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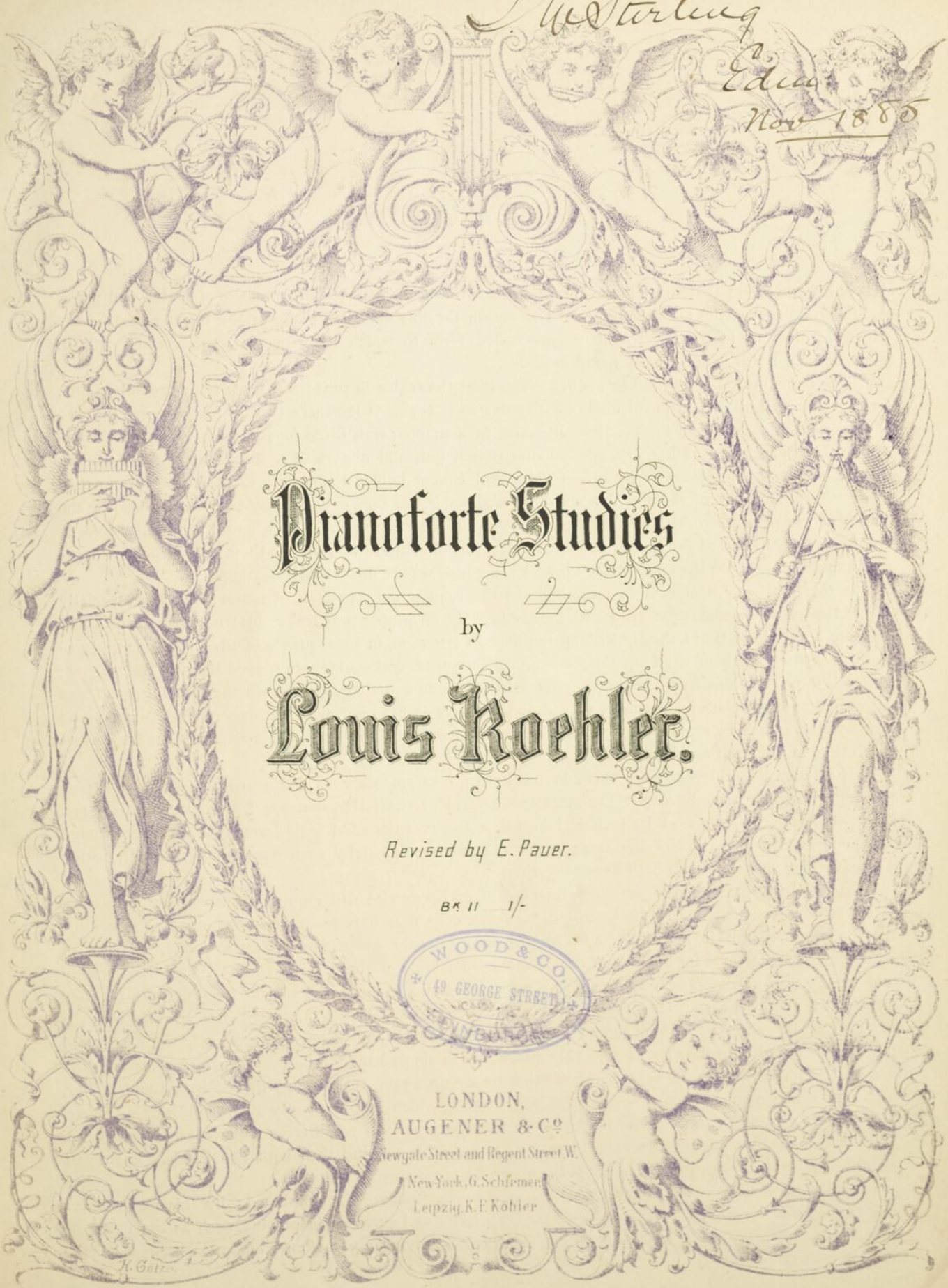

Pianoforte Studies

by

Louis Koehler.

Revised by E. Pauer.

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PREFACE.

IT is a known fact that most piano pupils neglect the so-necessary daily practice of scales, and prefer to practise even the longest studies. The reason for this may lie chiefly in the formlessness of the scales, to give an interesting harmony and varied form to which requires always a certain skill in composition, such as is not usually found in pupils.

There are, indeed, not wanting studies which treat the scales in runs; but these same are only found, for the most part, dispersed in all kinds of different collections. Clementi's two books, with preludes and exercises, treat specially all the twenty-four scales in a manner well fitted for practice; yet most of these exercises, besides being rather dry, are too much spun out, and always of a somewhat abstract nature, whence it comes that players easily tire of them, and cannot induce themselves through diligent practice to get the full benefit of them. Various other scale-exercises (*e.g.*, easy ones by Czerny, and also by the author of the present work) move too exclusively in the easier keys. All these, and other similar studies, are moreover constructed in more or less extended forms of composition, so that they form rather "pieces" than the short scales on the concentrated practice of which we are now chiefly treating.

It therefore only remained to put pupils to the regular daily practice of scales; but this, especially with those who were somewhat advanced, mostly brought no proper practical result: one played the scales at home a couple of times, mostly without the needful attention, in consequence of the short time given to them, with the feeling of the long time remaining for other work—also one played them to the teacher; but he is in no wise able from the simple runs learnt so long ago always to tell whether a *daily* practice of the same has taken place; but this is very desirable, since it not only gives the fingers fresh pliancy (and thereby new polish in rapid passages), but it works favourably on the whole mechanism, and so saves much time in the practice of pieces.

The following scale-exercises must, in order to go as smoothly as the usual scales, be practised *constantly*, because they have not the stereotyped form of the latter, but are treated in various ways. Each of these studies has, as its technical kernel, a freely-constructed scale-form, which is led through the major and minor keys of the same name, and is first played by each hand singly, with the other accompanying, and then with both hands together.

At the first studying, the thorough learning of each exercise will require about one or two weeks. For this purpose, each of the single repetitions (each only four bars long) in the semiquaver runs must first be practised till it goes well, and from memory; only sometimes, between whiles, a piece of accompaniment (likewise for a change) is to be played a couple of times alone, till it also goes accurately and without the notes. Then, for the first time, are the two hands to be played together, also till they are known well by heart. This should be counted as part of the lesson, and till it is attained with the first half of an exercise the pupil should not pass on. The two-handed runs are especially to be practised much and carefully, till they go as smoothly and easily as single-handed runs. When all twelve numbers are once studied in this manner, the book must be begun again. According to one's time and ability, a half or whole number should be taken as a daily task, which should occupy about a fifth or sixth part of the daily practising time. One may also for one day practise two parts with the runs for one hand, and for the next only the part with the double runs, first with one and then with two hands. Each part should be played through pretty often, till the allotted time is spent on it.

The fingering marked is accurate, and, in consequence, should be employed; by this means there will come to every pupil a certain so-necessary regularity and sureness in playing, such as can never be attained by arbitrary and chance fingering. The accompanying parts often contain, on account of the

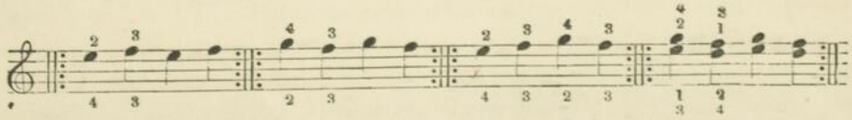
strict *legato*, a change of fingers on a held note, such as one finds first in No. 2. The fingers marked under a little slur, $\overset{\frown}{4\,3}$, must be changed immediately after striking the key; those connected by a hyphen, +-1, must not be changed till after the others, so that with +-1 the thumb first holds the note for nearly its full value, and the first finger replaces it when the other change $\overset{\frown}{4\,3}$ has already been made. The correct and convenient performance of the piece requires this. To observe such minuteness is not only conducive to accustoming the pupil to an artistic style of performance, but it also increases his power of execution, since he, in spite of such accuracy in the accompaniments, must also be able to play the runs well; besides, here is offered a welcome inducement to practise so much the longer at the single studies, and so get more benefit from them. The *Da Capo* at the end of each number, which should always be attended to, aims at the same object.

The degrees of strength are designedly nowhere marked with *forte*, *piano*, &c., in order not to fetter the player, but to let him choose for himself strong or weak playing, according as his touch requires strength or weakness, as also to stimulate him to devising tasteful *nuances*, by changing *forte*, *piano*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*, &c. But an entirely uniform play, *mezzoforte* throughout, is of great benefit, and such can be always retained in general. A very profitable method of practice, as regards the acquiring the various degrees of strength, consists in playing during *slow* practice somewhat loud (without raising the knuckles, and with a still hand); in *quick* time, on the contrary, not so loud, *piano*, and even *pianissimo*.

The usual long *legato* slurs over the semiquaver passages have been omitted, because, as may here be expressly mentioned, the equal, smooth, bound style of play must be everywhere practised. What is not marked with *staccato* dots must be also *tied*. Also the tempo has been nowhere indicated, because it is everywhere intended to be equal, flowing, moderately quick (about ♩ = 80), such as an average pupil with good progress will in time attain, if he (which must be a strict rule to every one) never plays otherwise than *correctly* and *comfortably* in the degree of speed which is at his command, and also does not urge himself on at the cost of good play, and "make" a quicker time through injurious compulsion, where, through natural growth in practice, it will gradually come of itself. The right development of quick tempo is comparable to that of a plant; with this, also, driving and pulling will not help—it will grow from within.

The following studies are so arranged that each single repetition ends in its own key, and forms a small portion complete in itself, instead (as one finds elsewhere in studies of this kind) of being always connected with the preceding and following ones. So a close is everywhere possible.

It cannot be too much remembered that in runs one should always look for still hands, and pliant, moderate movements of the fingers; but, at the same time, also well-sounding, finely-bound successions of notes should be heard. Especial care should also be taken that, always without any cramped feeling of the hand, the soft pressure of the finger-tips is maintained and transmitted uniformly from one finger to another, so that no special pressure of any single finger (even though not noticeable from without) takes place. Imagine that if the keys were living bodies, the fingers should pass over them like a soft roller; the hand playing runs should feel like a boat gliding over a smooth surface of water. Well-tied passage-playing may be compared to the movement of a wheel with a broad rim; jerky playing is like one with no rim at all.

As these studies omit the usual scales, one must not neglect to practise daily these four finger-exercises, each only for half a minute, with each hand alternately:

By this means, that part of the hand which is naturally weak will be strengthened and made more fit for equal and rapid play.

What piano works should be played before, with, and after these studies, may be found arranged in order in my "Führer durch den Clavierunterricht."

