased group must be released before the sustained dotted quarter note, which is held to the very end of the measure.

The slurred chromatic passages must be legato.

Allegro scherzando — HELLER, Op. 46, No. 2



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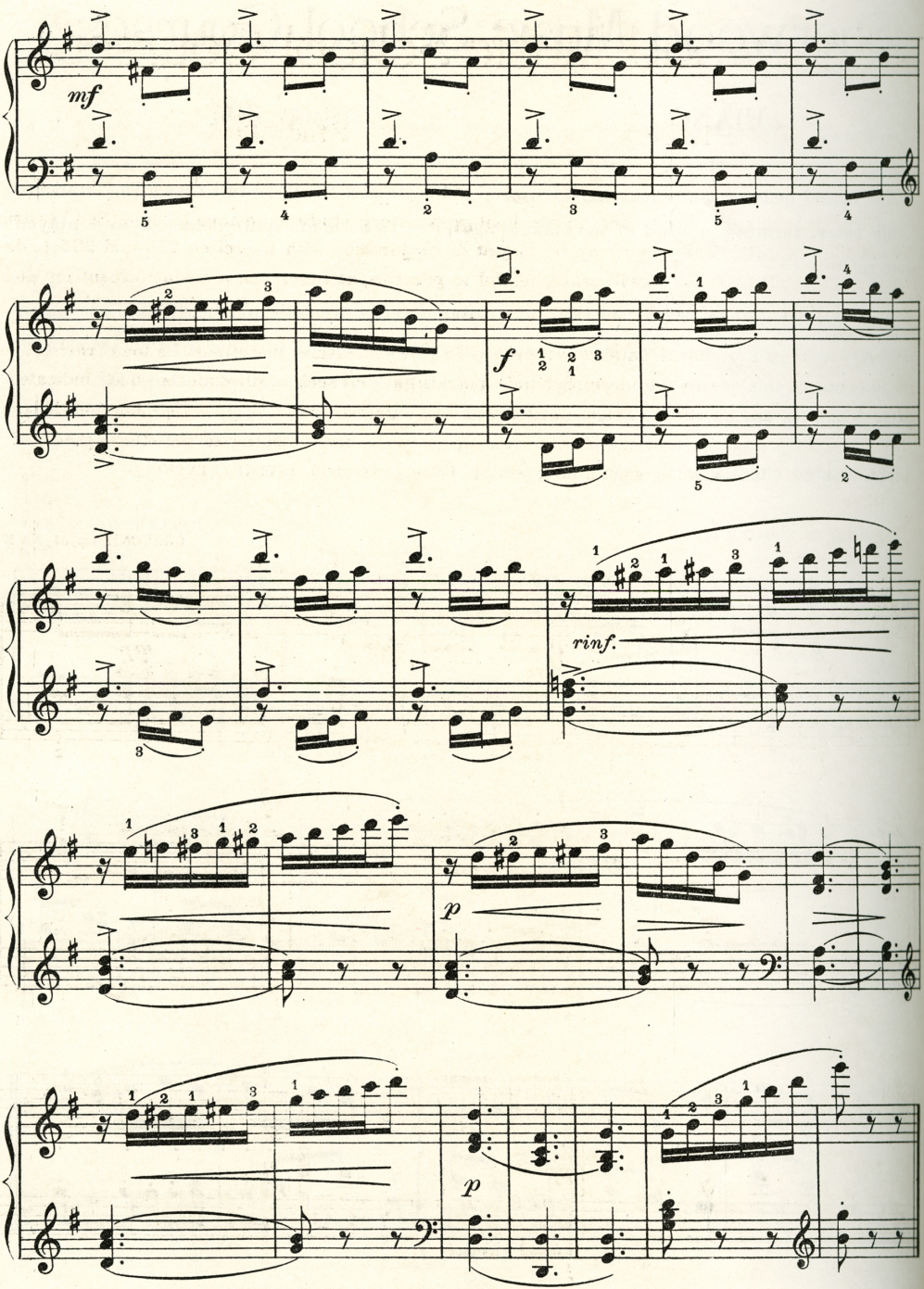
mf
f
rinf.
p
p

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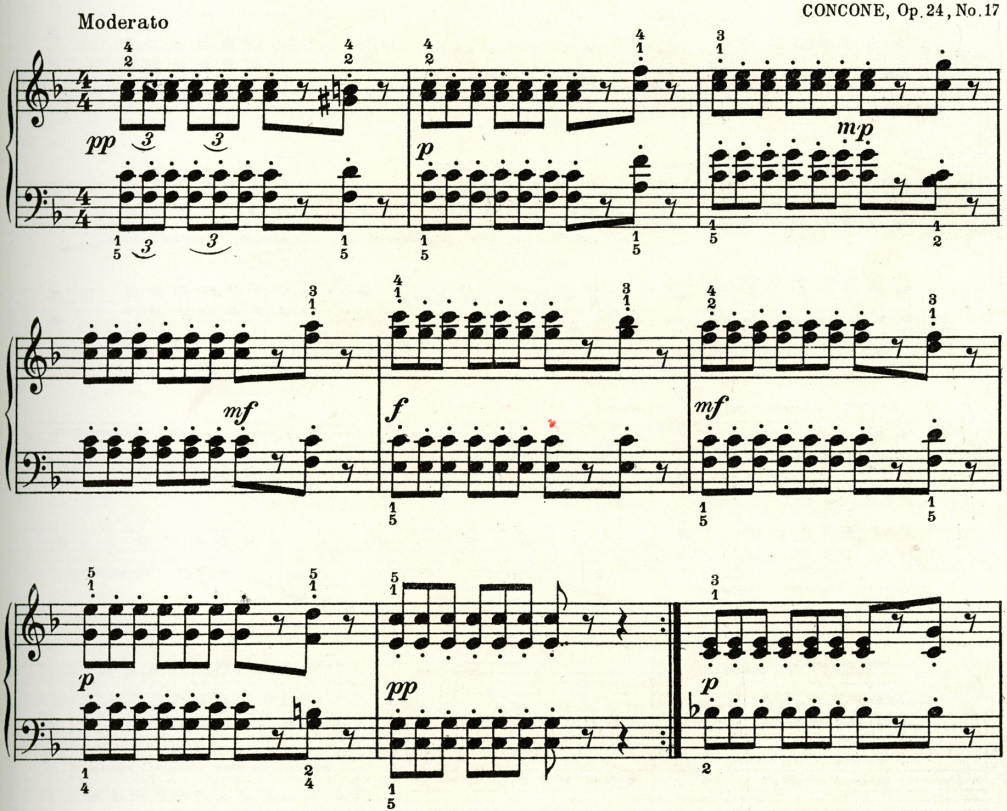
PIANO — Study 306

Repeated staccato chords are an excellent preparatory study for octave technic.(See Lessons 14 and 33, TECHNIC.) This study may be played in conjunction with Exercises 253 and 305, to develop good hand staccato. It will prove helpful to practice, at first, with a strong accent on each beat, giving four accents to the measure.

As the same rhythmical pattern is repeated in every measure, there must be tonal variety, to avoid monotony. Observe the many dynamic markings, and seek to produce the effects indicated. If no differences are heard, the listener's attention and interest cease. Proper reproduction of the dynamic scheme requires that the player, himself, be constantly listening to the effects produced. Crescendos and diminuendos should be gradual. (See Lesson 15, INTERPRETATION.)

Moderato

CONCONE, Op. 24, No. 17



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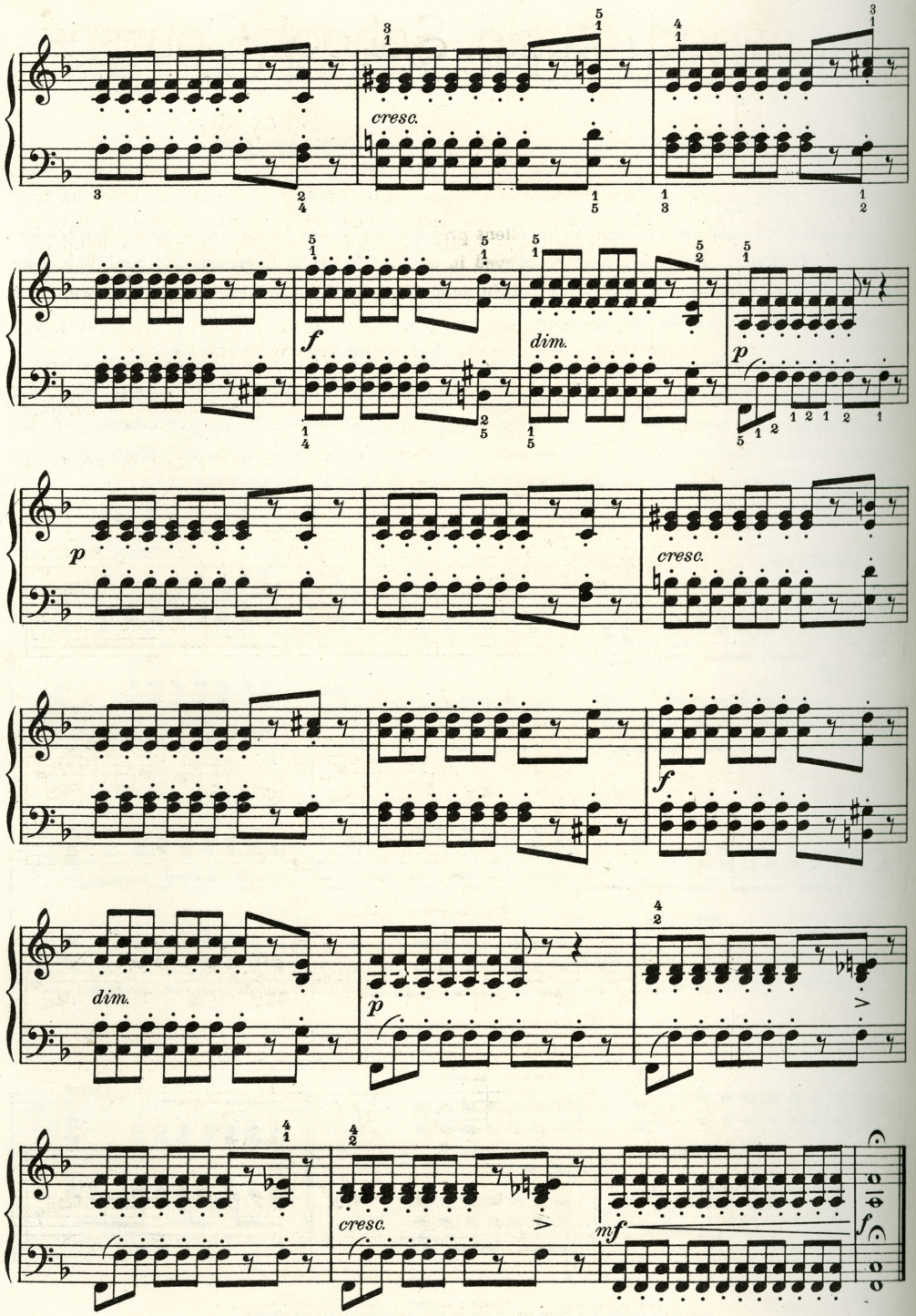
cresc.
f
dim.
p
p
cresc.
f
dim.
p
cresc.
mf
f

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PIANO

Study 307

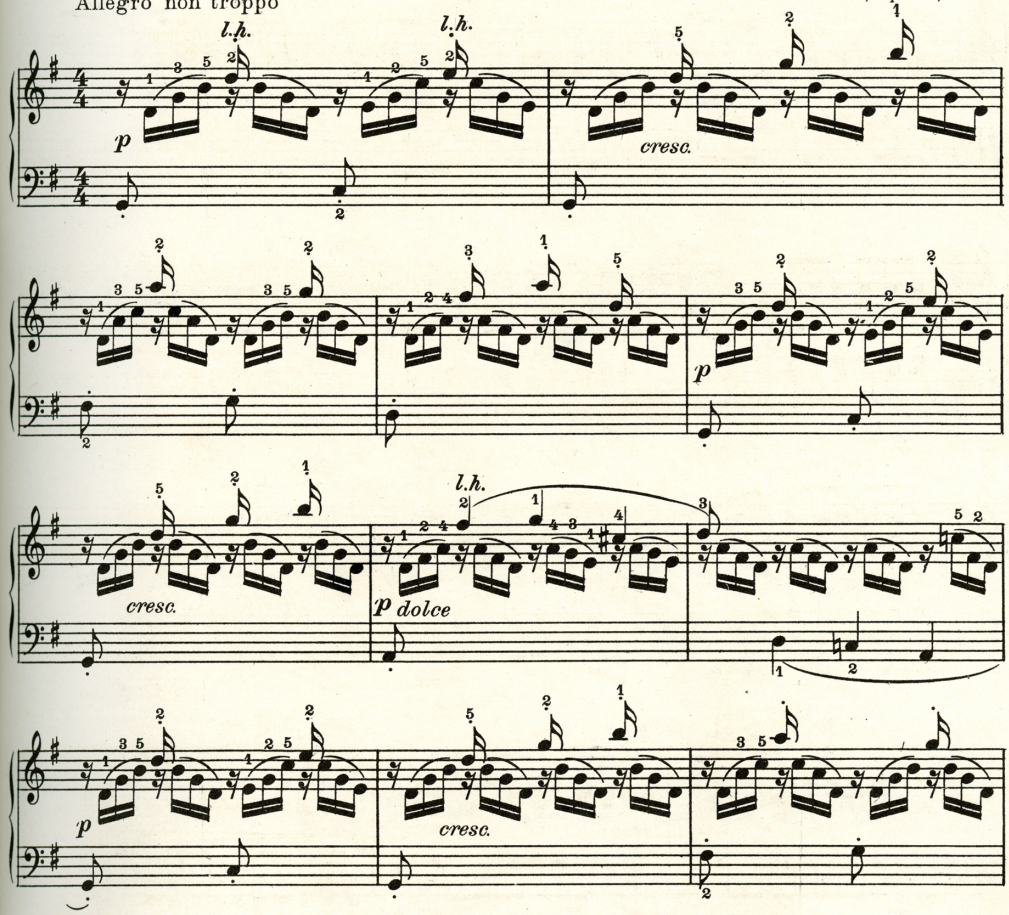
This melodious number requires, above everything else, ease of movement in crossing one hand over the other. Any jerkiness will mar the melodic line, which should sound as if it were produced by one hand throughout. After striking the bass note, staccato, carry the hand immediately, but quietly, into position for the uppermost note. The movement should be through an arc-like curve, ending with a freely falling arm. The return move is made in the same way.

When the crossing is to a black key, the finger may be less curved. That is, black keys may be played more with the flat of the finger; but white keys with the tip.

After playing the study as printed, the student should endeavor to transpose it one half-step lower. This is really a simple problem, as the same notes are read, but all the naturals are made flats, and all the sharps are made naturals.

