LANSING'S

Practical Instructor

FOR

BANJO

Containing correct rules, explanations and exercises for learning this popular instrument.

COMPILED BY

GEO. L. LANSING.

PRICE, $1.00.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

It has been the author's endeavor, in compiling this work, to present, in a condensed form, a correct method for the Banjo, and, in so doing, to refrain from any disparaging remarks concerning other works or methods.

The system of fingering adopted in this work is confidently presented as the culmination of all that is best in the art, and that which is used by such noted performers as Messrs. Hall, Huntley, Grover, Armstrong and many others. A system which, after a careful examination of other styles, I cannot discern any chance to improve.

The exercises should be practiced daily, and not merely run over, as is too often the case, for they are of great importance, and, if carefully practiced, will enable the student to acquire a style and finish much to be desired.

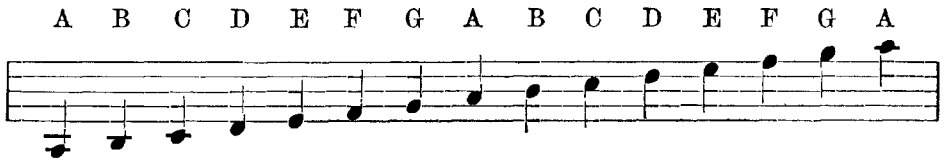
This work is not a collection of instrumental music for the pastime of young players, but is designed as a code of rules to guide and aid those who desire to learn to play the banjo correctly, and which should be kept in the student's portfolio as a book of reference.

J. FRANK GILES, Music Printer, Boston.

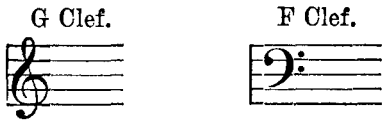
RUDIMENTS OF MUSIC.

Music is expressed by characters called Notes, which are written on and between five parallel lines, called a Staff, or upon added lines above and below the staff.

The different tones are represented by the first seven letters of the alphabet, and are written in the following manner:

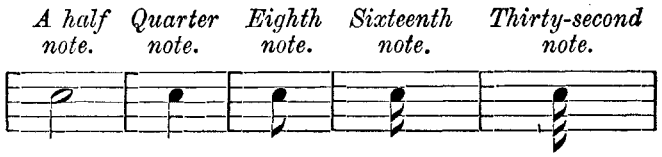


A sign called a Clef is used to establish the names of the notes. There are two clefs used in instrumental music, namely, the G or Treble clef and the F or Bass clef.

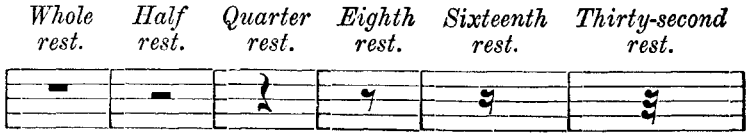


The G clef is used exclusively in Banjo music.

The duration of a note is indicated by its peculiar form, a note written thus: 𝅝 is called a whole note, and represents the longest tone. The following example will explain the others,



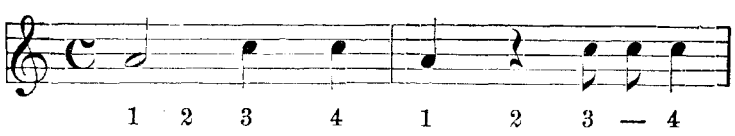
There is a rest corresponding with each note, denoting silence, or a pause.



Bars drawn across the staff divide it into measures.

TIME.

When this sign, 𝄵 or $\frac{4}{4}$ is written, each measure contains notes or rests to the value of four counts. These may be made up of different combinations of notes or rests, thus:



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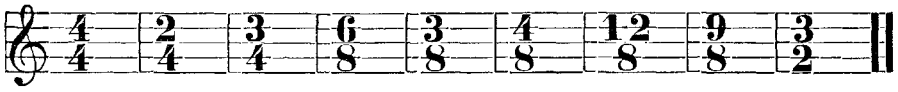
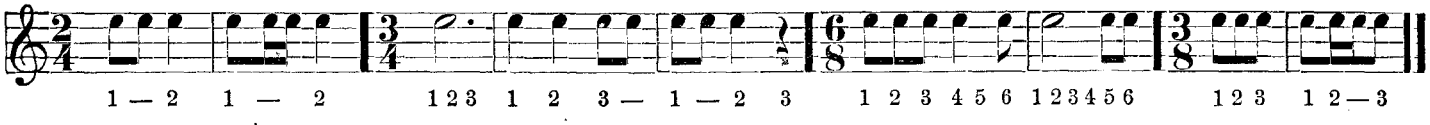
A Dot . placed after a note or rest increases its value one half.

The different kinds of time are written as follows:



The last four are seldom used in Banjo music.

Examples.



A Sharp ♯ placed before a note raises it a half tone. A Flat ♭ lowers it a half tone, and a Natural ♮ cancels a sharp or flat, restoring the note affected to its natural tone. A Tie, connecting two notes on the same degree of the staff signifies that the first one only is played, and the time continued to the value of both. A Slur, connecting two notes on different degrees of the staff signifies that they are to be played in a smooth manner. In Banjo music the slur is known as the snap.

A Grace note, written before a large one takes its time from the note it follows.

Double Bars, divide a piece of music into different parts or strains, and are placed at the end of each strain.

Dots placed on the inside of a double bar, indicate that the strain is to be repeated.

A Triplet is played in the time of two notes, usually on one count.

D. C. (*Da Capo*) signifies repeat from beginning to Fine, or to 𝄐.

D. S. (*Dal Segno*) signifies repeat from sign, 𝄋.

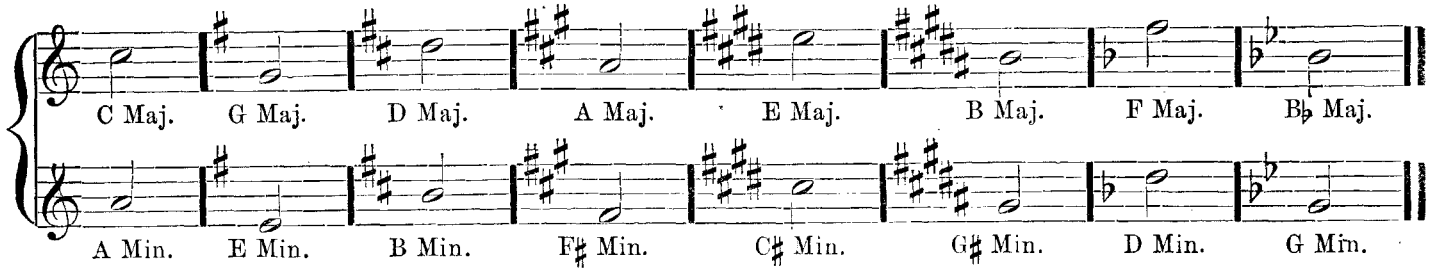
A Hold 𝄐 prolongs the note or rest over which it is written beyond its usual time, being a pause in the time at the discretion of the performer.

The letters *p* or *pp* signify the passage is to be made soft; *f* or *ff* loud.

Crescendo an increase of sound. *Diminuendo* a decrease of sound.

The Key of a piece is shown by the number of sharps or flats placed at the beginning of each staff.

There are twelve Major and twelve Minor keys. The minor keys are relative to the major keys and are found a third below. The following example will explain. I give those which are practical on the Banjo.



Each ♯ or ♭ in the signature affects the note throughout the piece.

THE BANJO.

The manner of holding the Banjo adopted by the most celebrated performers, Hall, Huntley, Shattuck, Babb and others, is the most desirable, as it affords the student more ease, and permits more grace than all other positions. The rim or hoop of the instrument should rest on the right limb, four inches from the body, the upper part of the hoop against the body. The little finger of the right hand should rest on the head, near the bridge, the forearm on the hoop, about four inches from the tail-piece. The student should practice the above until able to hold the Banjo without any assistance from the left hand.

The neck or handle should rest between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, taking care that the inside of the hand does not touch the neck underneath. The wrist should be thrown outward sufficiently to make the position one of grace.

MANNER OF PICKING THE STRINGS.

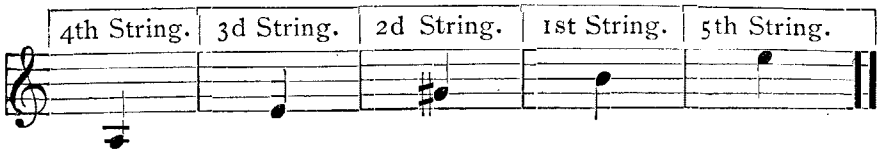
The first string is picked with the second finger, the second string with the first finger, the others with the thumb, except in chords and accompaniments, when the third finger is used. Great care should be taken with regard to producing a proper "Banjo tone." Very few young players get a good tone for the reason that they pick too far up on the fingers; the learner should touch the strings not more than one eighth of an inch from the nail. Persistence in this will cause a callous to develop which will act on the Banjo string as successfully as rosin does on a Violin bow when applied to the strings.

The thumb of the right hand should always remain stiff in picking, and should never fall under the fingers after picking a note.

TUNING.

* Tune the bass or fourth string to A, stop the fourth string at the seventh fret and tune the third in unison. Stop the third at the fourth fret, tune second in unison. Stop the second at the third fret, tune first in unison. Stop the first at the fifth fret, tune fifth in unison. In pieces marked "tune fourth to B," the bass string should be tuned one tone higher than usual.

THE BANJO IN TUNE.



When E has a flag it is intended to be played on the short or fifth string.

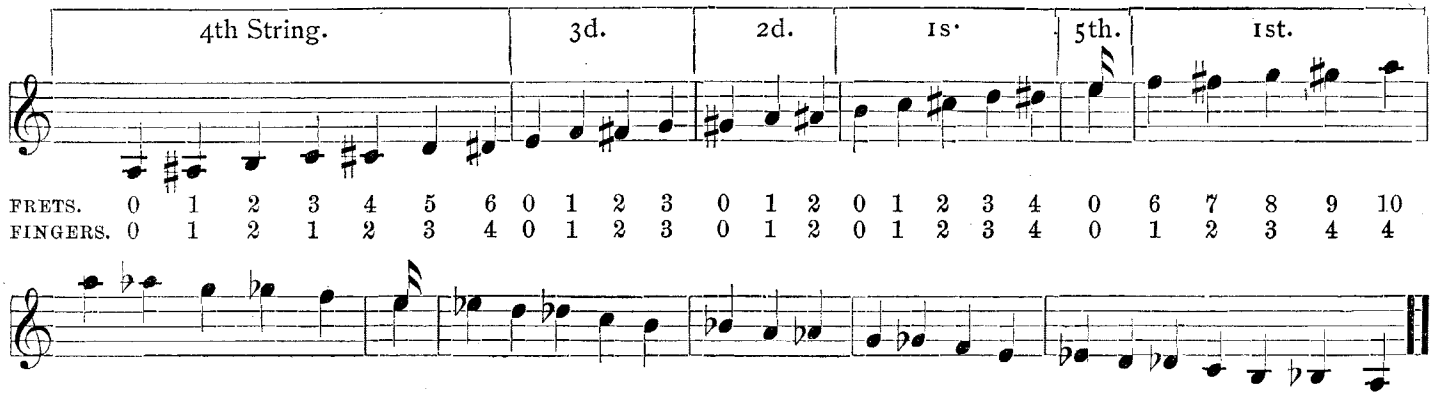
SIGNS FOR FINGERING.

Right Hand, × indicates the Thumb.
" " · " " First Finger.
" " ·· " " Second "
" " ··· " " Third "

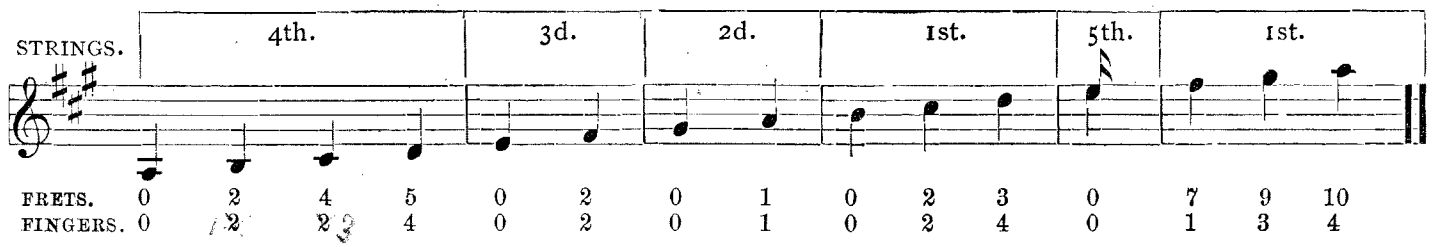
Left Hand, 1 indicates the First Finger.
" " 2 " " Second "
" " 3 " " Third "
" " 4 " " Fourth "

CHROMATIC SCALE.

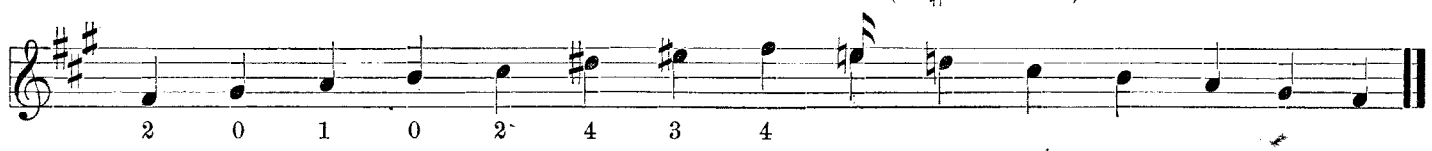
Showing notes and accidentals ascending with sharps, descending with flats.



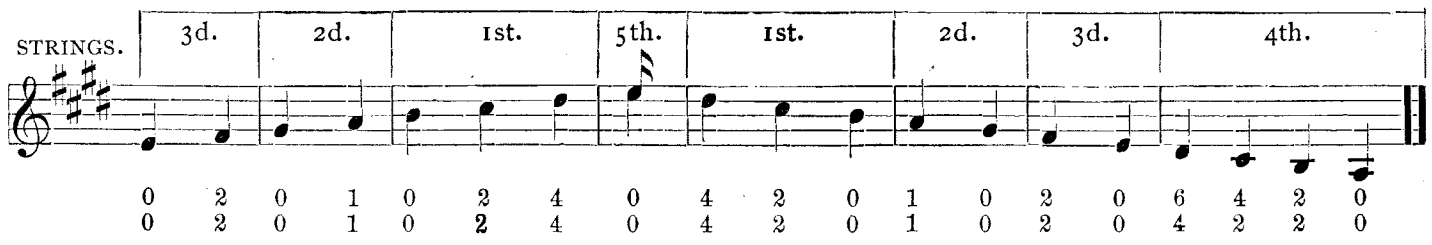
NATURAL SCALE ON BANJO. (A Major with 3 sharps.)



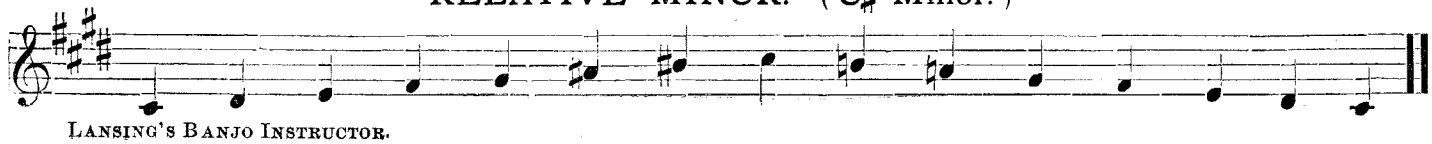
RELATIVE MINOR SCALE. (F♯ Minor.)



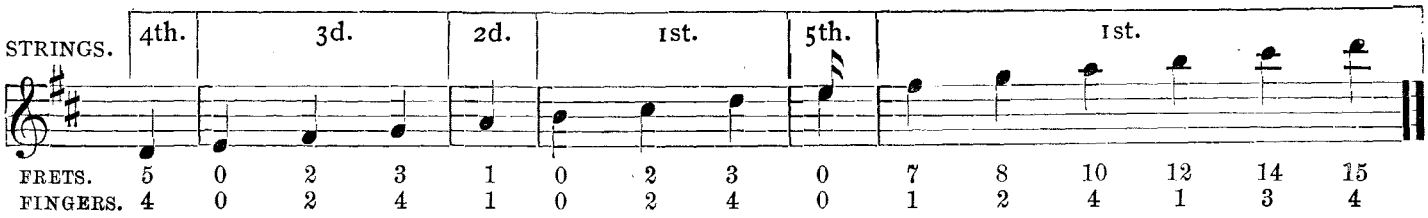
SCALE IN E. (Four Sharps.)



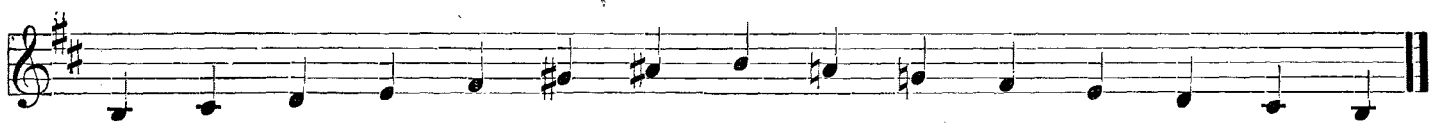
RELATIVE MINOR. (C♯ Minor.)



SCALE IN D. (2 Sharps.)

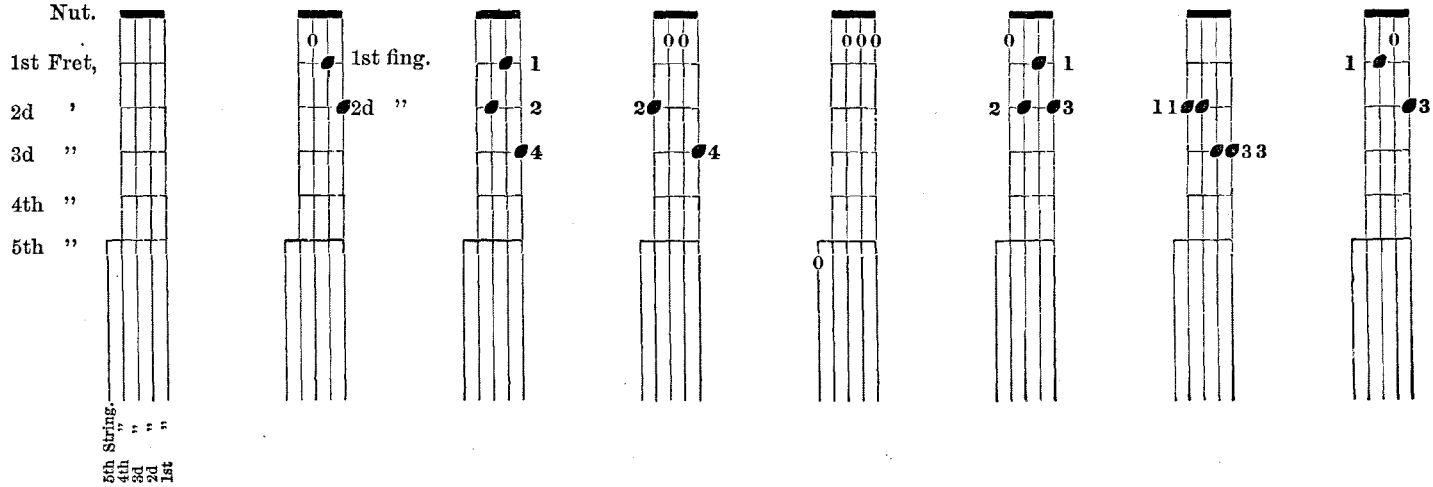


RELATIVE MINOR. (B Minor.)

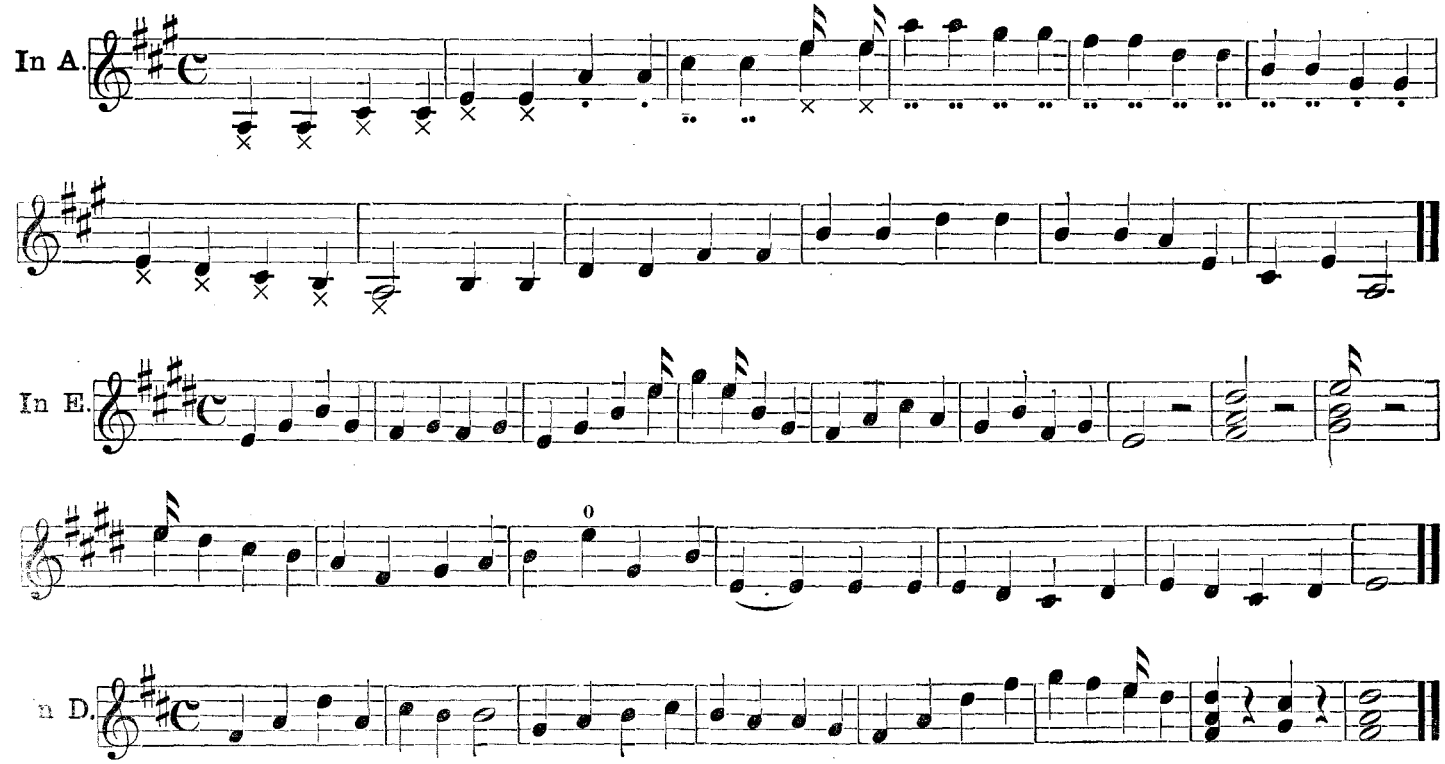


Diagrams showing some of the plain Chords.

A circle o *indicates an open string. A dot* ● *a closed string.*



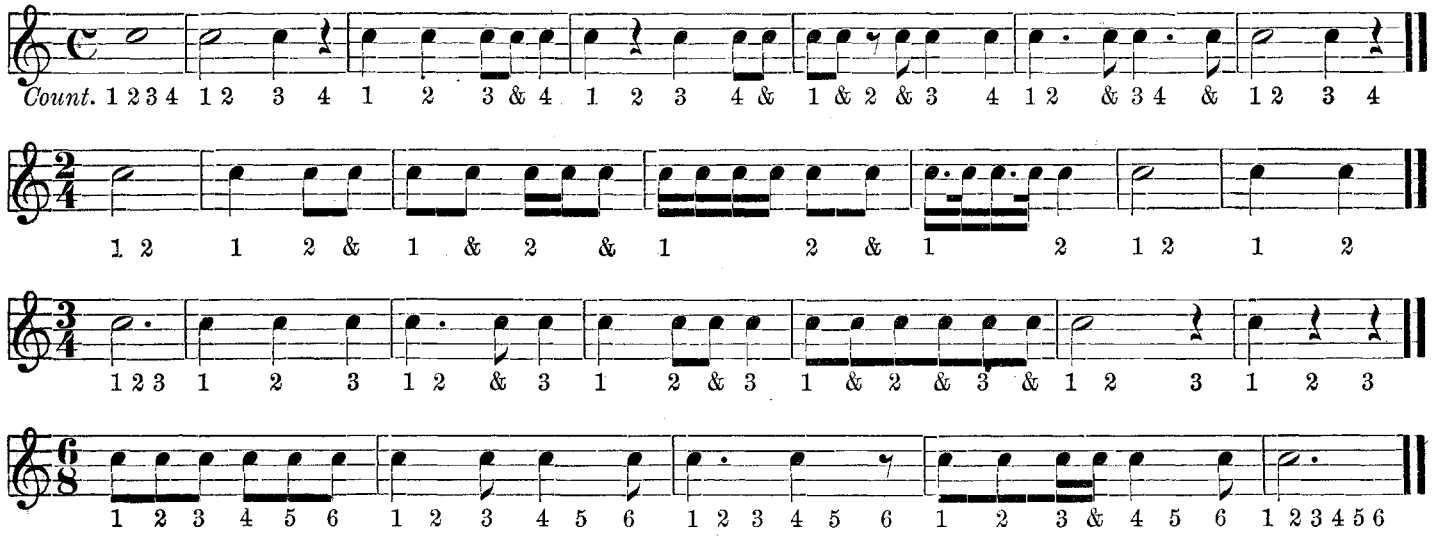
EXERCISES FOR LOCATING NOTES.



TIME.

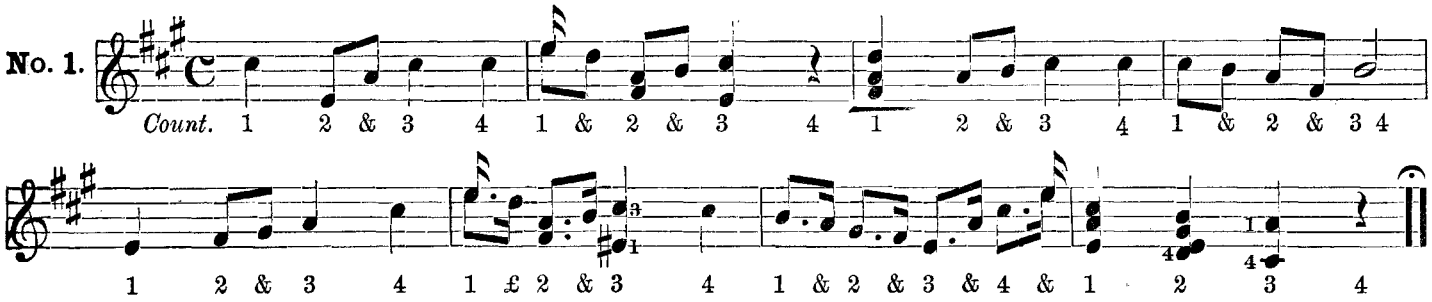
After locating the notes the student should learn to play them in proper time, giving to each note or rest its full value. In $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\mathbf{C}$ (common time) we understand that each measure contains notes or rests to the value of four counts. In $\frac{2}{4}$ time each measure contains notes or rests to the value of two counts, and so on in the different divisions of time.

Examples.

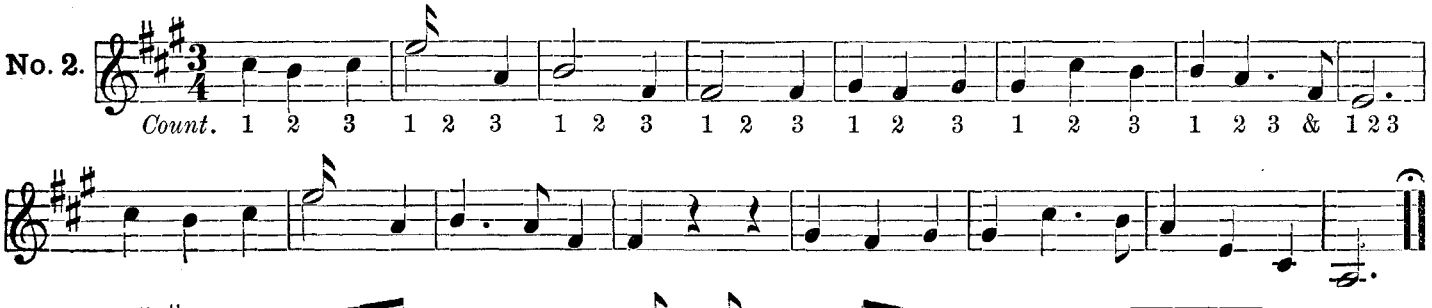


Melodious Exercises in the Keys of A, E and D.

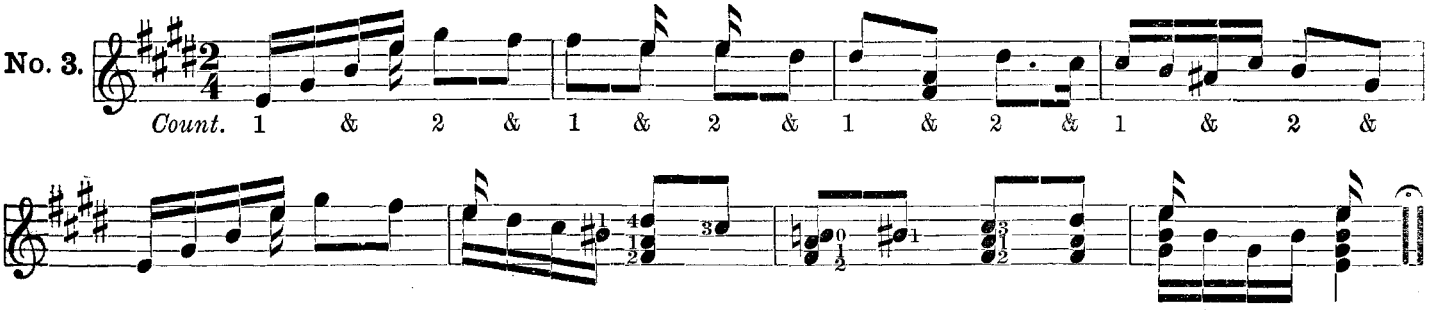
No. 1.