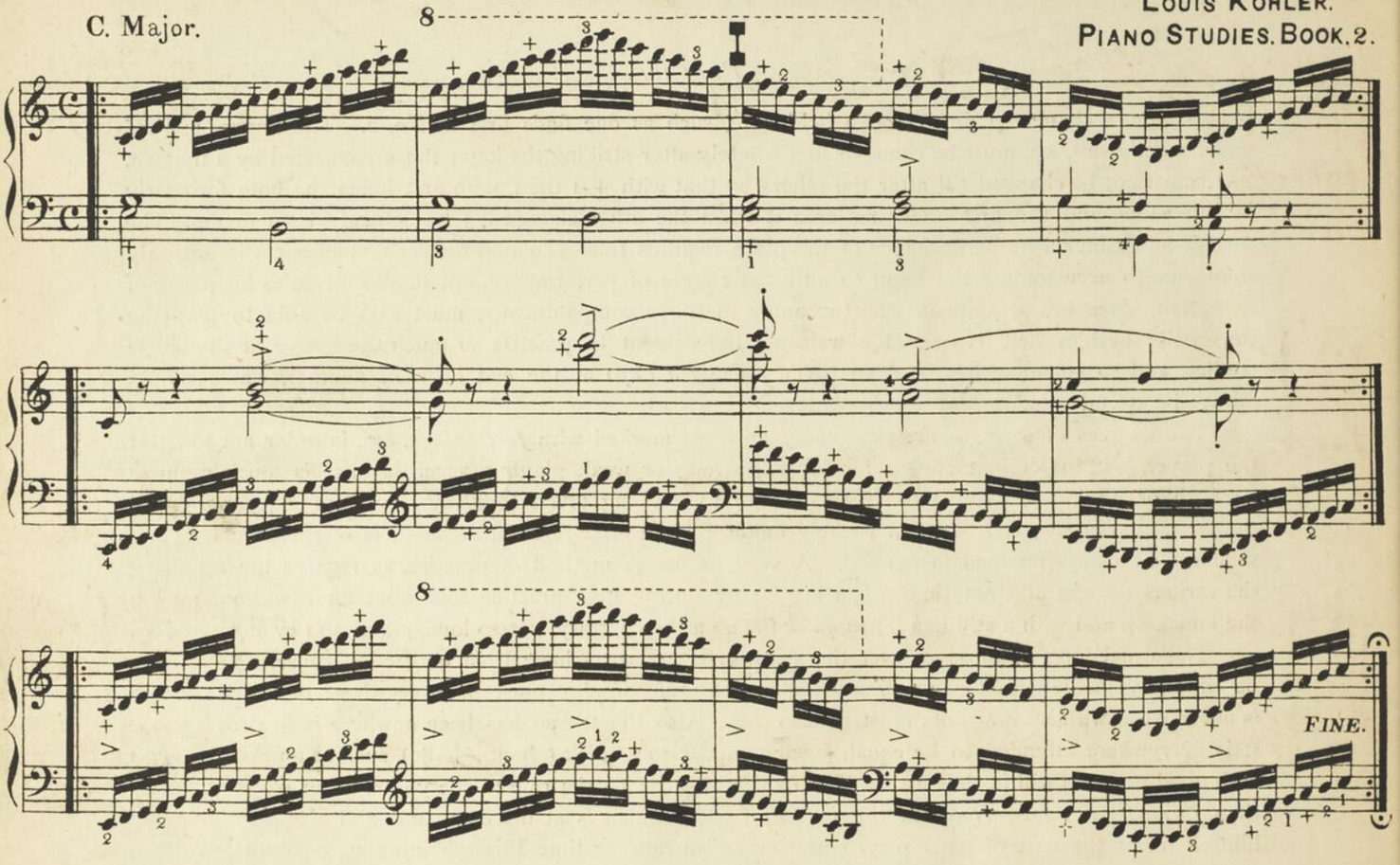
LOUIS KÖHLER.

DAILY TASK FOR ADVANCED PUPILS.

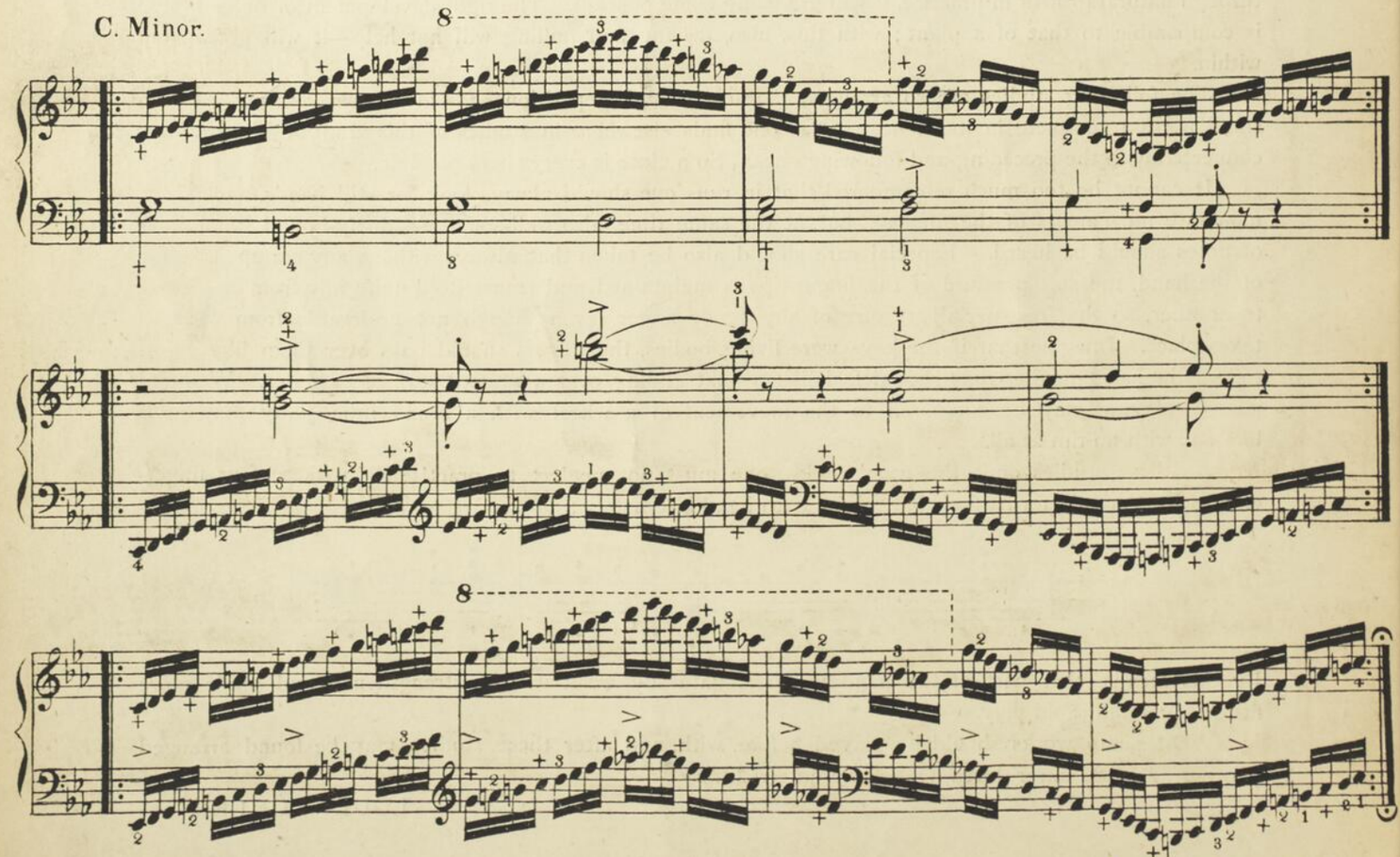
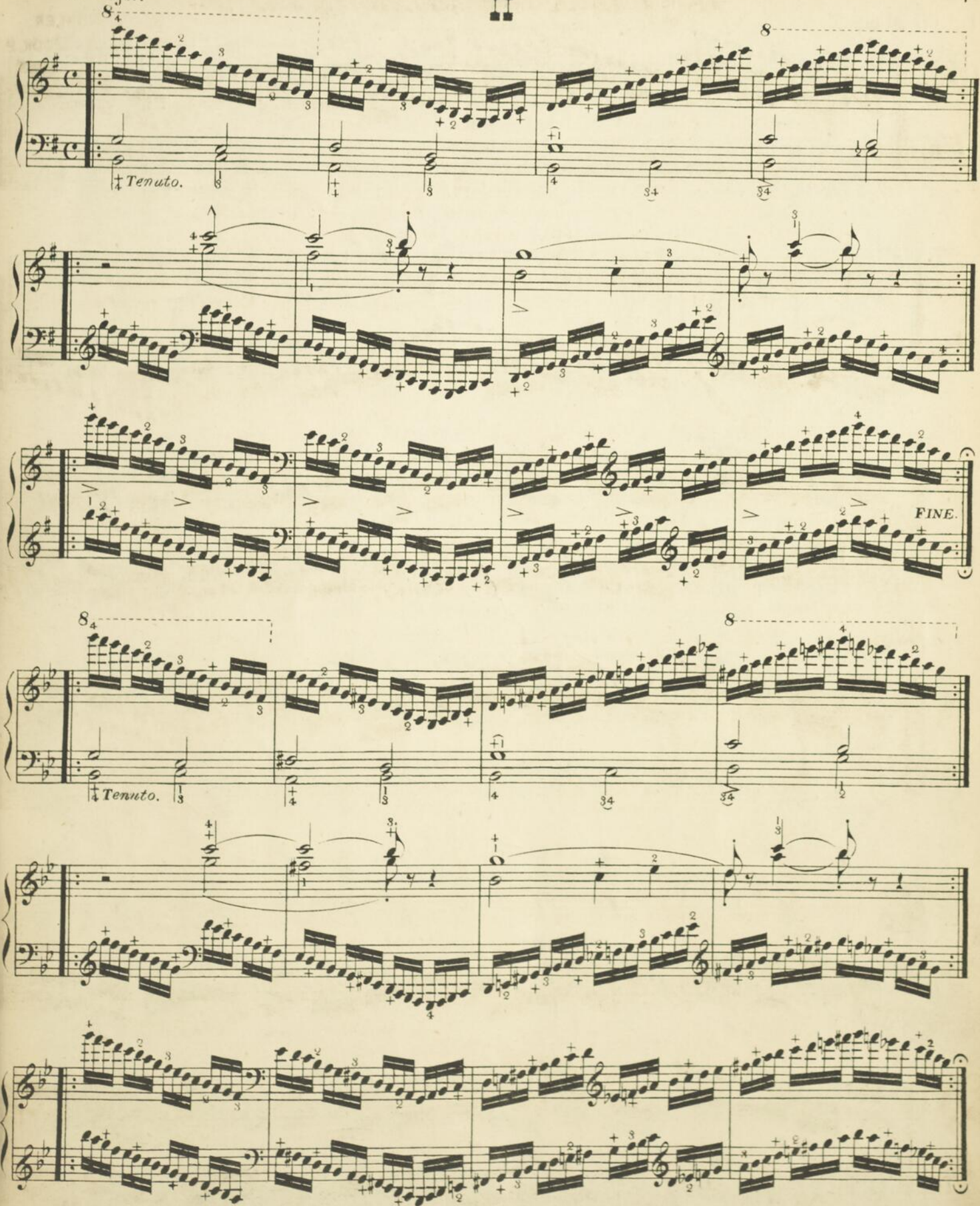
LOUIS KÖHLER.