Allegro non troppo

BURGMUELLER, Op. 100, No. 24



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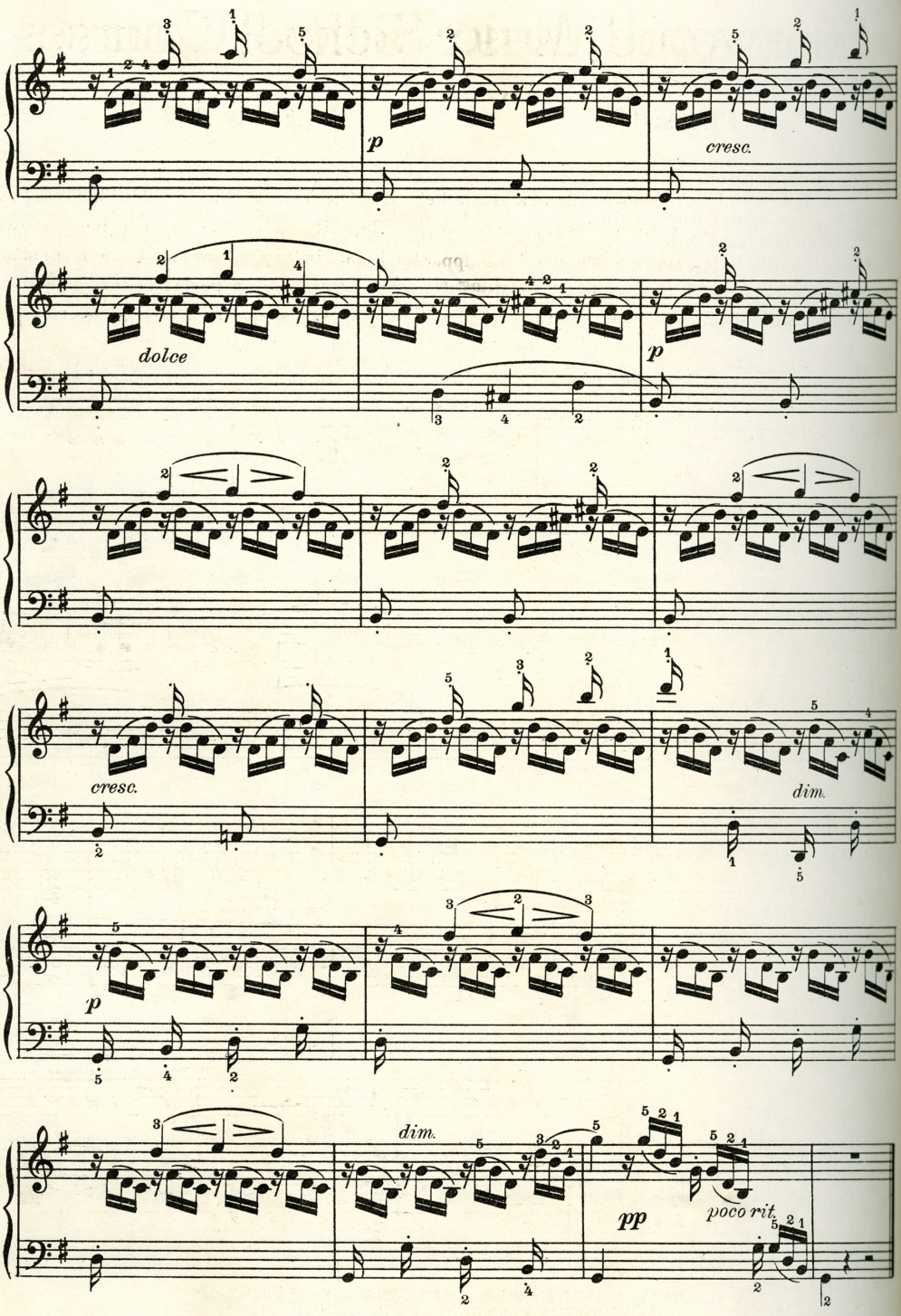
p
cresc.
dolce
p
cresc.
dim.
p
dim.
pp
poco rit.

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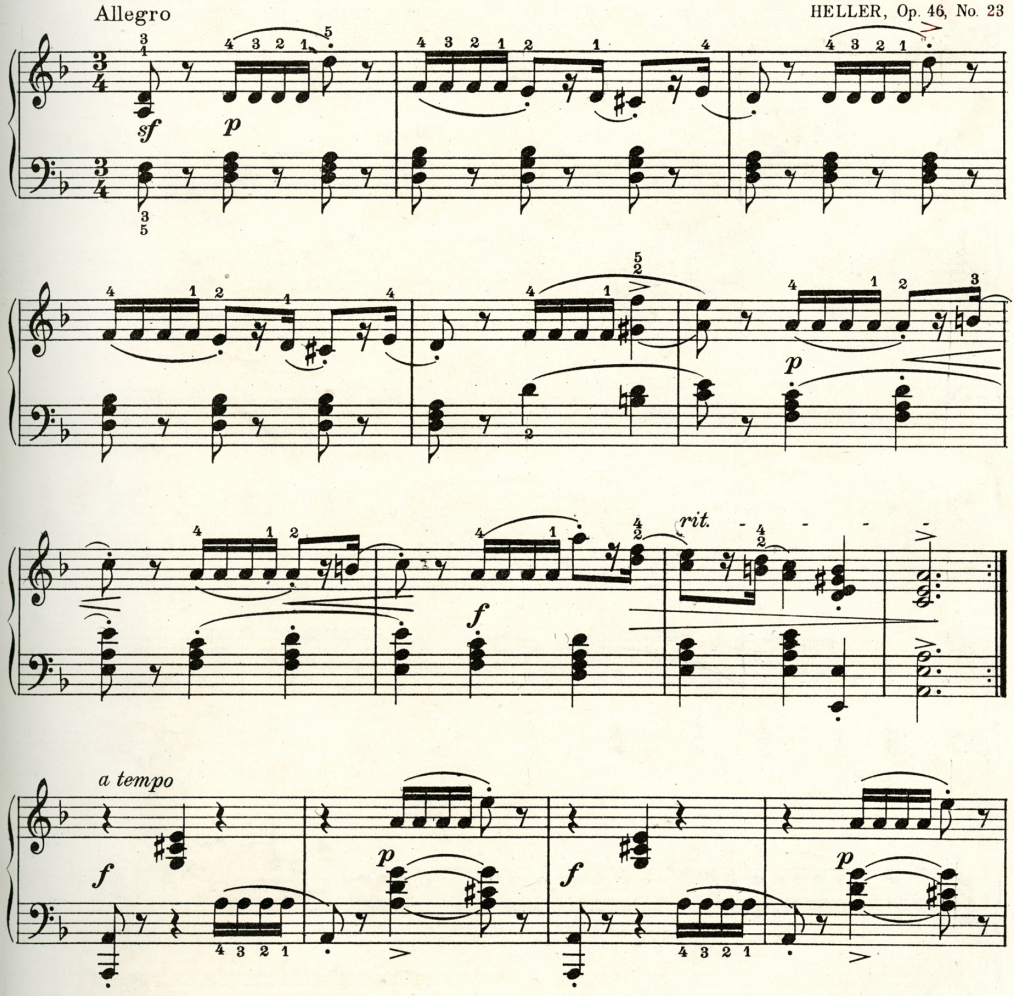
PIANO — Study 308

In the technic of repetitions of a single key, the fingers are held in a less curved position than is necessary for ordinary scale work. Repetitions are to be practiced slowly at first, with a wiping movement, from the knuckles. In rapid movements, the more sharply the key is struck, the more quickly will it rebound and be in position for repetition. The change of finger promotes clearness of effect, as well as sureness in the player's touch.



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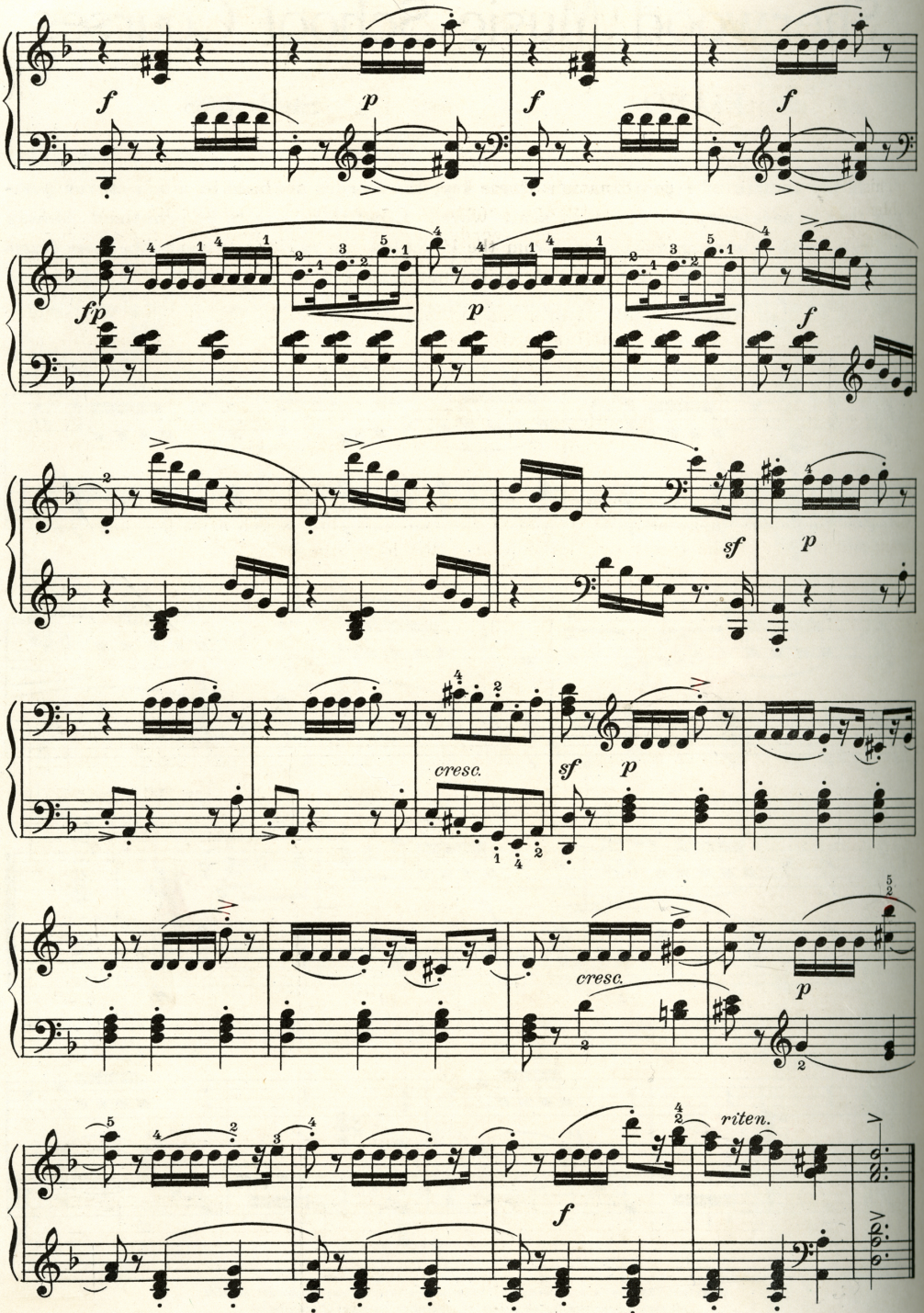
f
p
f
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fp
p
f
sf
p
cresc.
sf
p
cresc.
p
riten.
f

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PIANO — Study 309

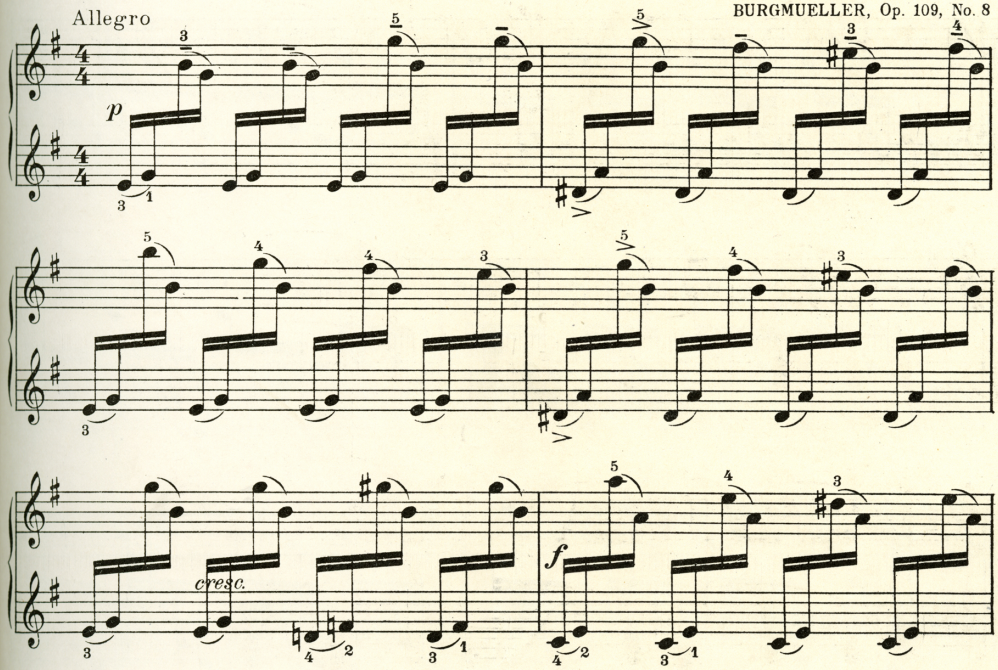
This is a study in the coördination of the hands. In order to handle such technical problems with the necessary facility and accuracy, prepare each hand for its next notes while the other hand is playing. In other words, have your hand placed exactly above the position of the keys to be played, so as to be prepared to strike without any loss of time in looking for the keys, or any break in the continuity of the whole passage.

The melodic line in this study is brought out by an accent on the highest note of each group of four sixteenths, falling on the second half of every beat. A somewhat syncopated effect is the result. In some places an extra accent is added, on account of some particular desired effect.

In order to present the melodic accent clearly, raise the hand somewhat high, with well-prepared position, directly above the note to be slurred, and attack with downward wrist action.

Early practice should be with equal weight, and no accents, in order to insure evenness. Then the playing may be as indicated by the two-note slur, which always suggests an accent on the first of the two notes, in addition to the legato.

This study should be practiced, at first, as slowly and carefully as possible. Only thus will the necessary accuracy be gained. After technical mastery has been acquired, all marks of expression should be carefully followed.