No. 2.



No. 3.



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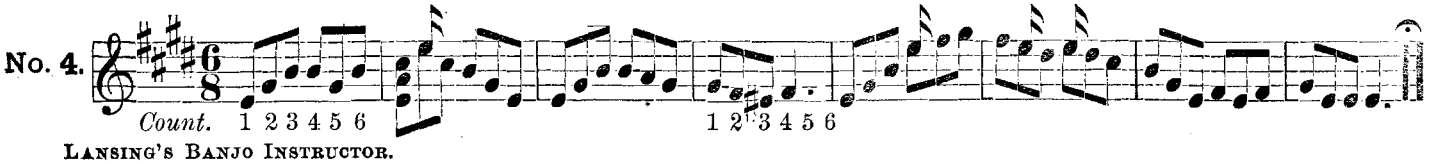
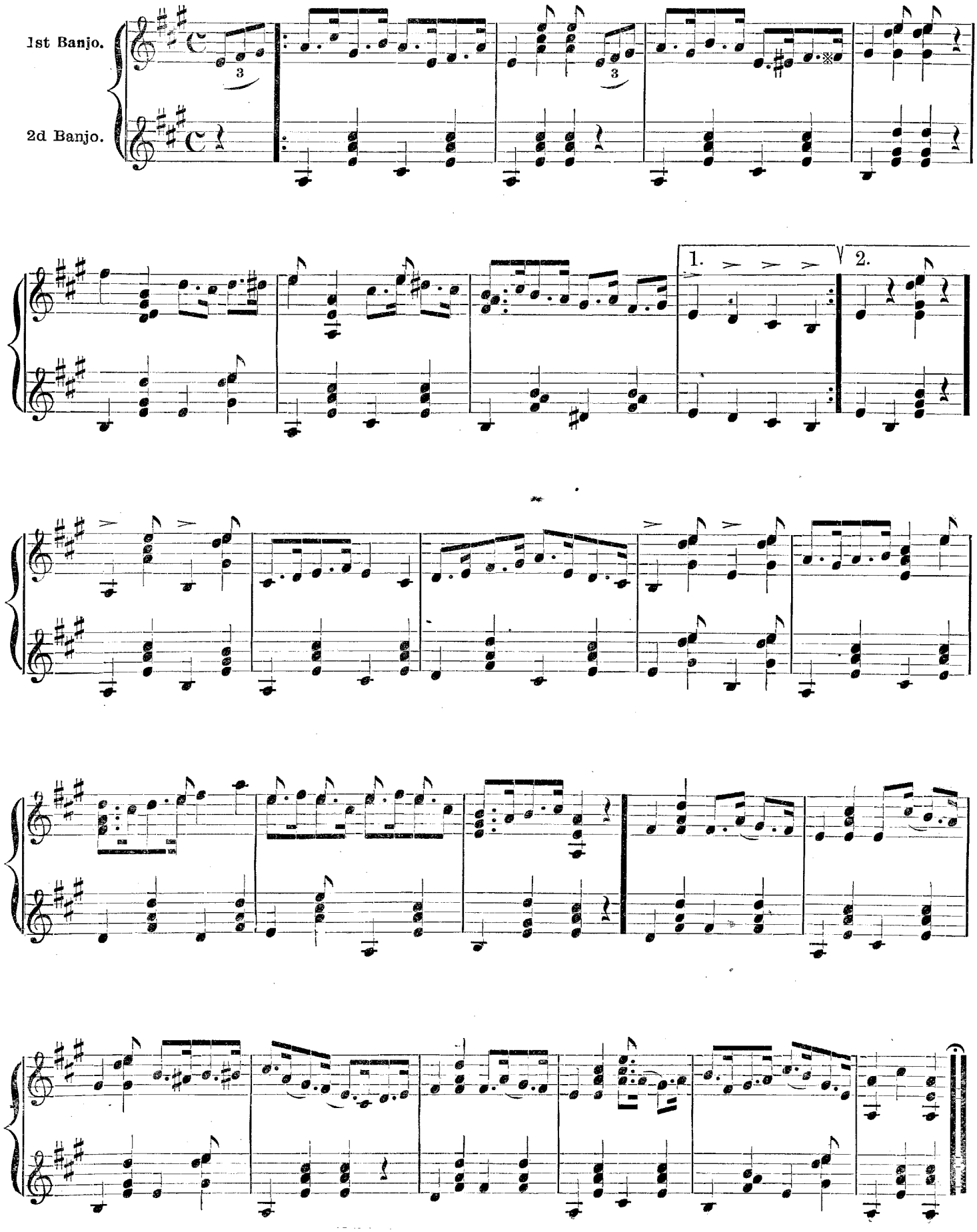
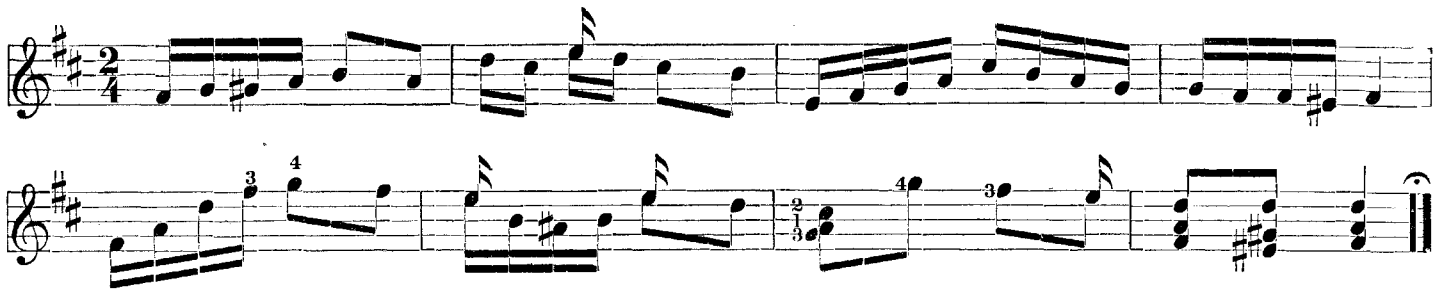



1st Banjo.
2d Banjo.
1.
2.

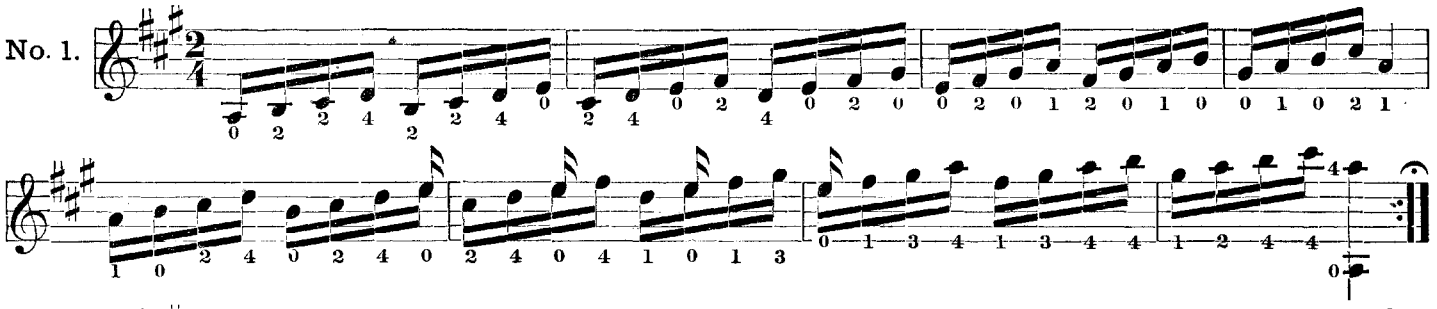


It is my aim in the following pages of this work to present to the student a list of exercises for daily practice together with suggestions in regard to the formation of chords etc.

Exercises for the development of rapid fingering.

Slowly at first then gradually increasing until able to play them very fast.

No. 1.



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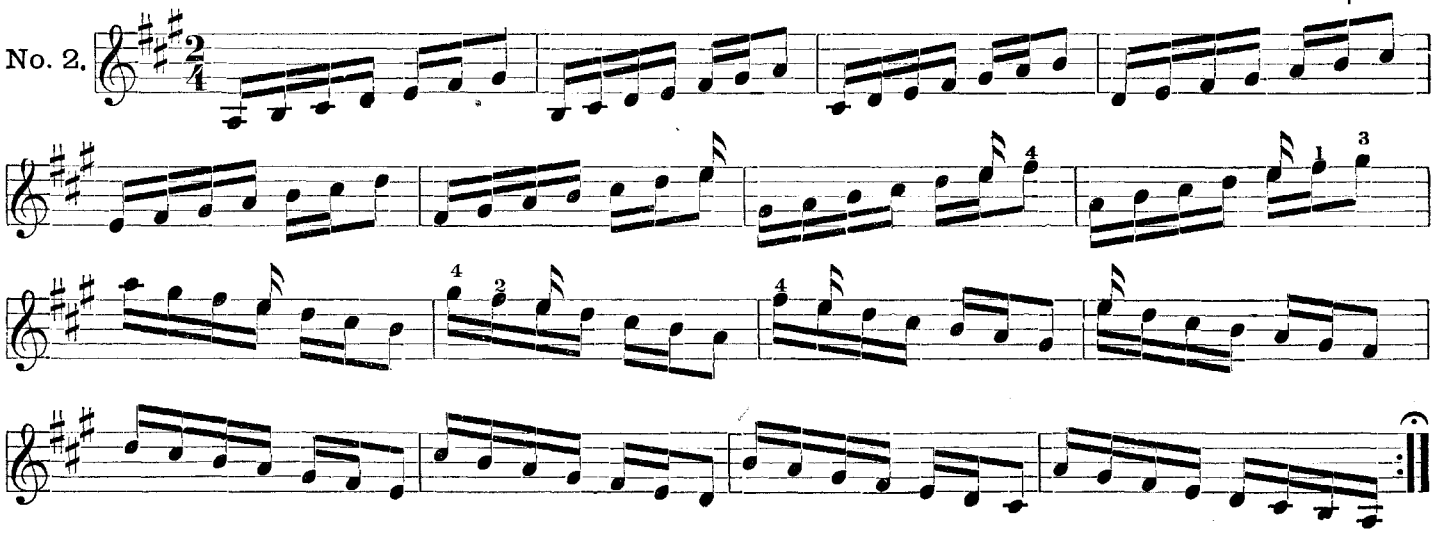

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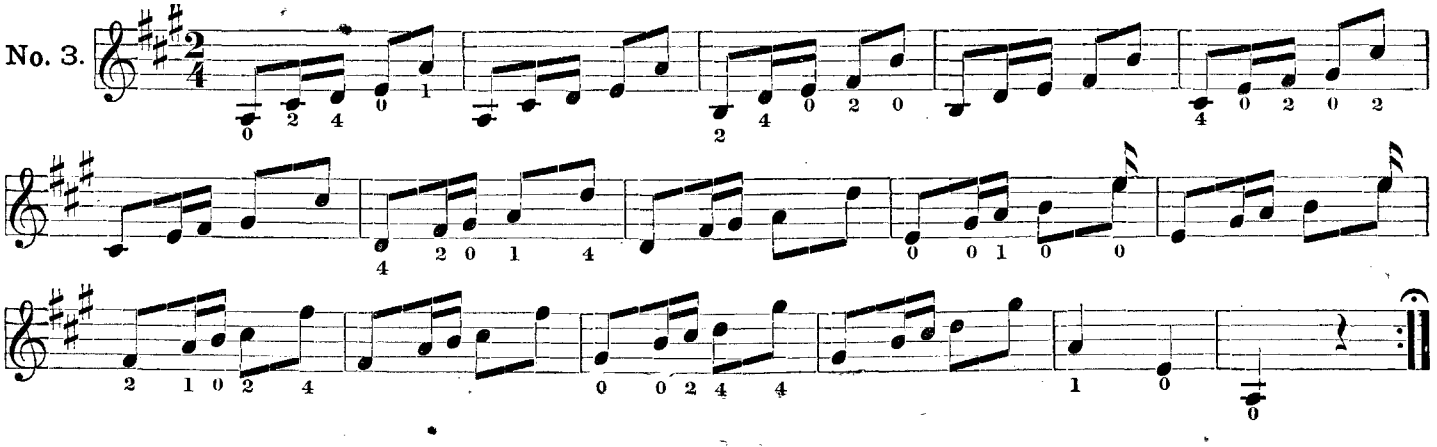
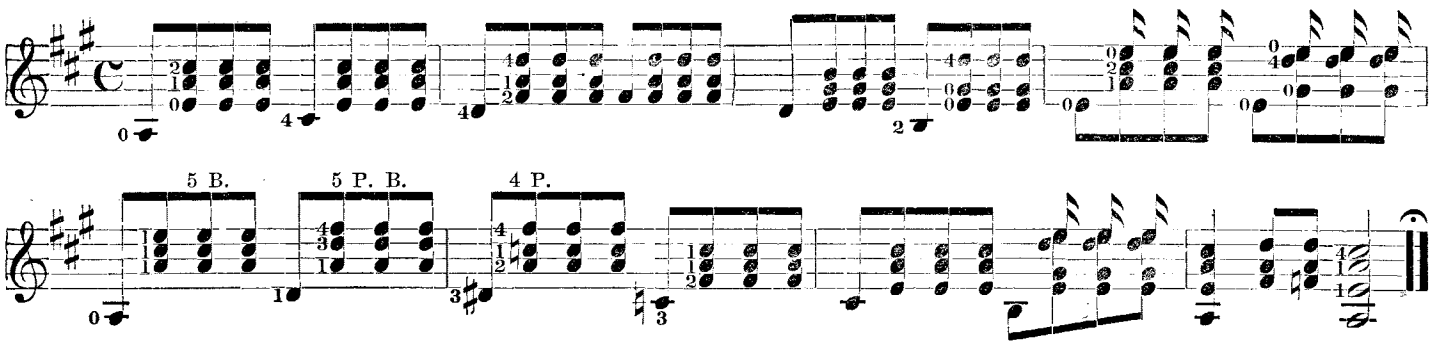


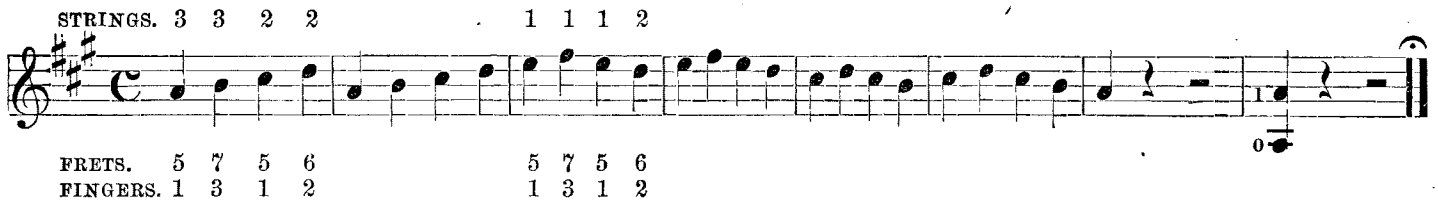
Accompaniment Chords in A.



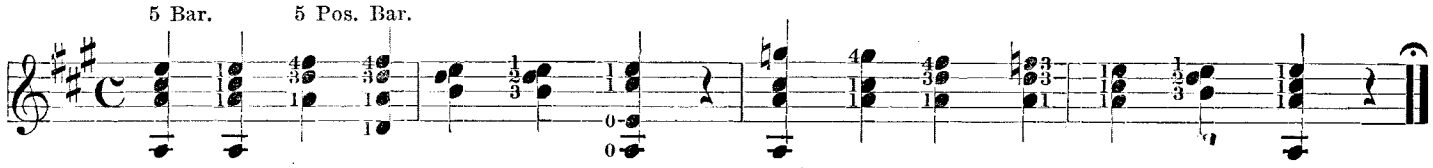
POSITIONS.

Every fret is termed a position, when the first finger of the left hand is at the first fret it is said to be in the first position, when at the fifth fret the fifth position and so on for all the others. There are five principal positions on the Banjo and a knowledge of them will suffice for all the others. The principal positions referred to are the 1st, 2d, 5th, 6th and 8th. The term Bar or Barre signifies that the first finger only is used at the position indicated by the figure.

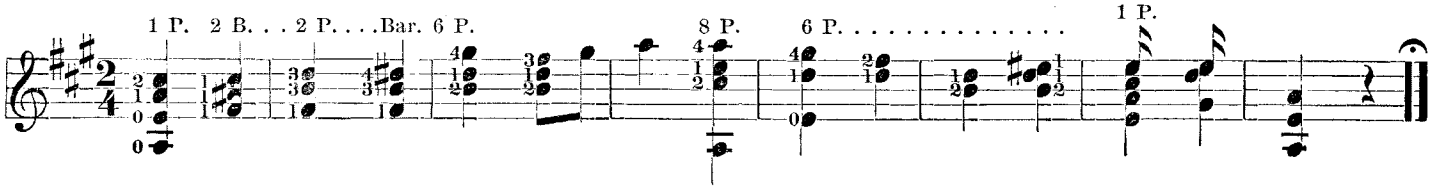
Exercise in 5th Position.



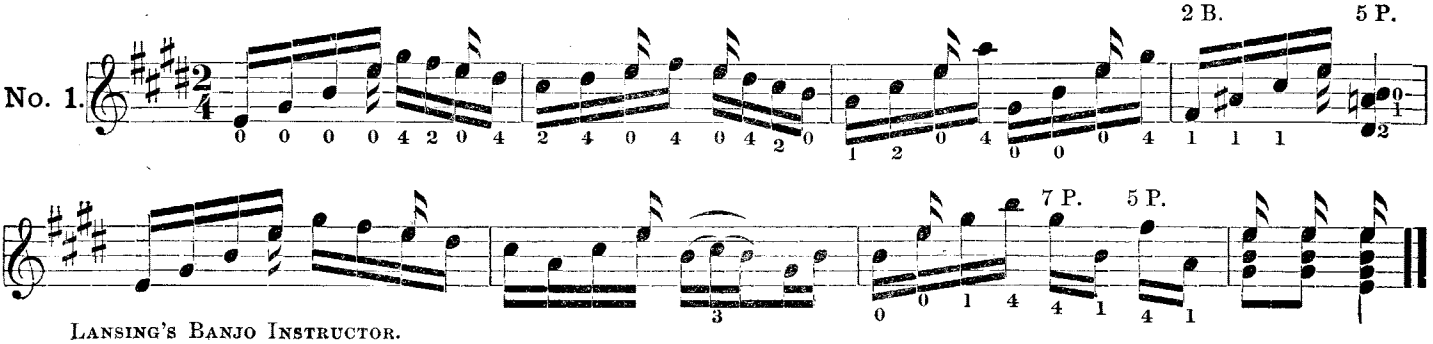
Common Chords in 5th Position.



Common Chords in 1st, 2nd, 6th and 8th Positions.

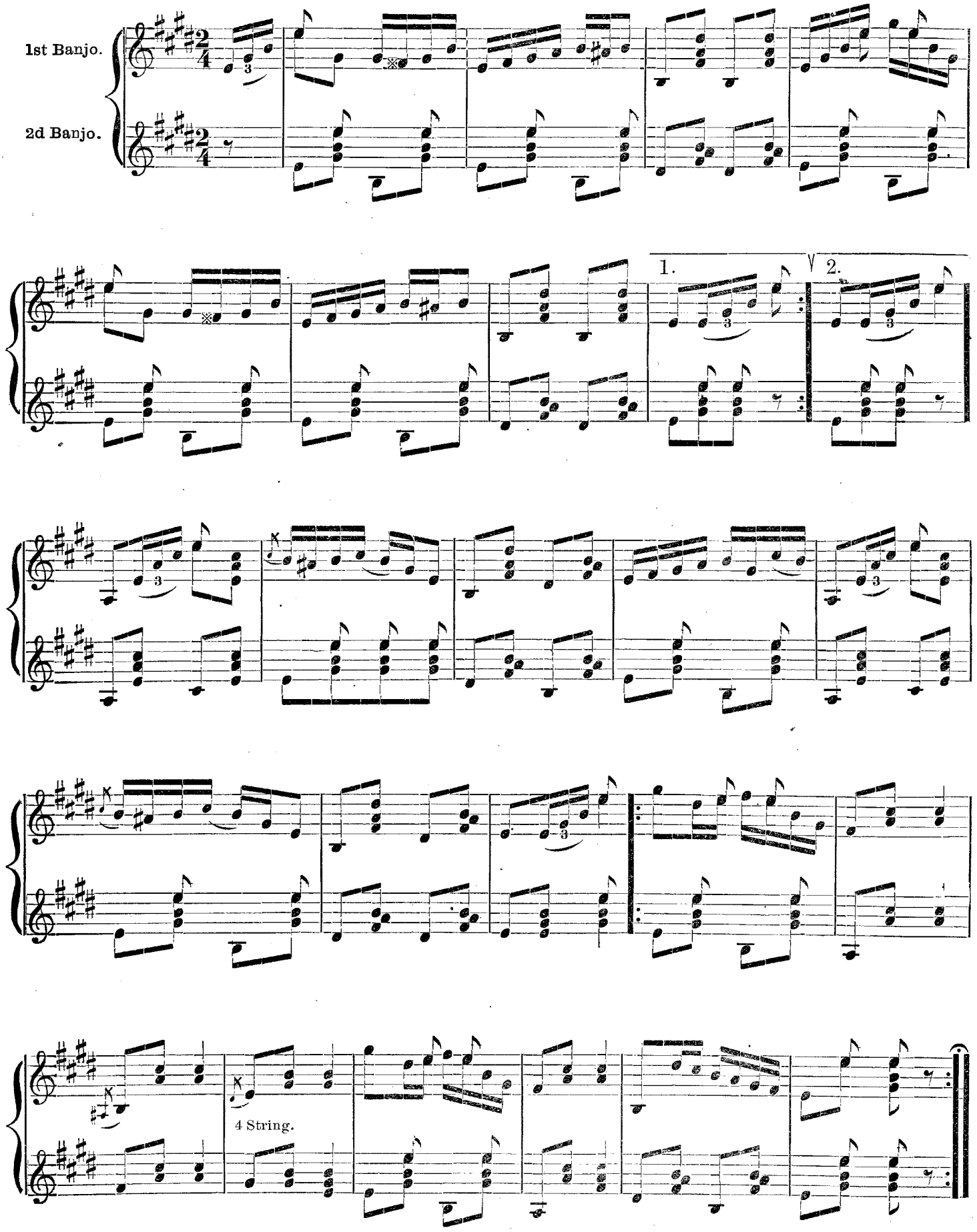


Exercises in E and D.



MELODY IN E MAJOR.

Fast.



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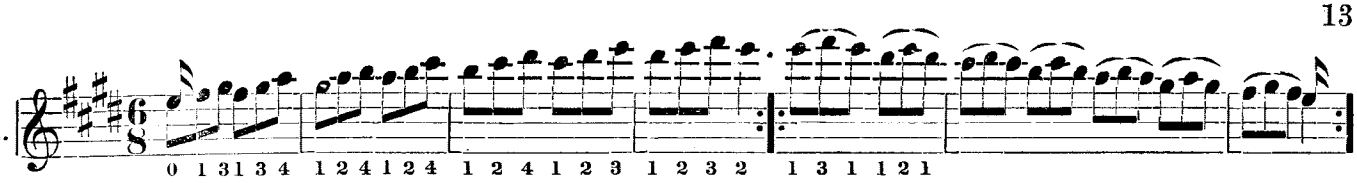

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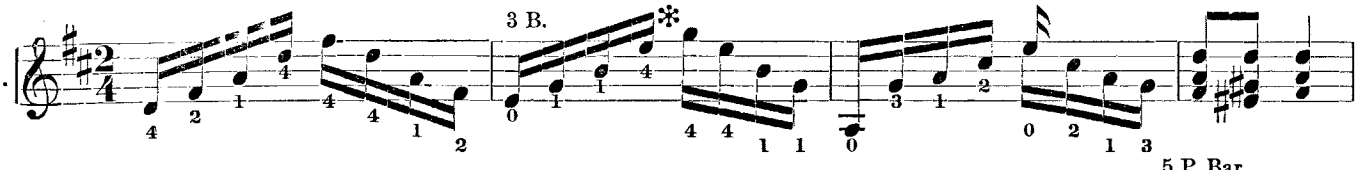

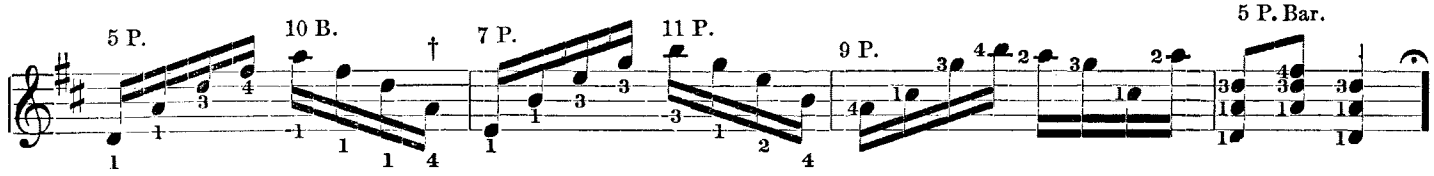

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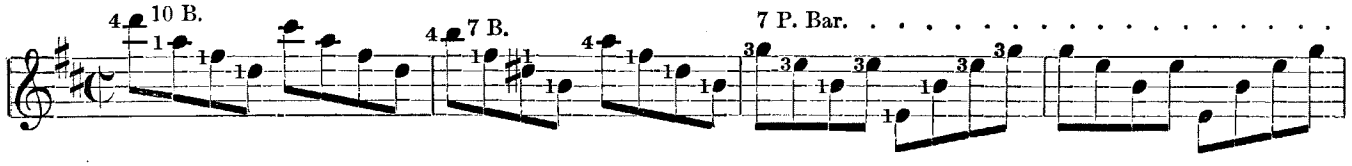
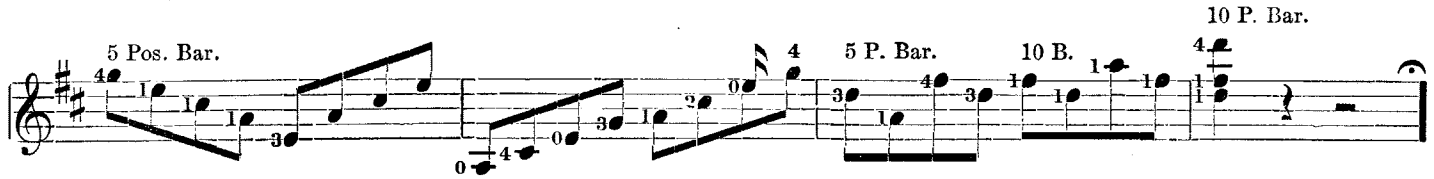
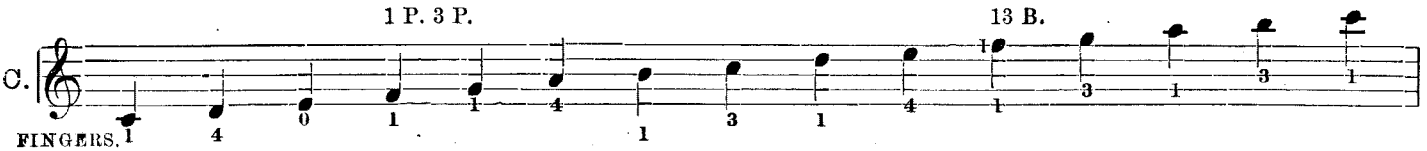


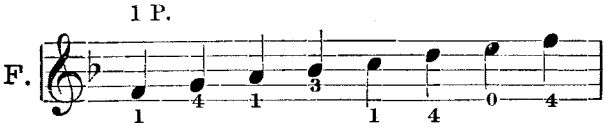


§ MAJOR SCALES IN POSITIONS.

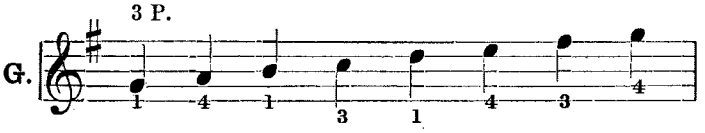
C.



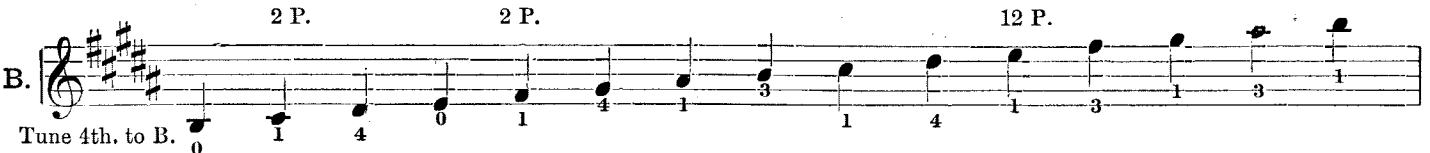
F.



G.

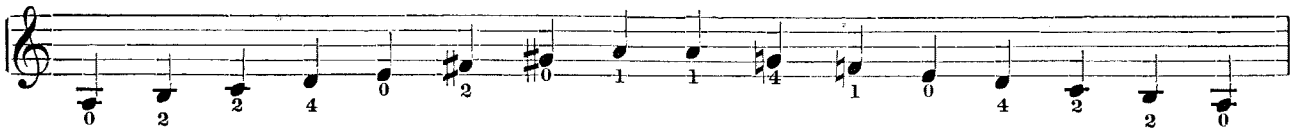


B.

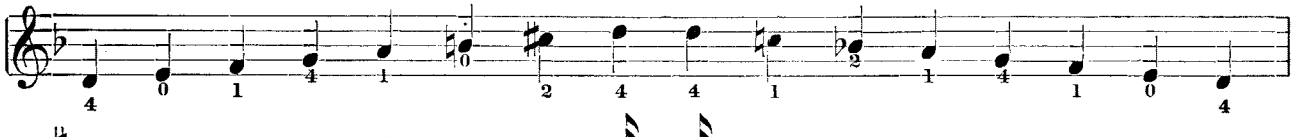


MINOR SCALES.