PIANO STUDIES. BOOK. 2.

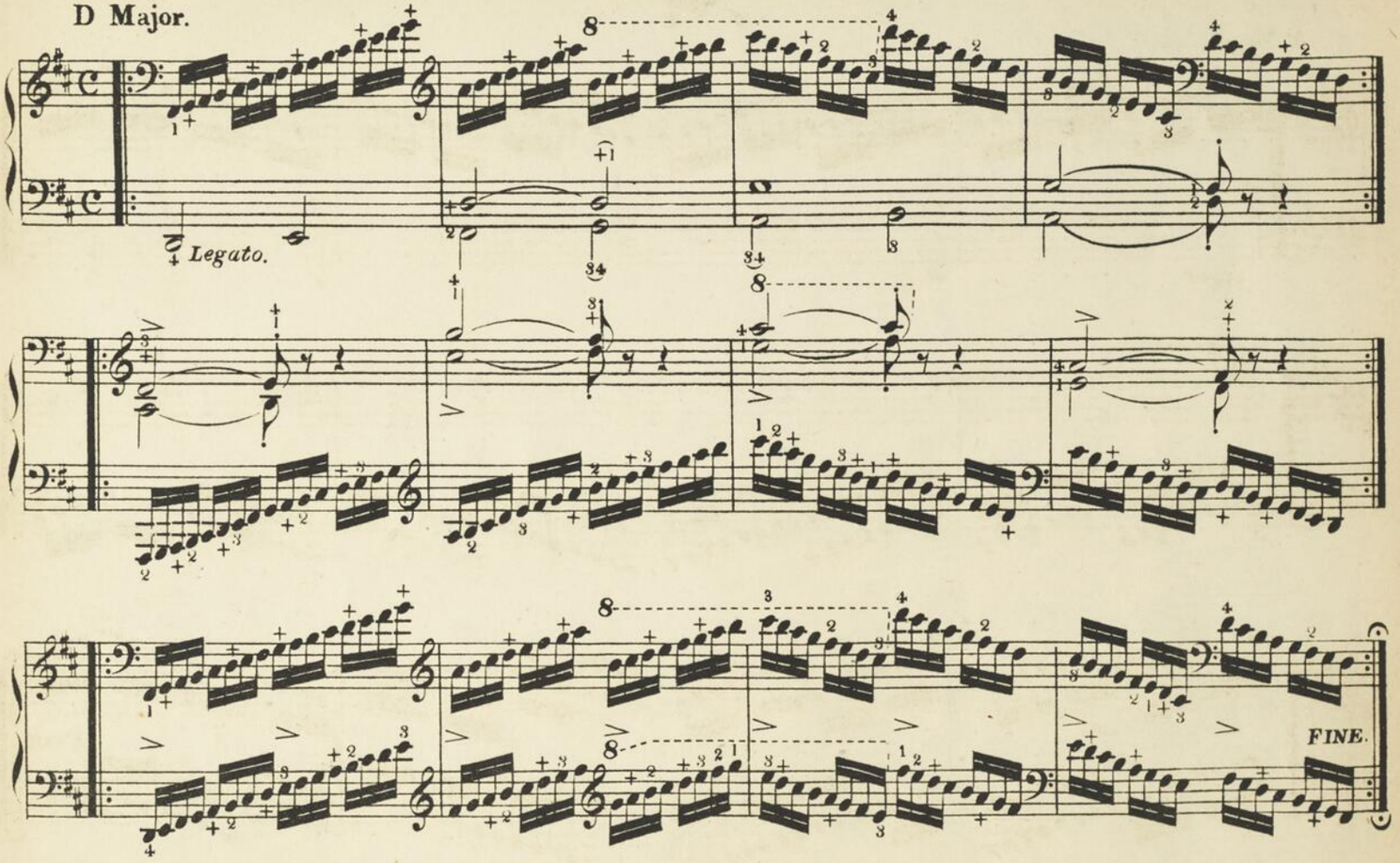
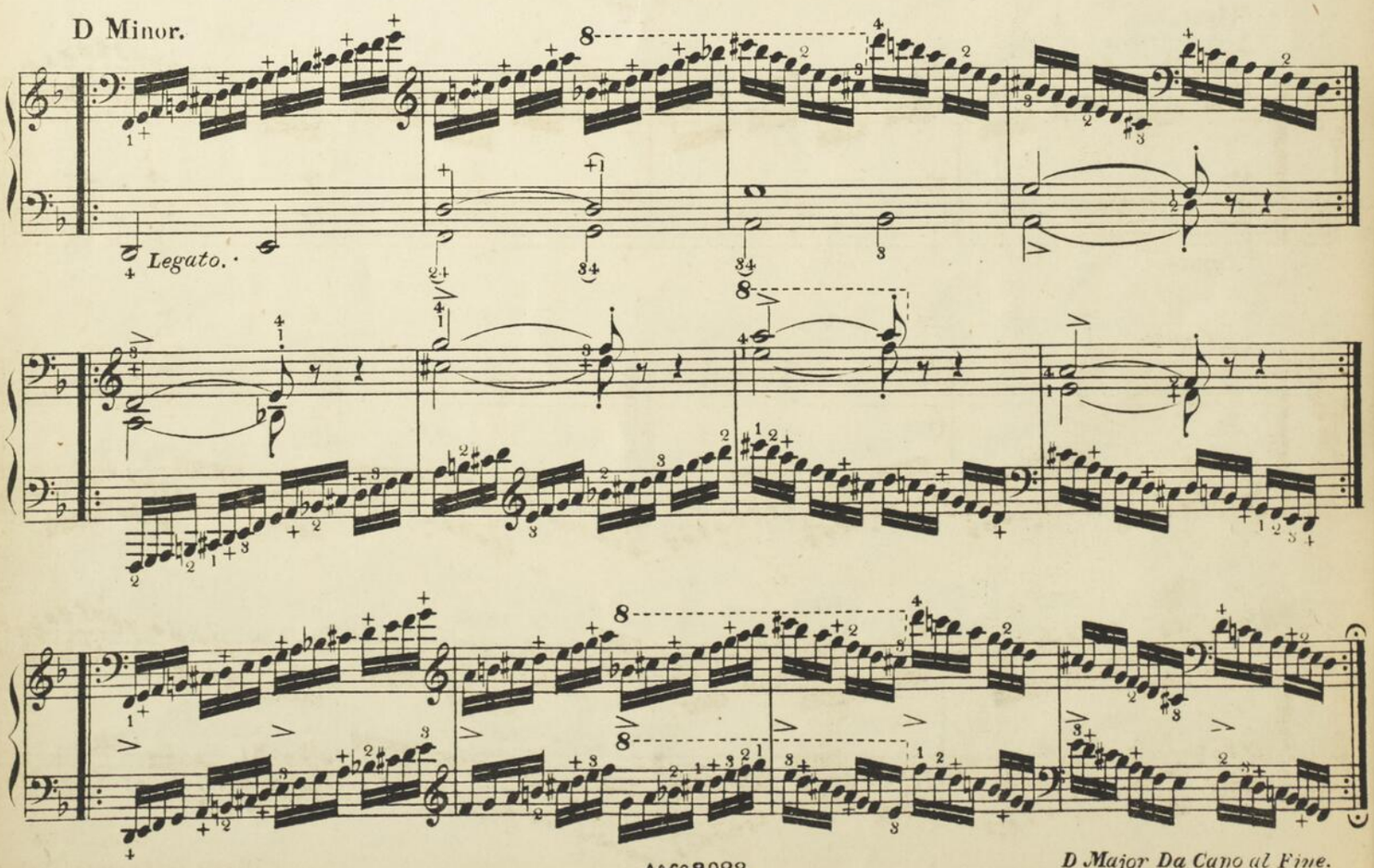
C. Major.