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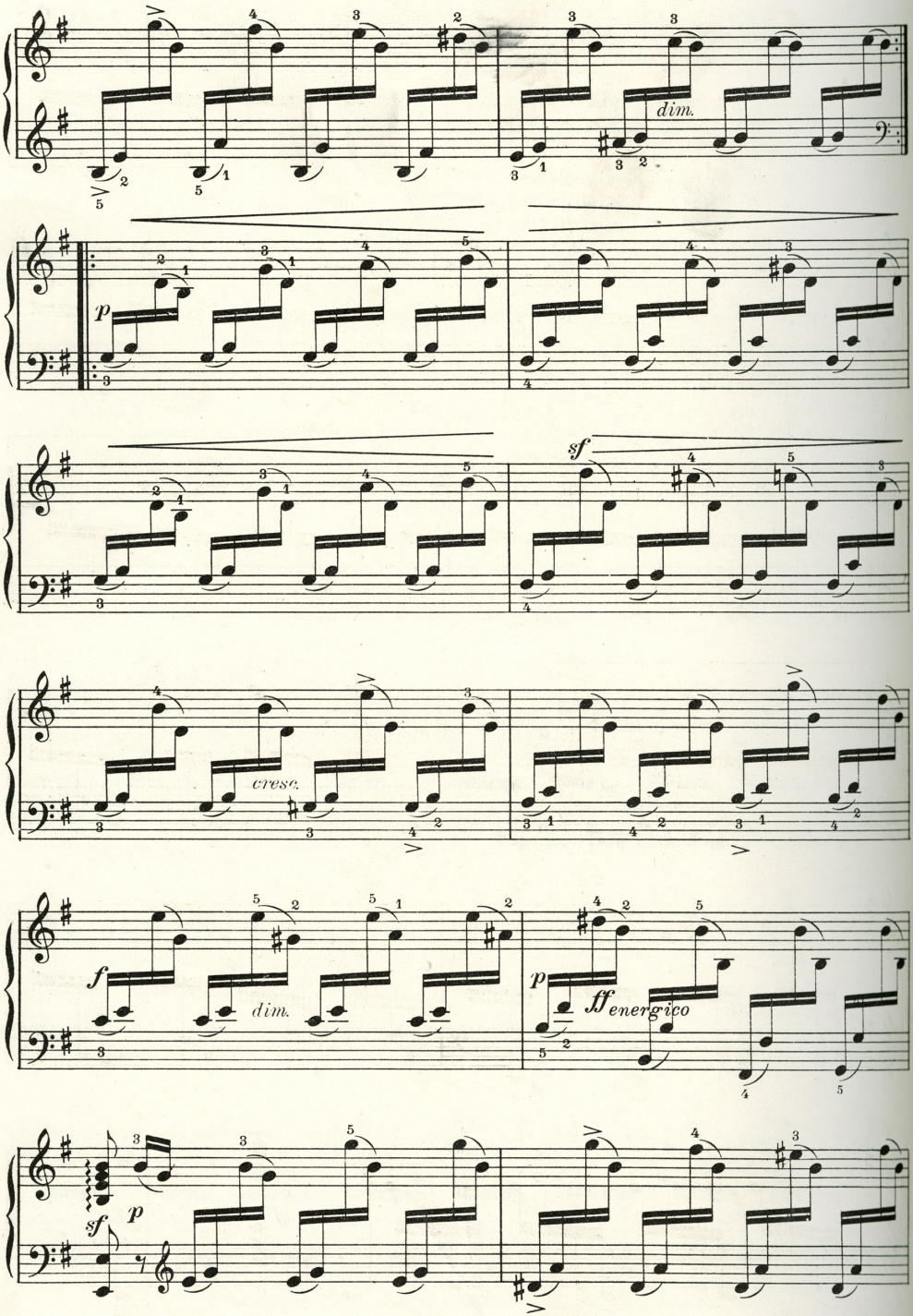
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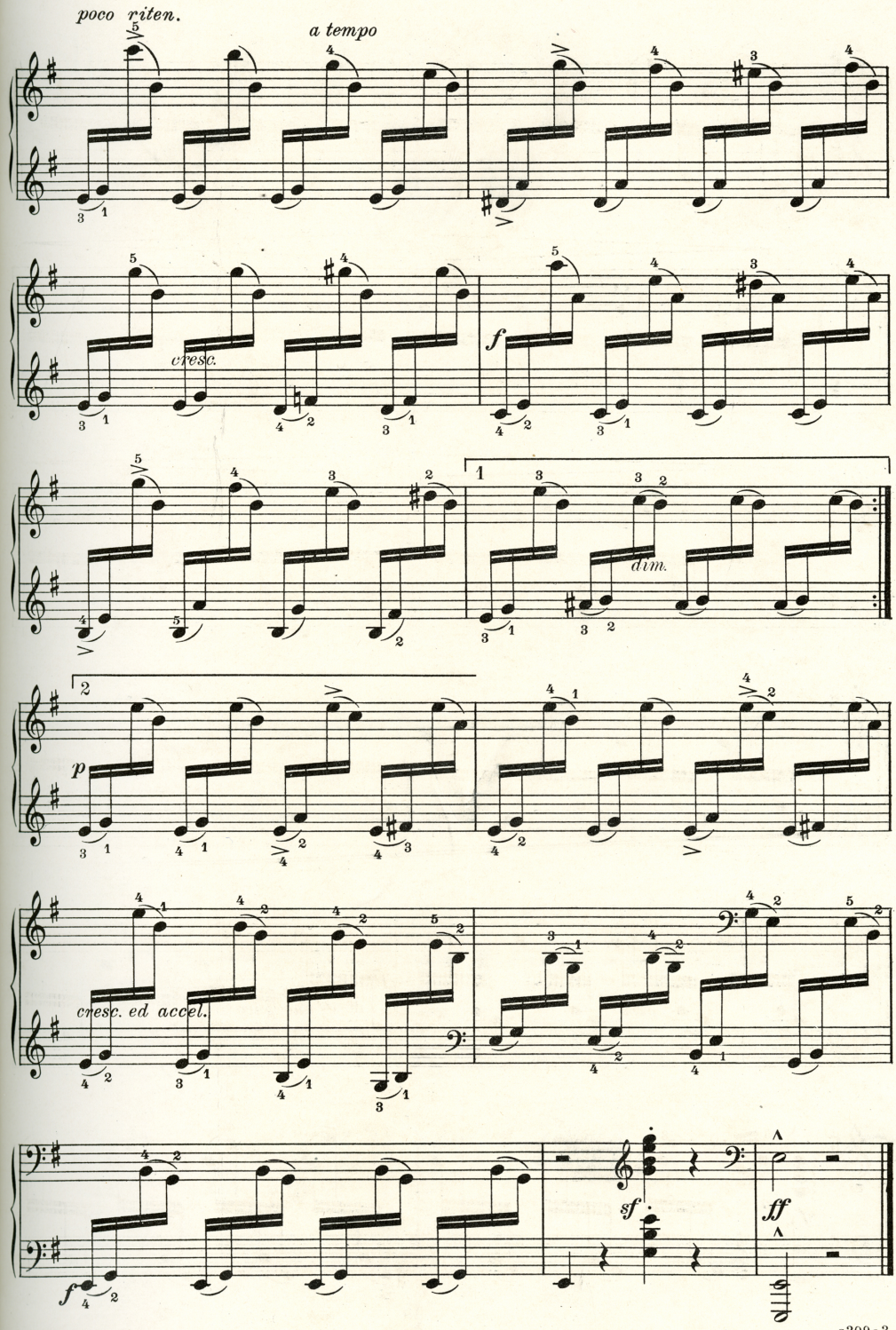
poco riten.
a tempo
cresc.
f
dim.
1
2
p
cresc. ed accel.
f
sf
ff

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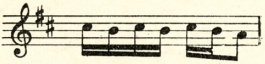
PIANO — Study 310

Polyphony

Besides writing numerous monumental works, the great Johann Sebastian Bach wrote many short pieces intended for the education of his large family. This is one of them.

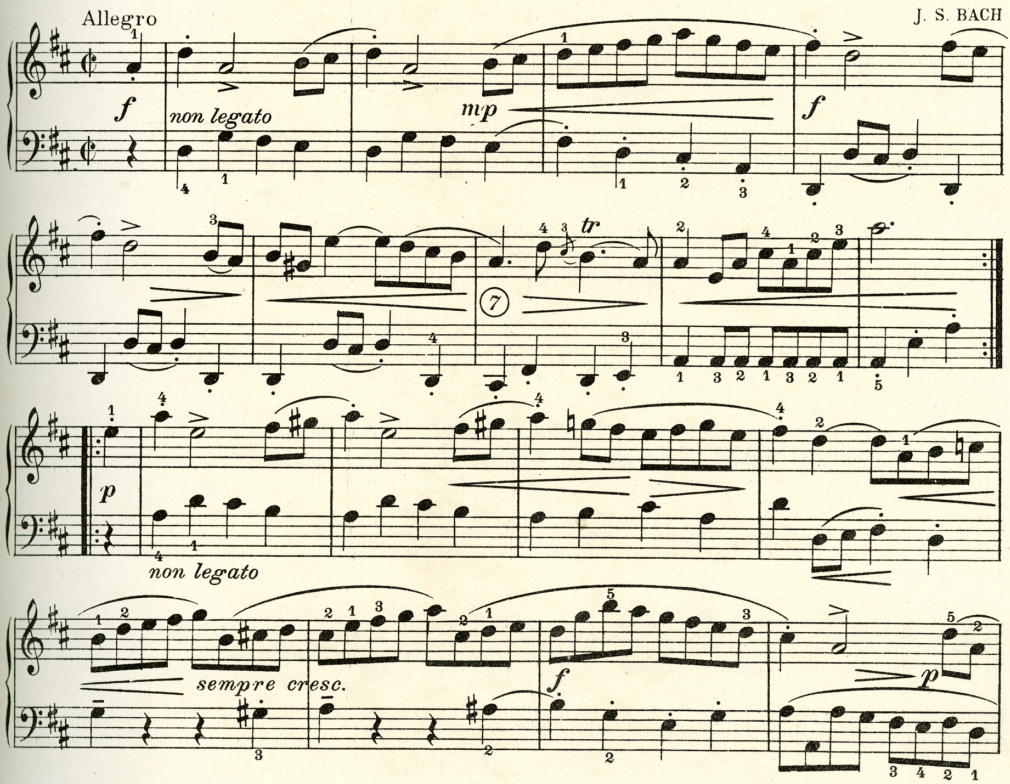
As in so many of Bach's smaller pieces, we here find legato, staccato and non legato. It is one thing to see this, and quite another to make your listener hear what you see. You must make *yourself* hear what you see; then your listeners will hear it, too. Bring out not only the correctness of notes and time, but also the details of style and expression.

The trill in measure 7 is to be played as follows:



The legato notes must be well connected and correctly phrased, and the staccato notes crisp and short.

MARCH



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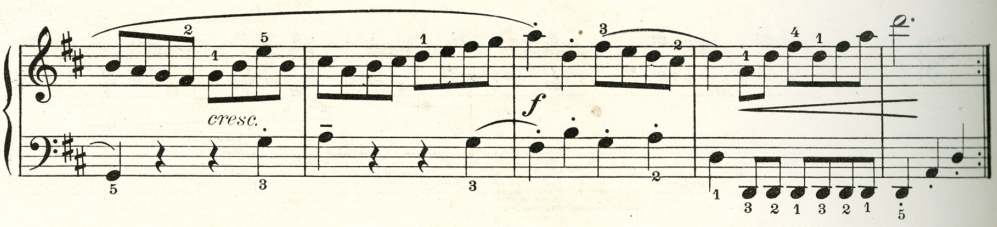
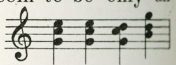


The following short Prelude might well have been named "Improvisation." It suggests a player "tuning up" before playing some larger piece, and thus getting his listeners into the right receptive mood.

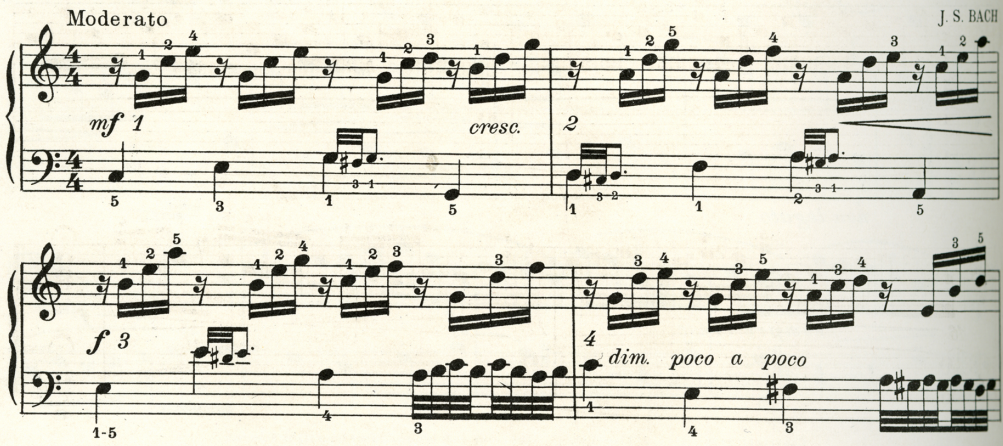
While the left hand has a singable part, there is nevertheless a melodic line for the right hand. If you will play the triads which have been broken up, and which seem to be only an accompaniment, in the following manner—taking measure 1, for example:  you will see that the highest notes have real tunefulness, and these should be brought into prominence above the left hand part.

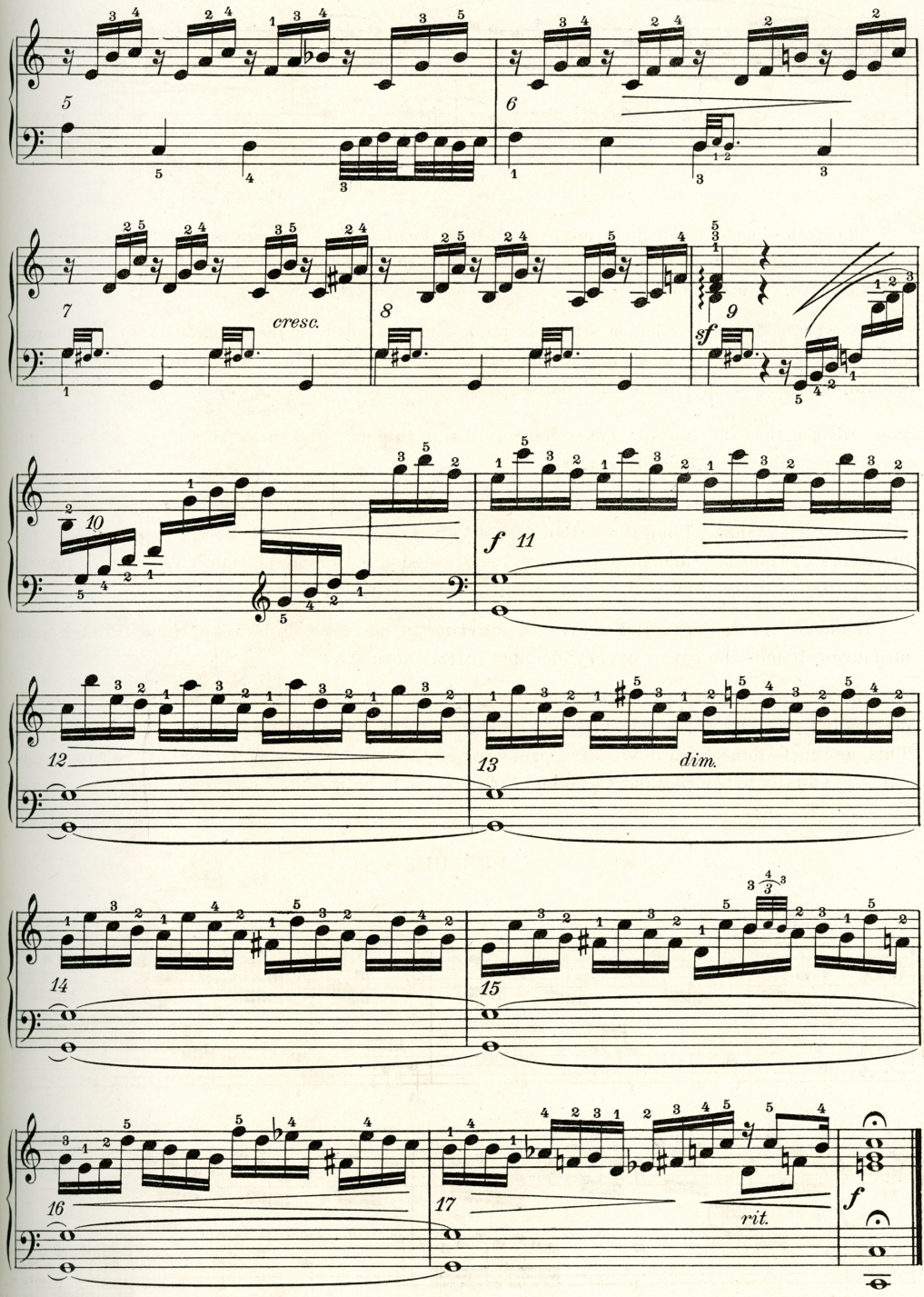
At measure 9, activites seem to end abruptly. The following two measures are in the nature of a cadenza. Then the veiled melody starts again, on high C, and continues for five measures. From measure 15 to the end is more cadenza—improvisation. The tempo may be accelerated a little, and then the final ritardando gains in expressiveness.

Inasmuch as the left hand octave G, starting in measure 11, is to continue through seven measures, it must be given a very decided initial accent.

In these measures (11-17) the right hand must clearly mark the rhythmical character of the descending four sixteenth-note figures, giving a slight accent to the first note of each group. This, again, is done by a downward pressure of the wrist on the first note of the group, raising it gradually when playing the other three, so as to be ready for the first note of the next group.