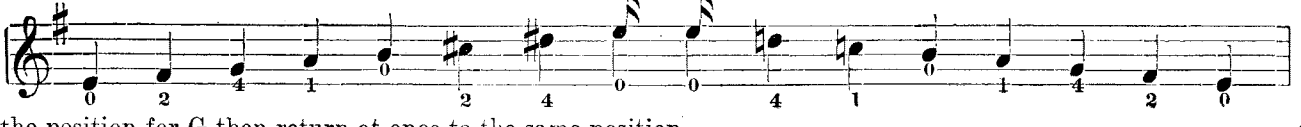
A Minor.



D Minor.



E Minor.

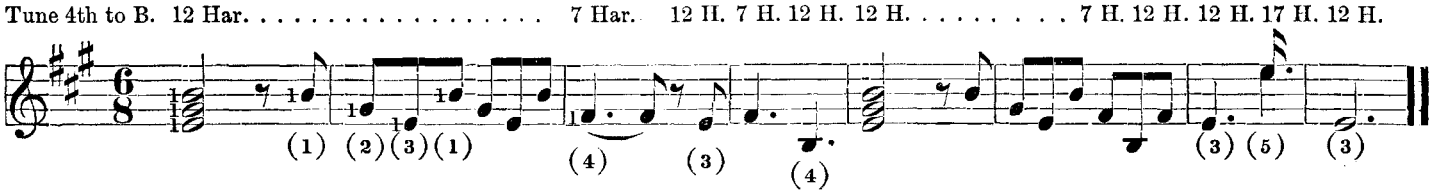


* Leave the position for G then return at once to the same position.
† Play A on the 4th. String.
§ I give only those that are at present in use on the Banjo.

HARMONICS.

The Harmonics are bell like tones produced at the 3d, 4th, 7th and 12th frets on all but the fifth string, on that string at the 17th fret. They are made by laying a finger (usually the third finger) of the left hand across the strings at the designated frets, parallel with the frets. Be careful not to press the strings down, but with force enough to prevent the ordinary tone, then pick the strings with the right hand. The left hand should be raised quickly after striking the strings.

* EXERCISE IN HARMONICS.



THE SLUR.

The slur is executed in two ways, the single slur should be snapped from C to B by drawing the finger quickly from the string after picking C. The double slur is made by picking the first note then letting the 4th finger of the left hand fall on the next note with a hammer like movement and snapping the last one immediately.

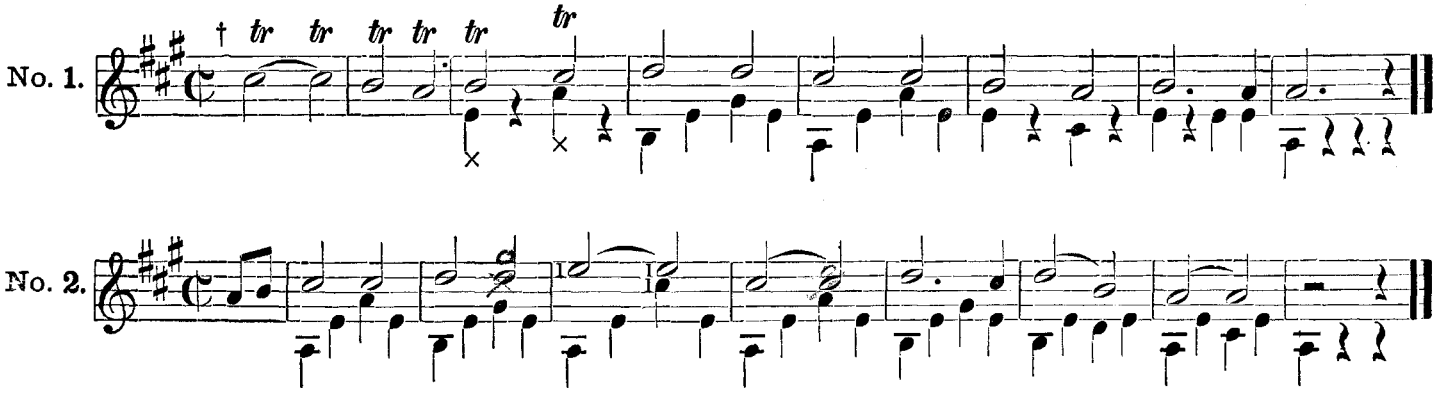
THE SLIDE.

The slide is made by picking the first note then sliding the finger on to the next. Written thus :

THE TREMOLO.

This is considered the most artistic movement on the Banjo, it is executed by laying the 2nd or 3d finger of the right hand on the head about two inches from the bridge elevating the hand so that the end of the first finger will barely touch the strings the first finger works forward and backwards across the strings. Much practice is required to become proficient in playing this movement.

TREMOLO EXERCISE,

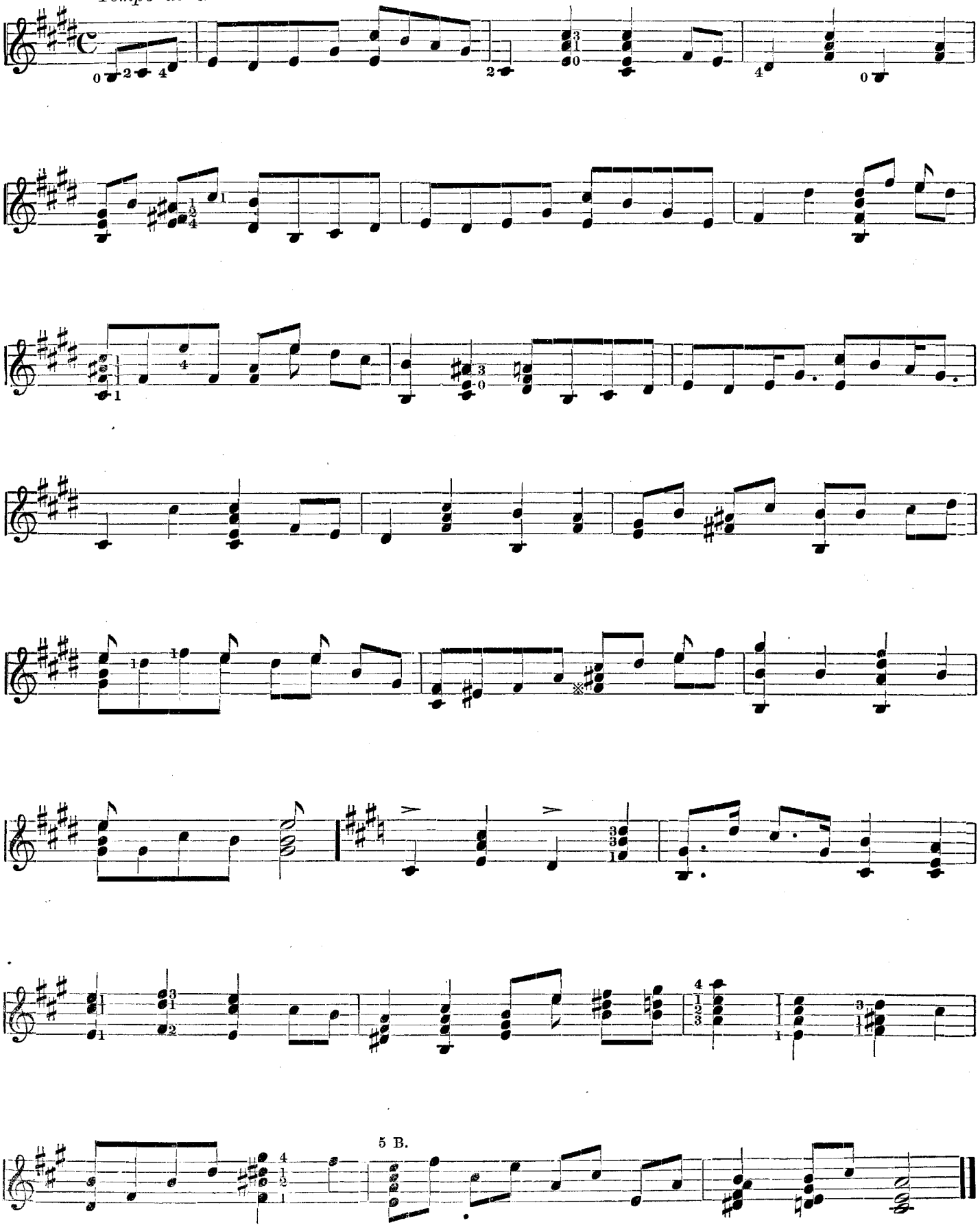


* This sign (3) signifies the string.

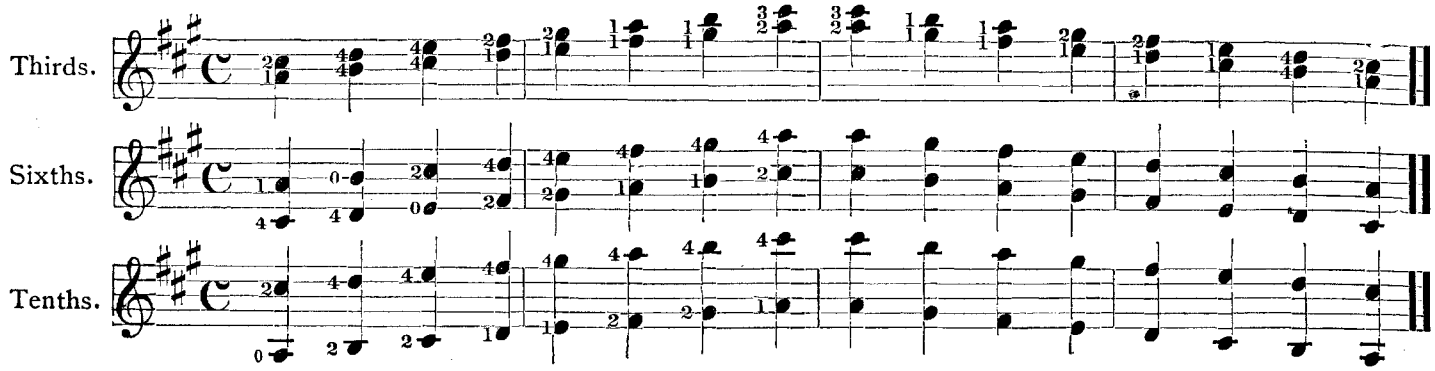
† Notes with stems turned up are played with first finger, others with the thumb.

Tune 4th string up one tone.

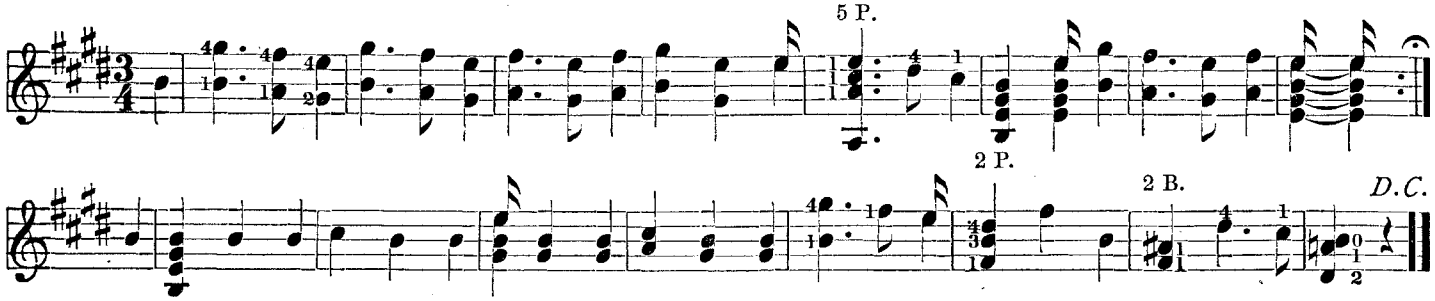
Tempo di Gavotte.



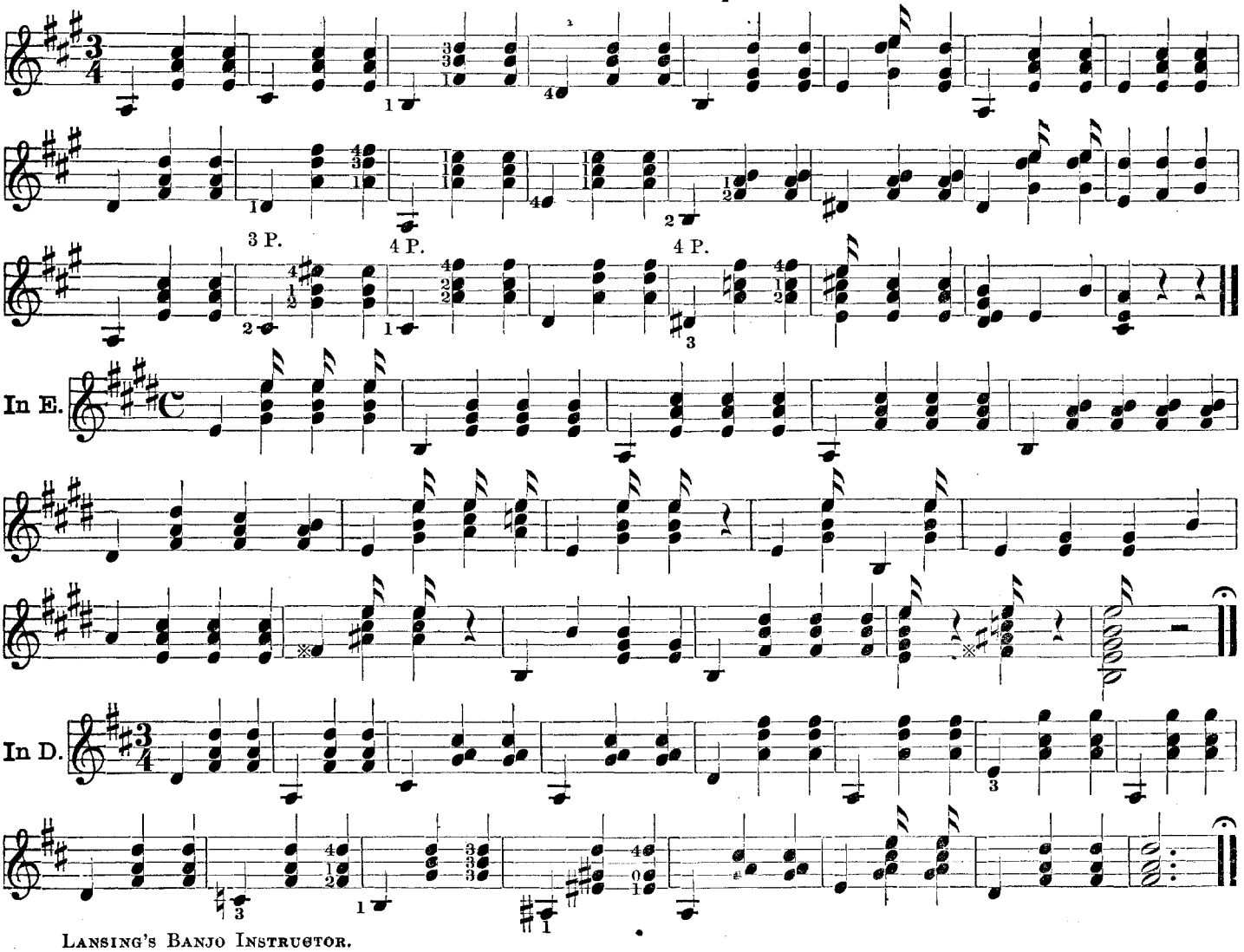
Exercises in Various Intervals.



FAMILIAR AIR.



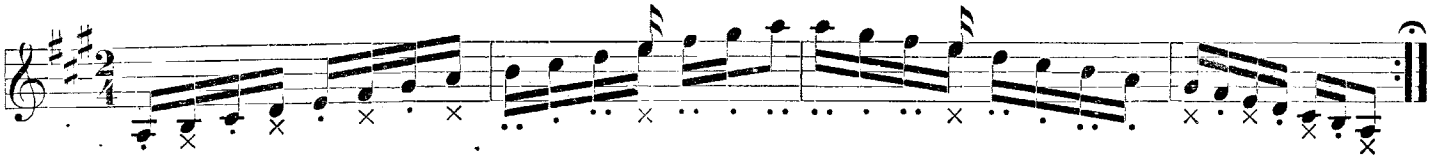
Chords as used in Accompaniments in A.



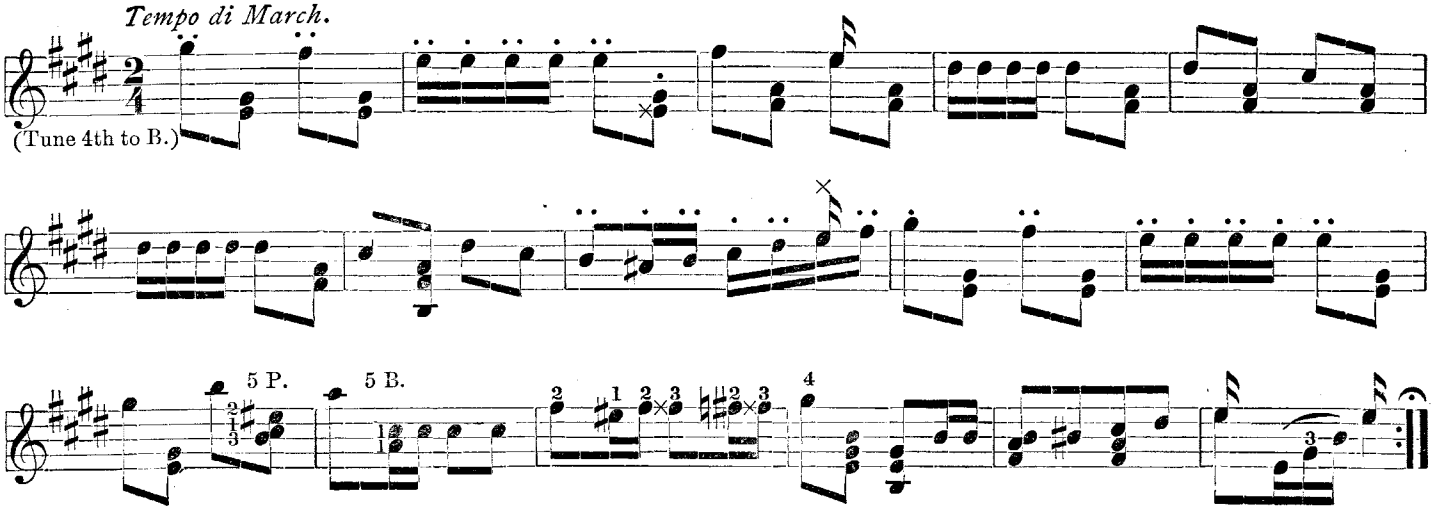
DOUBLE FINGERING.

To attain proficiency in executing rapid passages, the following right hand fingering will be found beneficial.

Exercise 1.

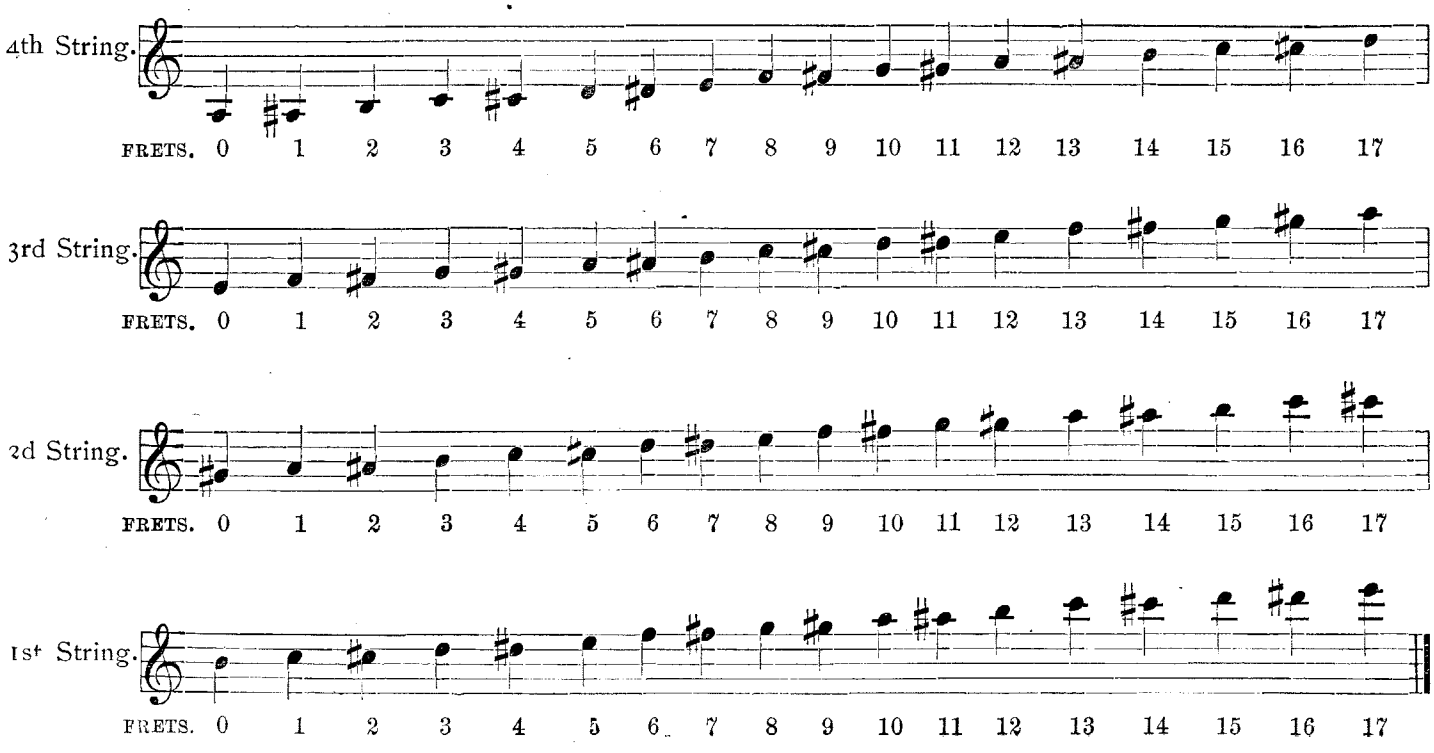


Exercise 2.

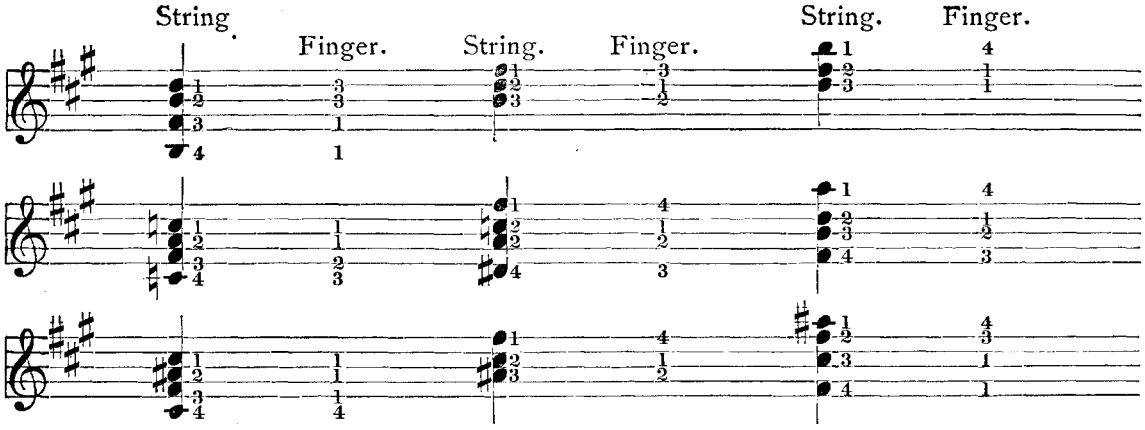


CHROMATIC SCALE ON EACH STRING.

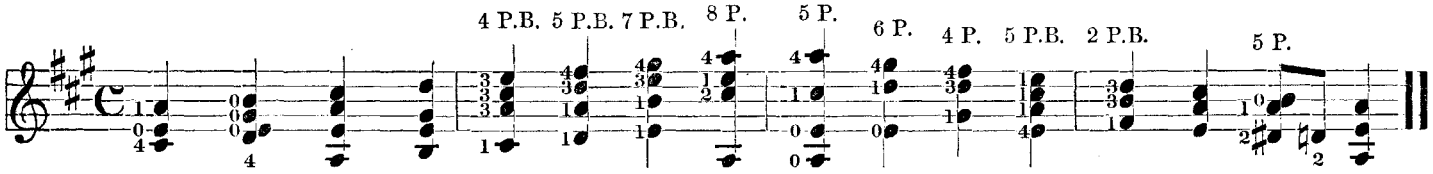
Showing all the notes on the different strings.



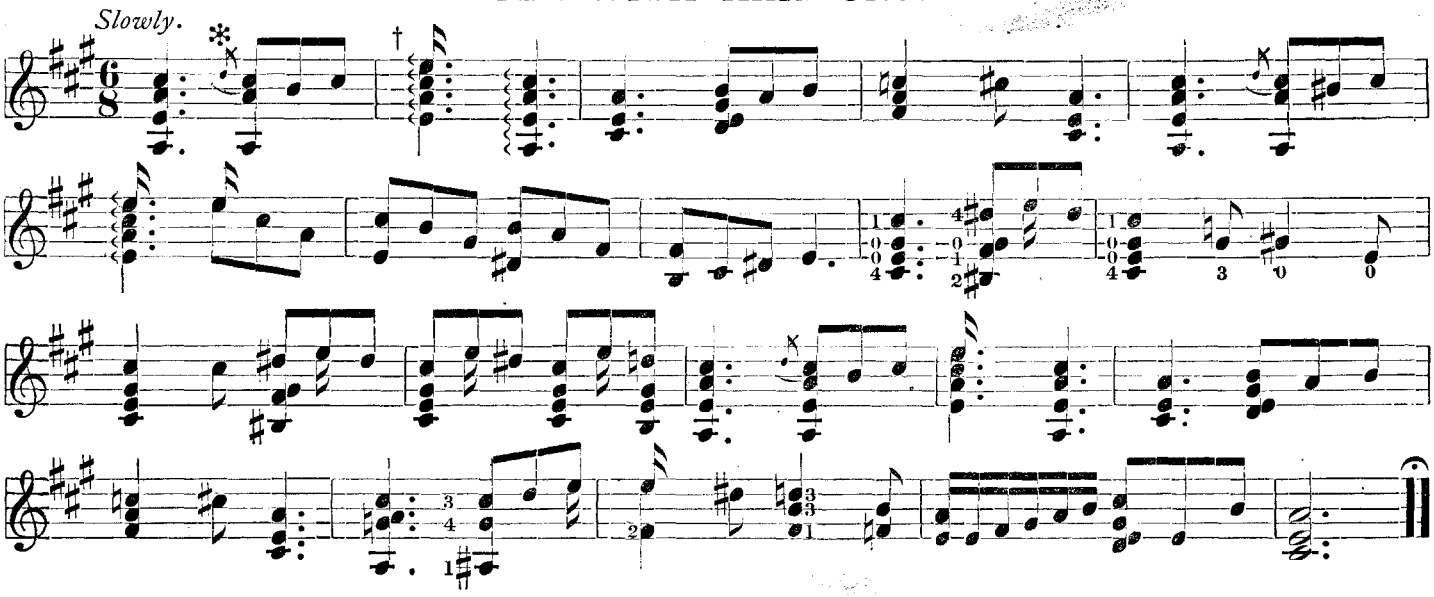
ANALYSIS OF CHORDS.



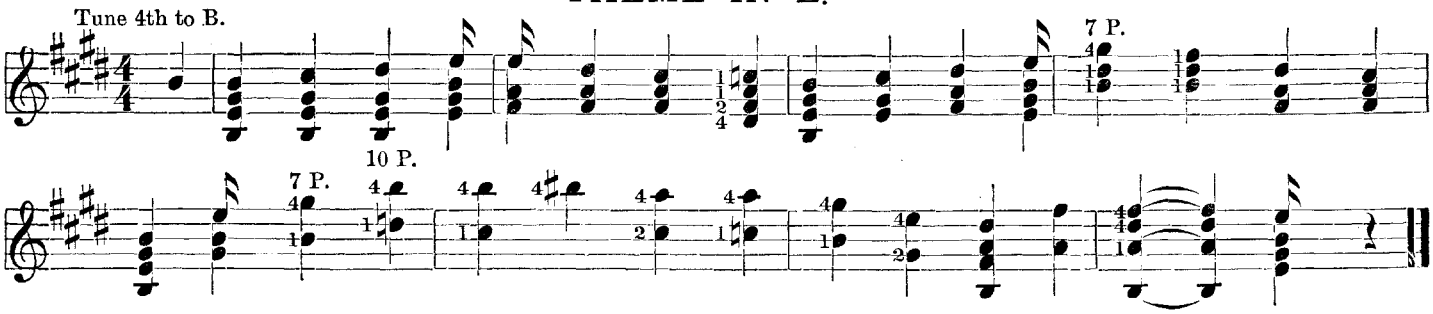
THE SCALE OF A IN CHORDS.



AIR WITH HARMONY.



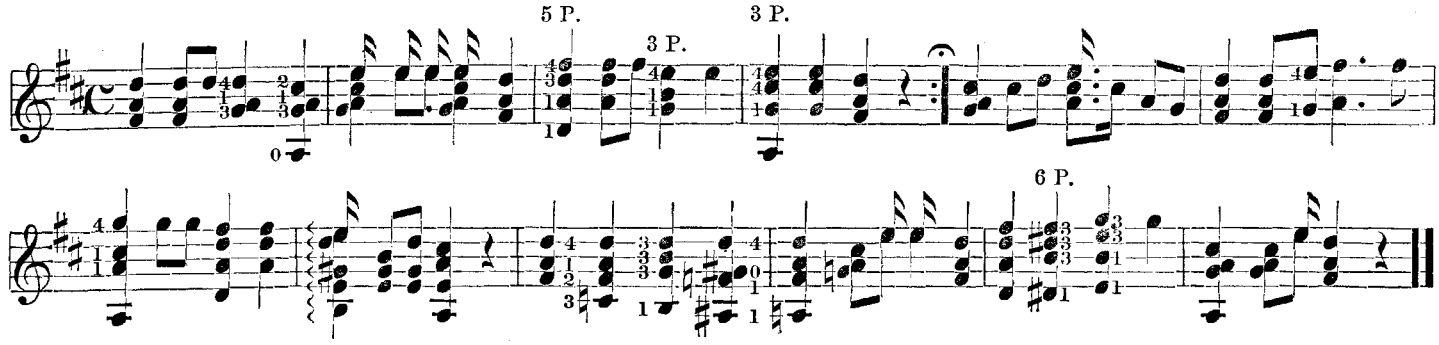
THEME IN E.