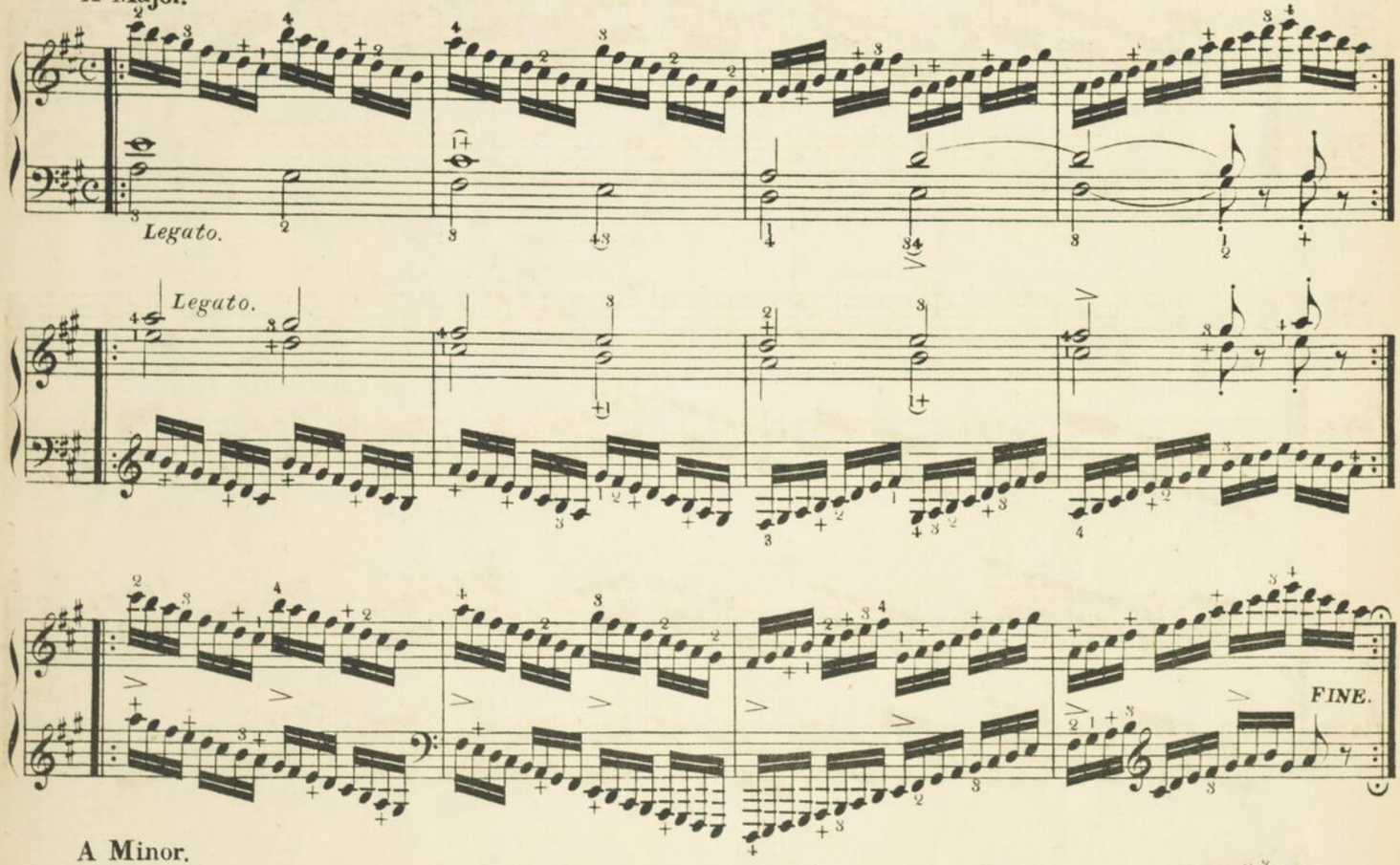
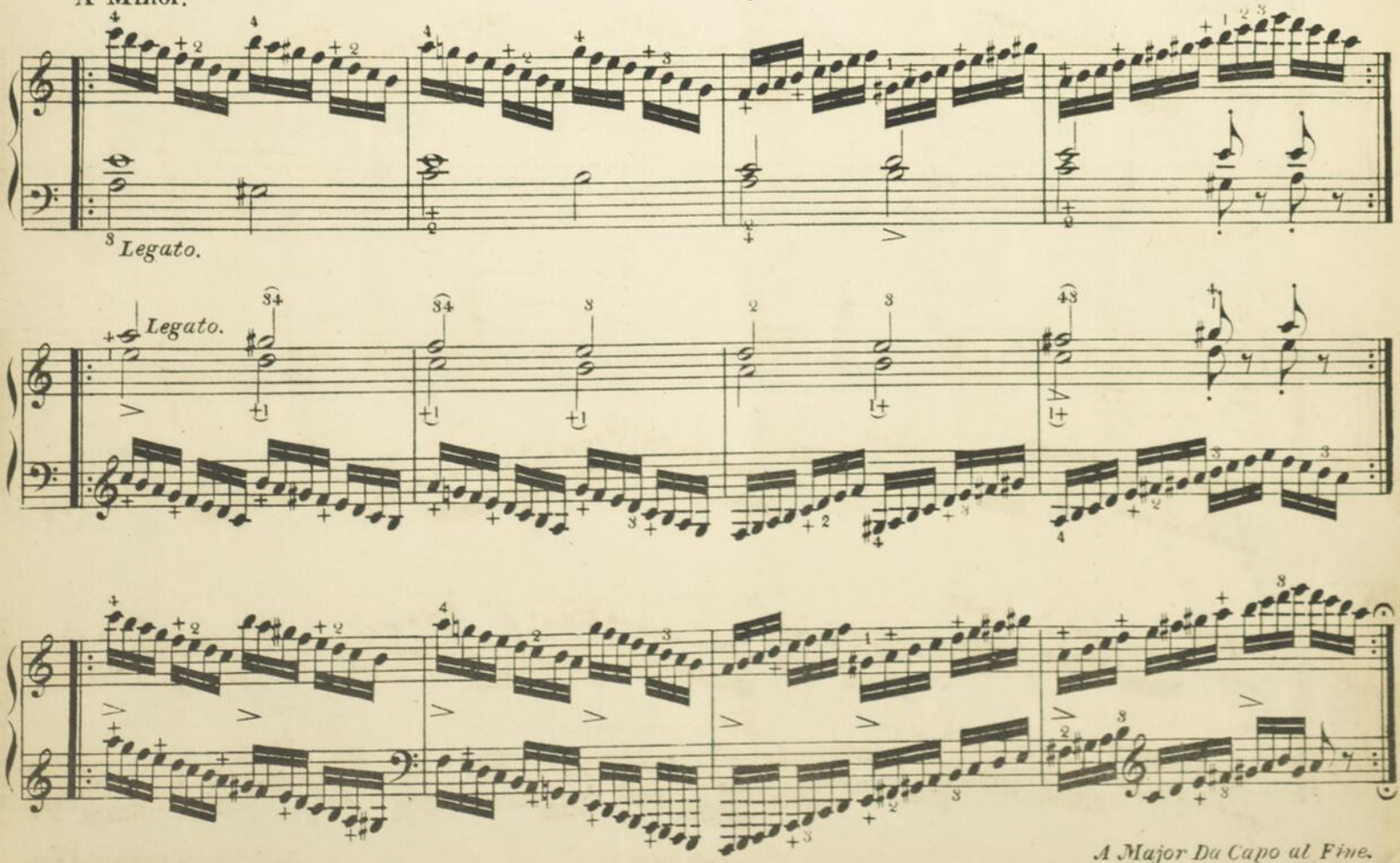
FINE.

C. Minor.

C. Major Da Capo al Fine.

G. Major Da Capo al Fine.

III.

D Major.

D Minor.

D Major Da Capo al Fine.

~~IV~~
~~V~~
VI

A Major.

A Minor.

A Major Da Capo al Fine.

V.

E Major.

8

8

FINE.

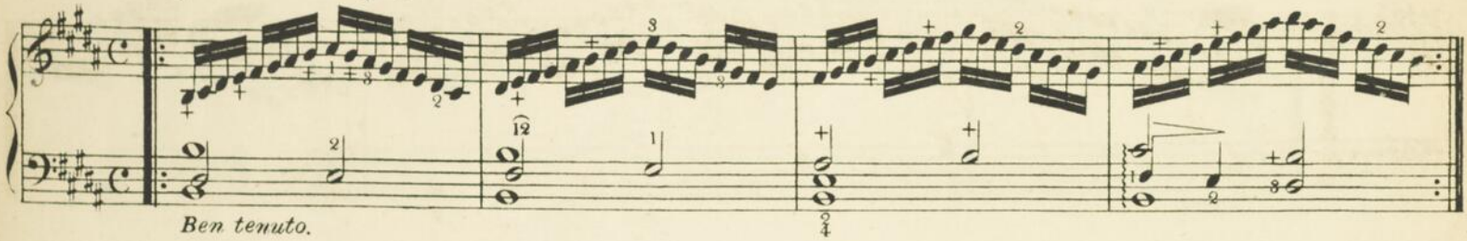
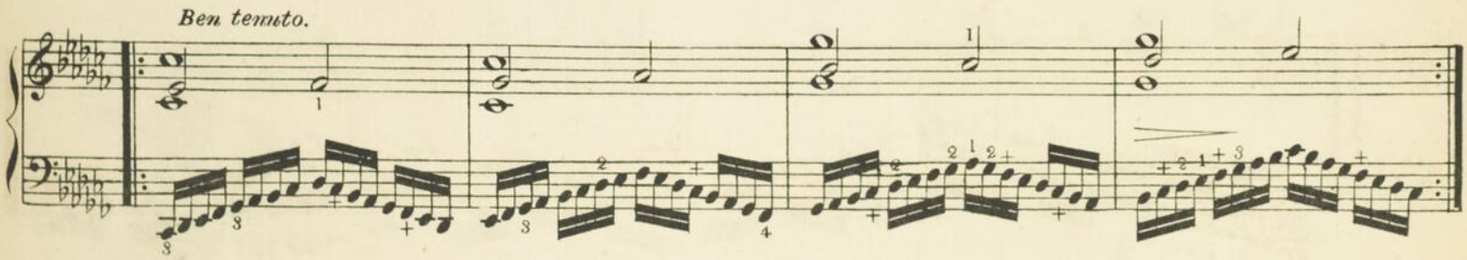
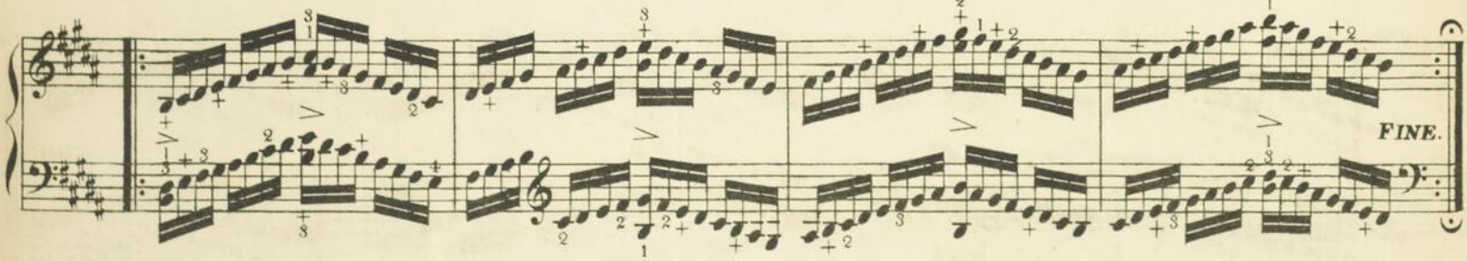
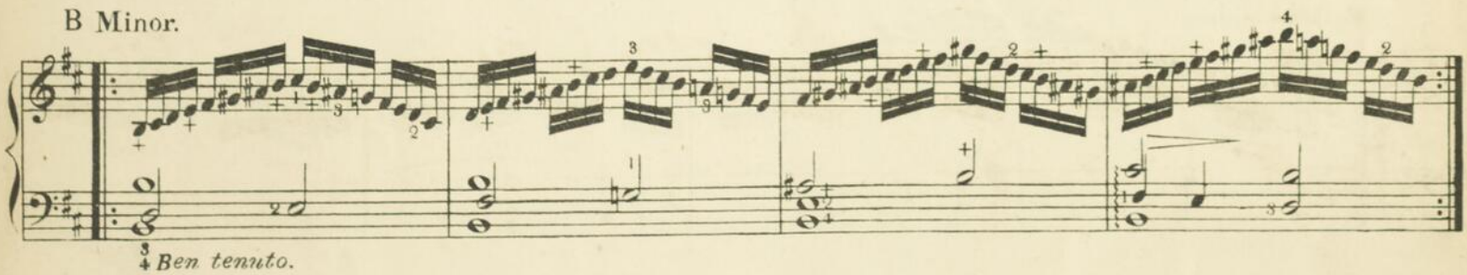
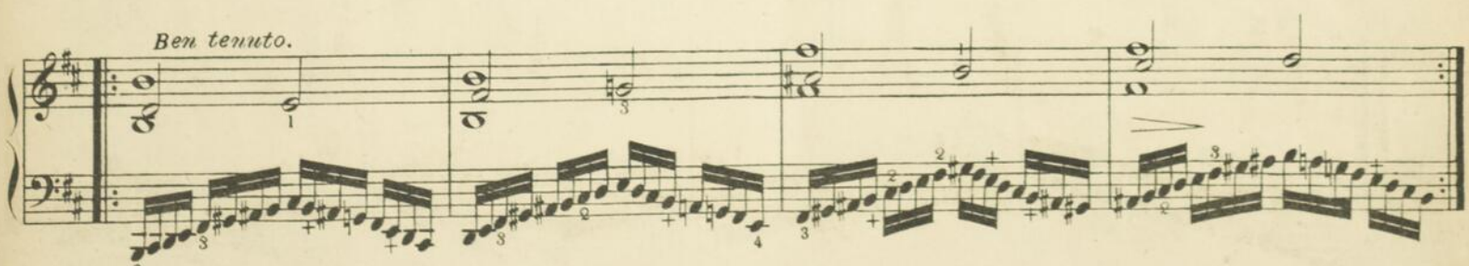
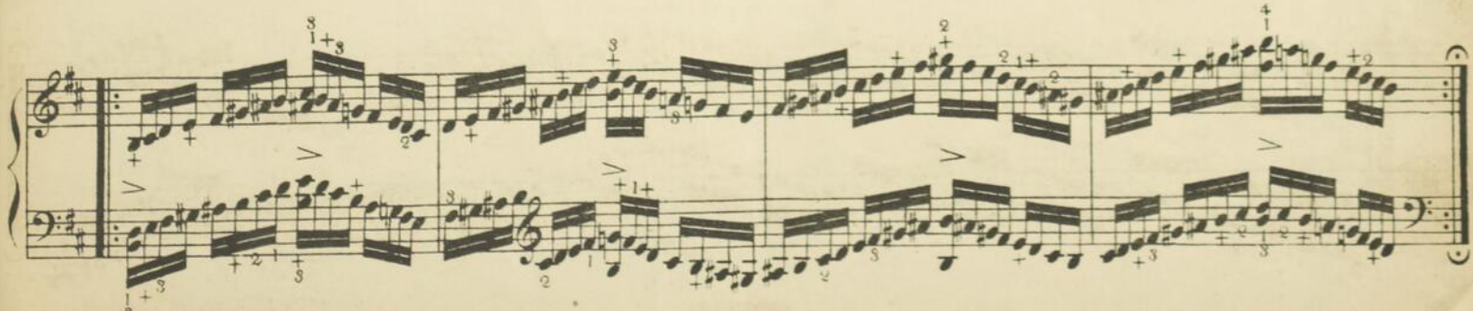
E Minor.