PRELUDE




5
6
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cresc.
8
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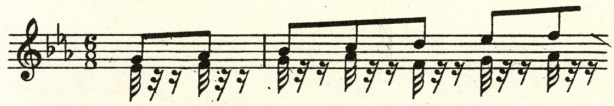
sf
10
f 11
12
13
dim.
14
15
16
17
rit.
f

Sherwood Music School Courses

PIANO — Study 351

We find in this piece a rapid succession of grace notes, which will require careful study if the composition is to be played delicately, smoothly and effectively.

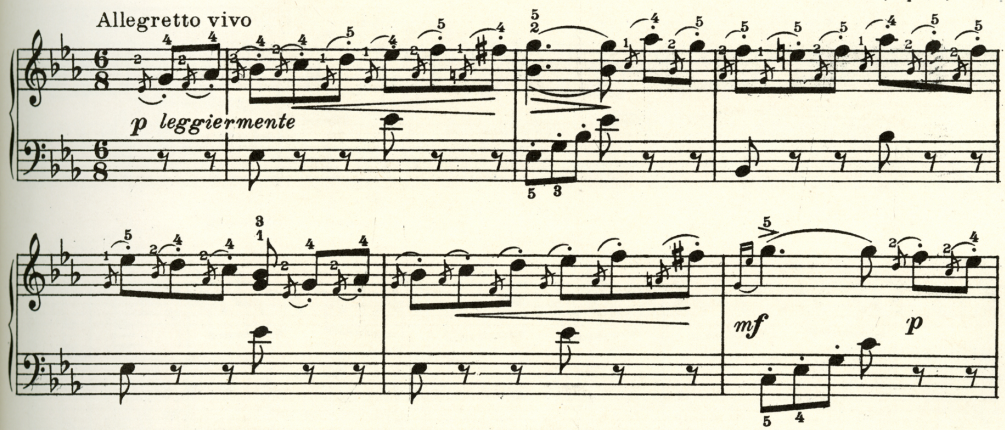
The student may at first play the grace and principal notes together. Playing double notes, in this way, but immediately releasing the lower of the two notes, gives very nearly the effect desired for the grace notes. (See the Acciaccatura, Lesson 32, GENERAL THEORY.) Practice playing the two notes together (making the grace note a sharp staccato) until the effect is such that the grace note is apparently played in advance of the principal note. The following notation gives an idea of the result desired in this kind of practice.



After some preliminary practice playing both notes together, the student may try the study playing the grace note a little in advance of the principal note. A slight but very quick upward movement of the hand is made as each pair of notes—grace note and principal note—is played. Carefully prepare the fingers, and then attack suddenly and come up again with a springy movement. In the same movement, prepare the position of the wrist and fingers for the next pair of notes.

The forearm moves laterally, in conjunction with the general movement of the hand. Much depends on the assistance of the forearm, to accomplish the playing of this study in quick tempo.

CONCONE, Op. 24, No. 9



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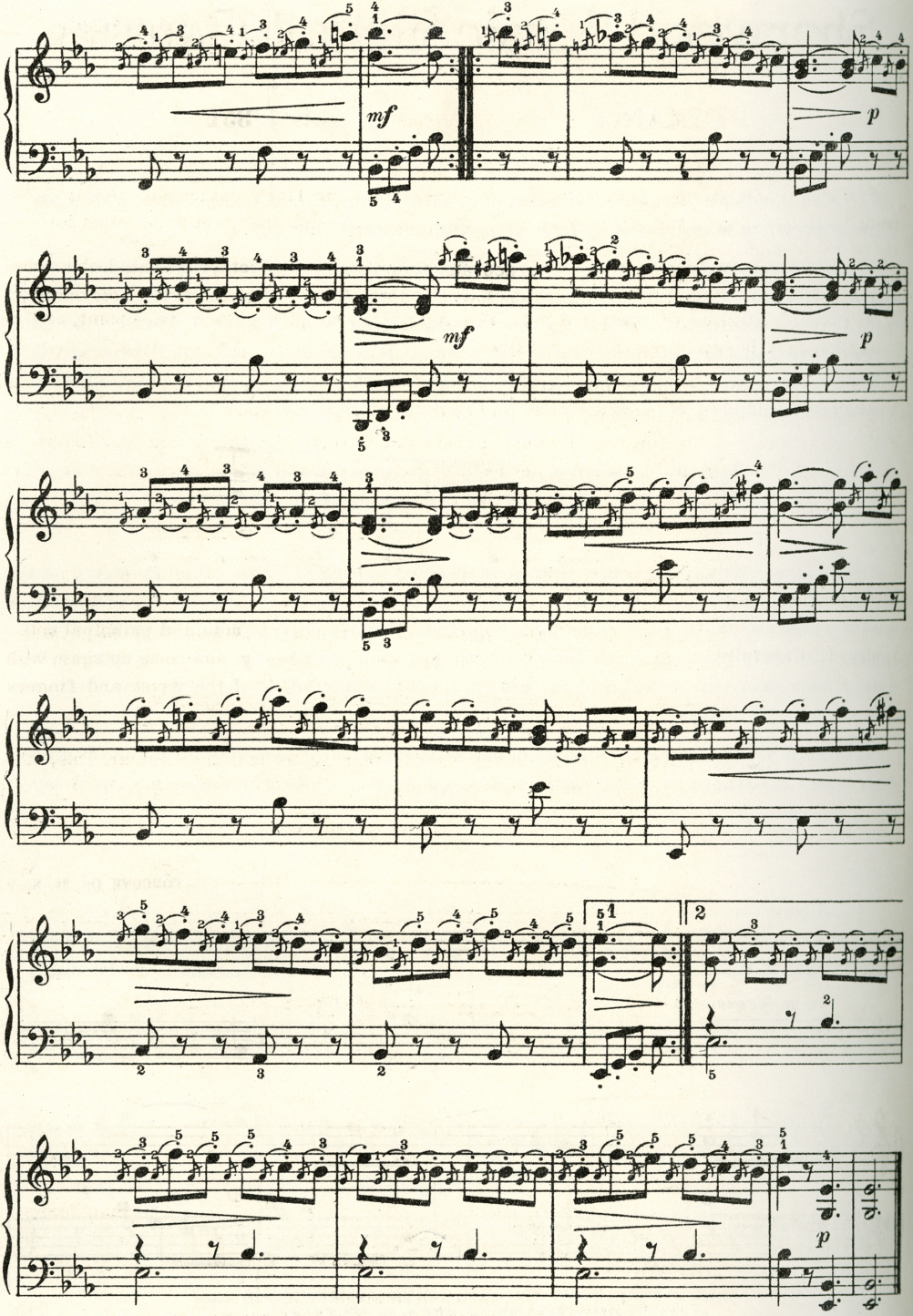

mf
p
mf
p
1
2
p

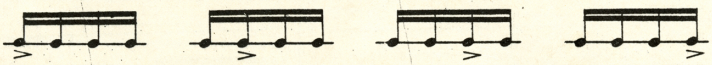
Sherwood Music School Courses

PIANO — Study 352

This study affords excellent practice for either wrist or finger staccato. As it is essentially a left-hand study, work on the left-hand part separately, until the requisite control of speed and dynamics is acquired.

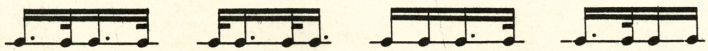
It is always helpful to vary practice so as to sustain and increase interest in the purely mechanical features of the piece. In this study, variation both as to accent, and as to rhythm may be made.

For accentual variation, after playing the study through with a strong accent on the first note of each group of four, play it again with a strong accent on the second of each group. Proceed in similiar manner, accenting, in turn, the third and the fourth of each group. The four methods of practice may be represented as follows, carrying each method entirely through the study, at slow tempo:



Finally, play the study without accents.

For rhythmical variation, each of the following rhythmical patterns may be applied, in turn, to every four-note group throughout the study.

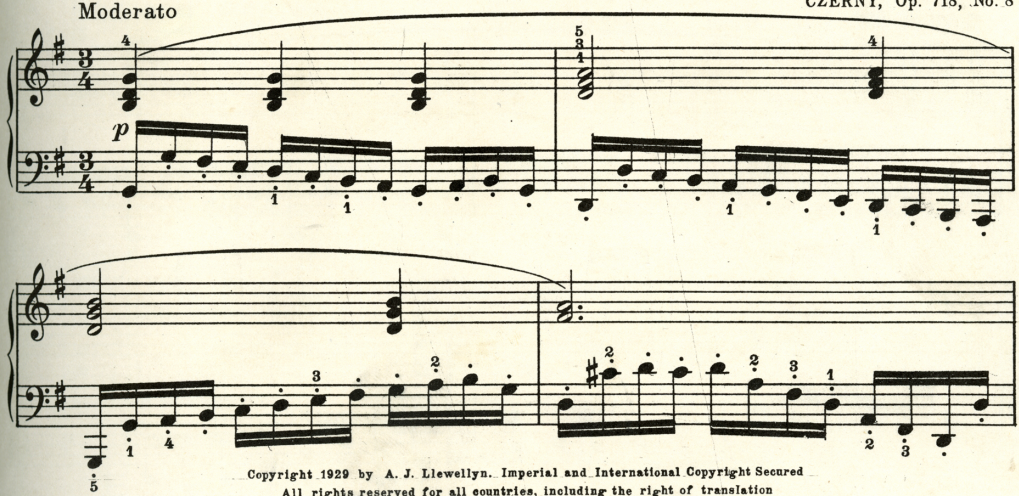


As before, use one pattern for the entire study; then select and use another. This, also, is only to be attempted in slow or moderate tempo.

In the right-hand part, observe the slurs, and play legato.

Moderato

CZERNY, Op. 718, No. 8



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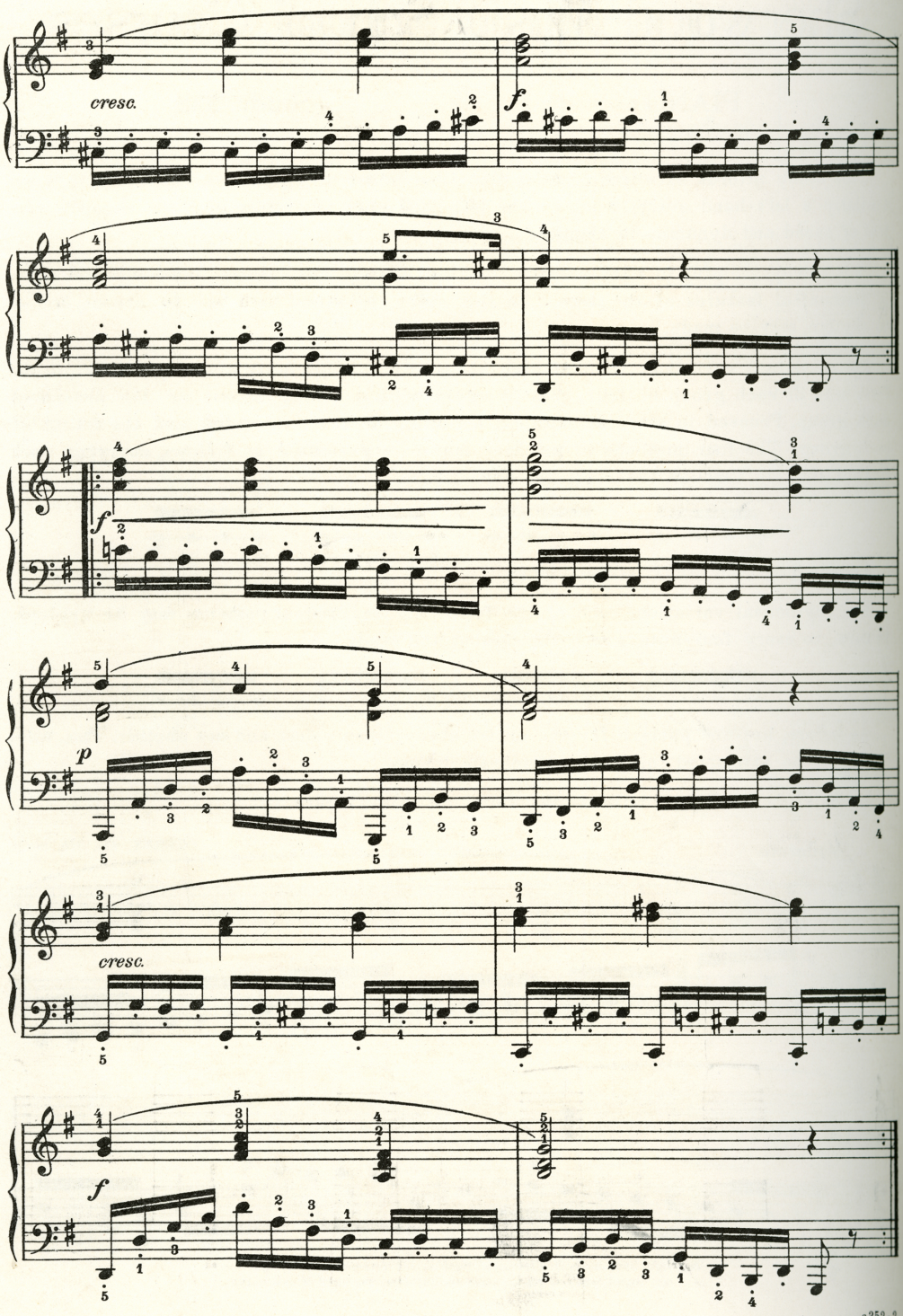
cresc.
f
f
p
cresc.
f

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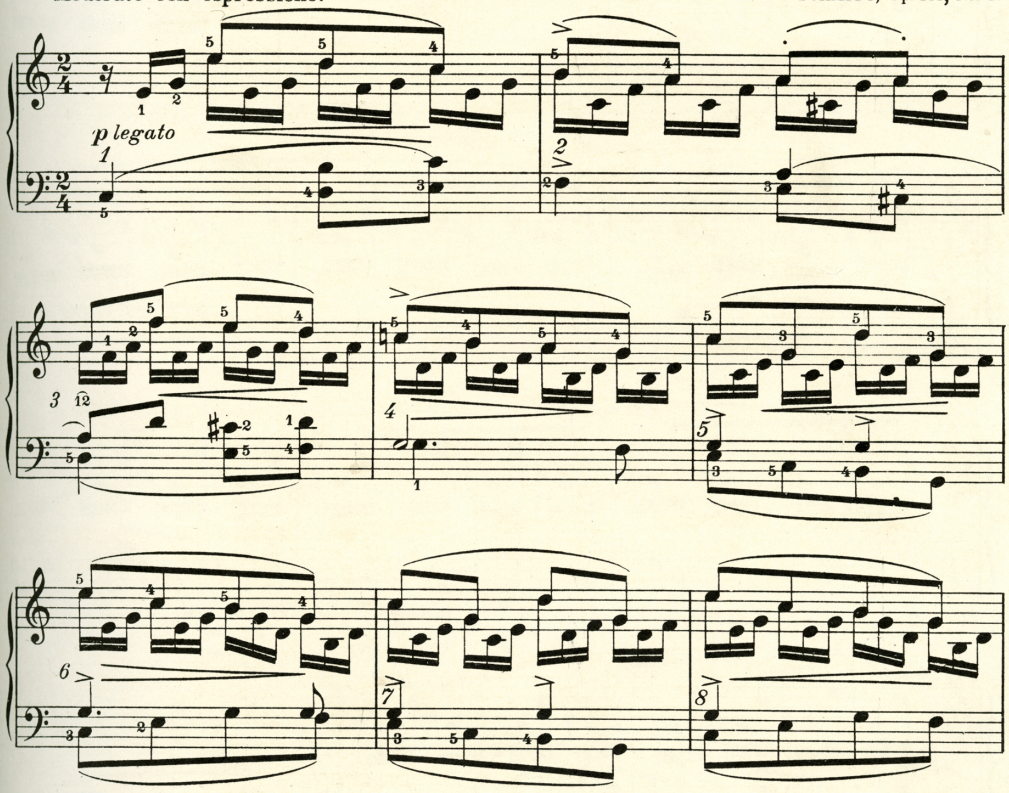
PIANO — Study 353

The legato melody with subordinated accompaniment is very frequently used in music. It is well exemplified in this study. The intermission in the melodic flow, on the first half-beat of measure 9, and through measures 13-16, as well as the delay of a half-beat at the beginning, serve to make the legato melodic passages the more conspicuous. Perfect legato and correct phrasing should be used in bringing them out. The phrasing requires the lifting of the hand at the conclusion of each slurred passage.