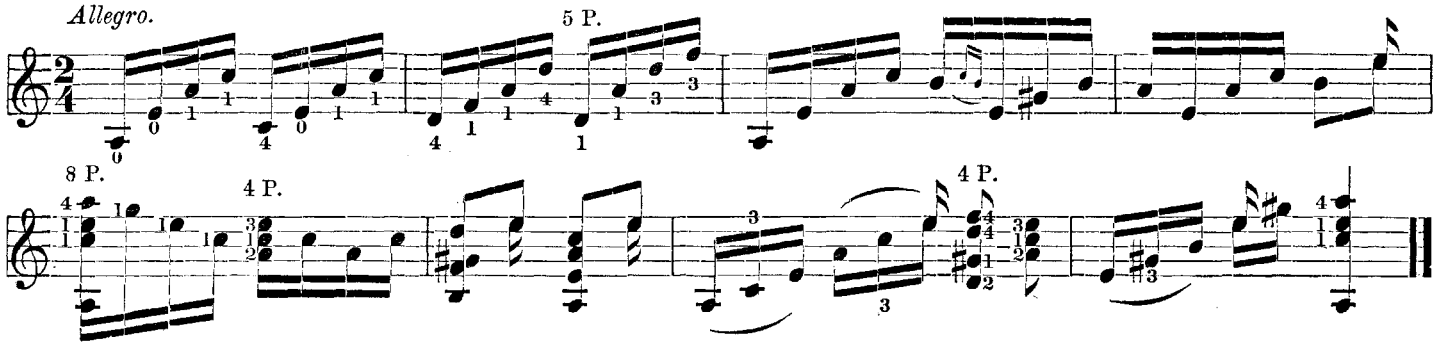
* When a Grace Note precedes a chord as in the above it should be played with the chord and then snapped immediately on to the next note.

† This sign } signifies a roll chord or arpeggio. It is executed by picking one note quickly after the other beginning with the lowest.

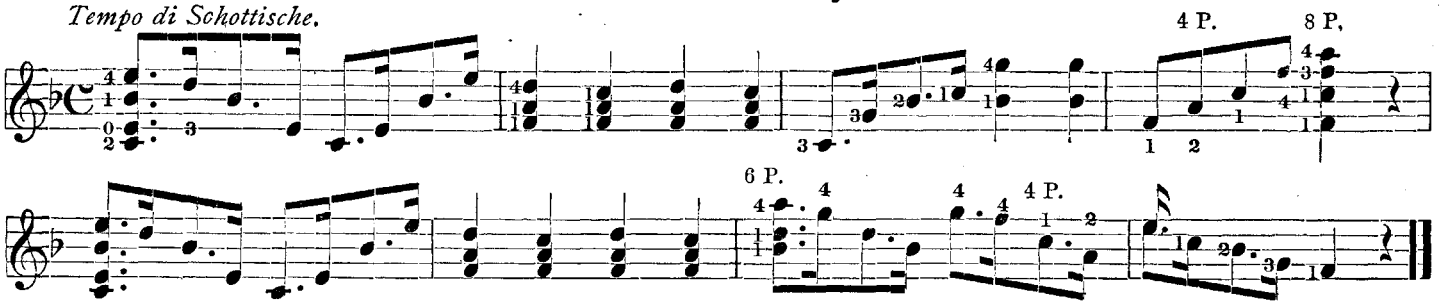
THEME IN D.



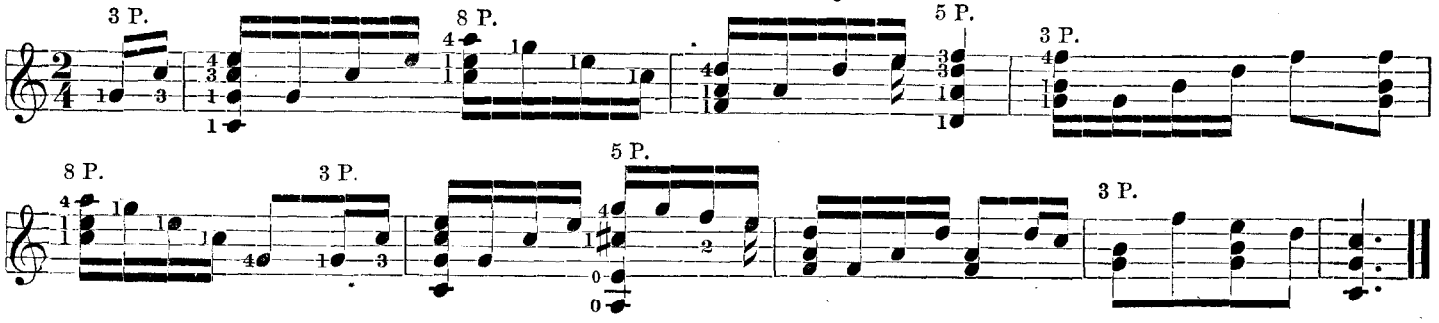
Exercise in A Minor.



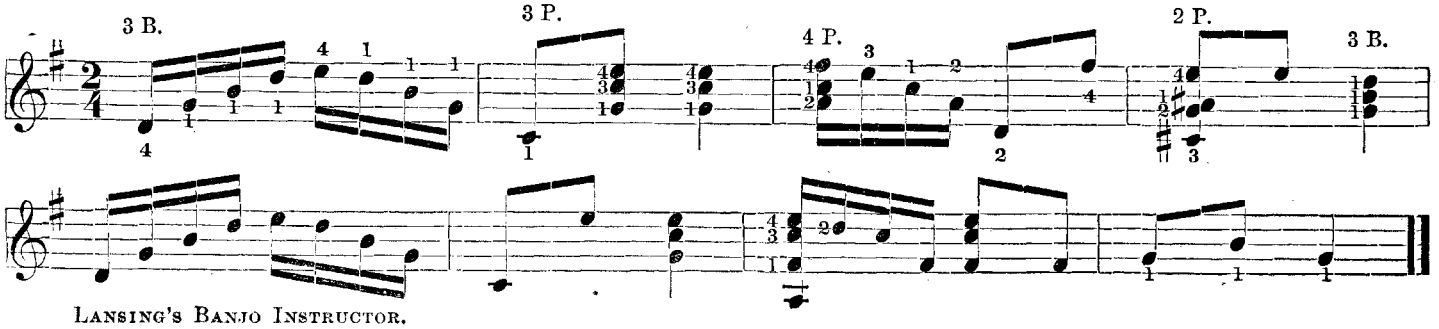
Exercise in F Major.



Exercise in C Major.



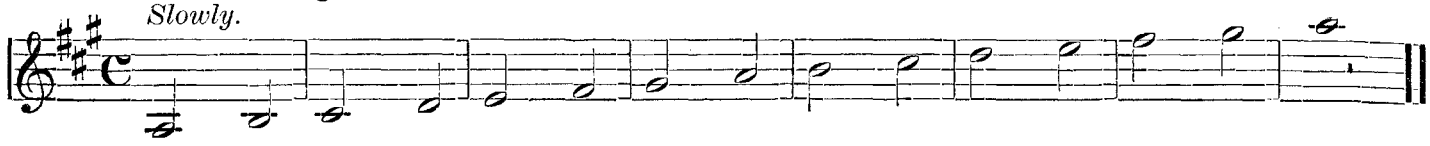
Exercise in G Major.

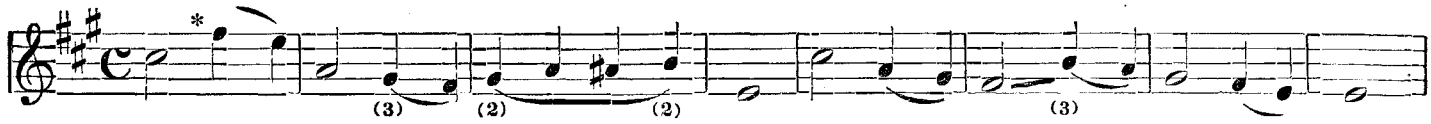


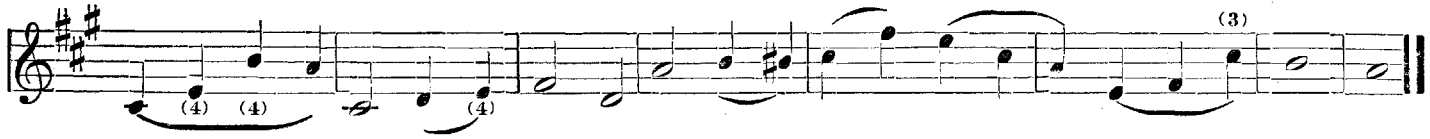
TREMOLO EXERCISES.

On One String.

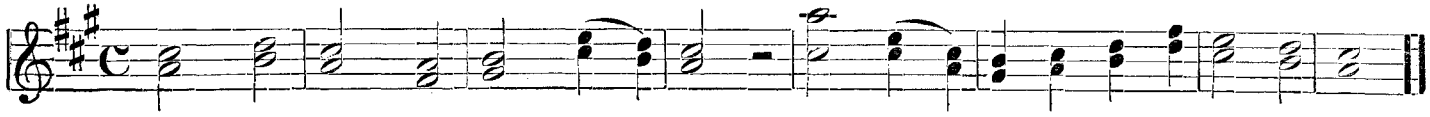
Slowly.



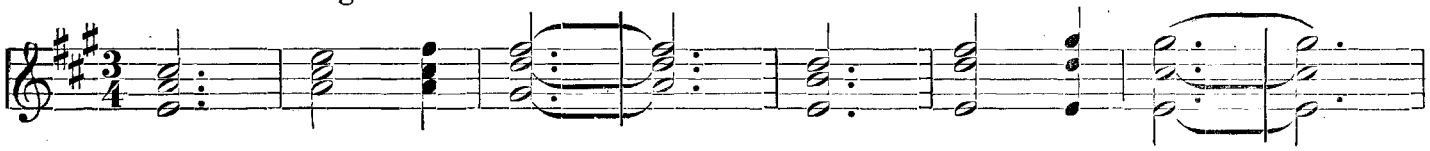




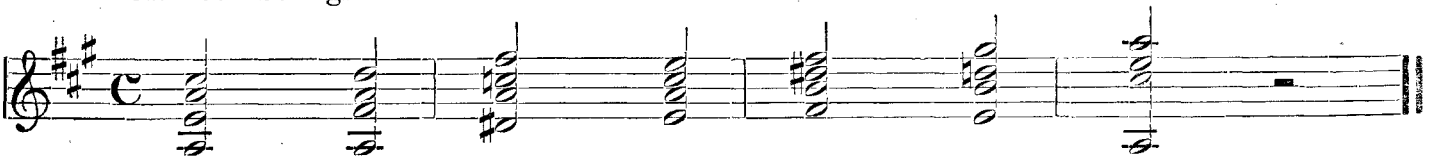
On Two Strings.



On Three Strings.



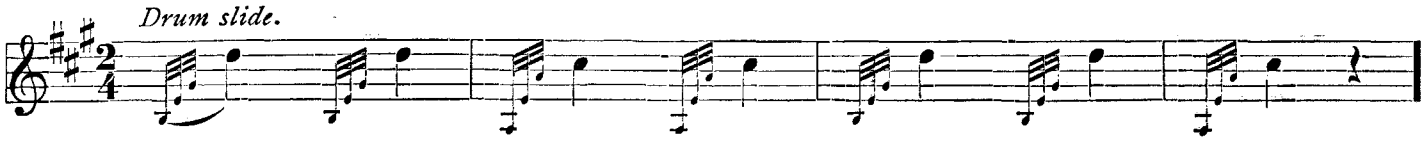
On Four Strings.



* All notes that are marked with a slur, are to be played with an uninterrupted tremolo, all others are to be accented.

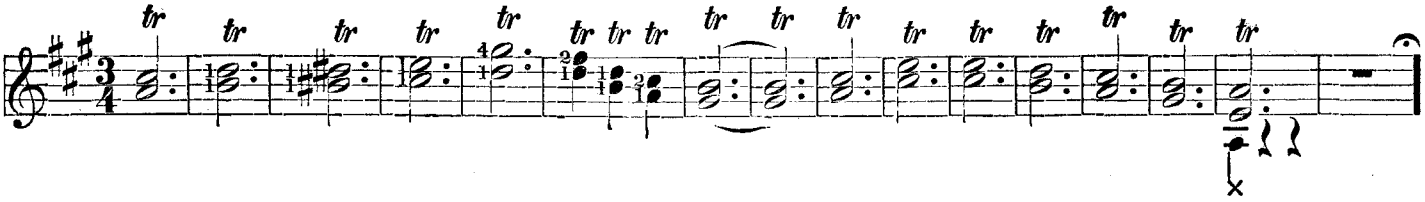
This movement is executed by striking the strings with the nails. The hand is partially closed near the bridge then with a swift movement beginning with the third finger on the fourth or bass string the hand is opened and the other fingers follow the third finger over the strings.

Exercise.

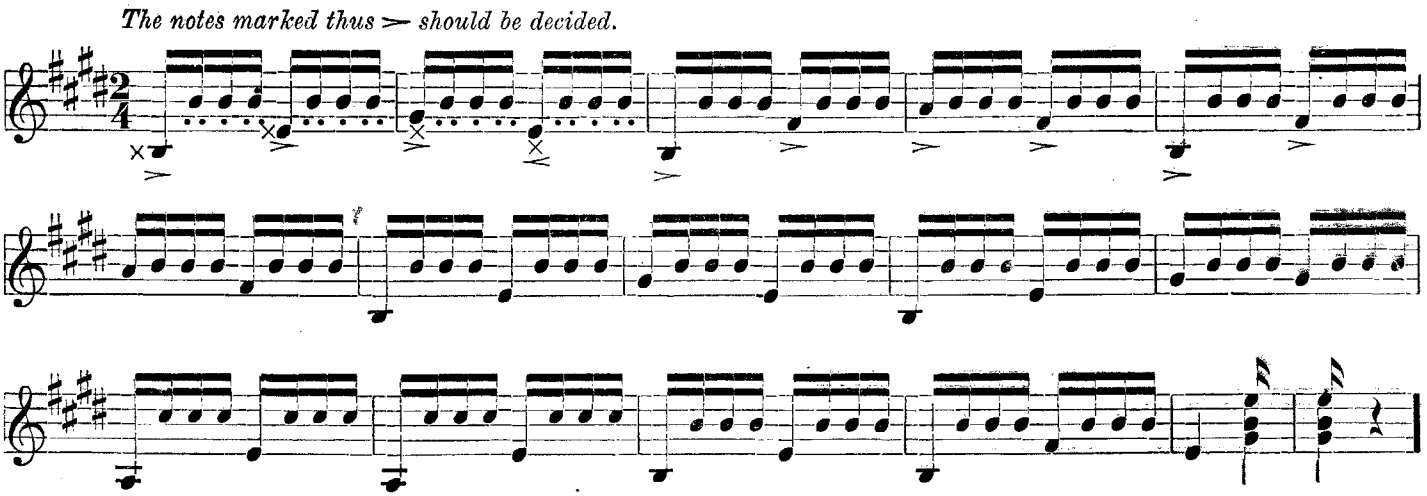


VARIOUS EXERCISES.

Exercise for Tremolo on two strings.



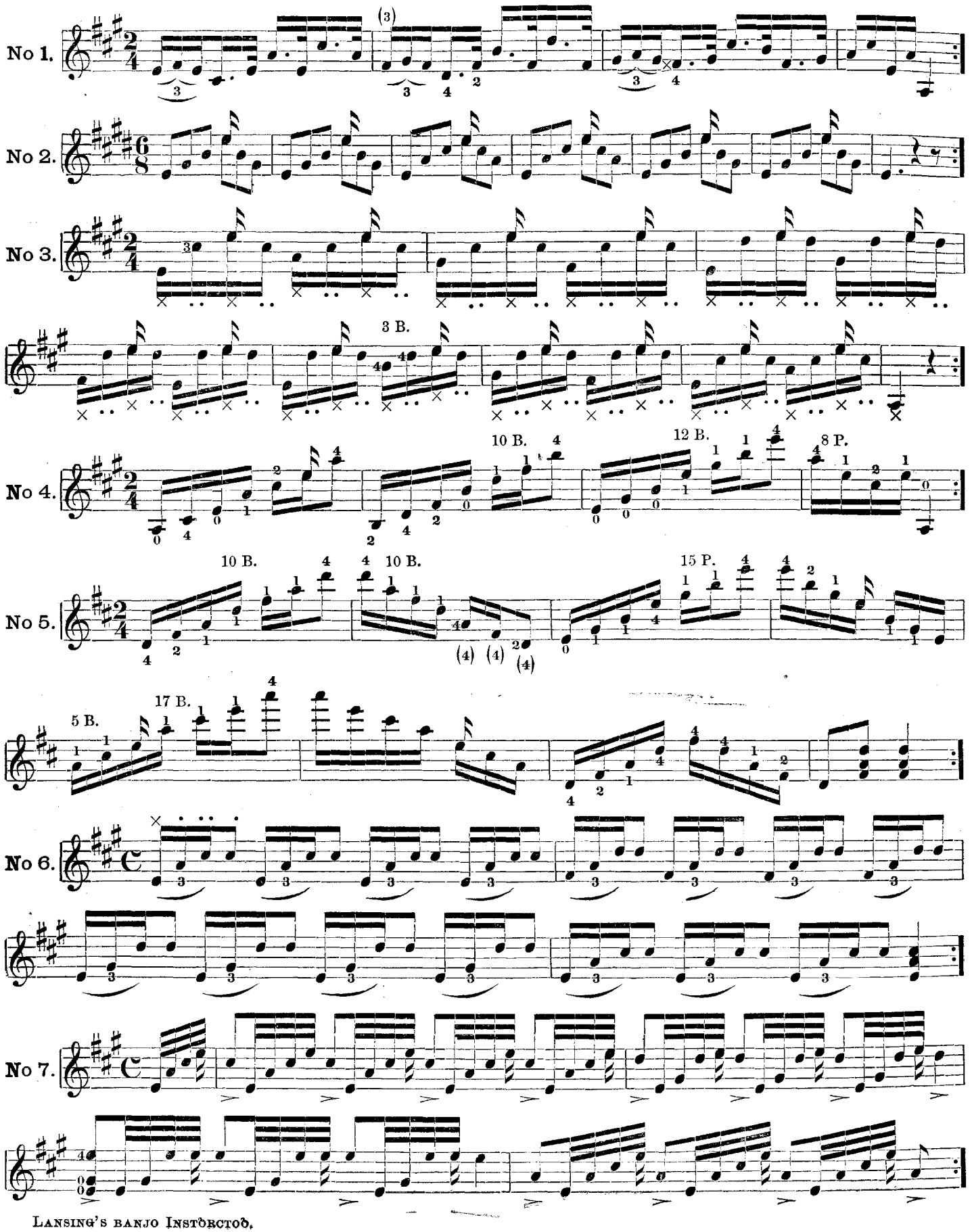
Exercise for Double Fingering.



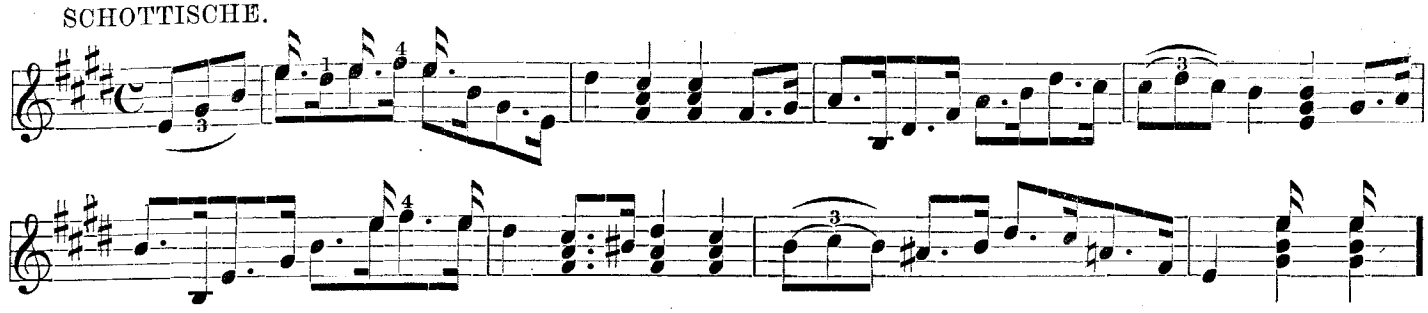
STROKE PLAYING.

Although not used now as much as formerly this style of playing when well done is capable of fine effects the performer usually wears a banjo thimble and instead of picking the strings strikes in a downward motion. I do not append any exercises in this branch of banjo playing as it is utterly impossible to attain proficiency in it without the most careful surveillance of a master.

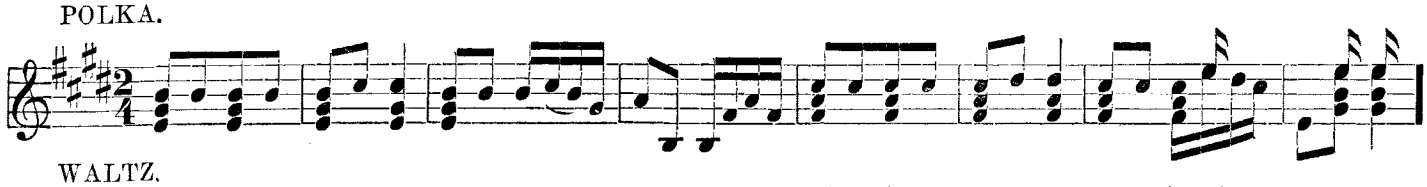
Each number should be repeated at least a dozen times before advancing to the next.



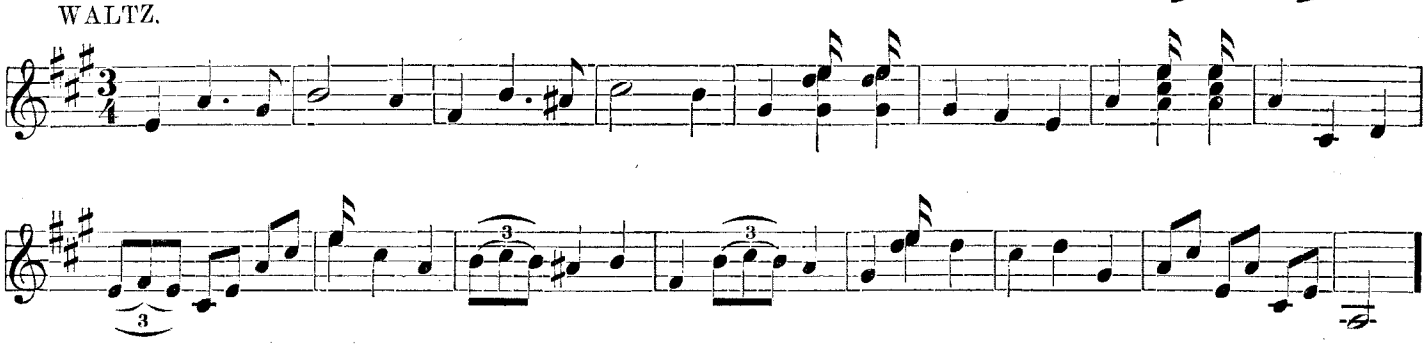
SCHOTTISCHE.



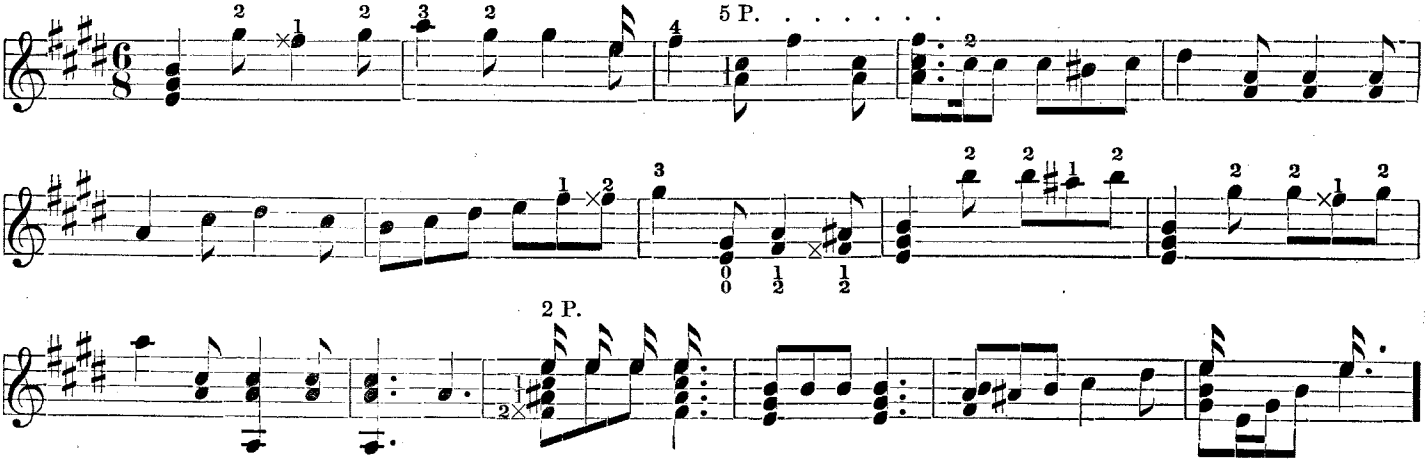
POLKA.



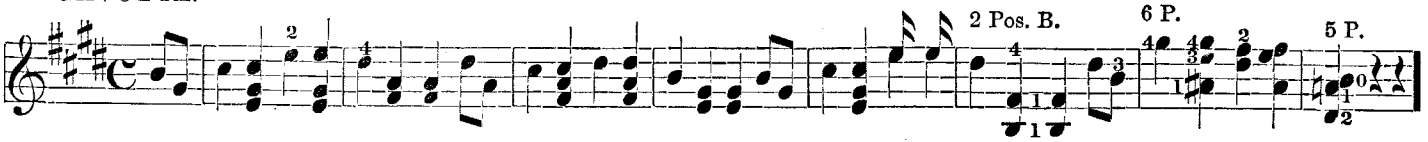
WALTZ.



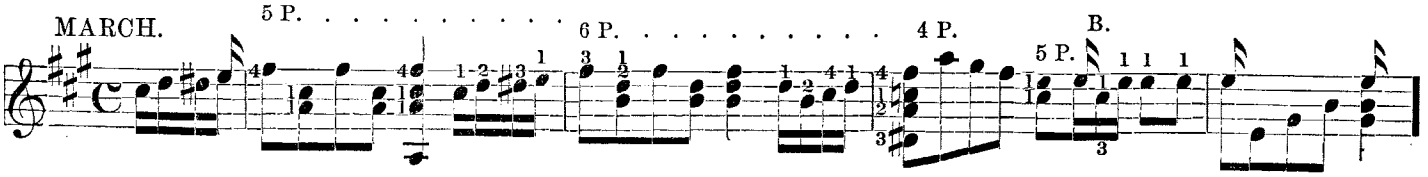
MARCH.



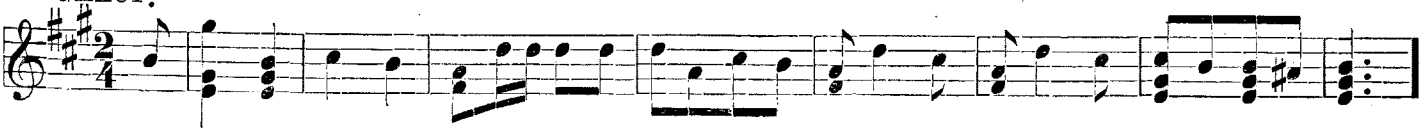
GAVOTTE.



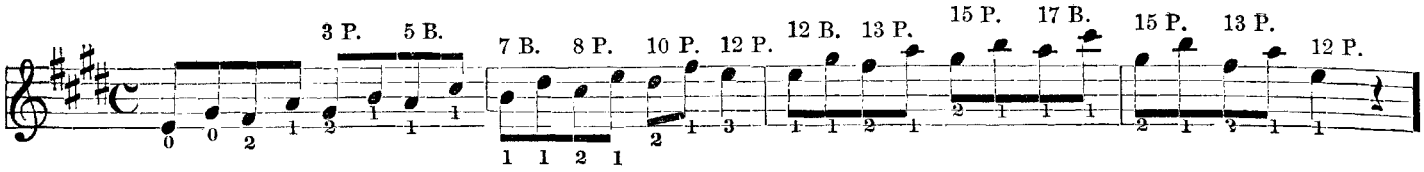
MARCH.



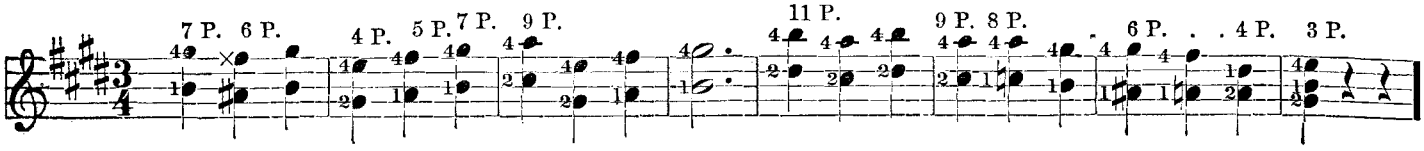
GALOP.