8

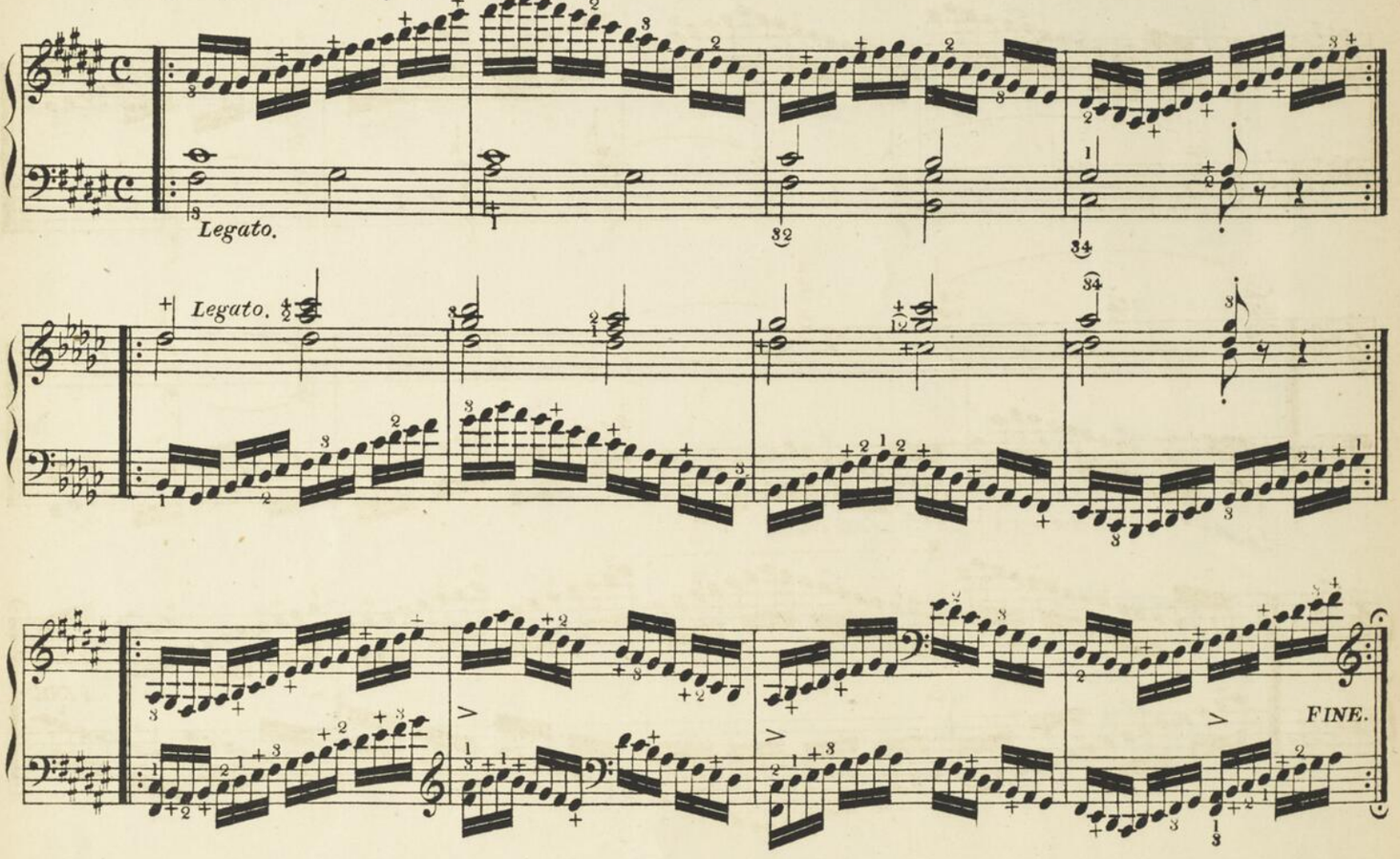
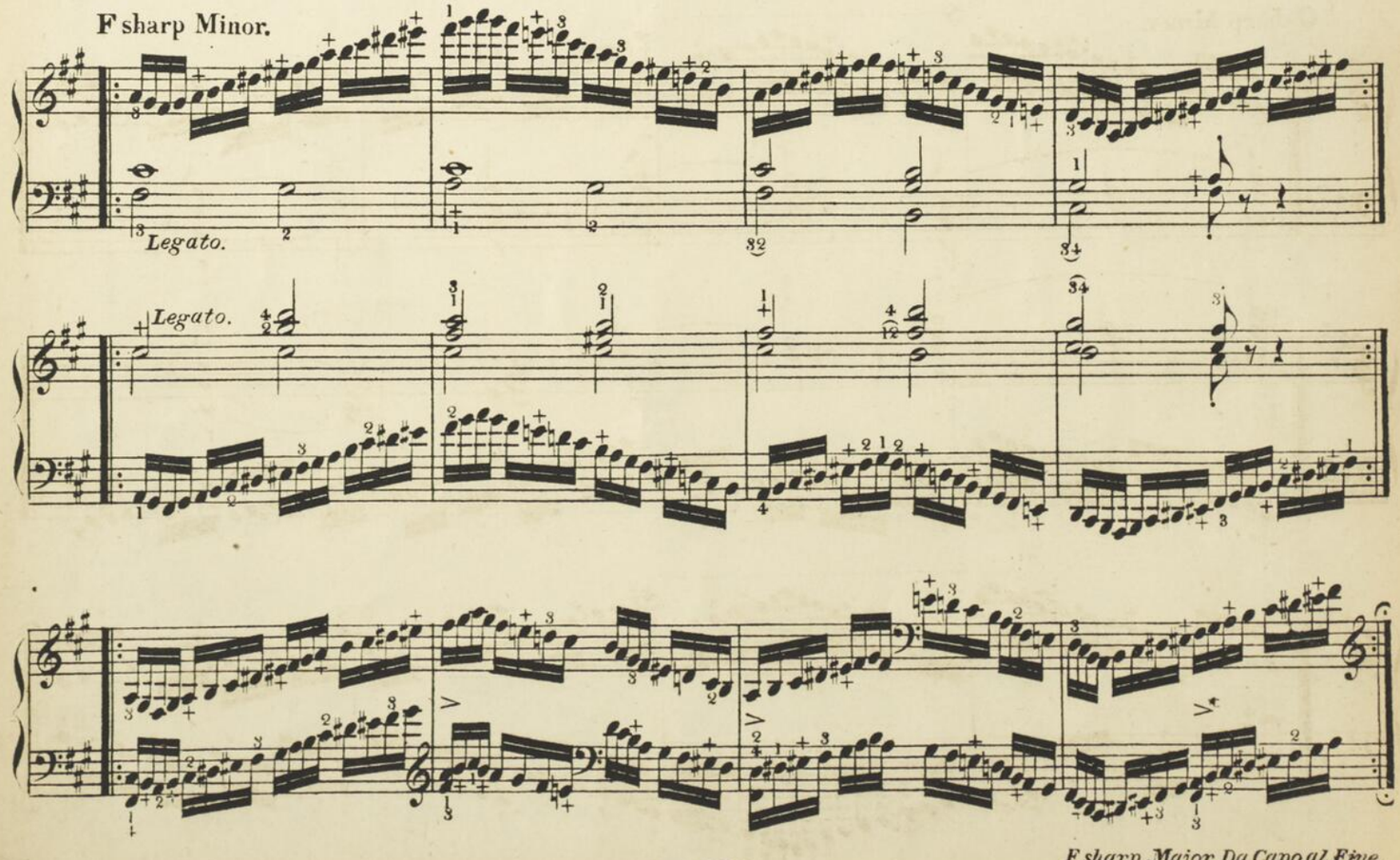
8

D Major Da Capo al Fine.