It is advisable to play the melody alone, at first, without any accompaniment, in order to become familiar with the singing effect. Observe the phrasing carefully. Then play it again, with the sixteenth-note accompaniment (in the same hand) very soft.

Observe the special accents and the dynamic marks.

Moderato con espressione. SCHMITT, Op. 114, No. 43



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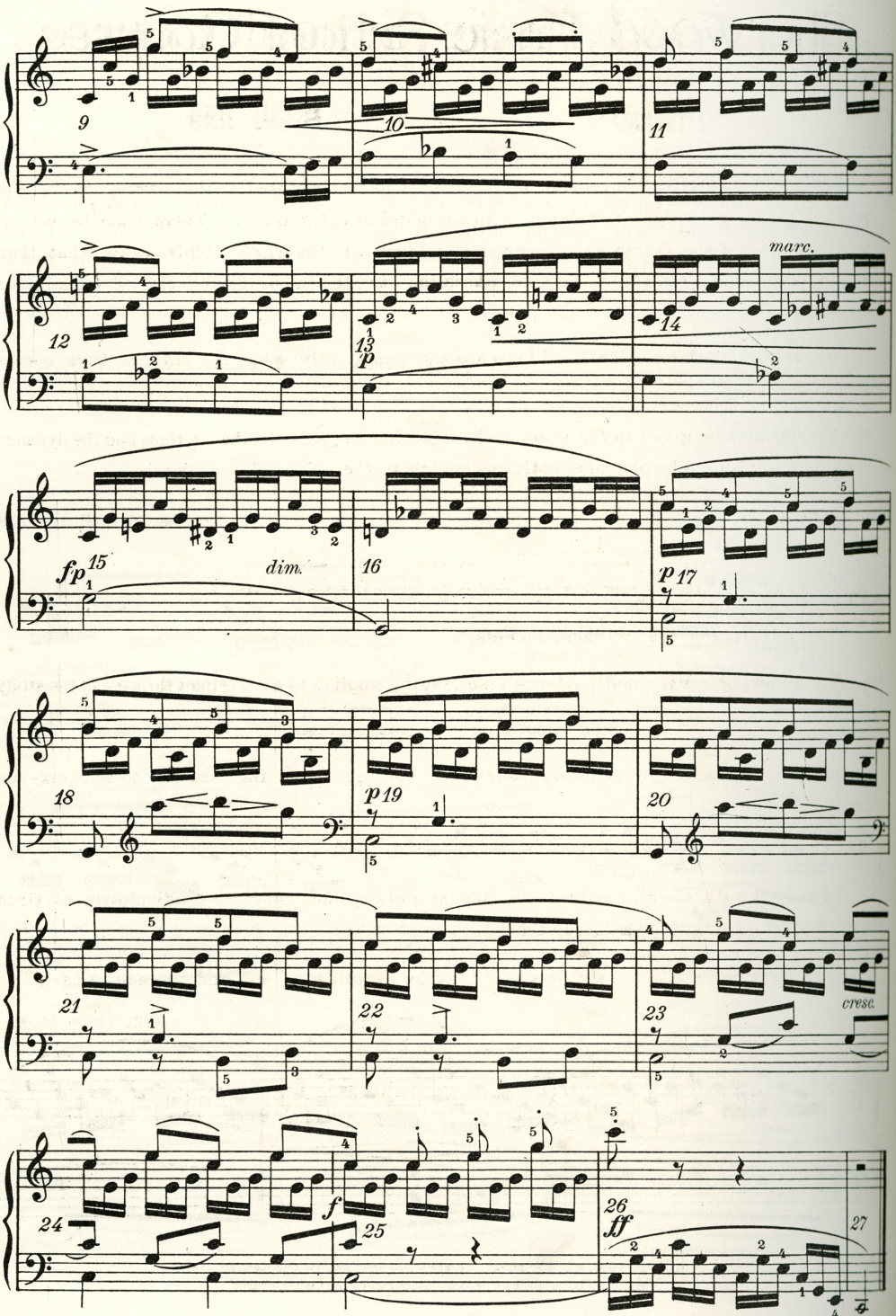
9
10
11
12
13
p
marc.
14
fp
15
dim.
16
p
17
18
p
19
20
21
22
23
cresc.
24
f
25
26
ff
27

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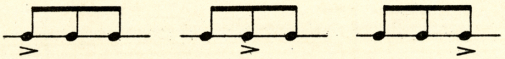
PIANO Study **354**

A slightly undulating movement of the wrist is better adapted to the playing of these arpeggios than mere finger movement with the hand at a fixed level. There must be no jerk at the crossing of the thumb and finger, and no break in the legato. This means that there must be an absolute connection between the thumb and the third (or fourth) finger at the crossing.

Begin with slow practice, and increase the tempo only when the fingers have become sure of their keys.

Variety may be given to the practice by altering the accents, the rhythms and the dynamics. Then the study should be played exactly according to the printed indications.

Accents may be applied in three different ways, as follows, applying each, in turn, all through the study.



Then play it through without accents.

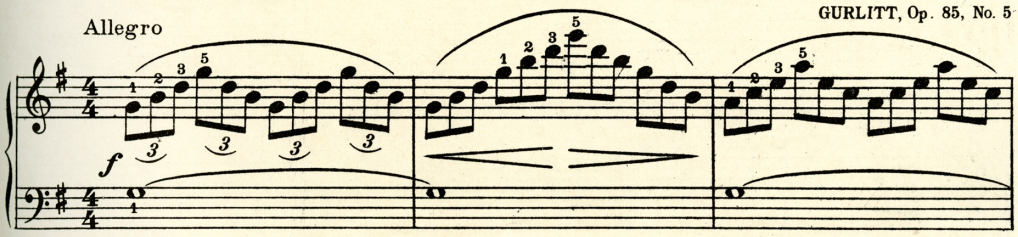
The following rhythmical patterns also may be applied to each triplet throughout the study:

or the rhythm may be changed from four three-note groups in the measure to two six-note groups, as follows:

In adapting the above variations in accent and rhythm, play the study slowly at first, and work up gradually to a faster tempo.

For variation in dynamics, the study may be practiced *f, mf* and *p,* each in turn.

GURLITT, Op. 85, No. 5



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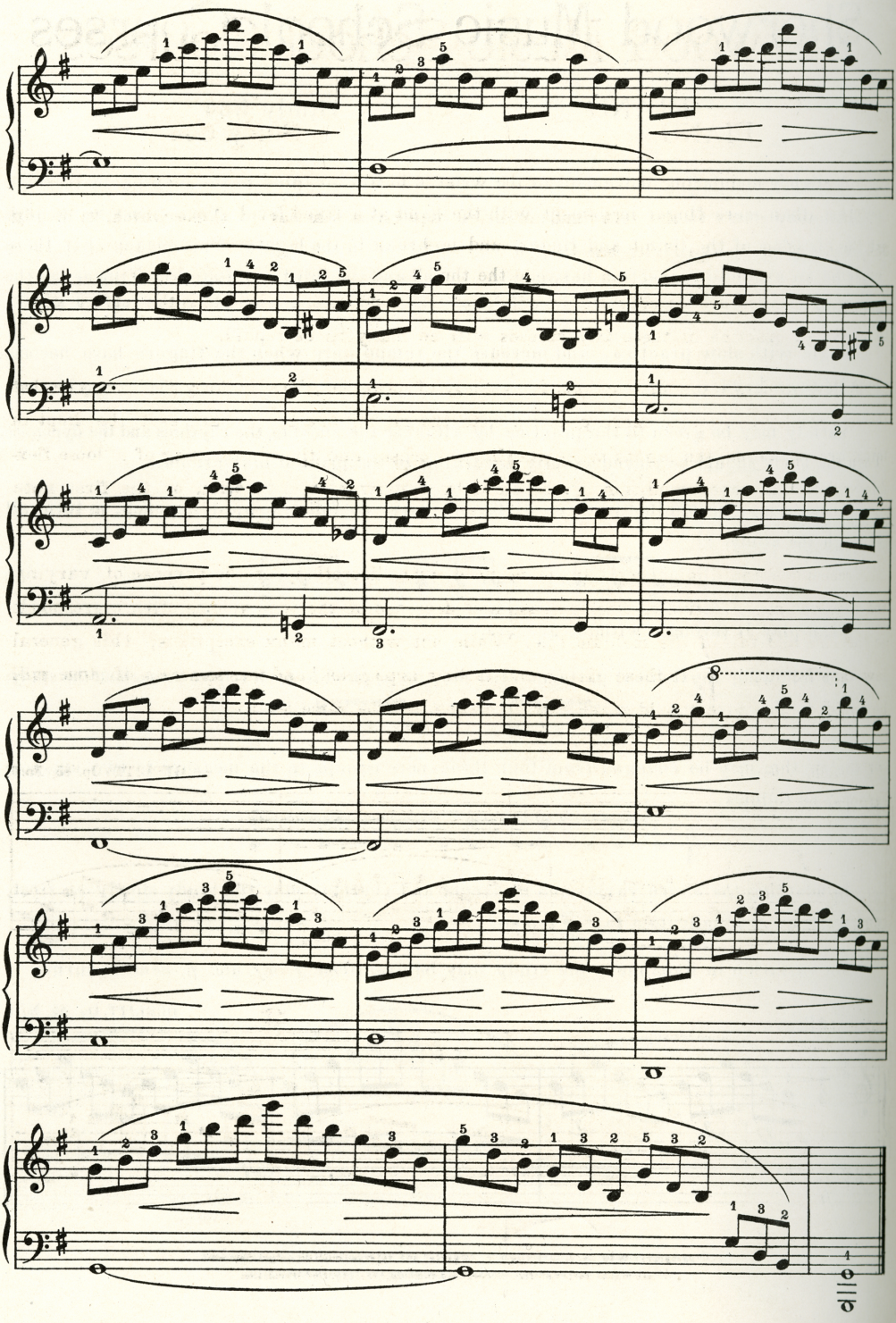

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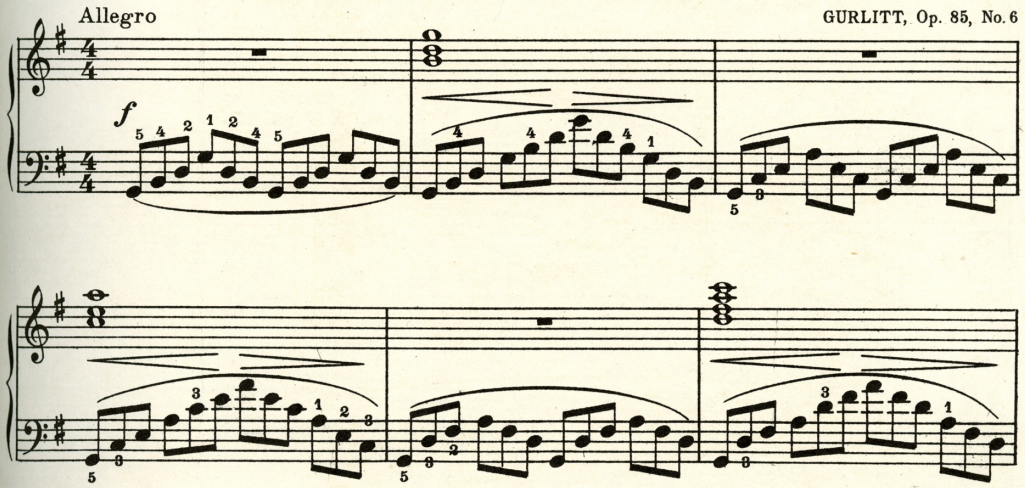
PIANO — Study 355

This study gives to the left hand extended arpeggios similiar to those which, in Study 354, were given to the right hand.

Such passages are so universally employed in piano compositions, that the effort given to thorough practice of these two studies will be many times repaid.

Follow in detail the instructions for variety of practice given in Study 354. It may be that the left hand will require more practice than the right. The main features to be kept in mind are, of course, the legato when the fingers cross, and the maintaining of a loose, flexible wrist. The latter condition can be aided by downward wrist action on the first note of each group.

Crescendos and diminuendos are to be used with discretion, for the purpose of varying the tone volume effectively. The increase and decrease of the tone volume often corresponds to the rise and fall of the melodic line. While not without many exceptions, this general law may be followed in these rising and falling arpeggios, and thus sameness of tone will be avoided. The tone should *never* remain at one and the same level.



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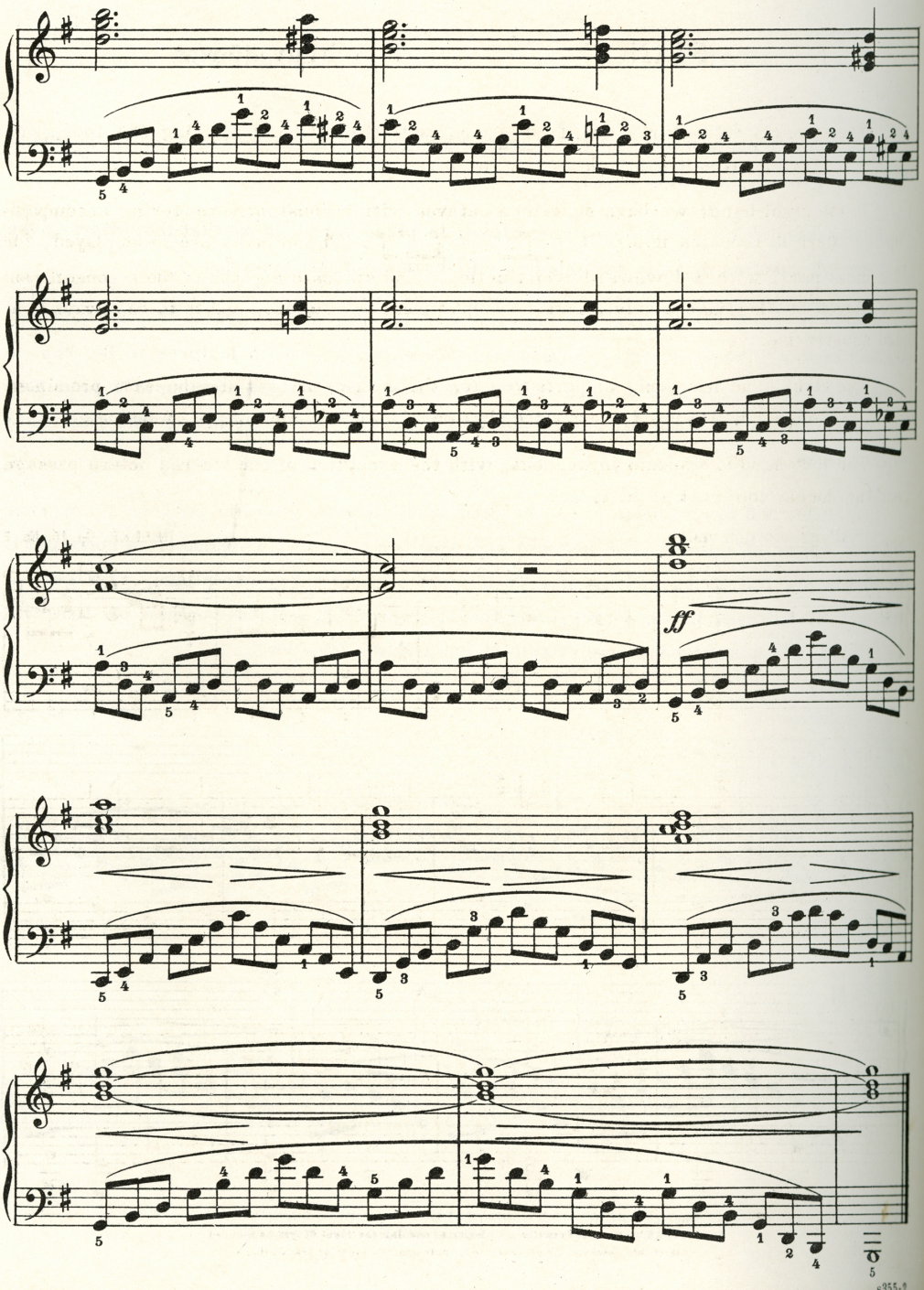
ff