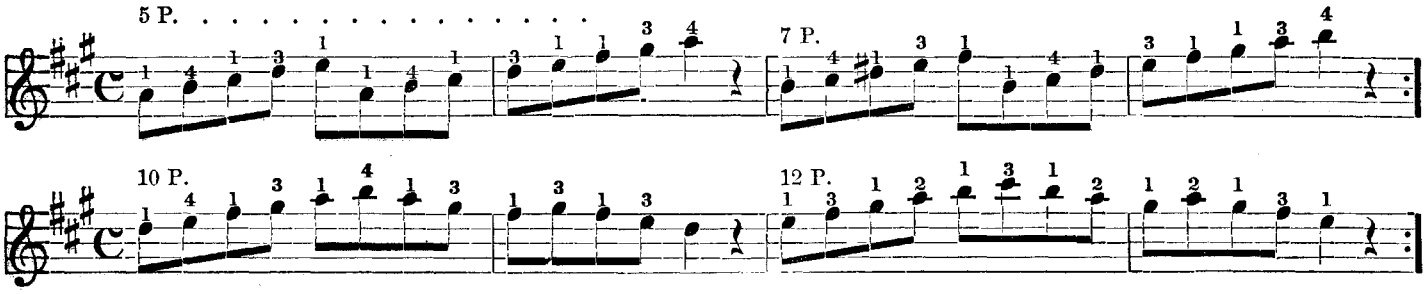
Exercise on 2d & 3d Strings.



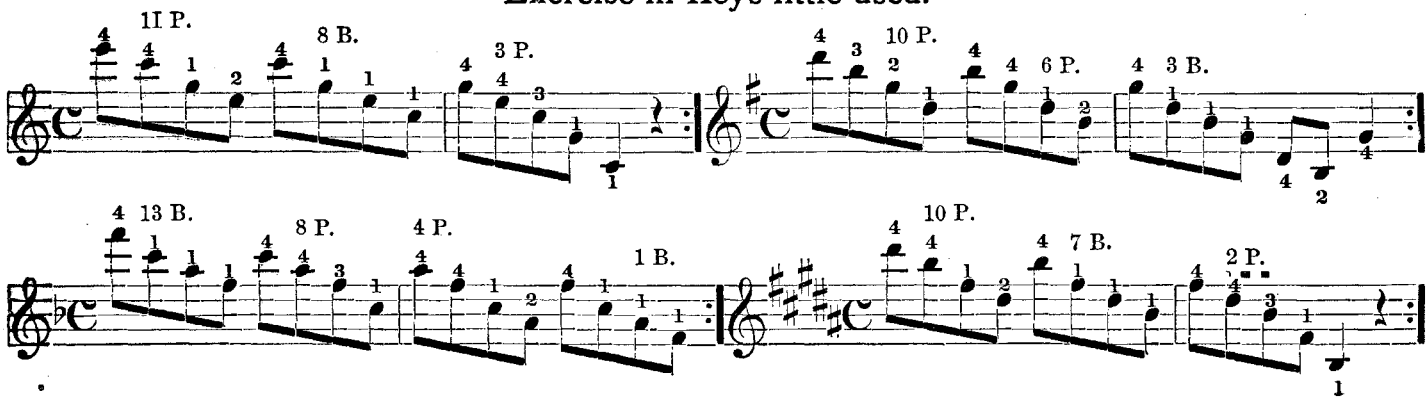
* Exercise on 1st & 3d Strings.



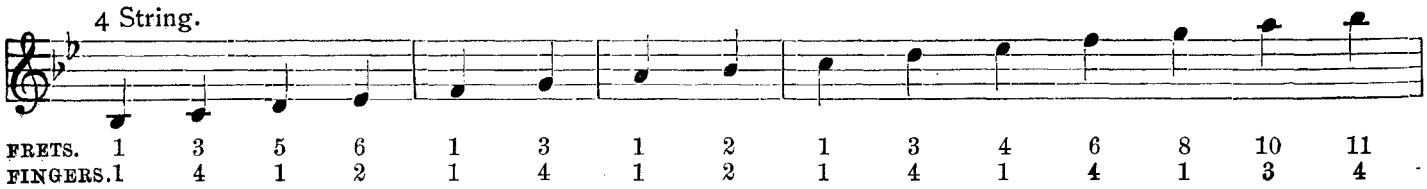
Fingering in the Upper Register.



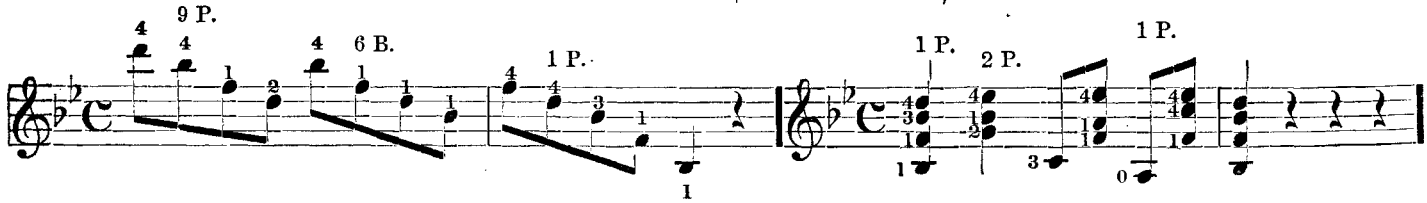
Exercise in Keys little used.



Scale of B♭.



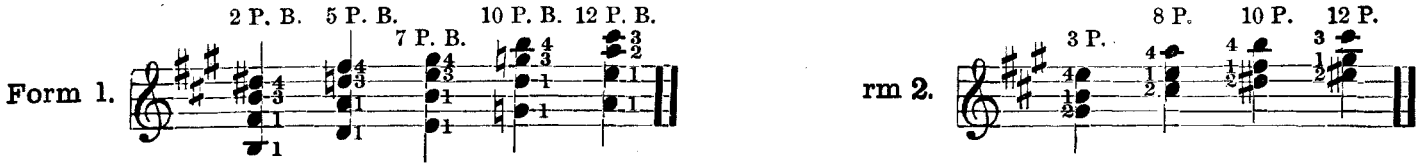
Exercise in B♭. (Seldom used.)



* The positions are determined by the fret that the first finger is on unless it happens that the first finger is not used. In that case the lowest finger determines the position. Examples will be seen in this Exercise.

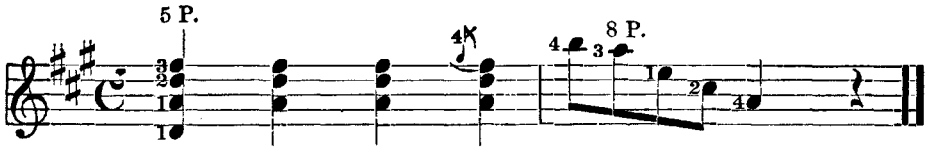
System of fingering the Positions.

Showing where the 3d and 4th fingers are substituted by the 2d and 3d.

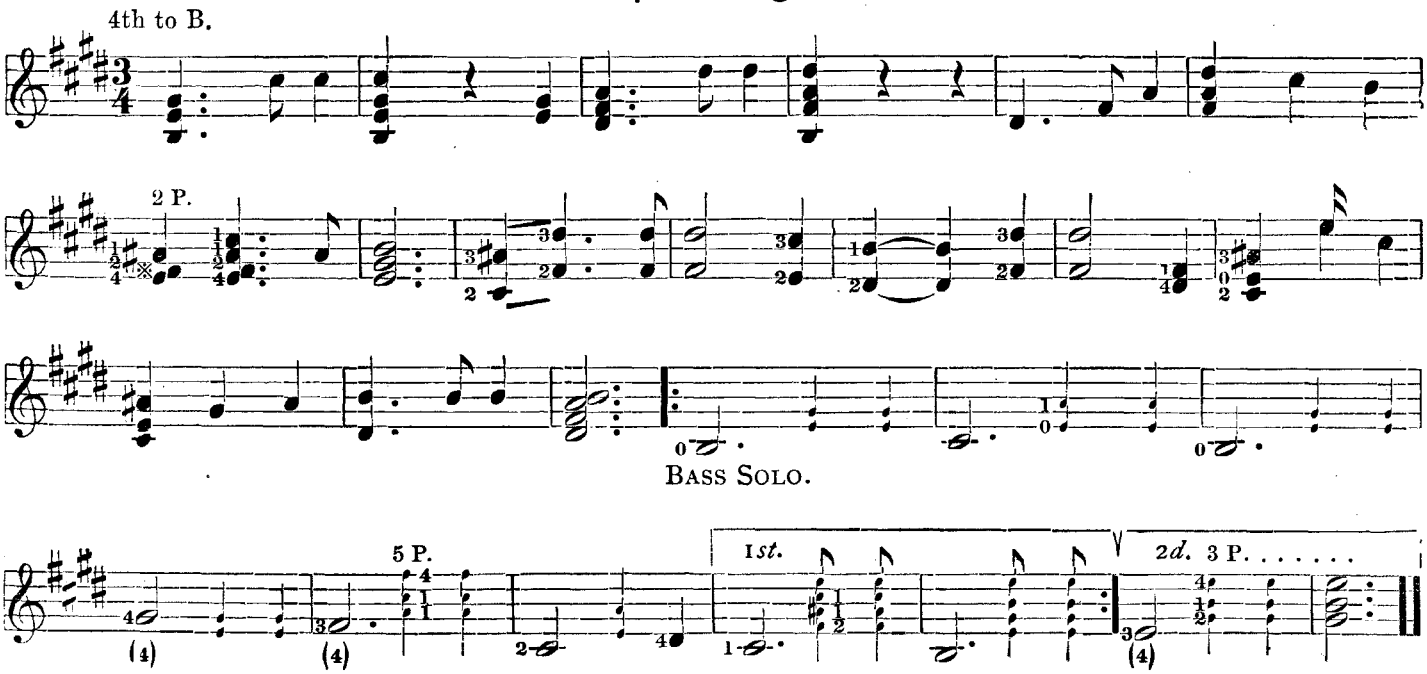


Some writers make the change at the 5th fret or position in form 1, and in form 2 carry it to the 10th or 12th position before changing the fingering, but I claim that it is as easy to carry both forms to the 12th and make the change at that position, thereby giving a rule for both forms in each register of the instrument.

Exercise showing where an exception to the above may sometimes be necessary.



Exercise with 4th String elevated to B.



TRANSPOSITION.

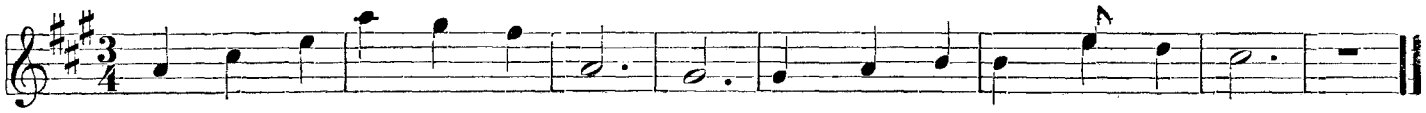
Every Banjoist should understand the rule of transposition, or changing a piece of music from one key to another. The rule is as follows:—

First decide which key you wish to play or sing in, then write each note as many intervals higher or lower than the original as the key you change to is from the original. By this rule pieces written for other instruments may easily be adapted to the Banjo.

EXAMPLES.

ORIGINAL KEY B♭.

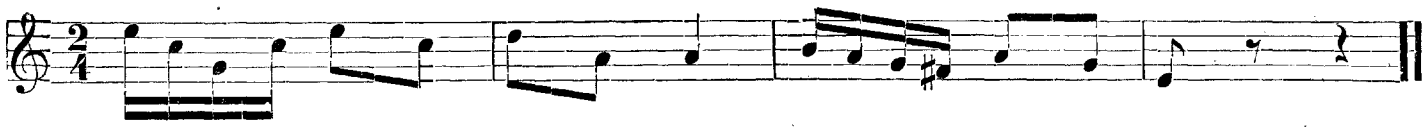
TRANSPOSED TO A, WRITTEN ONE-HALF TONE LOWER.



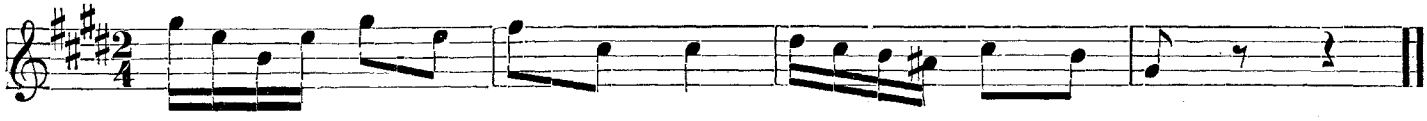
ORIGINAL KEY E♭.

TRANSPOSED TO D, ONE-HALF TONE LOWER.

ORIGINAL KEY C.



TRANSPOSED TO E, TWO TONES HIGHER.



A SHORT DICTIONARY OF MUSICAL TERMS.

Accelerando. Quicker.

Adagio. Very Slow.

Ad Libitum. (*ad lib.*) At will or discretion of performer.

Allegretto. Cheerful.

Allegro. Rapid.

Andante. Quite Slow.

A Tempo. In regular time.

Coda. Added measures at the close of a piece.

Con Spirito. Quickly, Spirited.

Crescendo. (*cres.*) Gradually increasing the tone

Diminuendo. (*dim.*) Gradually decreasing the tone.

Dolce. In a sweet style.

Fine. The End.

Furioso. Fiery.

Legato. In a smooth and connected manner.

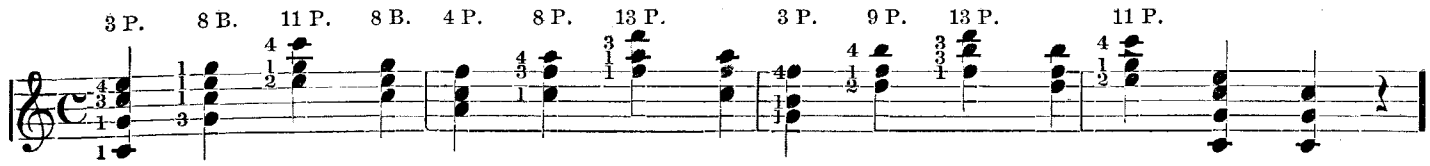
Moderato. With a moderate movement.

Rallentando. (*rall.*) Lessening the speed.

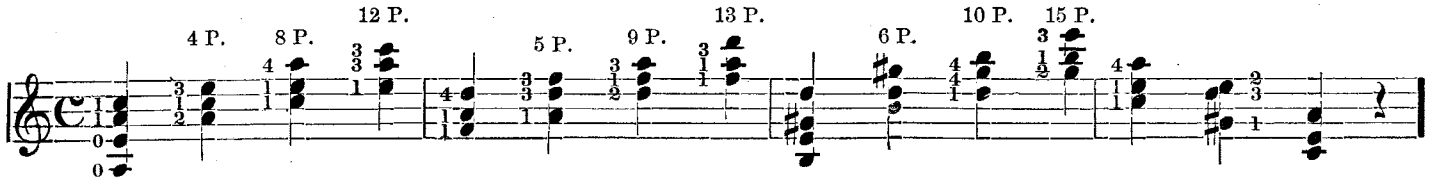
Ritard. (*rit.*) Slower.

Trio. A second movement to a March, Gavotte, etc.

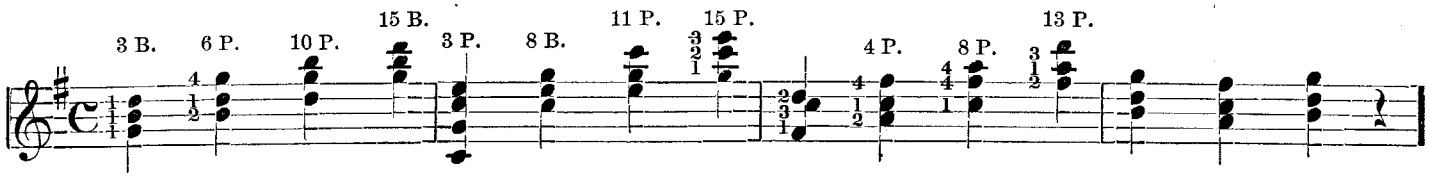
C MAJOR.



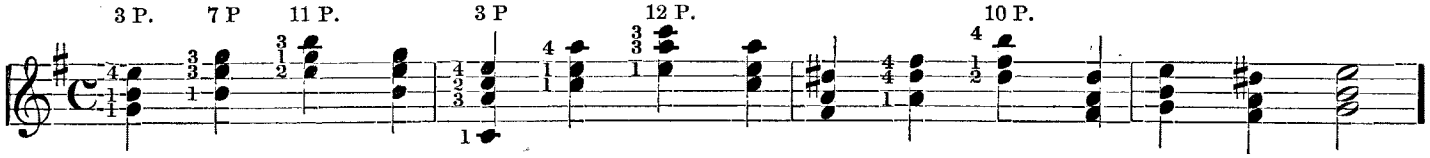
A MINOR.



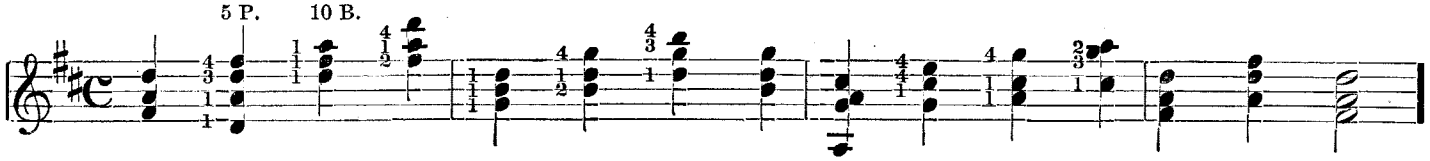
G MAJOR.



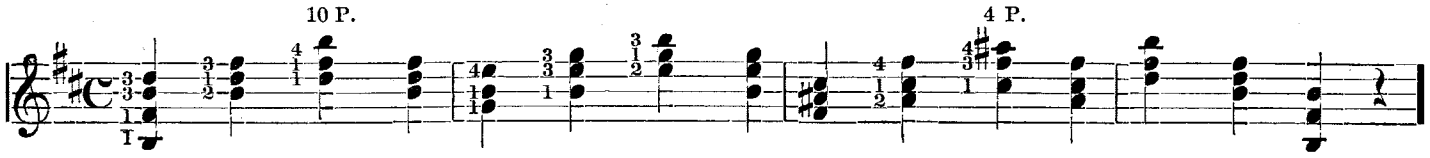
E MINOR.



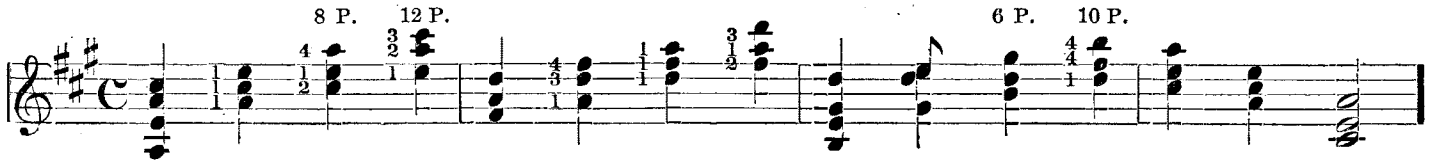
D MAJOR.



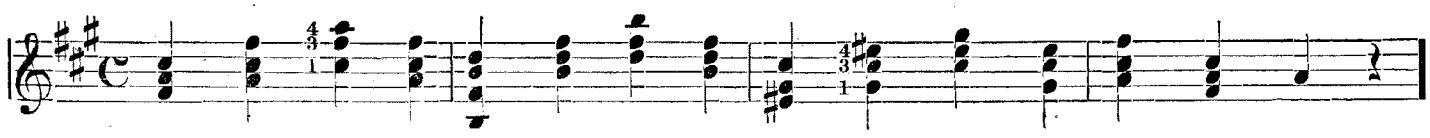
B MINOR.



A MAJOR.

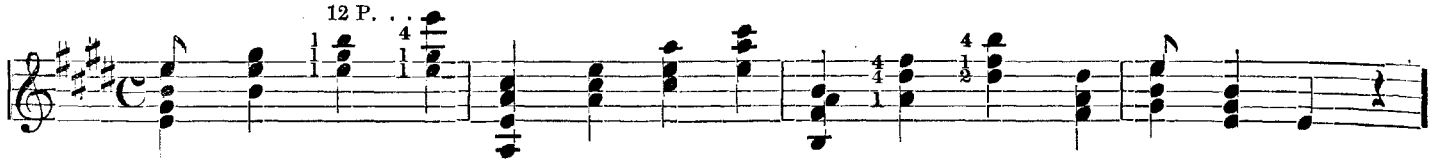


F♯ MINOR.

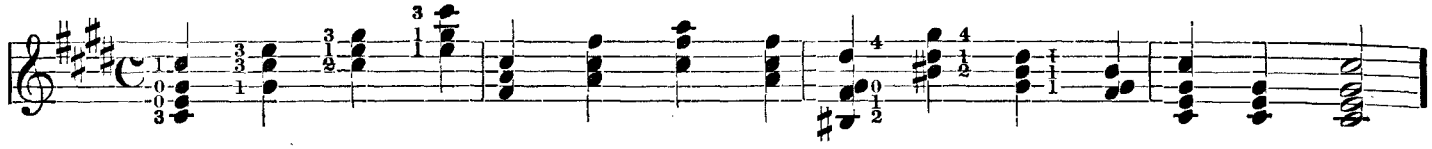


CHORDS IN MAJOR AND MINOR KEYS.

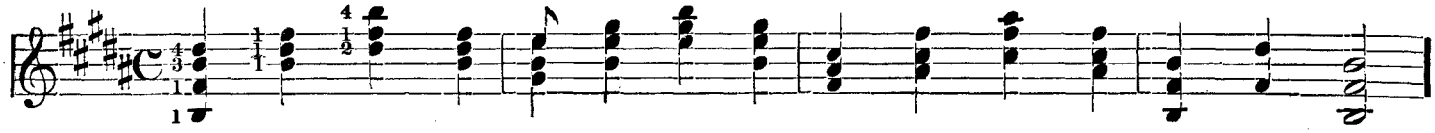
E MAJOR.



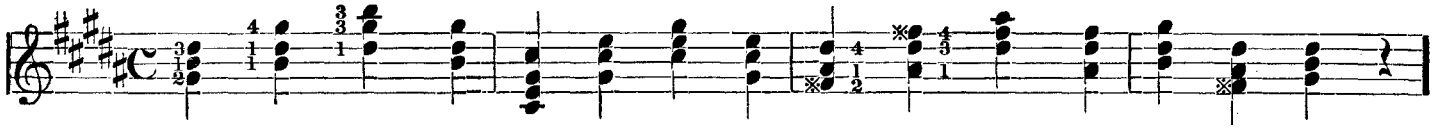
C♯ MINOR.



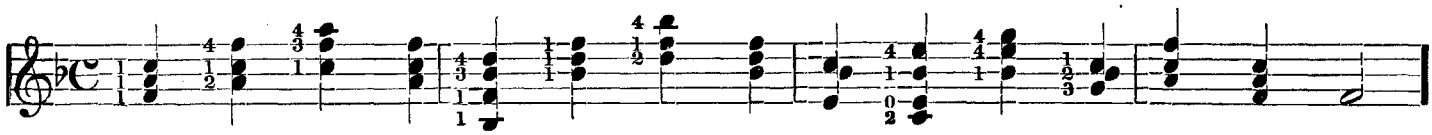
B MAJOR.



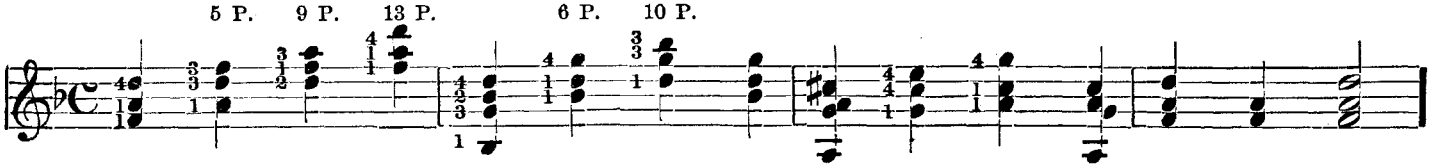
G♯ MINOR.



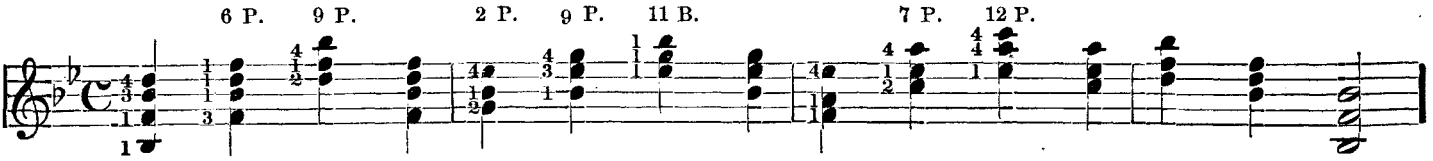
F MAJOR.



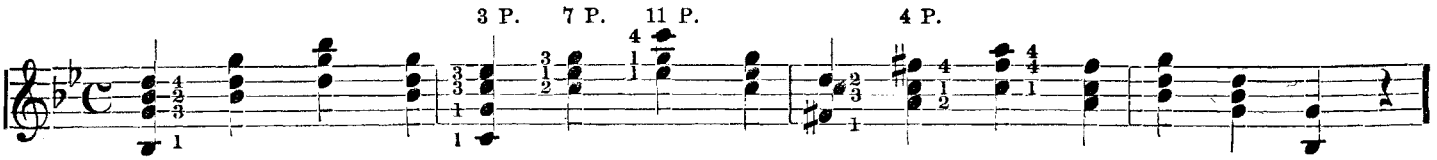
D MINOR.



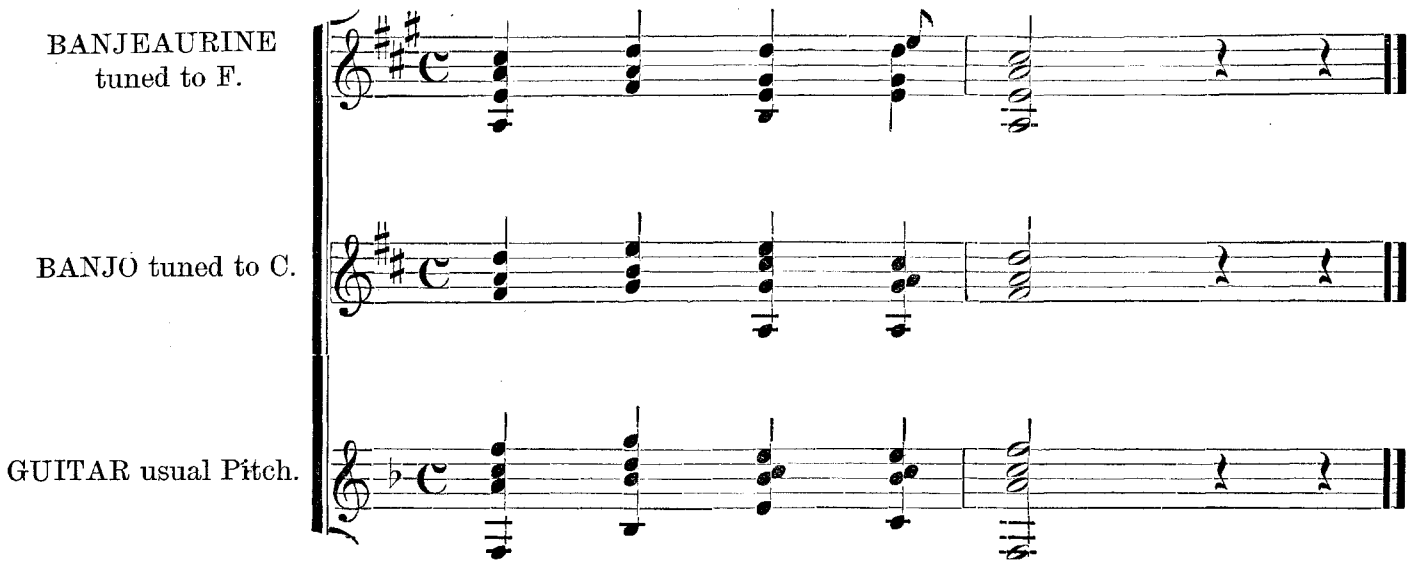
B♭ MAJOR.



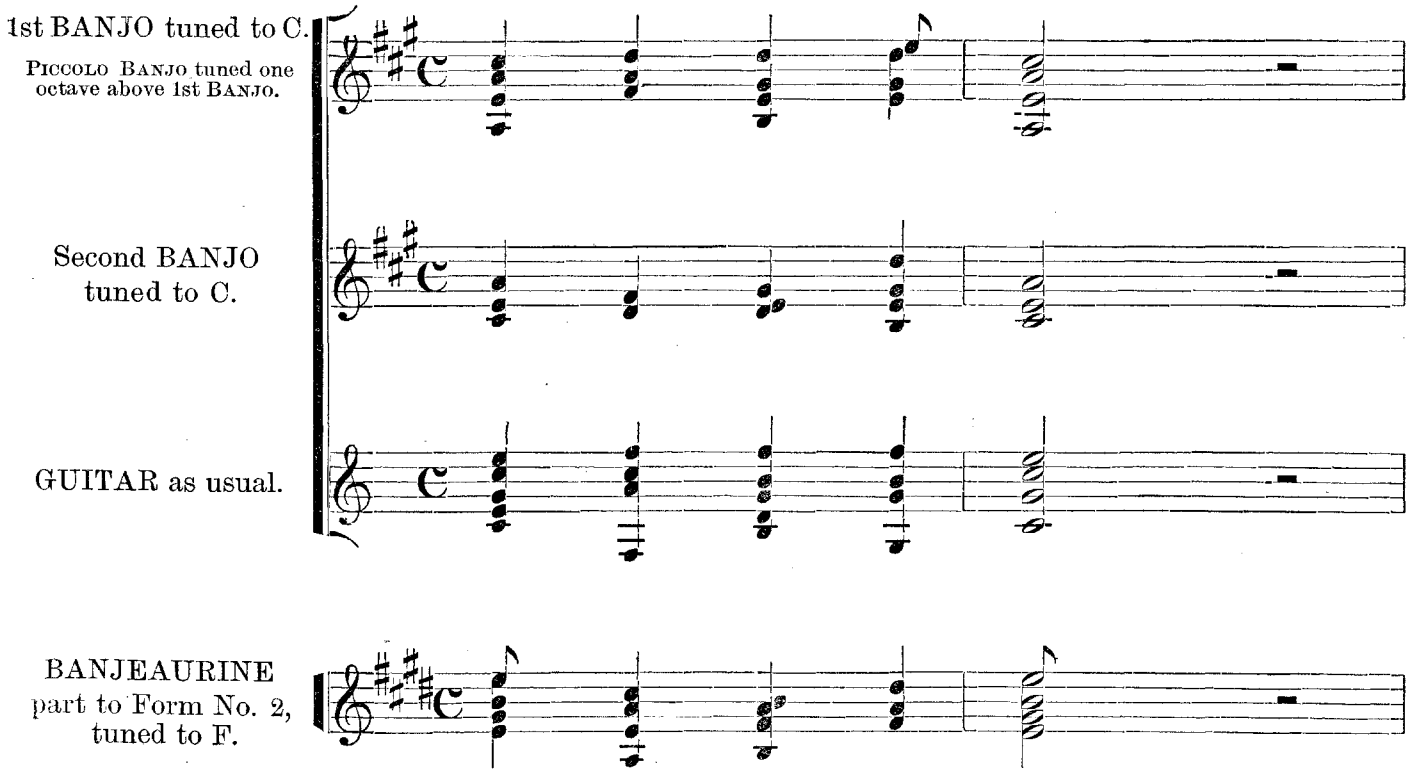
G MINOR.