VI.

B Major. C flat Major.

B Minor.

B Major Da Capo al Fine.

VII.

F sharp Major G flat Major.

F sharp Minor.

F sharp Major Da Capo al Fine.

VIII

C sharp Major. D flat Major.

8

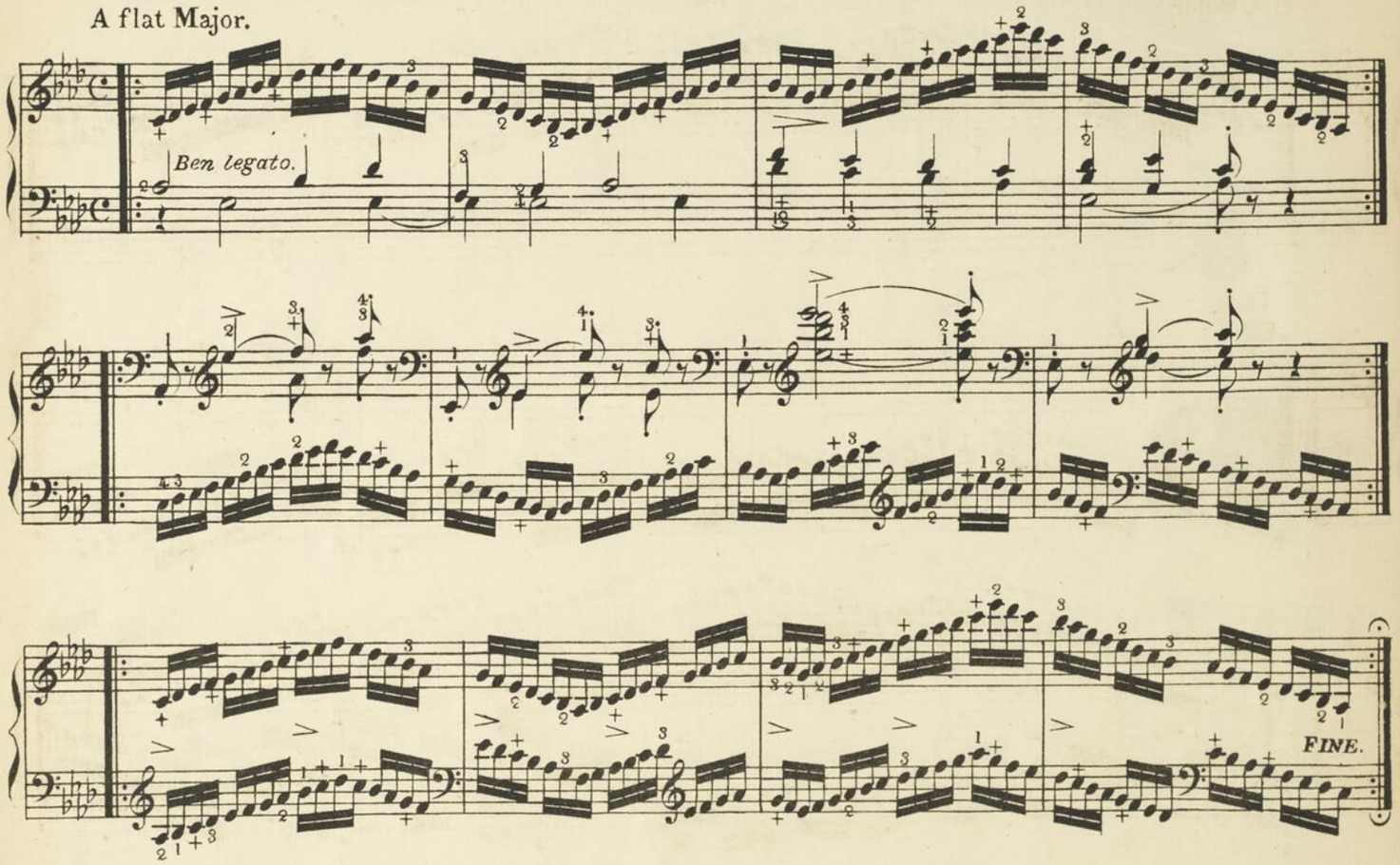
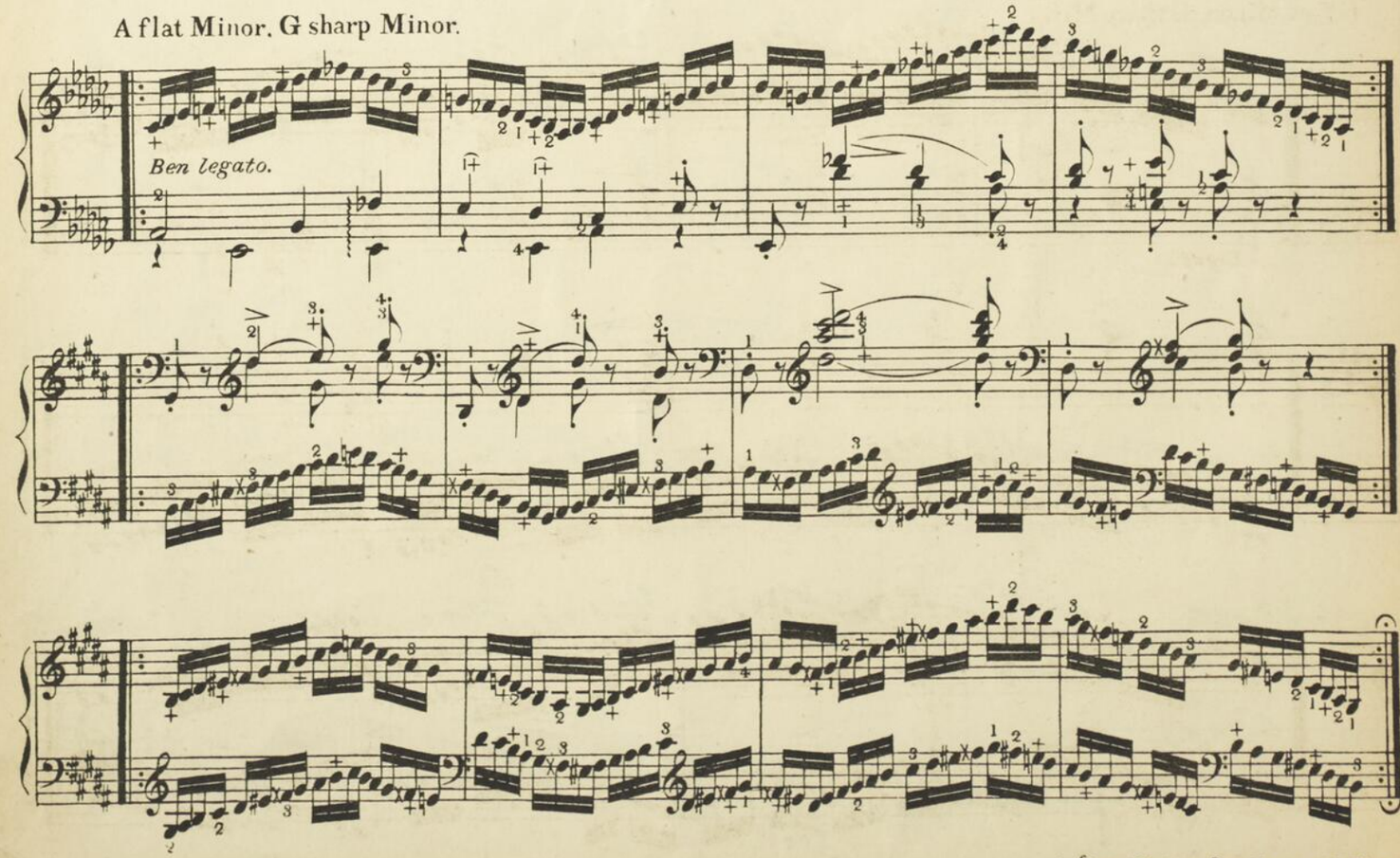
FINE.

C sharp Minor.