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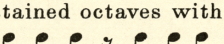
PIANO — Study 356

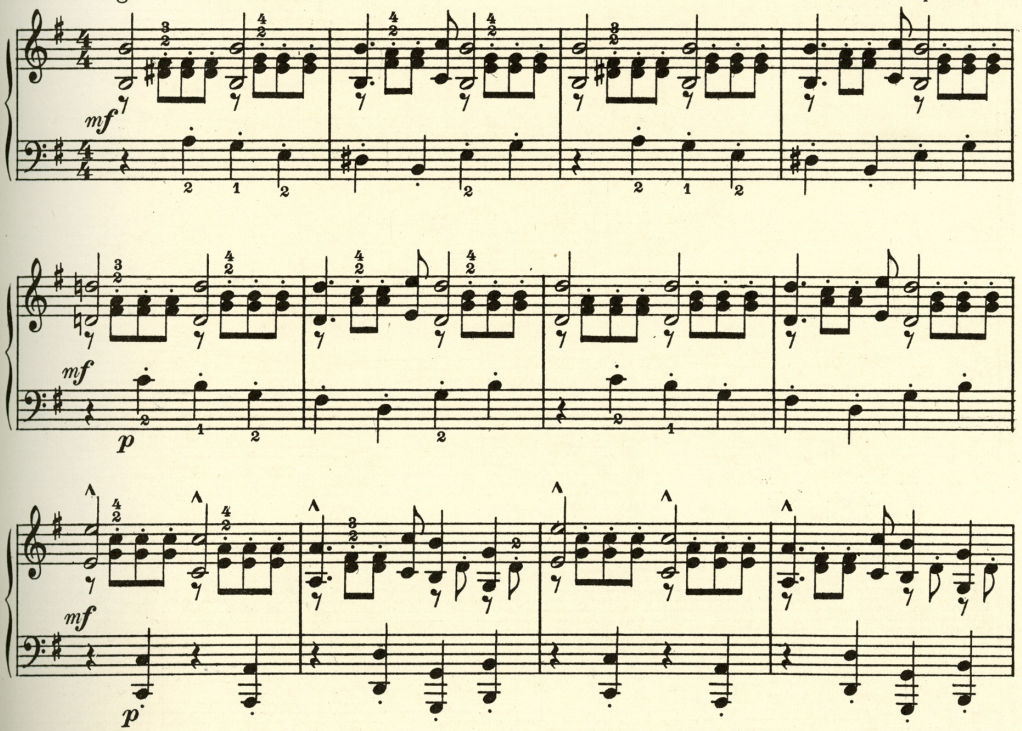
The strongly defined rhythm of this study, with the left hand marking the four beats to the measure, gives it a march-like character.

In the right hand, we have sustained octaves with a constantly recurring accompaniment pattern in repeated notes  . The octaves are to be played, for the most part, with a downward wrist action. The staccato eighths of the accompaniment are played by the fingers only. This accompaniment is staccato, and is to be always light and unobtrusive.

The right hand has thus two parts to play, the most prominent and the least prominent; while the left hand, as stated, marks the rhythm, with a medium degree of loudness.

The left hand is staccato throughout, with the exception of one slurred octave passage and the double note part at the close.

Allegretto con moto. HELLER, Op. 45, No. 7



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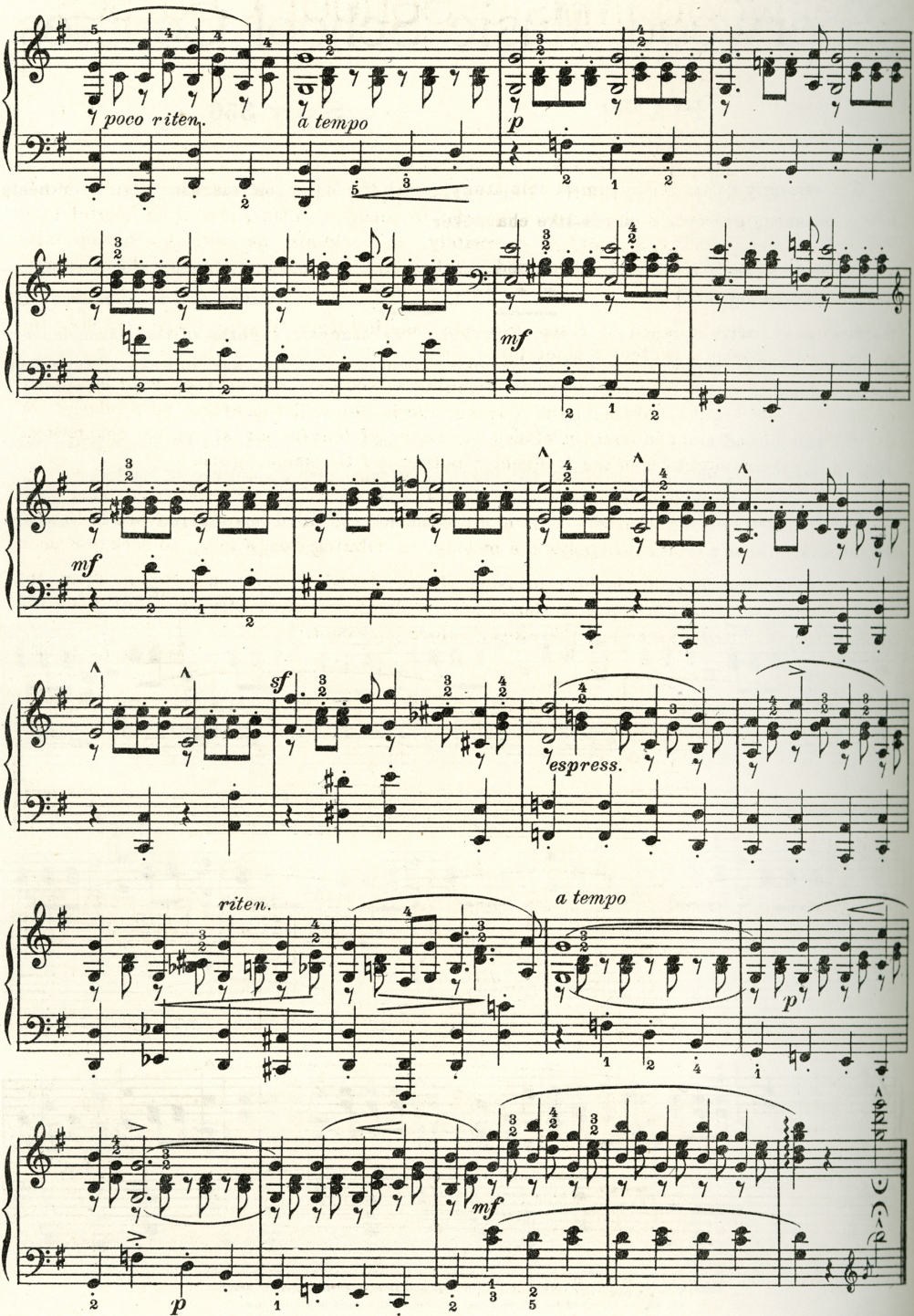
poco riten.
a tempo
p
mf
mf
sf
espress.
riten.
a tempo
p
mf
p

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PIANO — Study 357

Technically, the importance of this study lies in the fact that it aims at developing evenness of tone production in all of the five fingers, when playing a succession of figures closely connected through a very strict legato. In order to accomplish this, it will be helpful to at first practice slowly, and *f, mf* and *p,* alternately. It would also be advisable to emphasize the weaker fourth and fifth fingers, and then, when playing in tempo, to give the same pressure with all of the fingers.

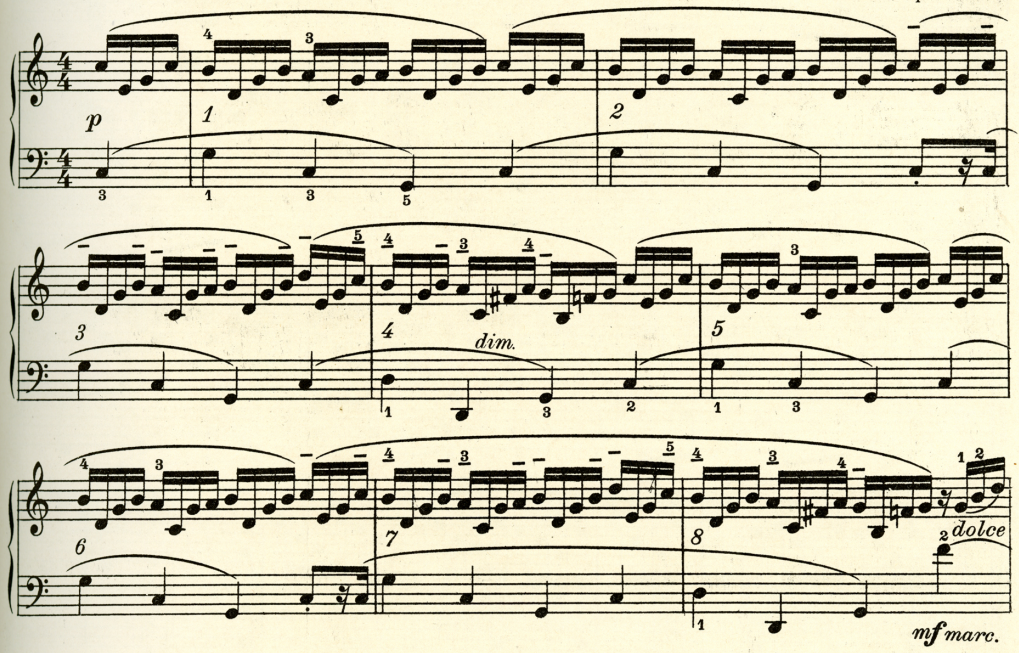
The legato is accomplished by clinging to each key, in turn, until your finger reaches the next one, thus making a perfect connection.

Musically, this study may represent the running effect of a quiet rivulet or mountain stream. The more legato and fluent the playing, the better will the effect be produced. A melodic line is brought out in certain places by means of *tenuto* marks, which counteracts any monotony there might be in the frequent repetition of the same figure.

The bass takes on a melodic interest at the last beat of measure 8, the right hand playing a broken chord accompaniment. This continues until the third beat of measure 12. In measures 20 - 25, the left hand again plays the melody, modulating from F to C, and back to F again.

The notes of the arpeggio chord in measure 29 are played in quick succession from the bottom to the top. The last or top note should have a slight accent exactly on count 3 of the measure, the previous notes being, therefore, before the count.

HELLER, Op. 45, No. 1



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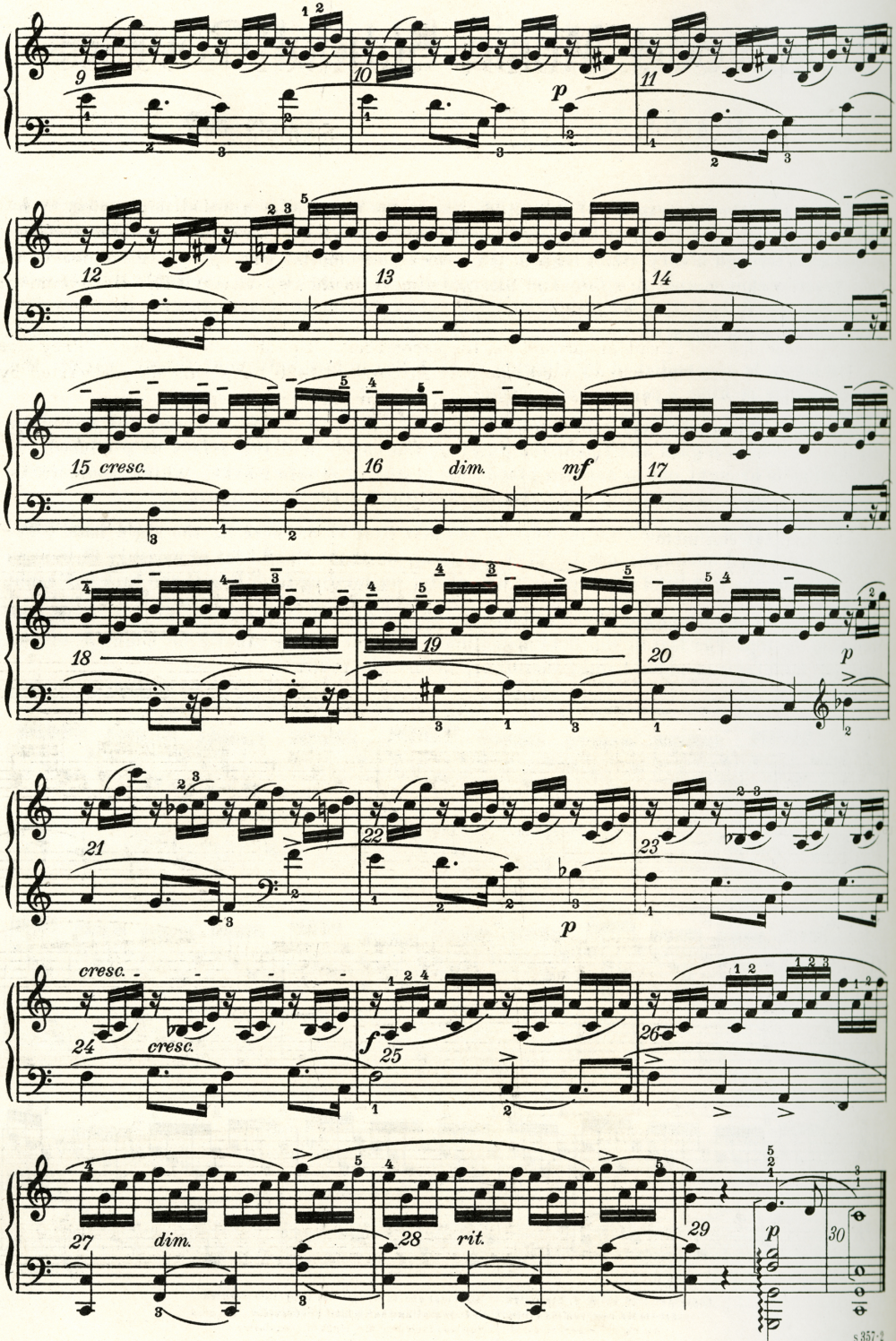
9
10
p
11
12
13
14
15 cresc.
16 dim.
mf
17
18
19
20
p
21
22
23
p
cresc.
24
cresc.
f
25
26
27
dim.
28
rit.
29
p
30