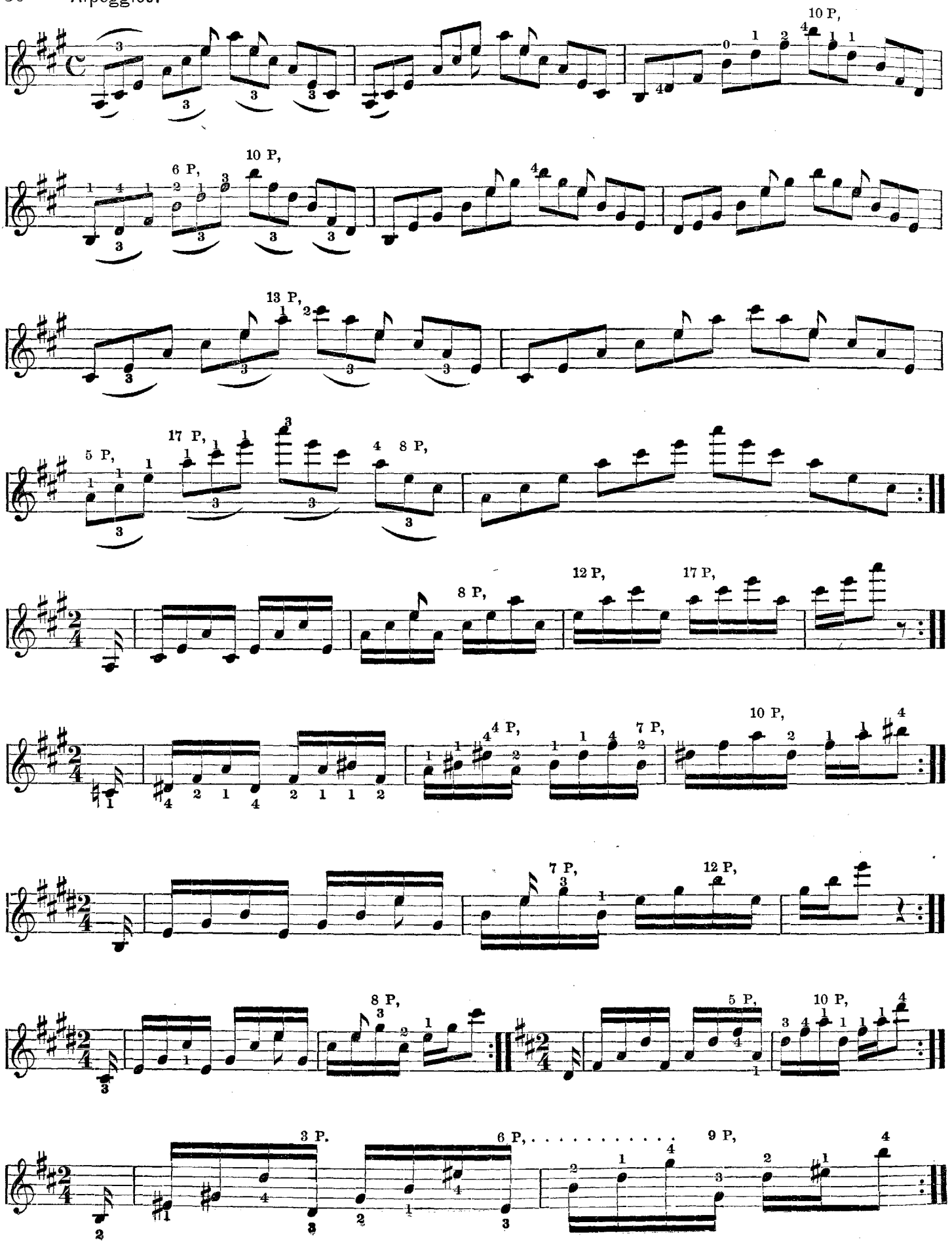
FORM No. I.



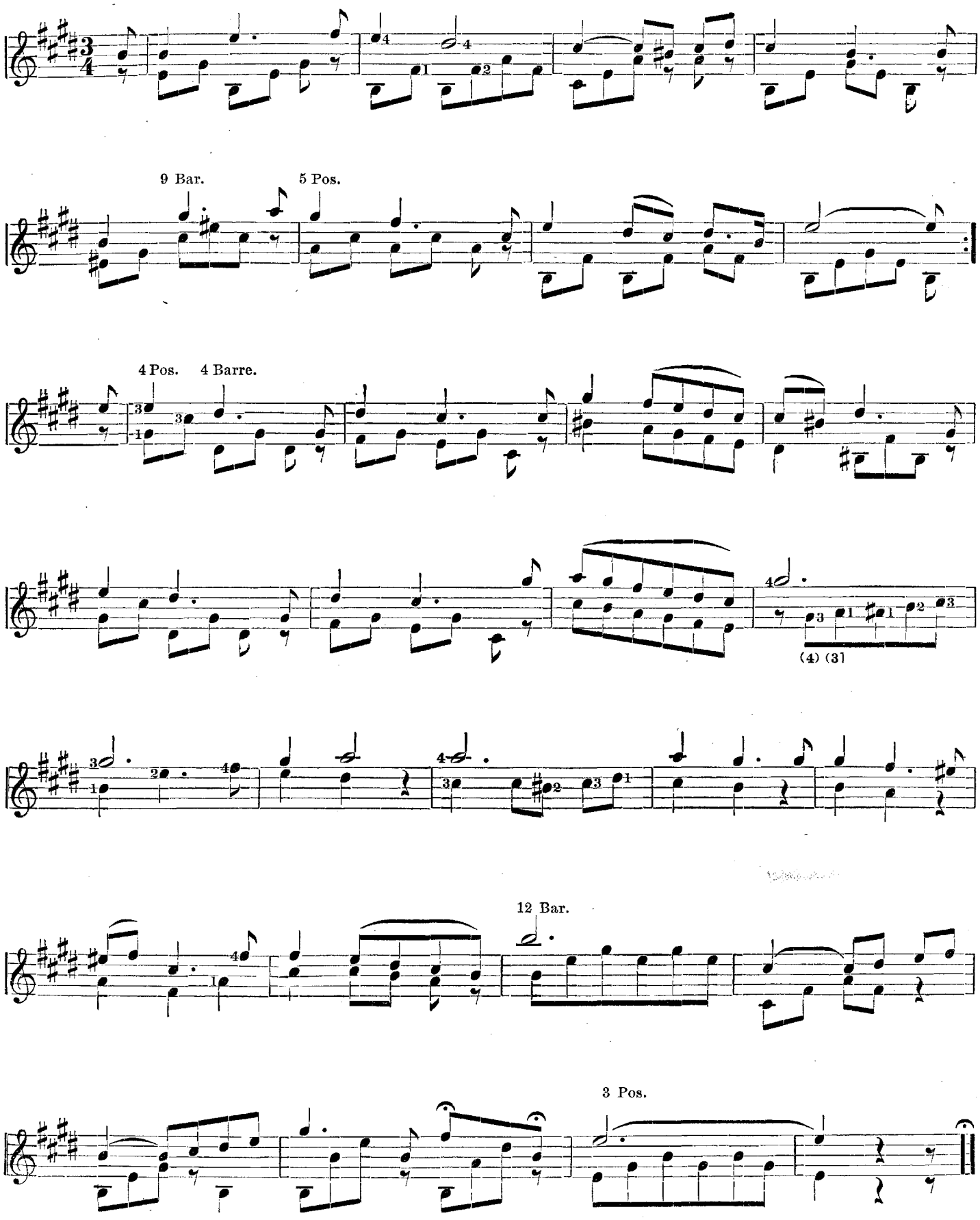
FORM No. 2.



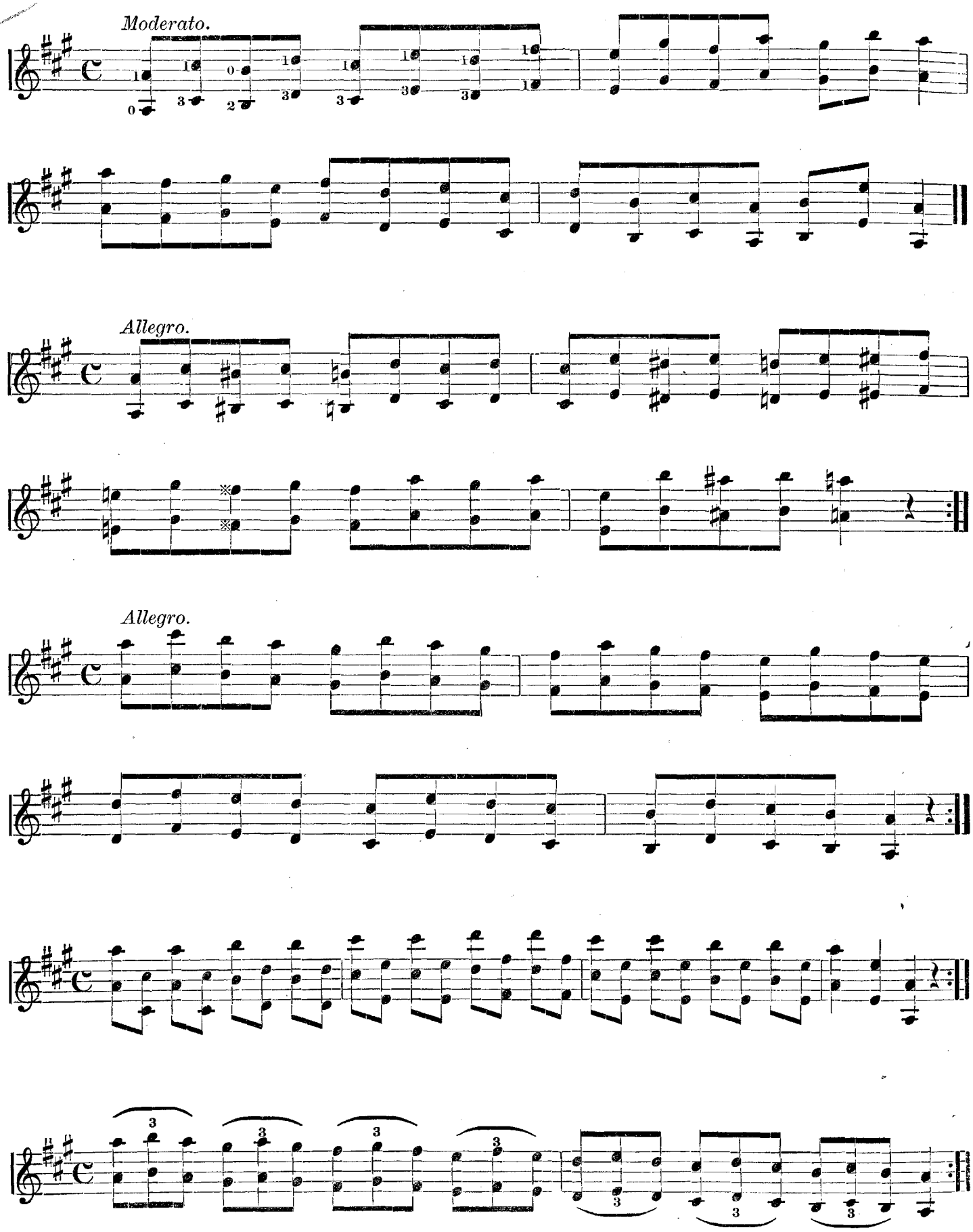
The best results will be obtained from FORM No. 1. If MANDOLINS are used the parts would be written in the same keys as those of the GUITAR.


10 P,
6 P,
10 P,
13 P,
5 P,
17 P,
8 P,
12 P,
17 P,
4 P,
7 P,
10 P,
7 P,
12 P,
8 P,
5 P,
10 P,
3 P.
6 P,
9 P,

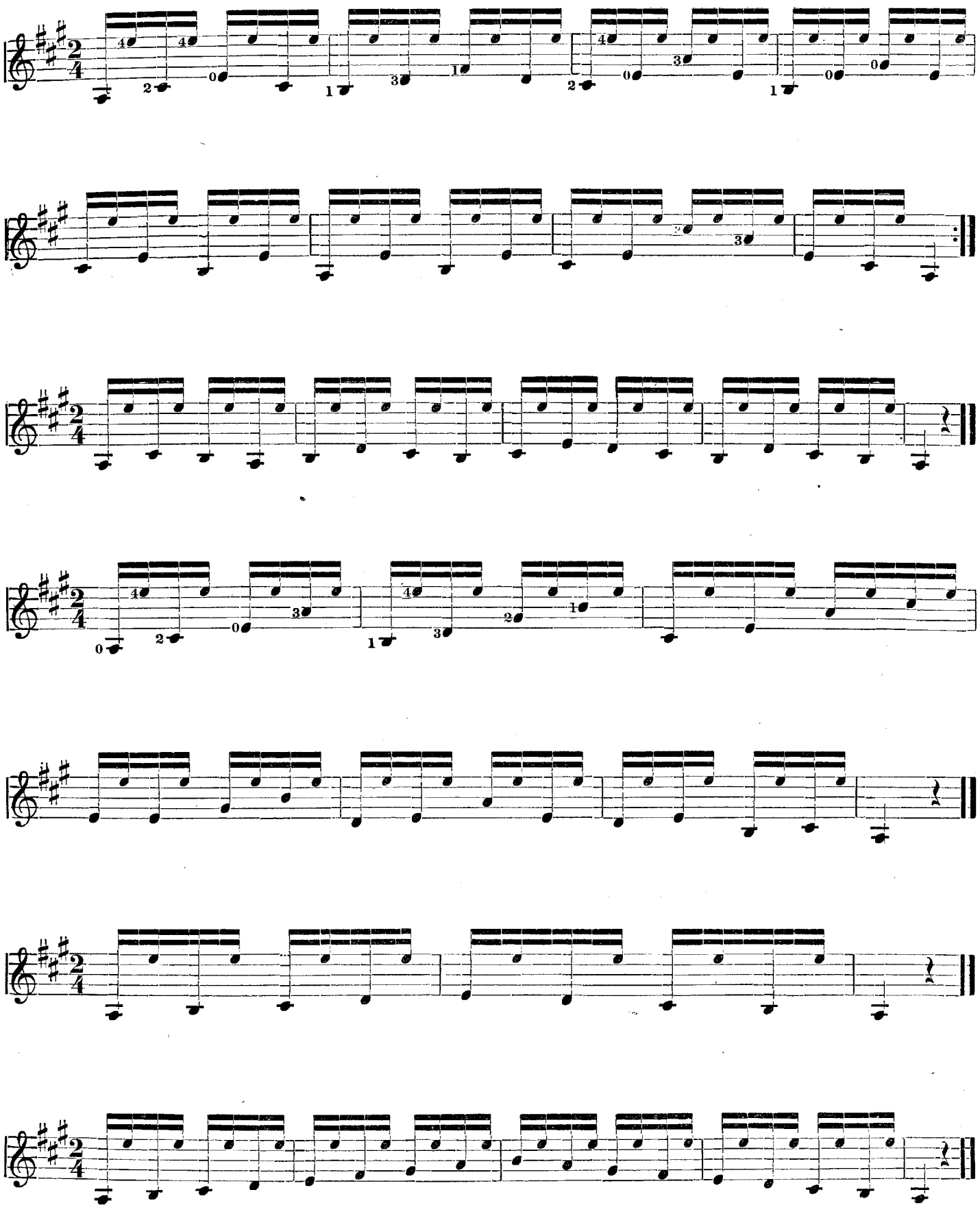
Tremolo with under notes picked with thumb. Bass String Elevated.

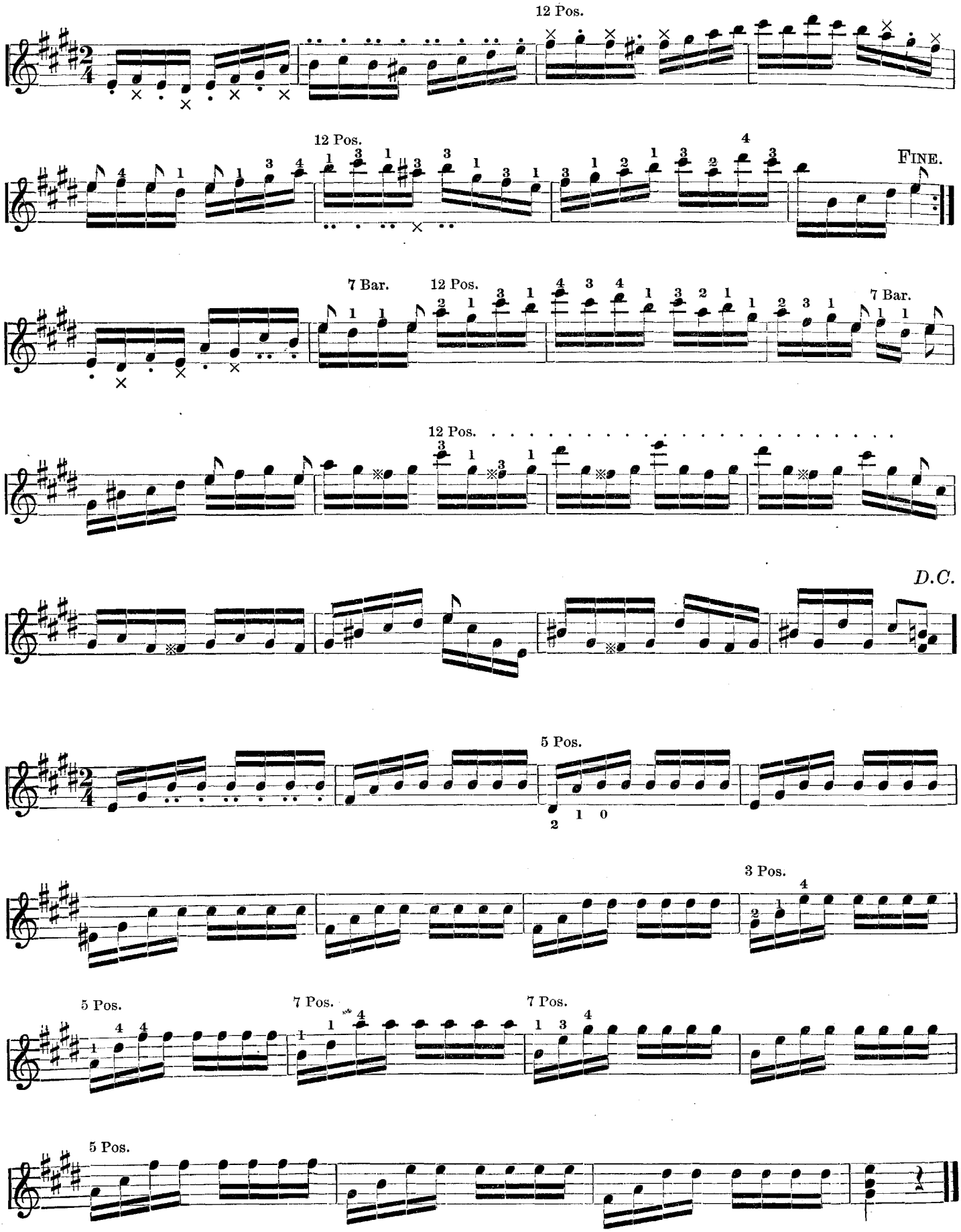


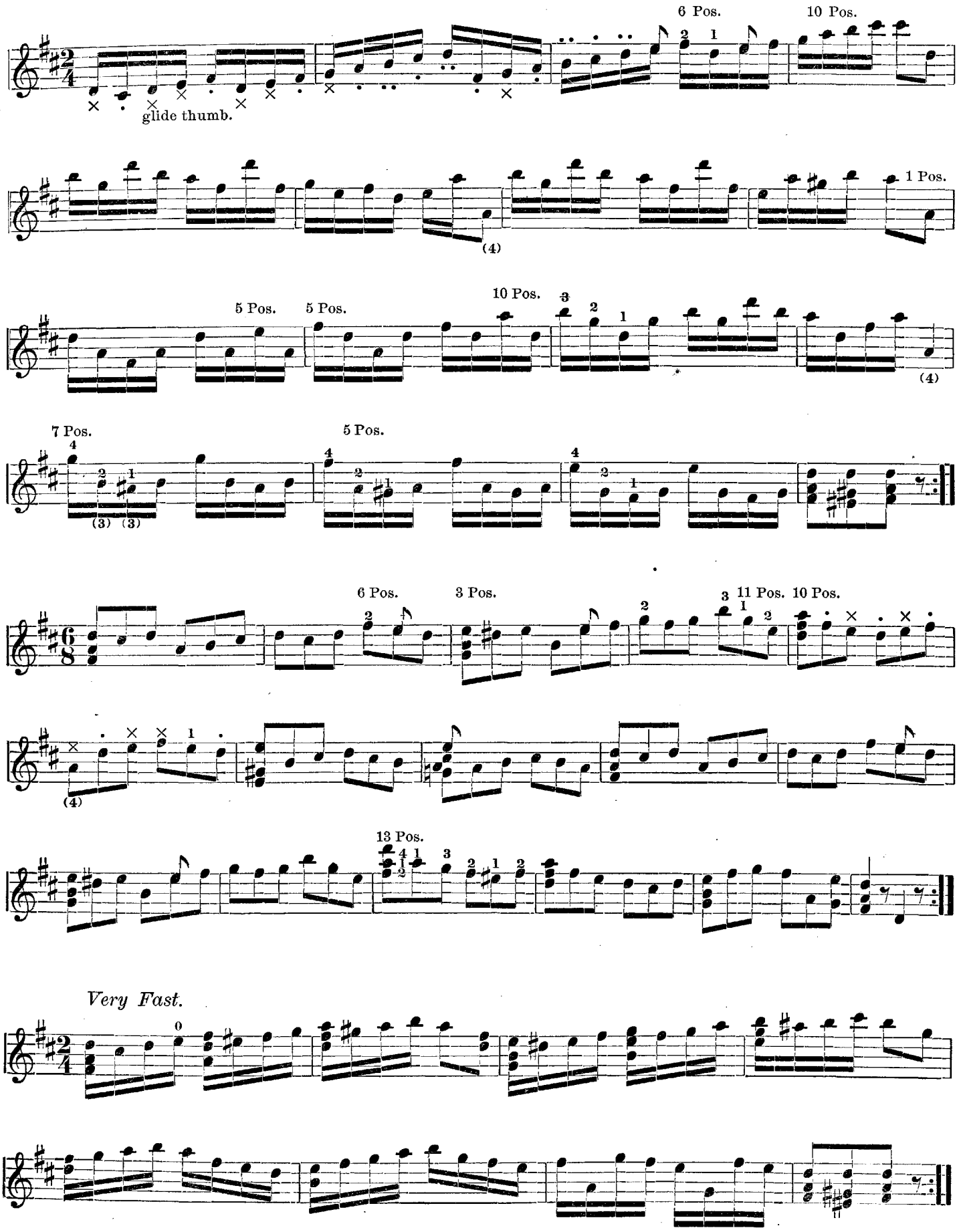
EXERCISE IN OCTAVES.



Hold 4th finger down throughout entire exercise.

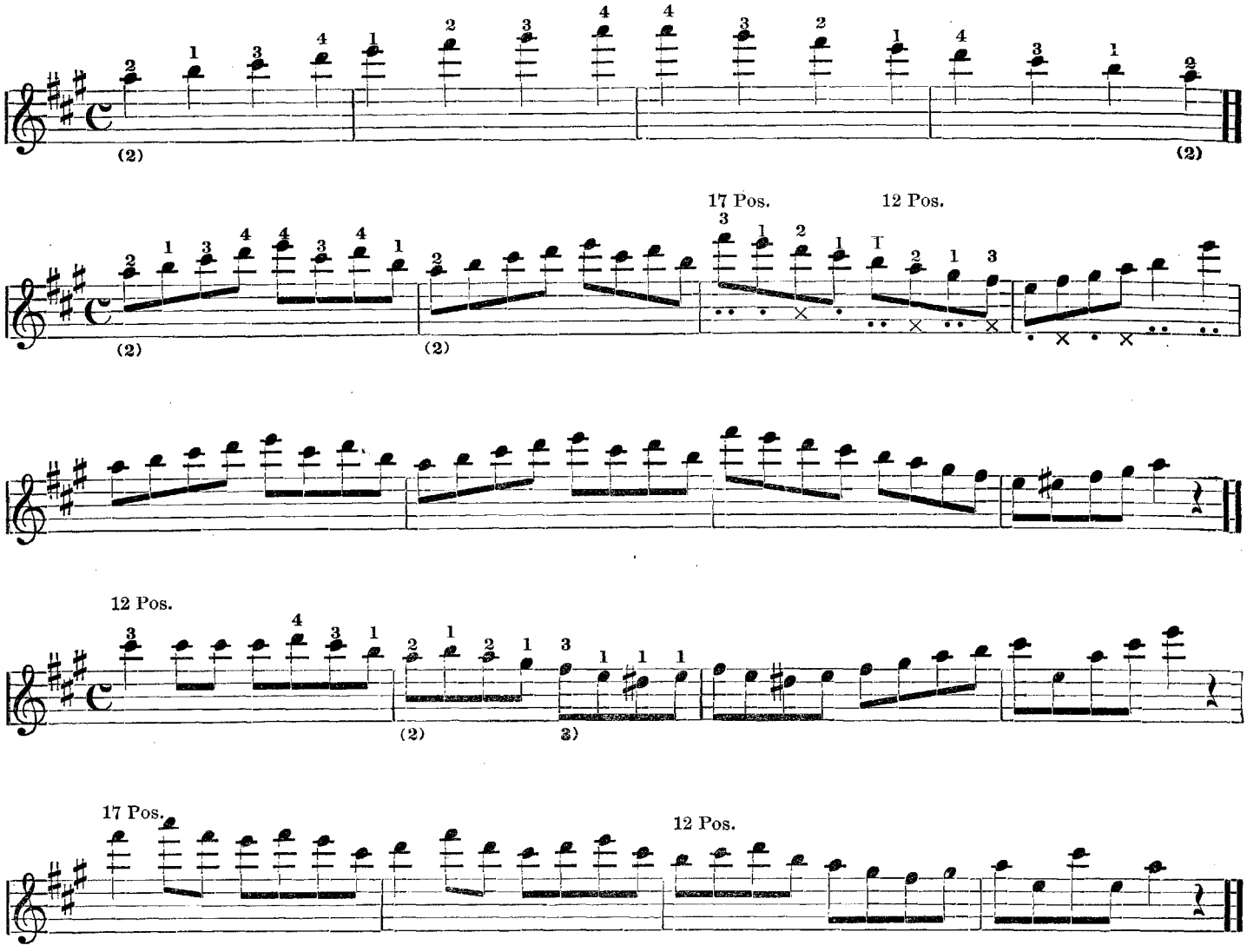



12 Pos.
12 Pos.
FINE.
7 Bar.
12 Pos.
7 Bar.
12 Pos.
D.C.
5 Pos.
3 Pos.
5 Pos.
7 Pos.
7 Pos.
5 Pos.

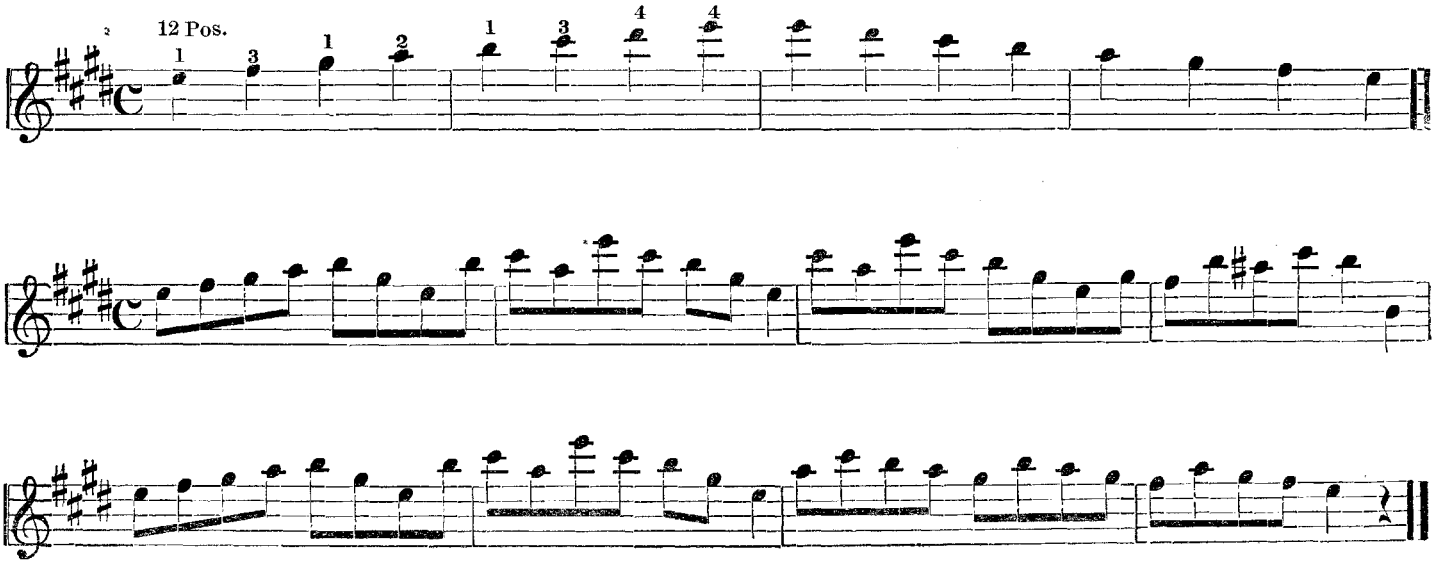

6 Pos.
10 Pos.
glide thumb.
1 Pos.
5 Pos.
5 Pos.
10 Pos.
7 Pos.
5 Pos.
6 Pos.
3 Pos.
11 Pos.
10 Pos.
13 Pos.
Very Fast.

EXERCISES IN THE THIRD OCTAVE.