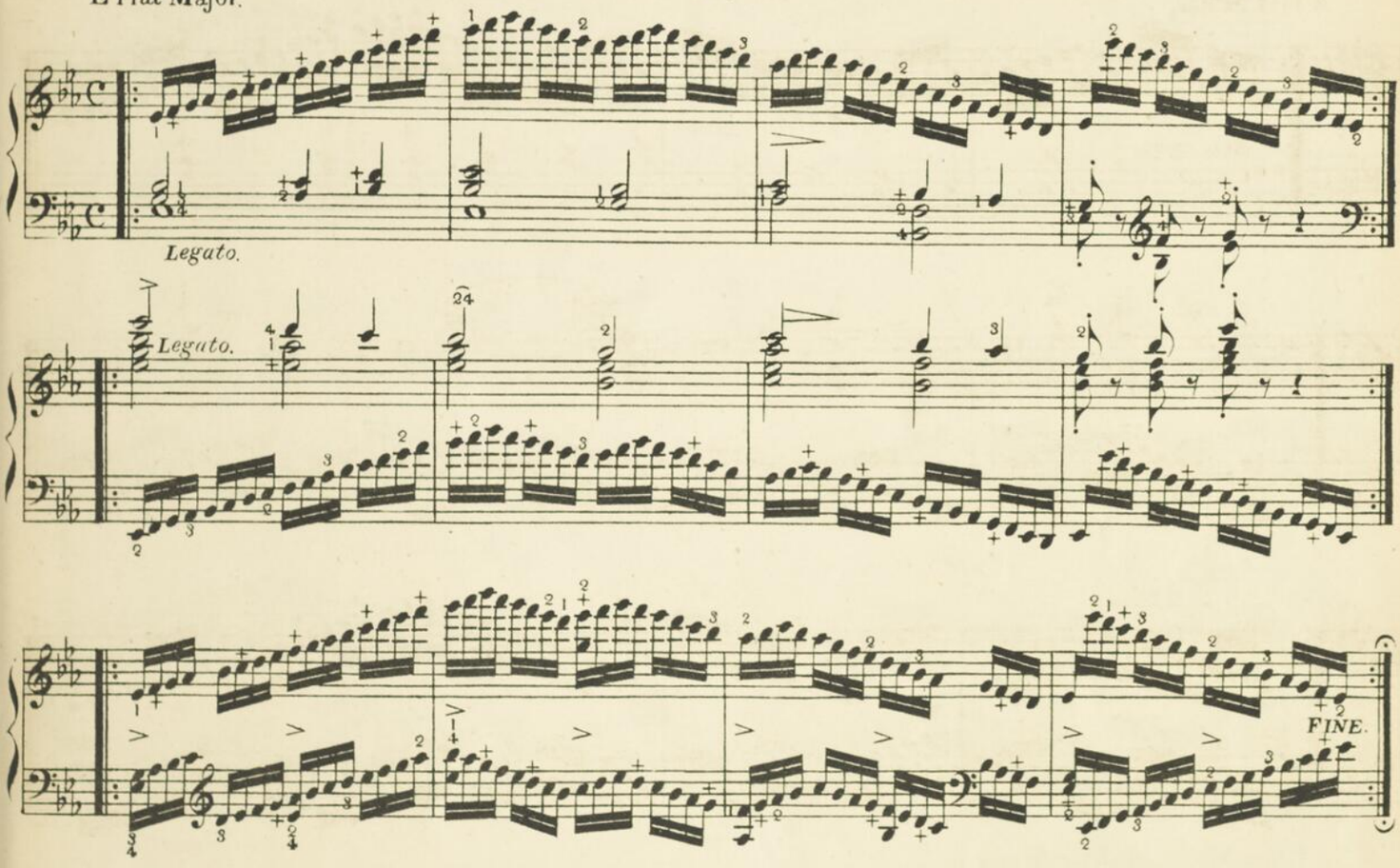
8

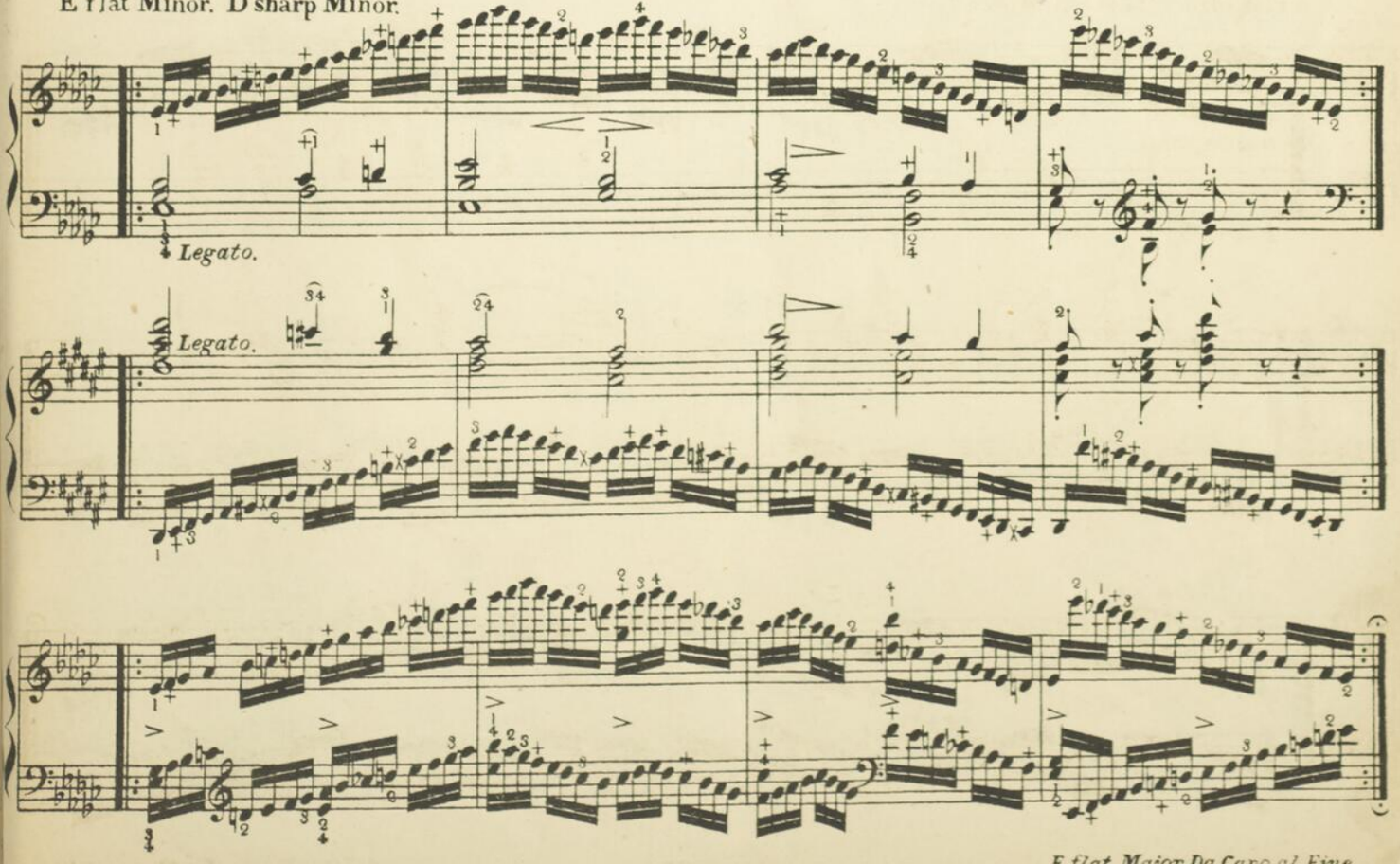
C sharp Major Da Capo al Fine.

IX.

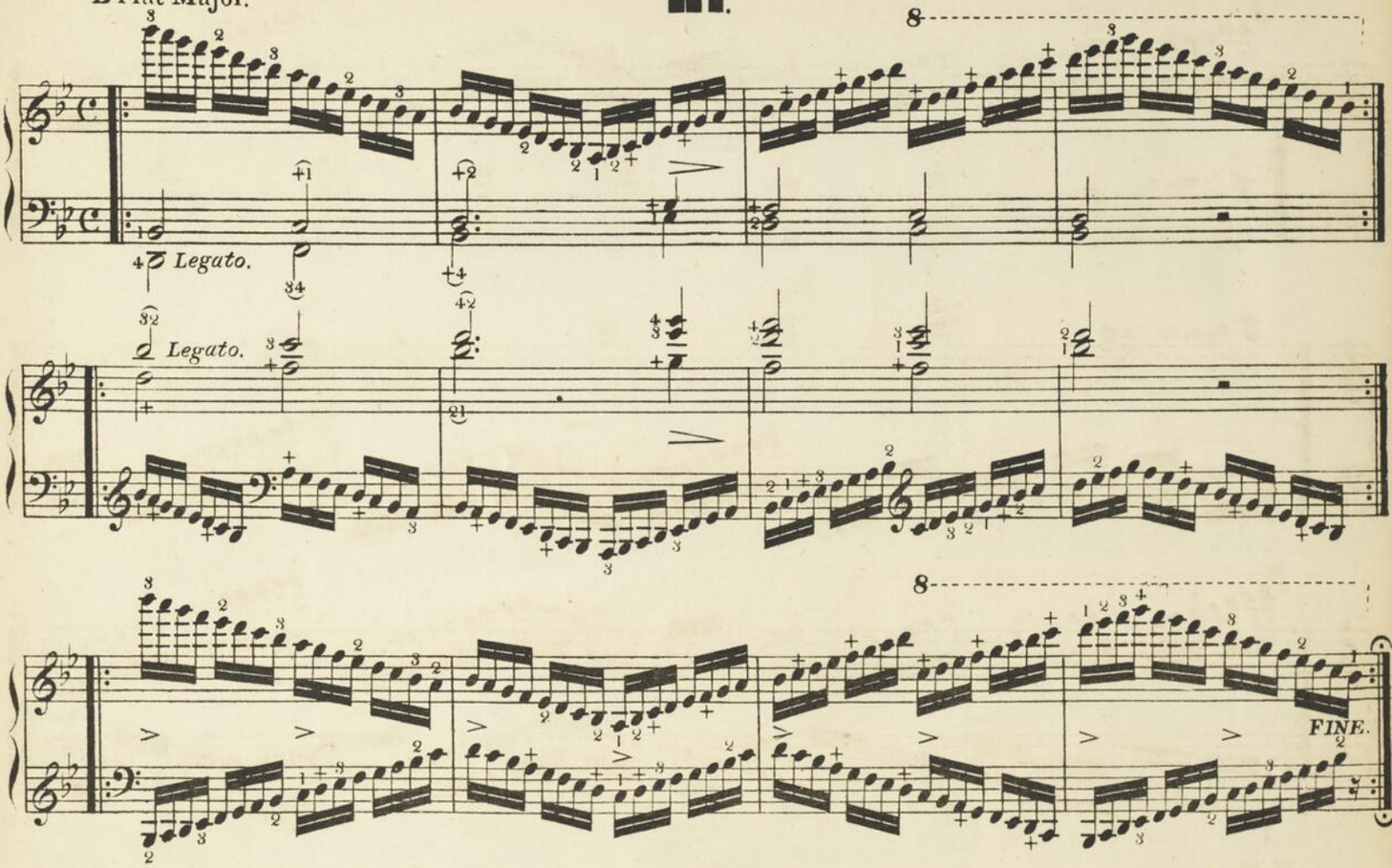
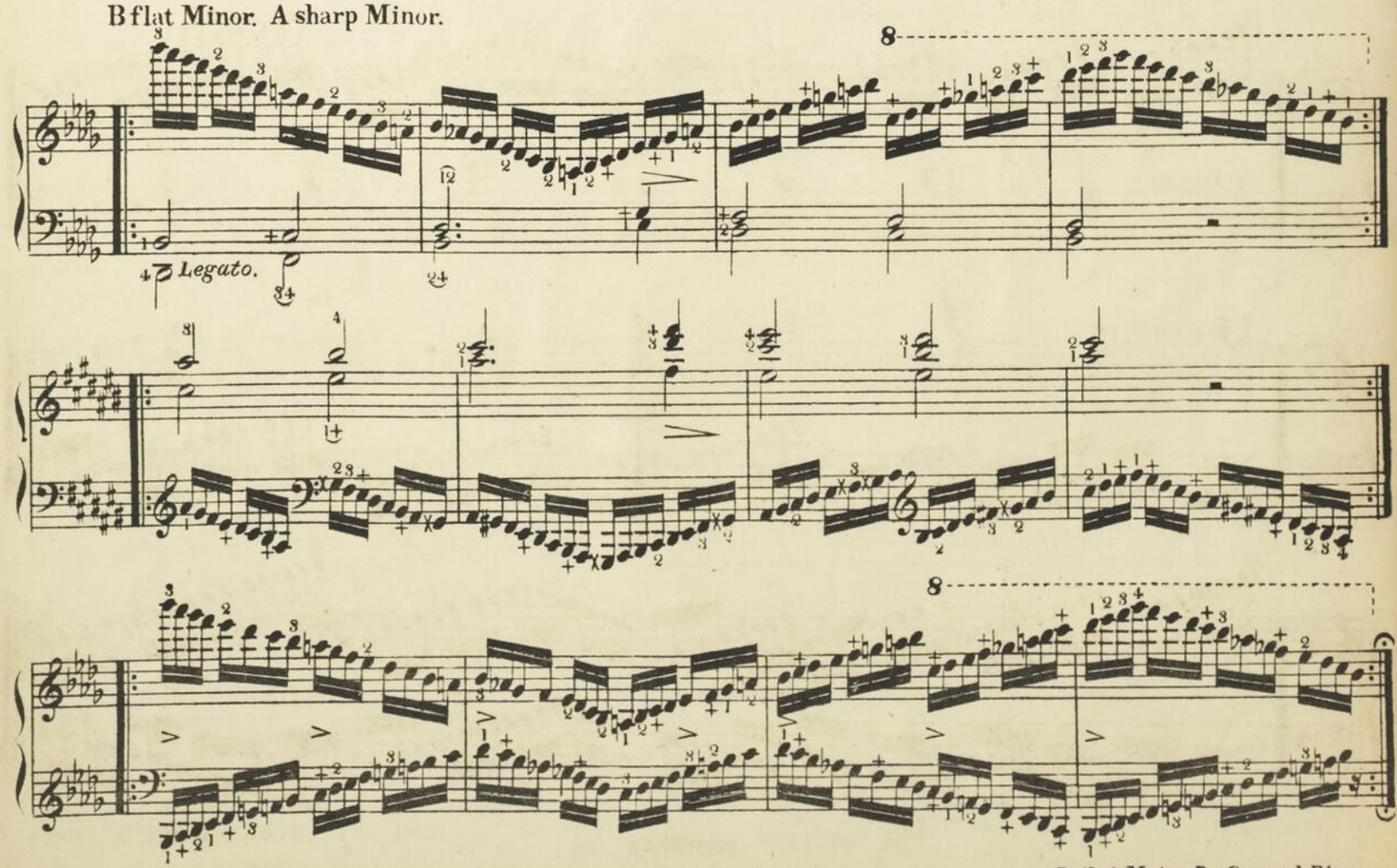
A flat Major.