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PIANO — Study 358

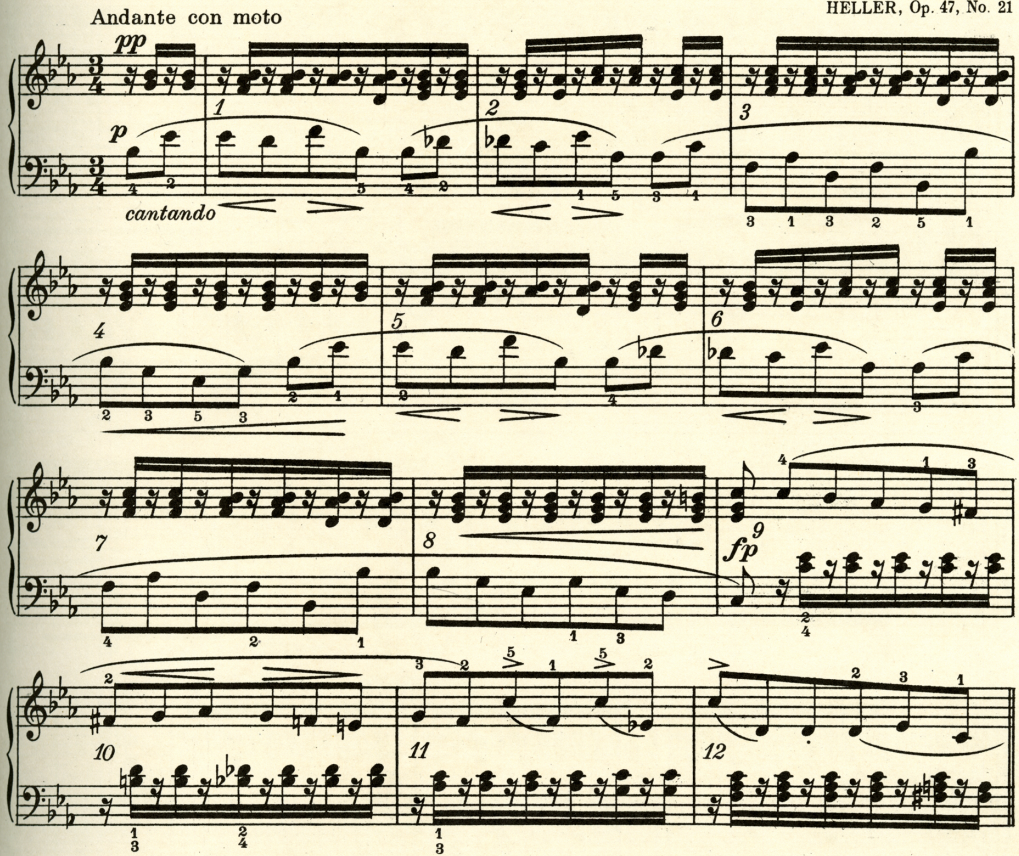
The prominent feature of this study is the strong legato of the melodies played by the left hand and the right hand alternately; that is, the left hand plays a melody for eight measures, then the right hand has a singing legato part, measures 9-20. The opening theme makes its appearance again in measure 20, and then once more in the repetition. The third time it leads to a coda, in measures 33-39.

The accompanying chords are always on the second half of each melody note. They are very short, and softer than the melody notes. Measures 13-20 have this device varied by the accompanying (bass) notes being sustained, and producing syncopation.

Practice the study in sections. Each of the parts, as described, may be taken up for separate practice.

The marks of expression should be carefully followed.

HELLER, Op. 47, No. 21



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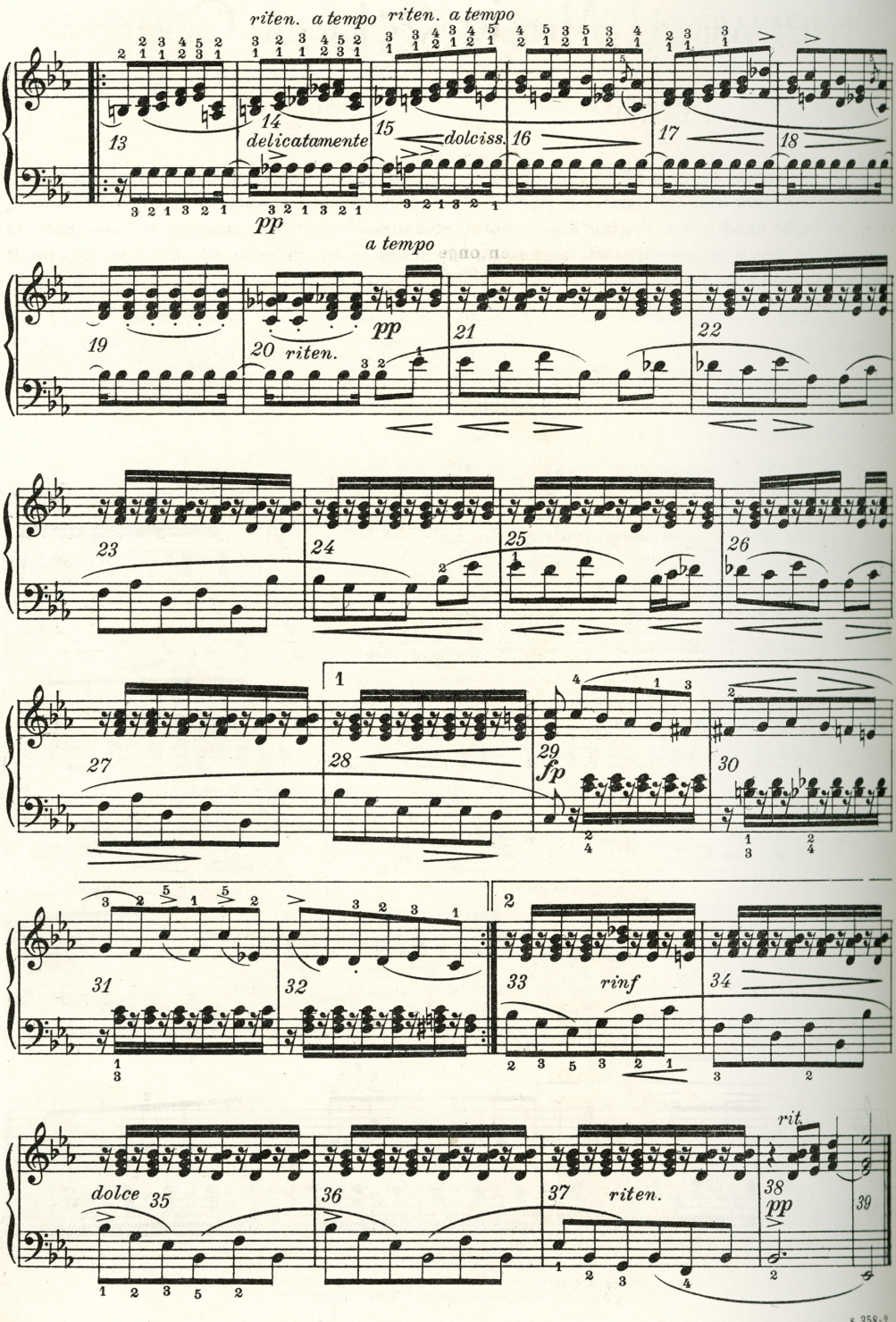
riten. a tempo riten. a tempo
13
14
delicatamente
15
dolciss.
16
17
18
pp
a tempo
19
20
riten.
pp
21
22
23
24
25
26
1
27
28
29
fp
30
2
31
32
33
rinf
34
dolce
35
36
37
riten.
38
pp
39
rit.

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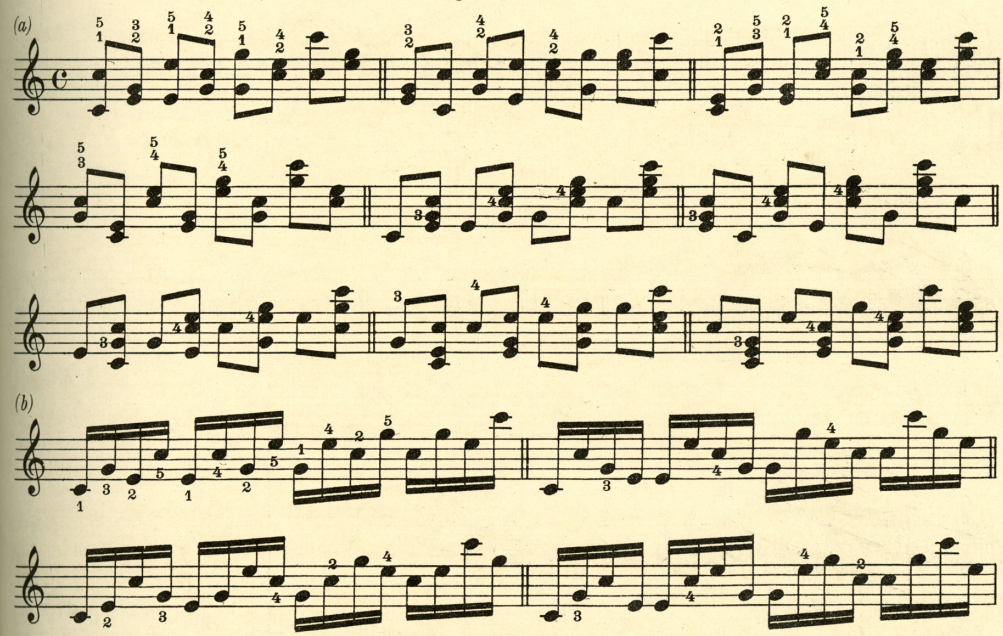
PIANO — Study 359

In playing broken chords and arpeggios, the wrist should not be kept at one and the same level, but raised and lowered according to the requirements of the music. (See Lesson 94, TECHNIC.) In this study, an undulating movement of the hands may be employed in playing the sixteenth-note groups, with the wrist low at the first note of each group, and rising slowly to the fourth.

The preparatory exercises are to be practiced both staccato and legato, and will help you to acquire a mastery of the study itself. Use downward wrist action on the first of the two-note figures *(a)*, and a rising wrist on the second. Play the four-note figures *(b)*, as described above for the sixteenth-note groups.



Practice this study at various speeds, slowly at first, and with various accents and dynamics. The following rhythmic variations may be used in the sixteenth-note groups:

The short legato sign connecting the last note of one group with the first note of the next group, is for the purpose of laying stress on the need for strict legato. This sign is only shown in the first two measures, but the principle applies throughout the study. In short, the sixteenths should make a continuous legato.

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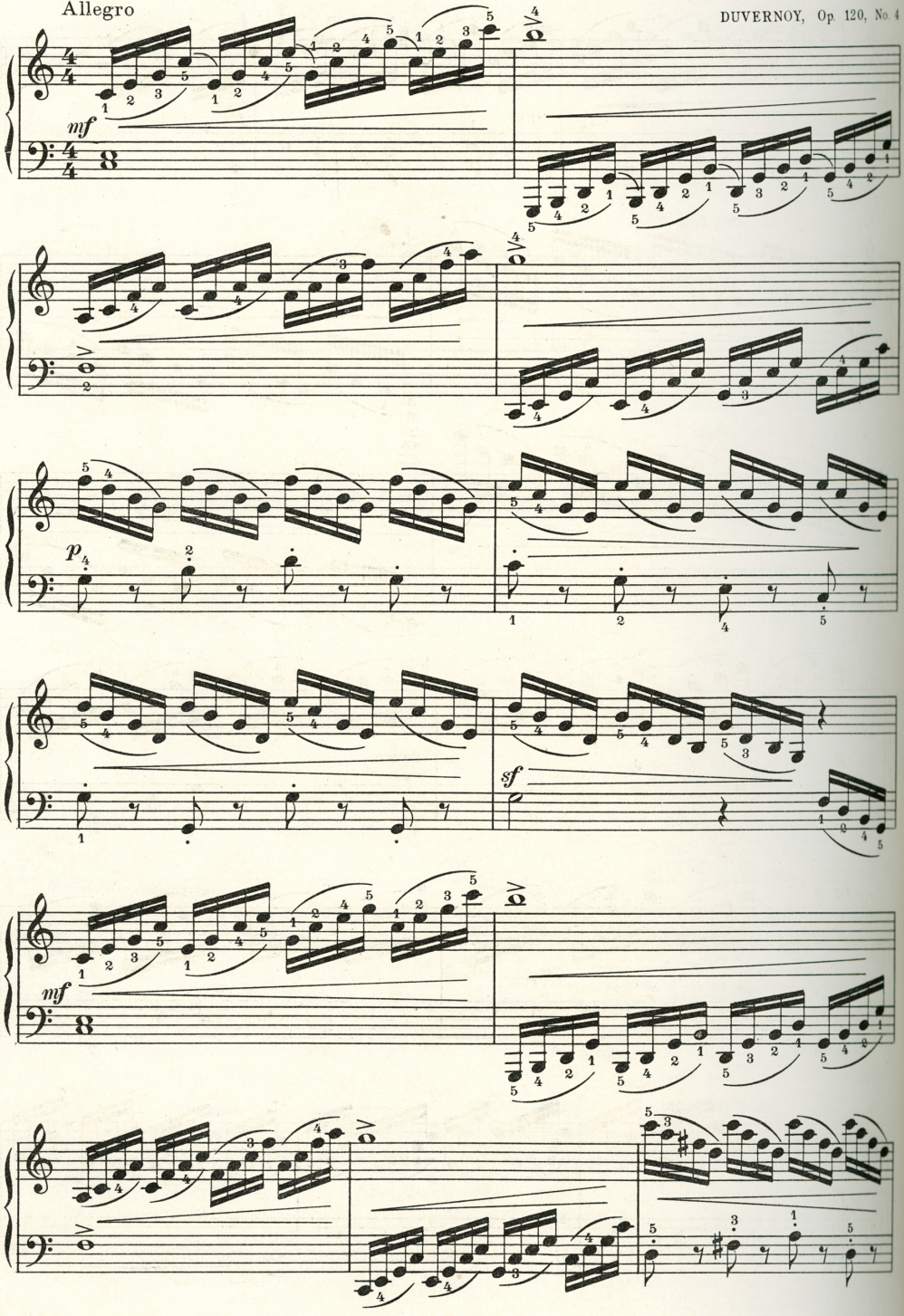
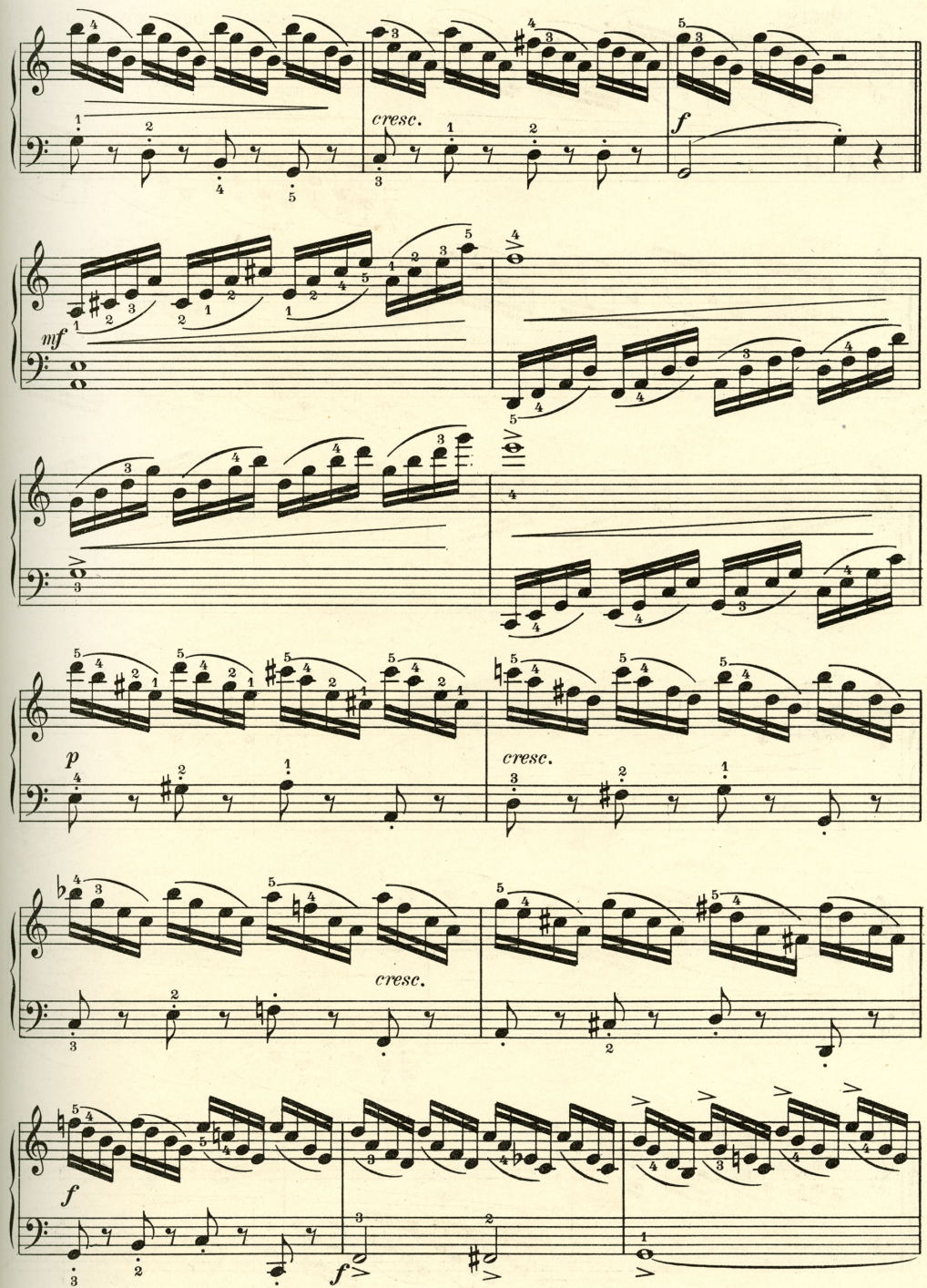
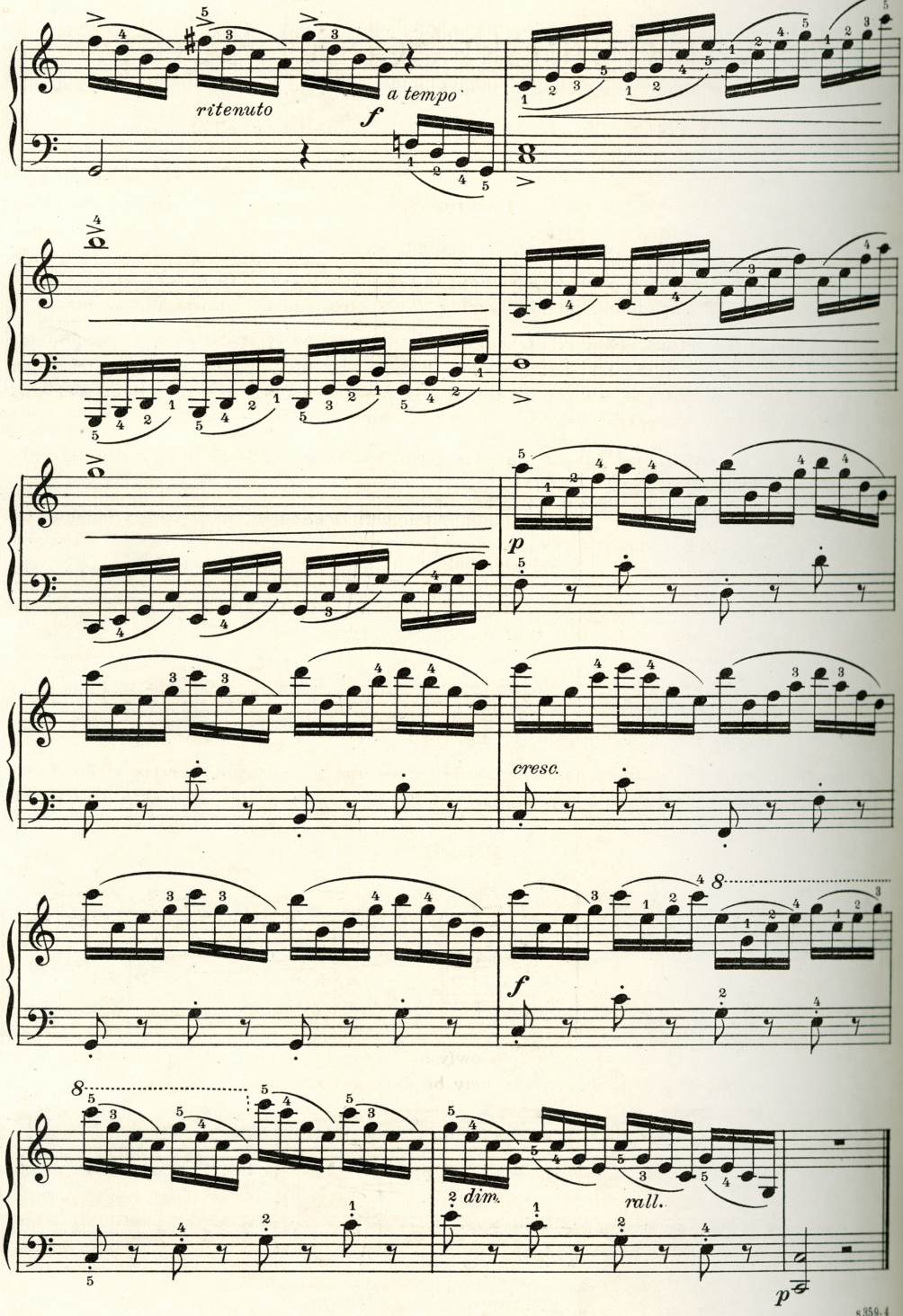