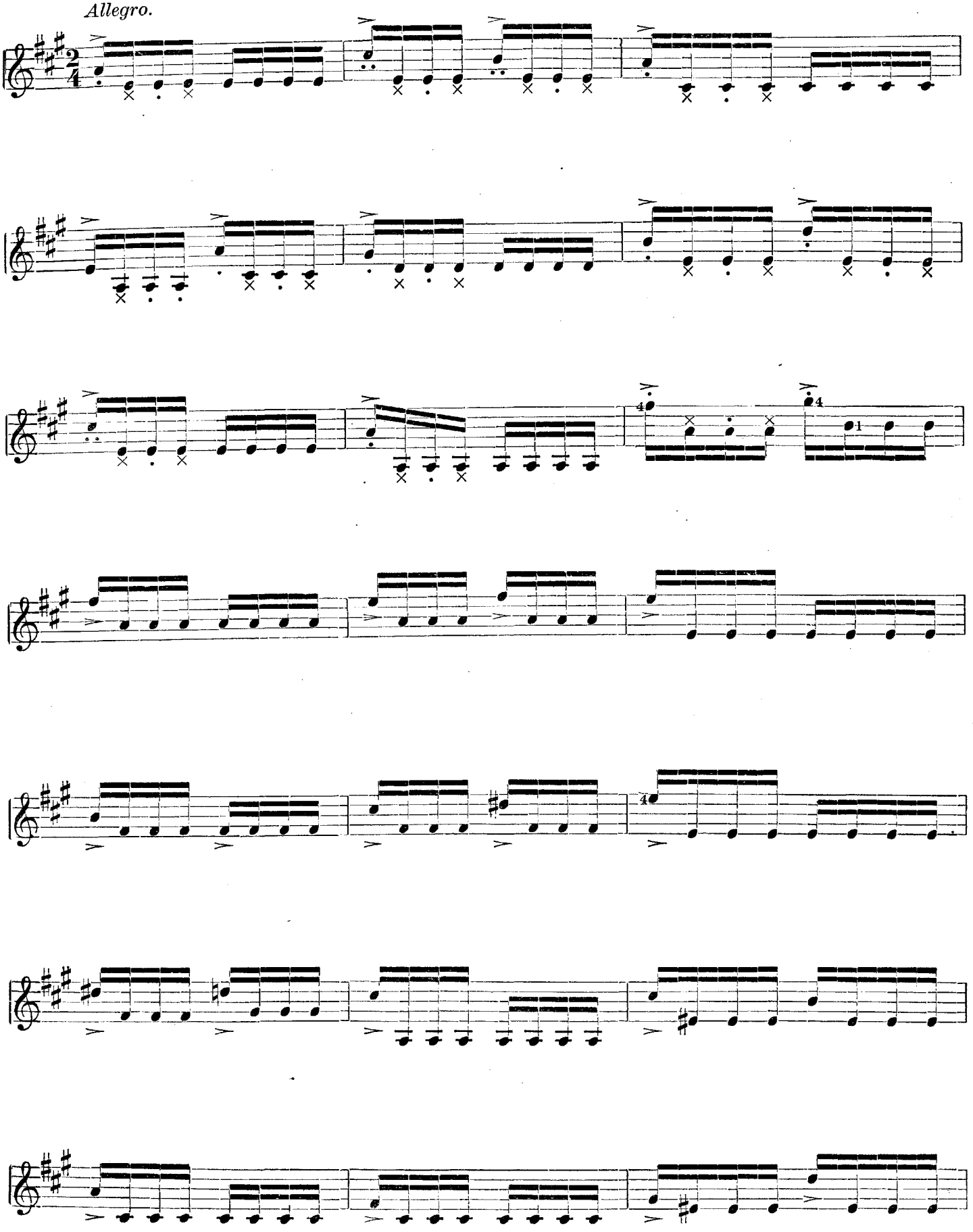
SCALE IN A MAJOR.

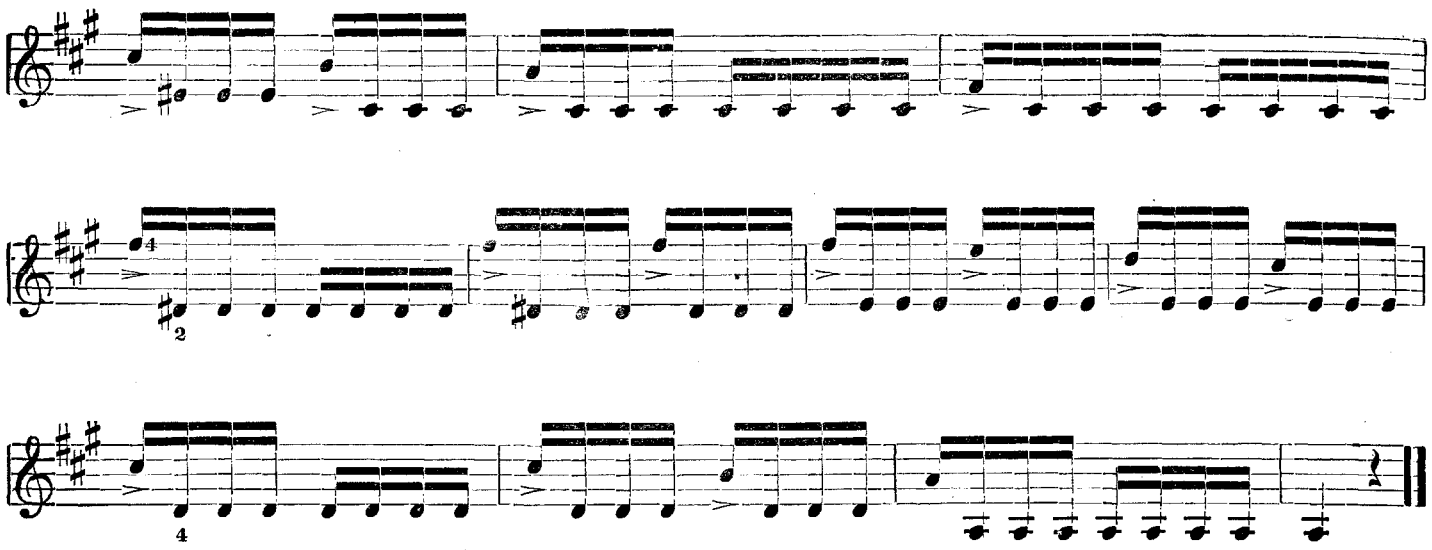


SCALE IN E MAJOR-



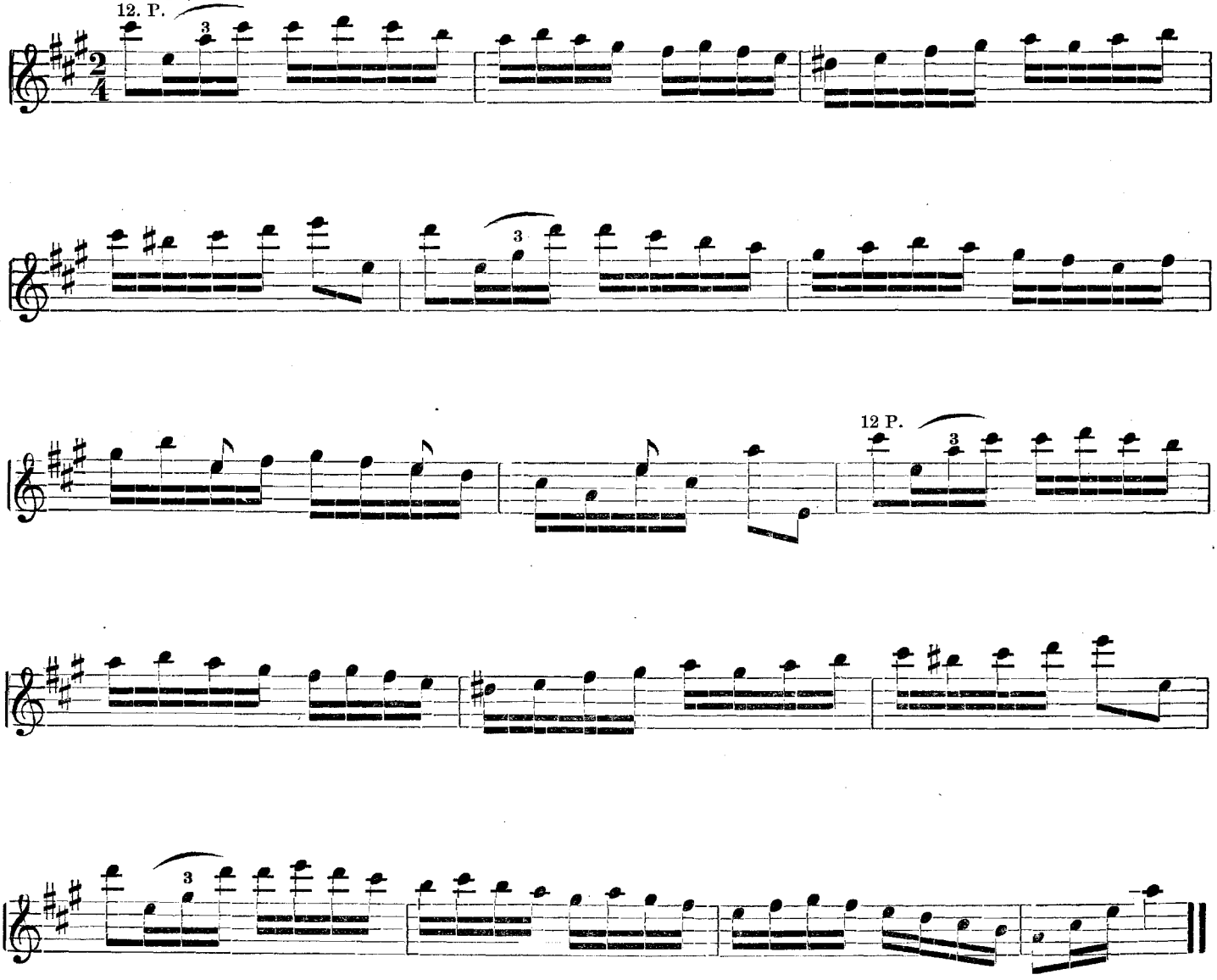
Allegro.

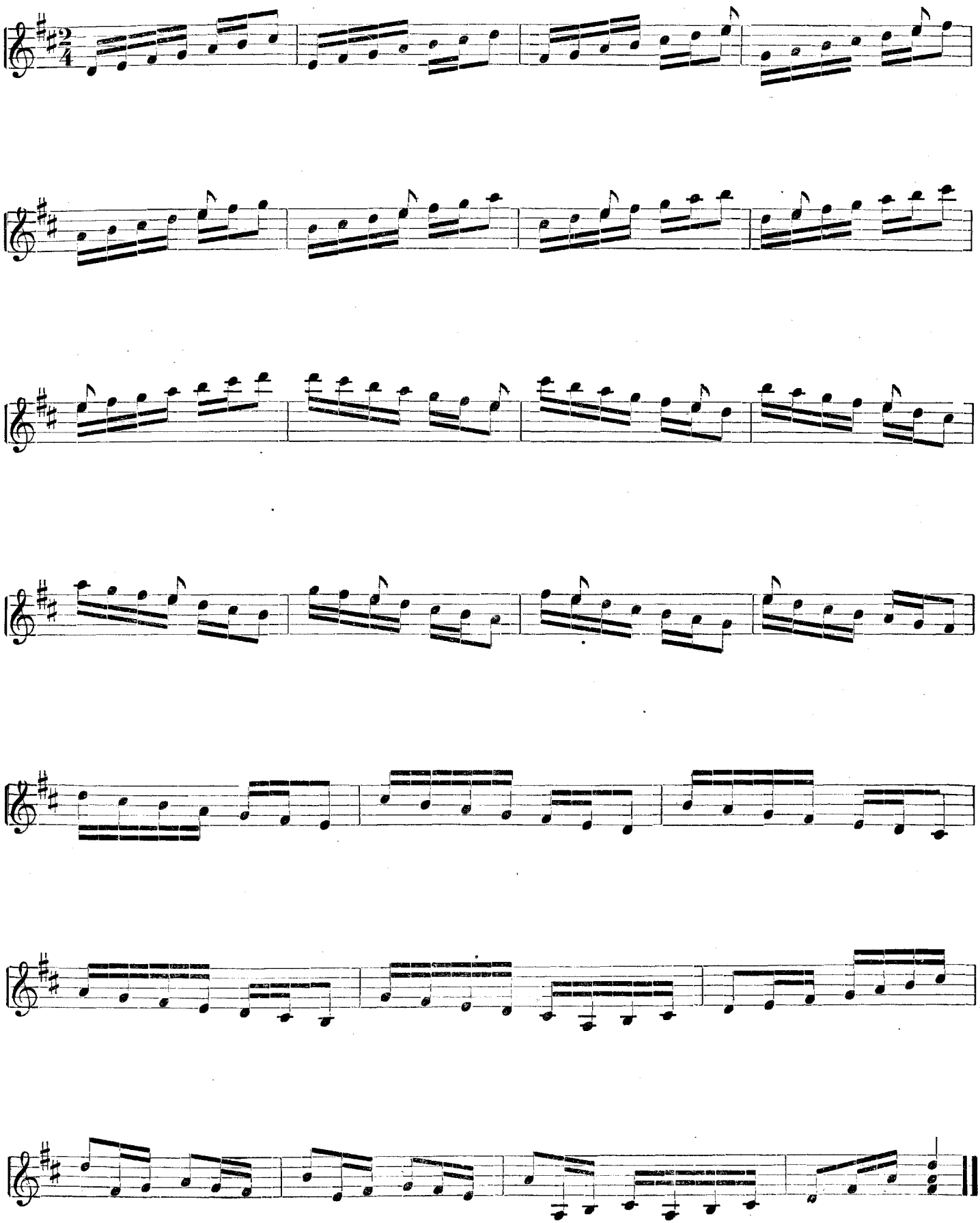


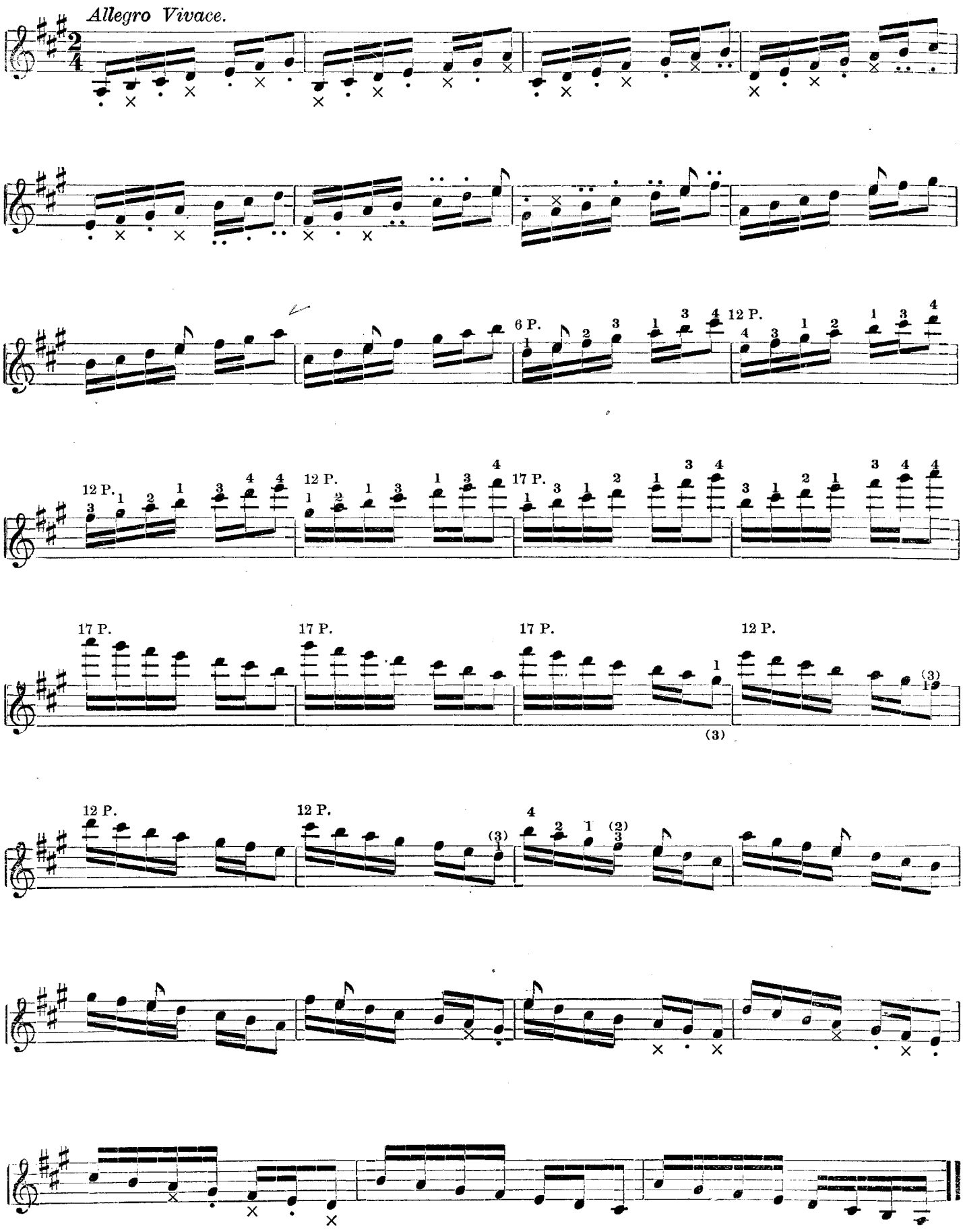


Use Alternate Fingering.

Very fast.

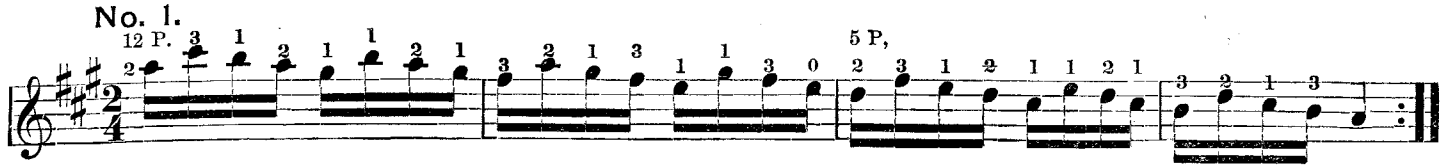




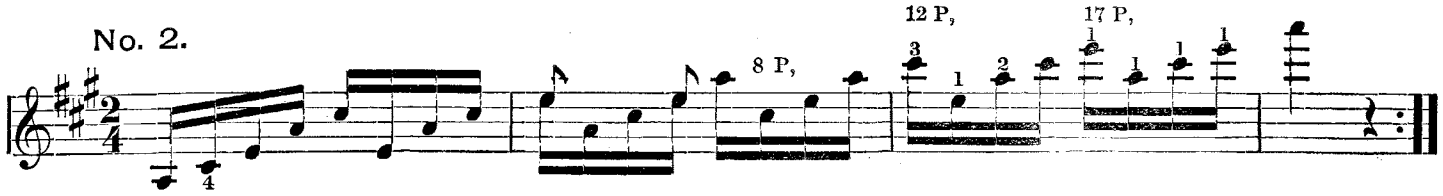

Allegro Vivace.
6 P.
12 P.
12 P.
17 P.
12 P.
17 P.
17 P.
17 P.
12 P.
12 P.
12 P.

Play each one at least a dozen times.

No. 1.



No. 2.



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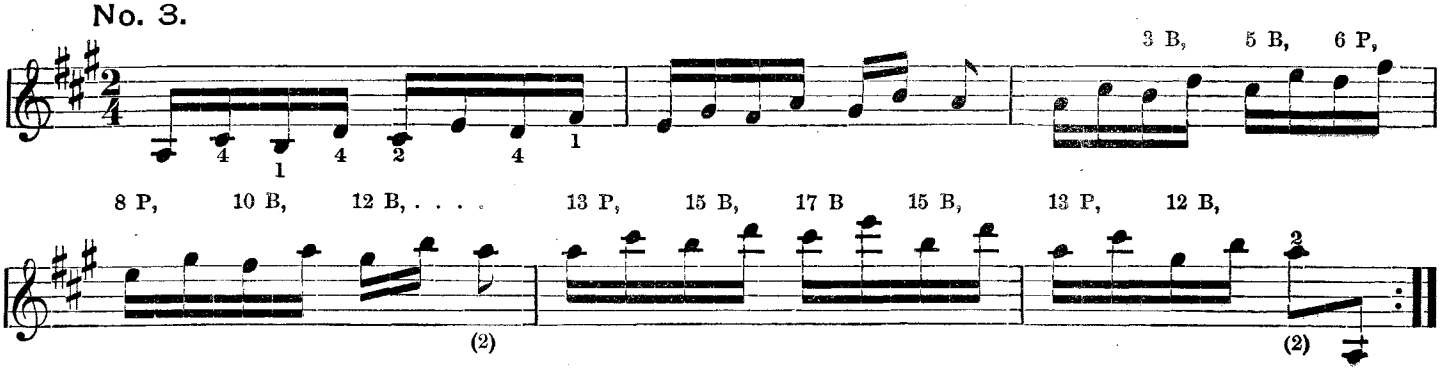

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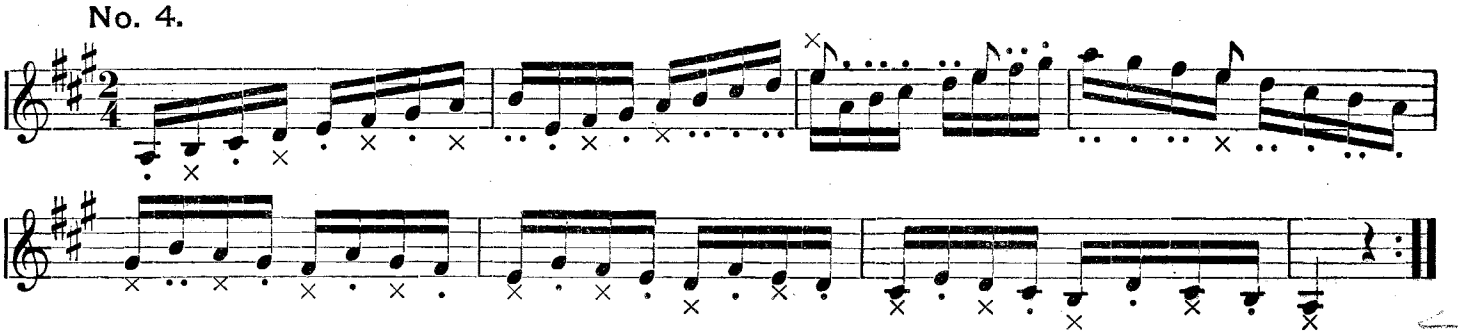

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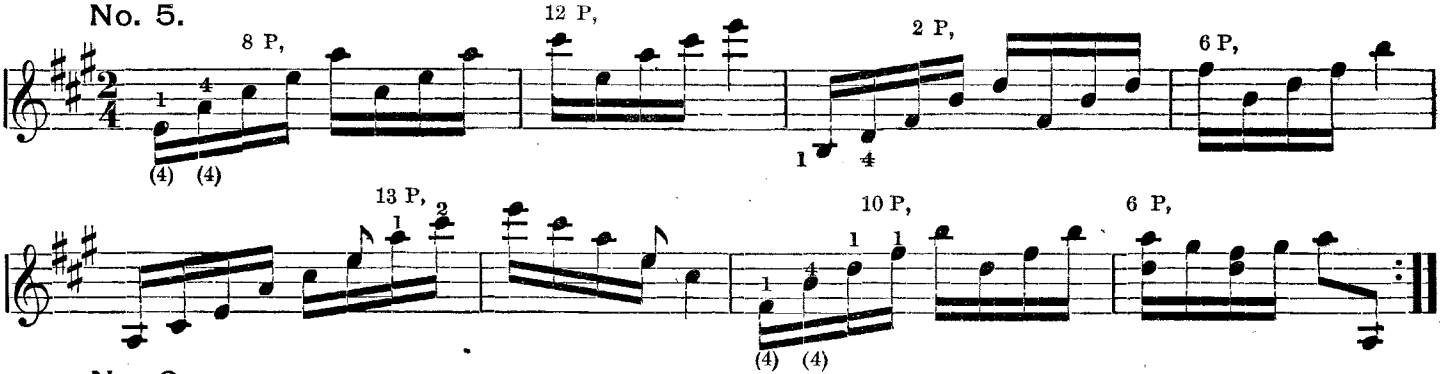

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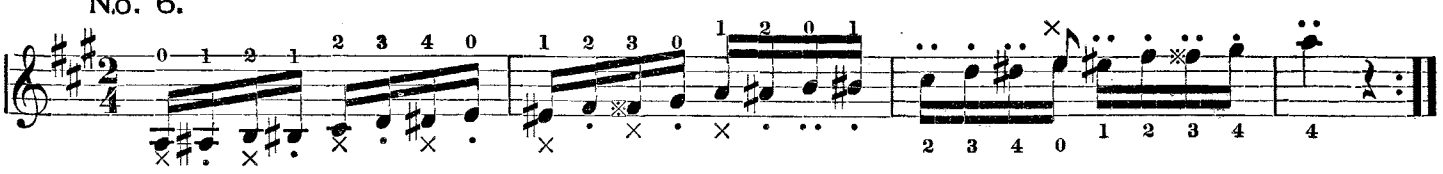

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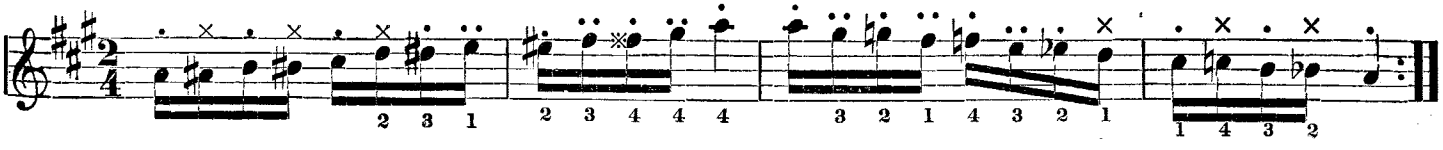
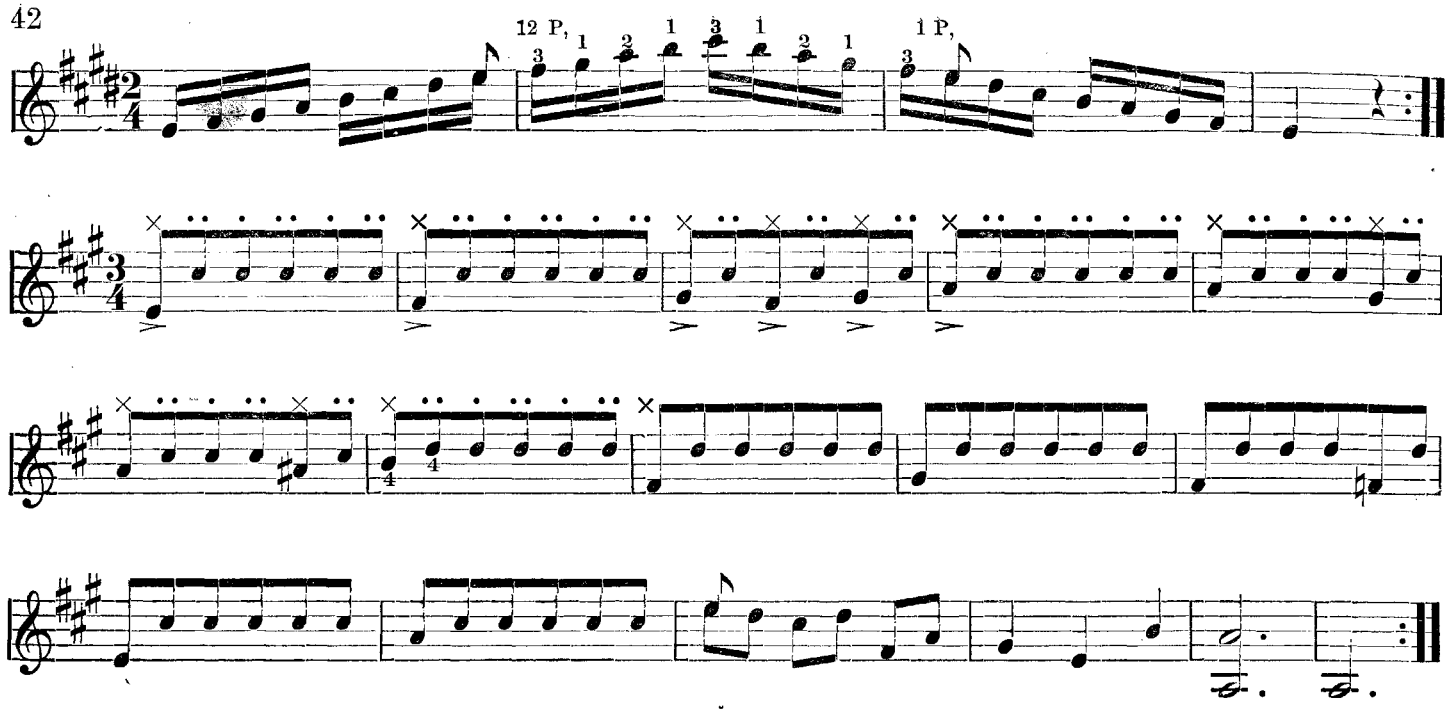
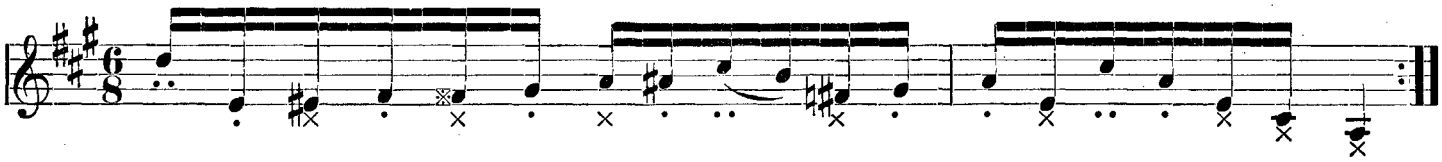
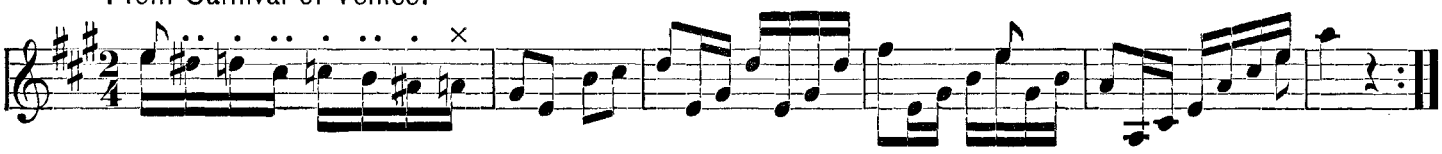




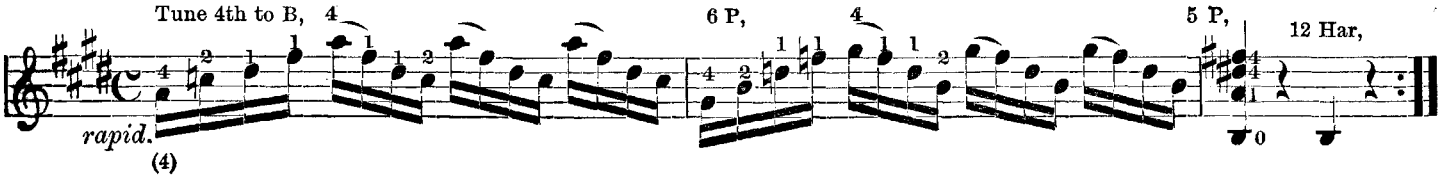
From Carnival of Venice.