A flat Minor. G sharp Minor.

A flat Major Da Capo al Fine.

E flat Major.

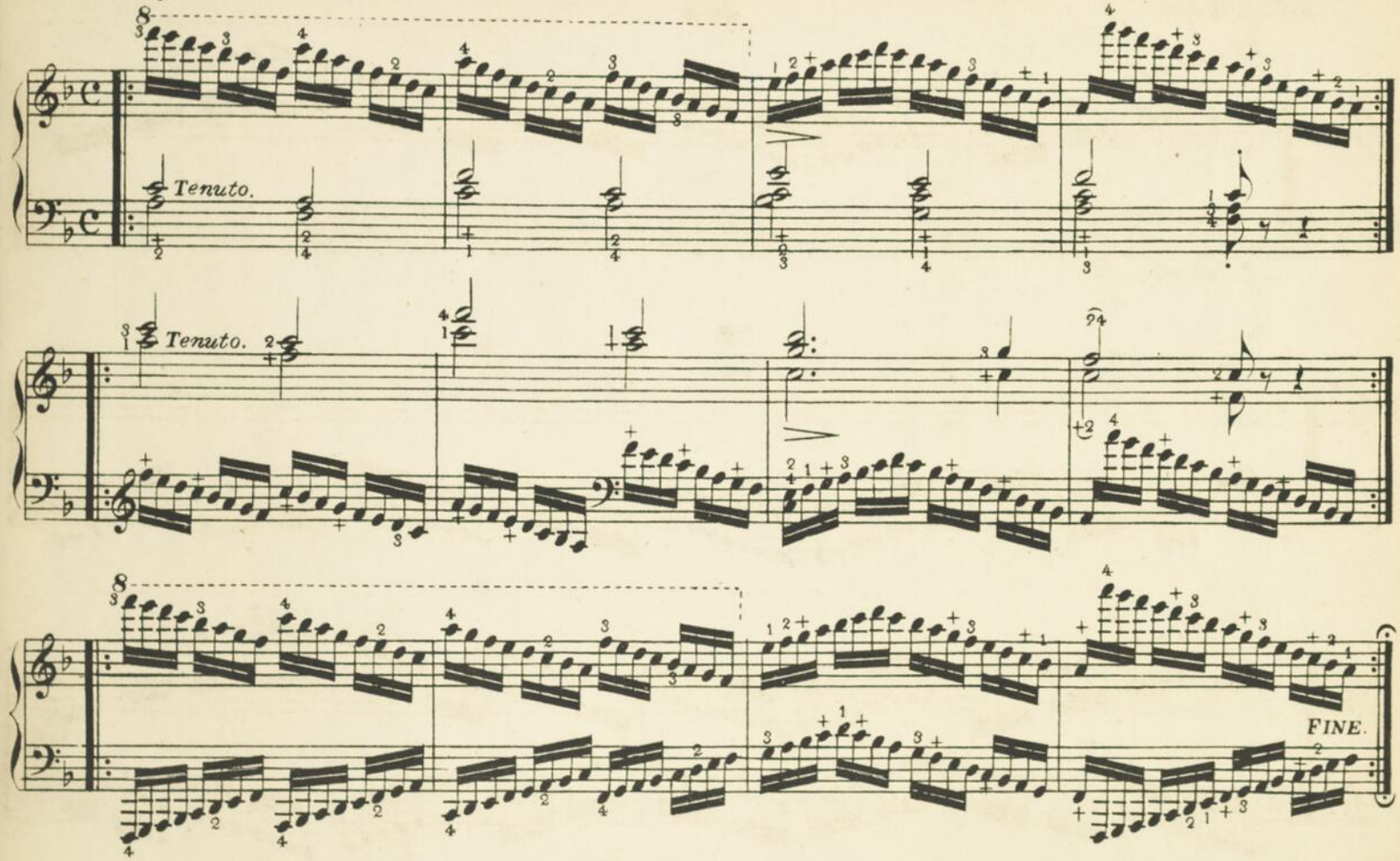
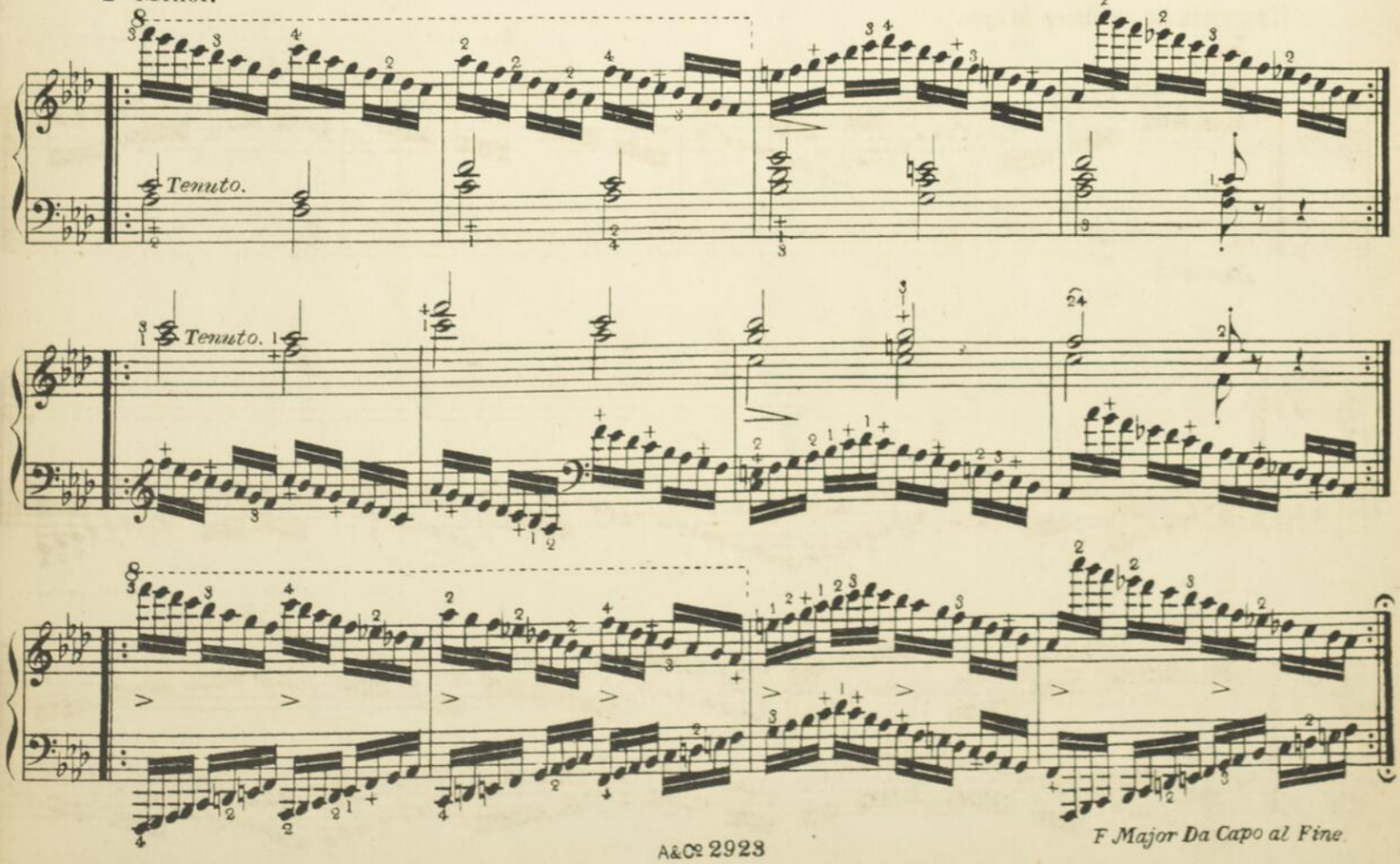


E flat Minor. D sharp Minor.

E flat Major Da Capo al Fine.

B flat Major.

XI.

B flat Minor. A sharp Minor.

B flat Major Da Capo al Fine.

XII.

F Major.

F Minor.

F Major Da Capo al Fine.