Allegro
mf
p
sf
mf


cresc.
f
mf
p
cresc.
cresc.
f
f


ritenuto
a tempo
f
p
cresc.
f
dim.
rall.
p

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PIANO — Study 360

Polyphony

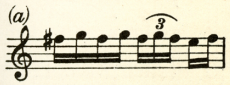
The spirit of the old-time minuet is present in this little piece. The minuet, which is really a "walking dance," expresses, in its leisurely paces, grace and courtliness.

The canon at the octave below, with which each part of the study begins, is not kept up throughout. The theme in the left hand must be brought out clearly, and with more force than in the right hand, so as to be heard without fail. In measures 22 and 24 it will be seen that the imitation is not at the octave below.

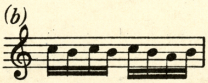
Legato, staccato and non-legato are all used, and should be made perfectly distinguishable, one from another.

The quarter notes tied over to first beats of the next measures, must be given added accent, or else they will not stand out as prominently as they should.

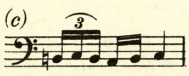
The trill in measure 21 is to be played as at *(a)*, and that in measure 23 similarly. The trill in measure 27 is to be played as at *(b)*, and the left hand trill in measure 22 as at *(c)*. Measure 24 repeats this last trill one degree higher.



Measure 21



Measure 27

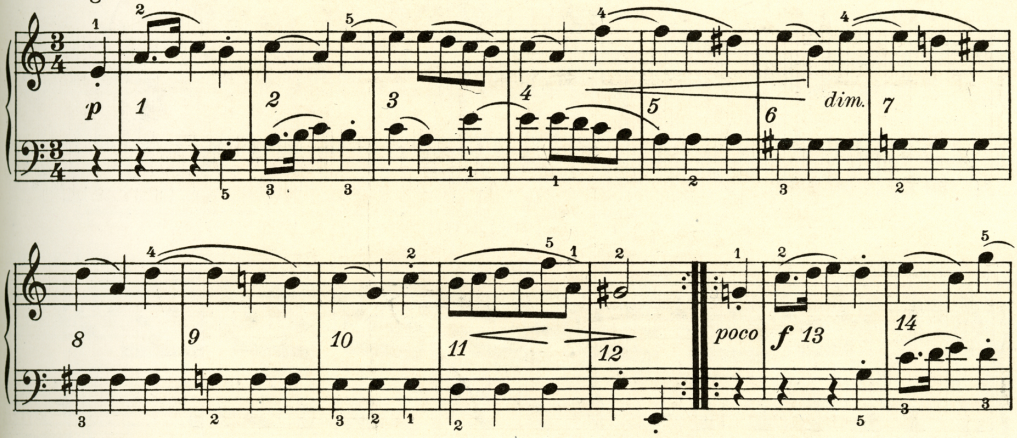


Measure 22

Play the repetitions without pause, making the second time softer than the first. A very slight pause, however, between the repetition of the first section and the beginning of the second, is in good taste.

MINUET

Allegretto — J. S. BACH



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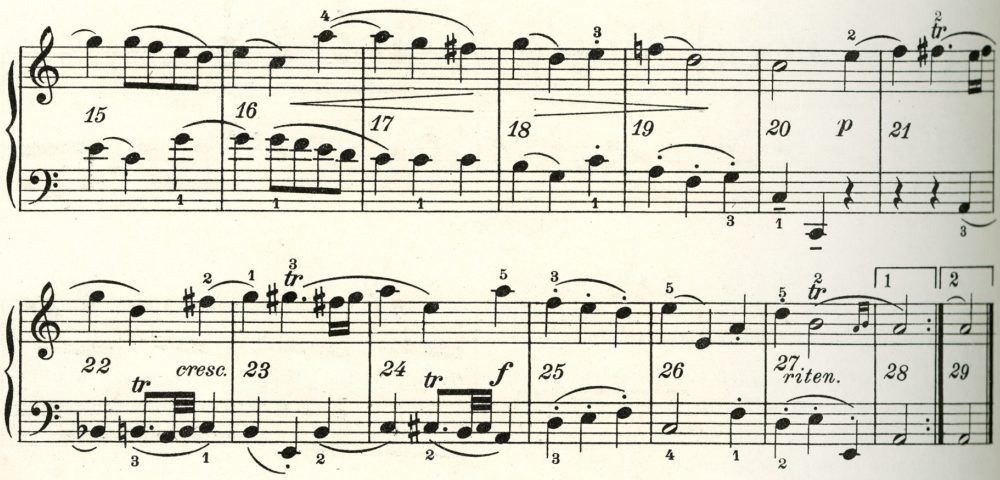
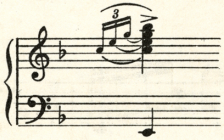


The character and movement of the next piece suggest the brisk canter of spirited horses. There is a refreshing air of "the outdoors" about it.

Notice that in the triads broken into sixteenth notes, the highest note gives a melodic line, and should be brought out with a little more prominence than the other notes. Their position, too, causes a syncopated effect which adds much more charm to the movement. Take note, also, of the reversal of parts, in measures 3-4 as compared to measures 1-2.

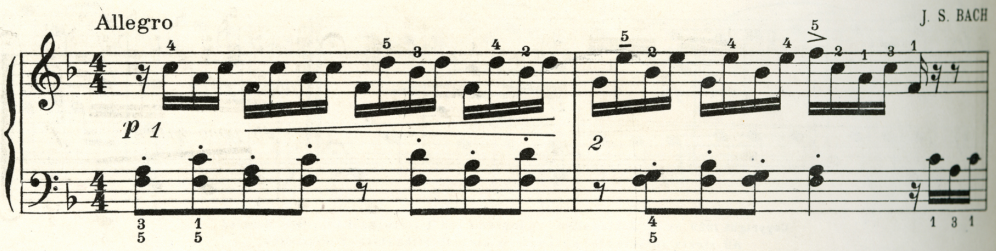
Here, again, we meet with legato and staccato played at one and the same time. The crisper the staccato and the smoother the legato, the finer the general effect will be. The sixteenth-note passages, made up of four-note figures, must be played with a free hand and wrist, so as to avoid fatigue. This may be accomplished by using a slight downward action of the wrist on the first note of the group, bringing it back into normal position on the others.

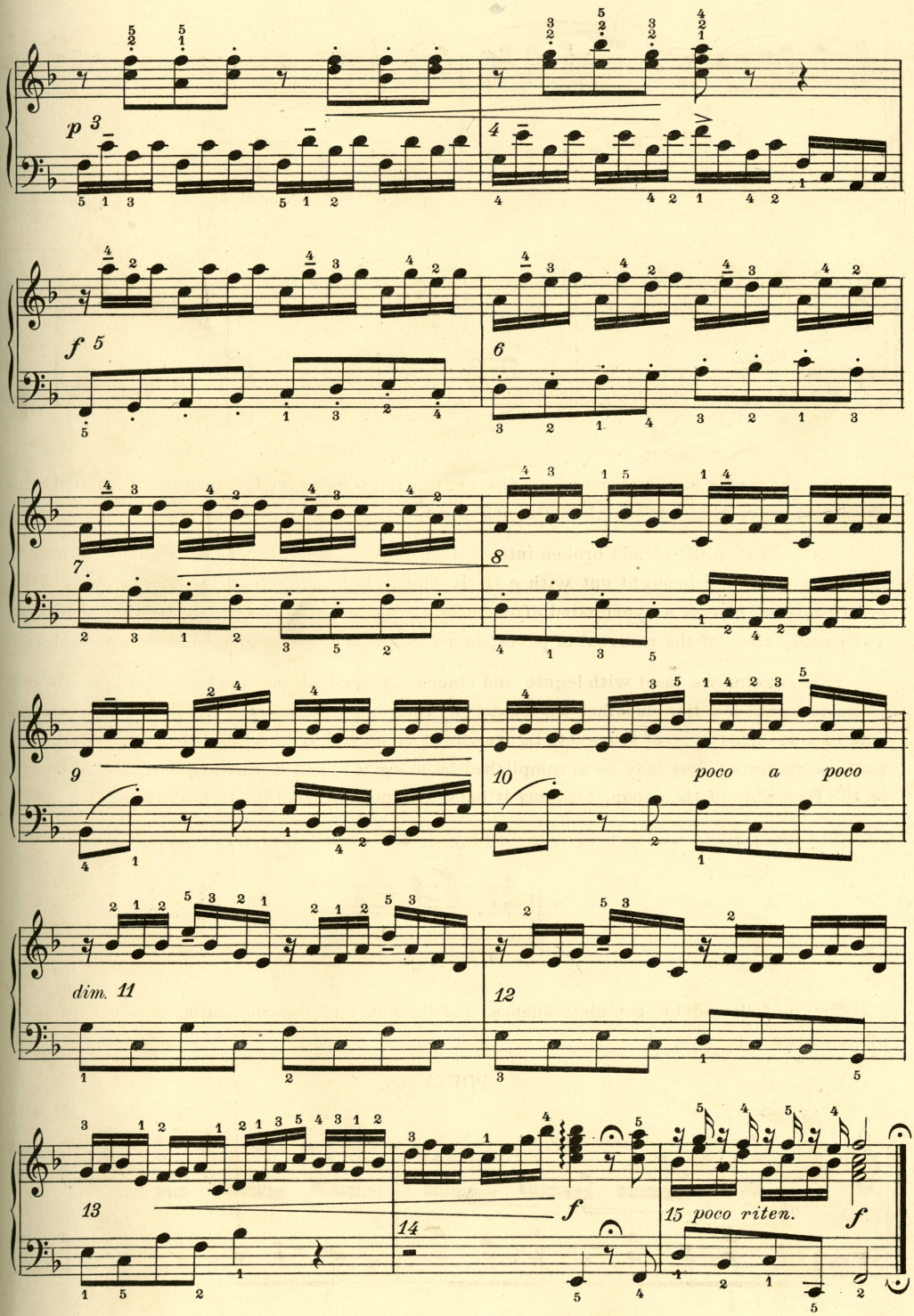
The arpeggio in measure 14 is to be played as if it had been written out thus:



This is followed by complete silence, and the entry of the concluding measure is made all the more effective.

PRELUDE




p
3
4
f
5
6
7
8
9
10
poco a poco
dim.
11
12
13
14
f
15 poco riten.
f