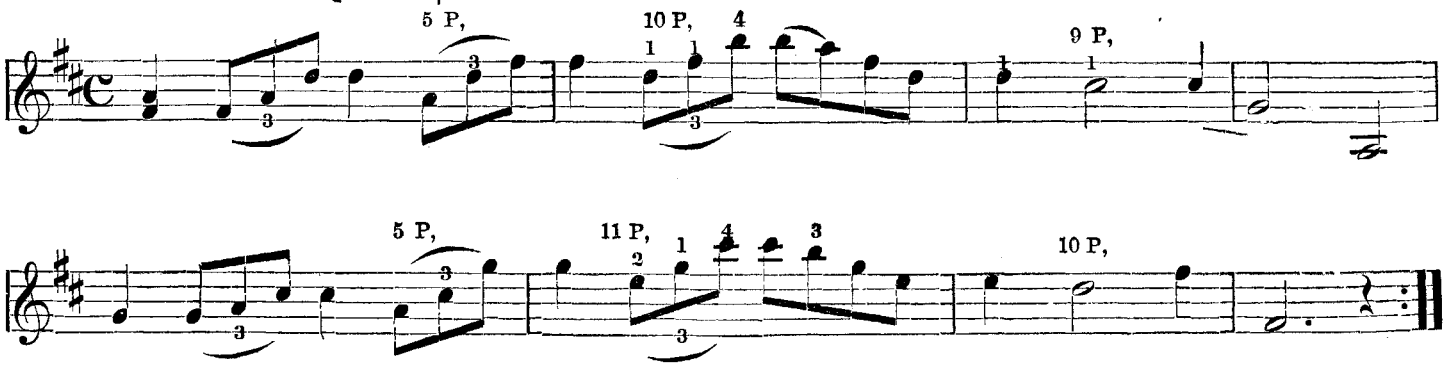
From Carnival of Venice.



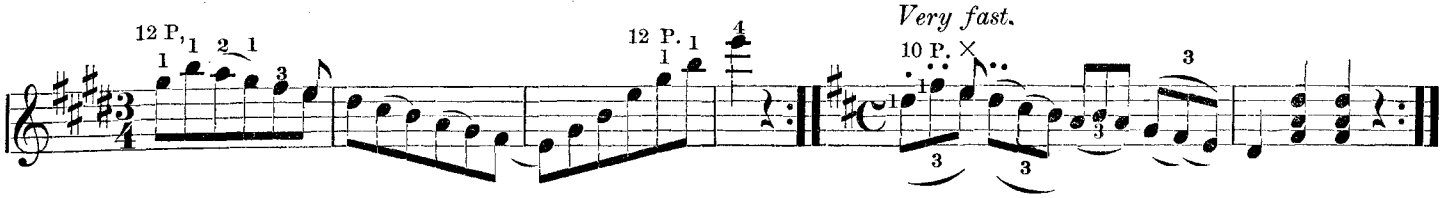
Cadenza from Oriella Polka.



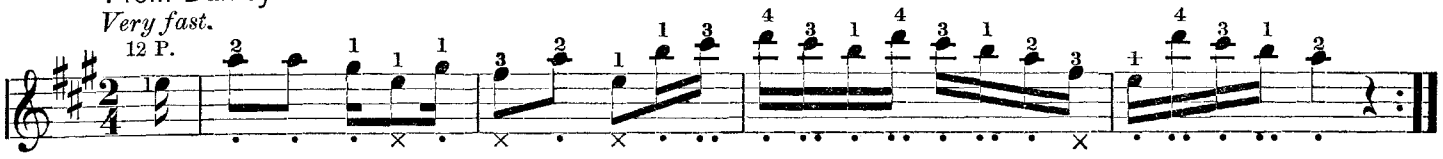
From Albemarle Quickstep.



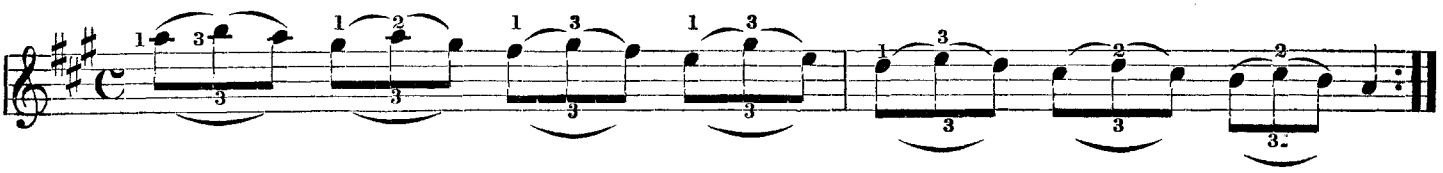
The following exercises are extracts from selections. Beginners often encounter such passages in pieces, and unless they are familiar with the execution of the same it leads to discouragement.



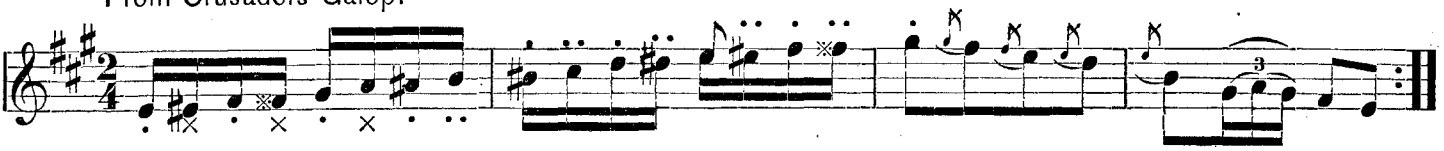
From Darkey Tickle.



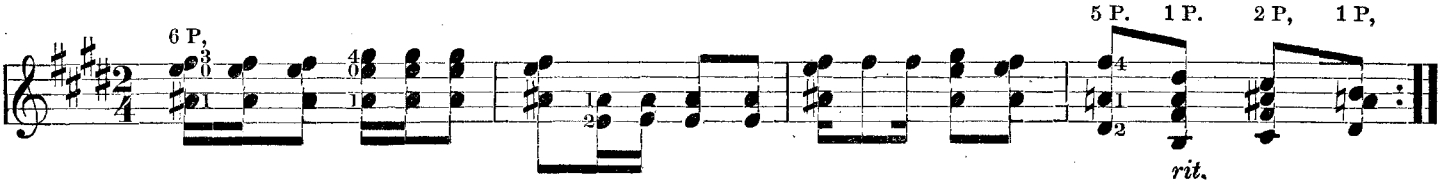
From Carnival of Venice.

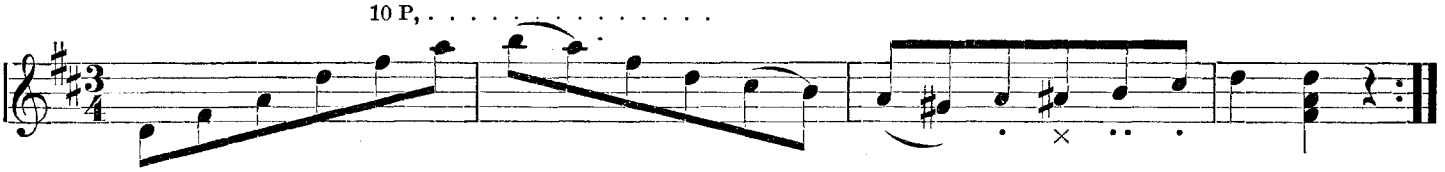


From Crusaders Galop.

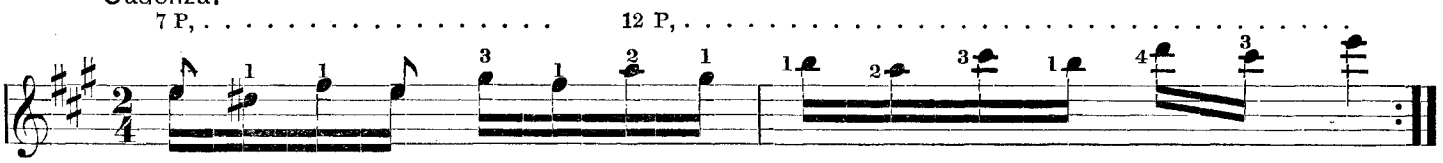


From American Princess Polka.

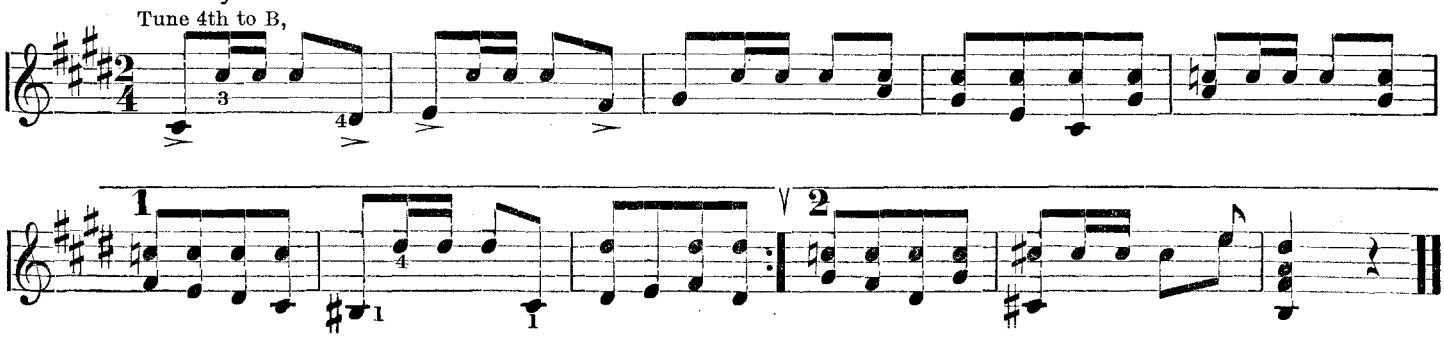




Cadenza.

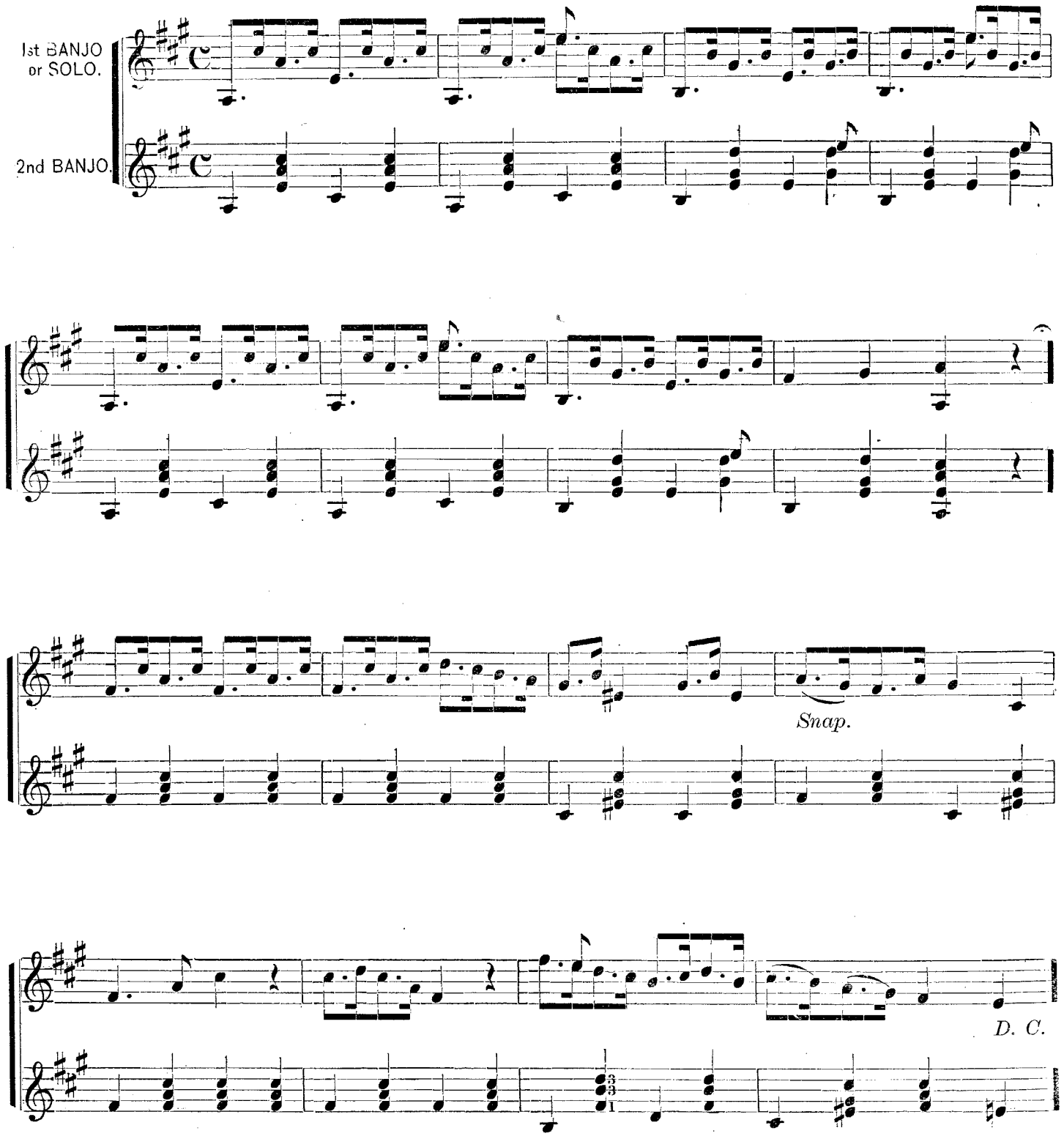


From Boys of America.



OLD PHILADELPHIA JIG.

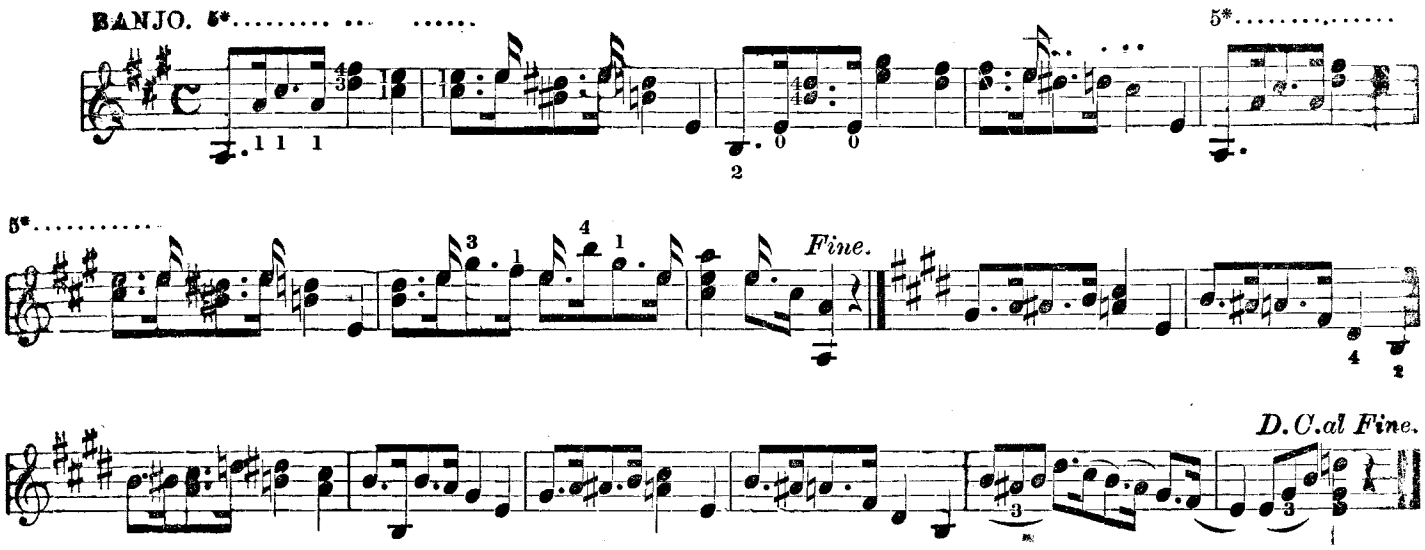
Arr. by **LEO CATLIN.**



L. B. Gatcomb Company, Boston.

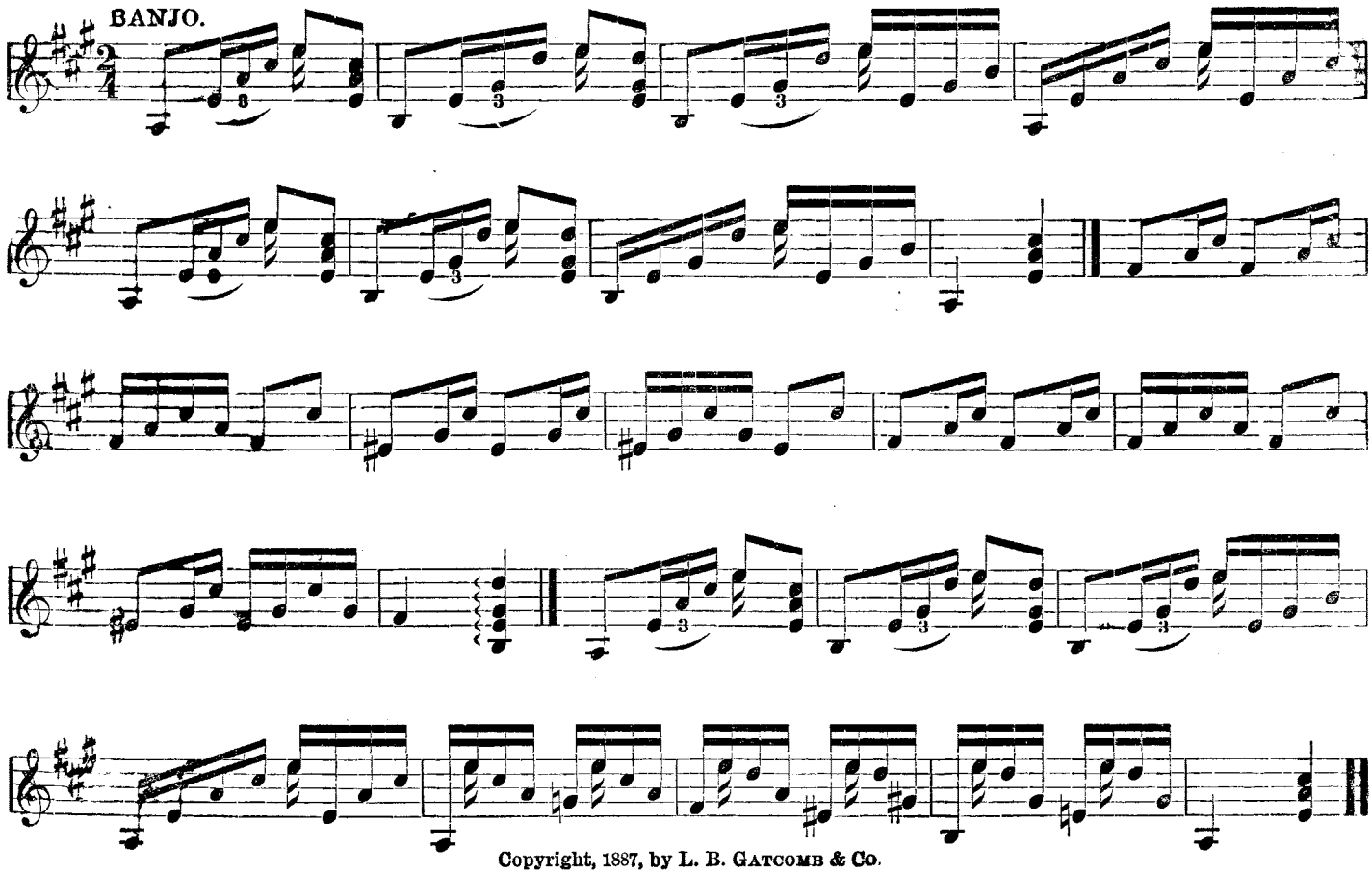
THE TESSIE SCHOTTISCHE.

By RANOUS A. SMITH.



WHEELER'S FAVORITE POLKA.

Arr. by B. E. Shattuak.



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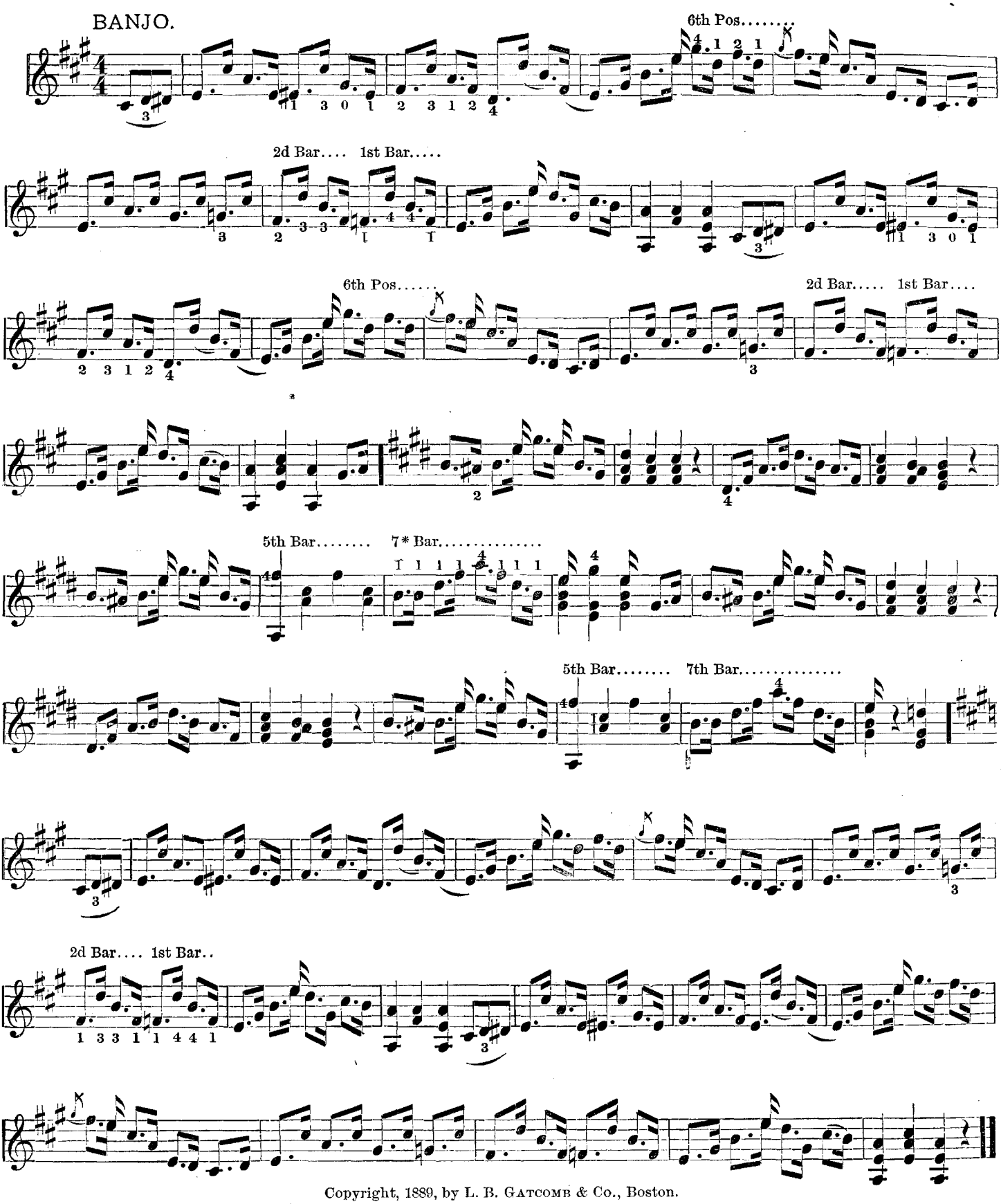
MINA SCHOTTISCHE.

F. T. McGRATH.



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OH SWING ME HONEY.

Or ("DE CULLED FOLKS QUADRILLE.")

Tune 4th to B.

By C. L. LANSING.

Lively.

Tune 4 to A.

2nd Pos.

p

5 Pos. . . .

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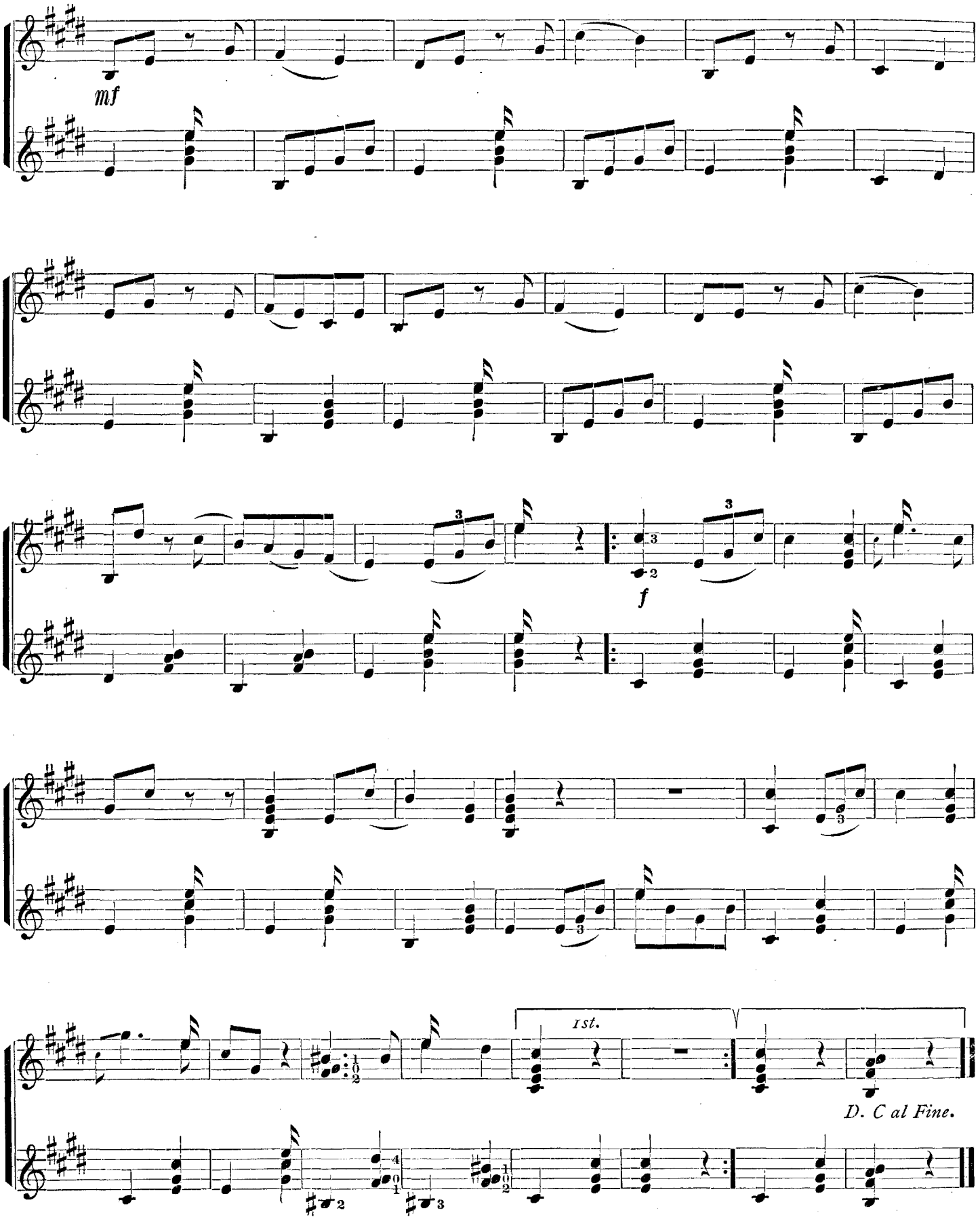
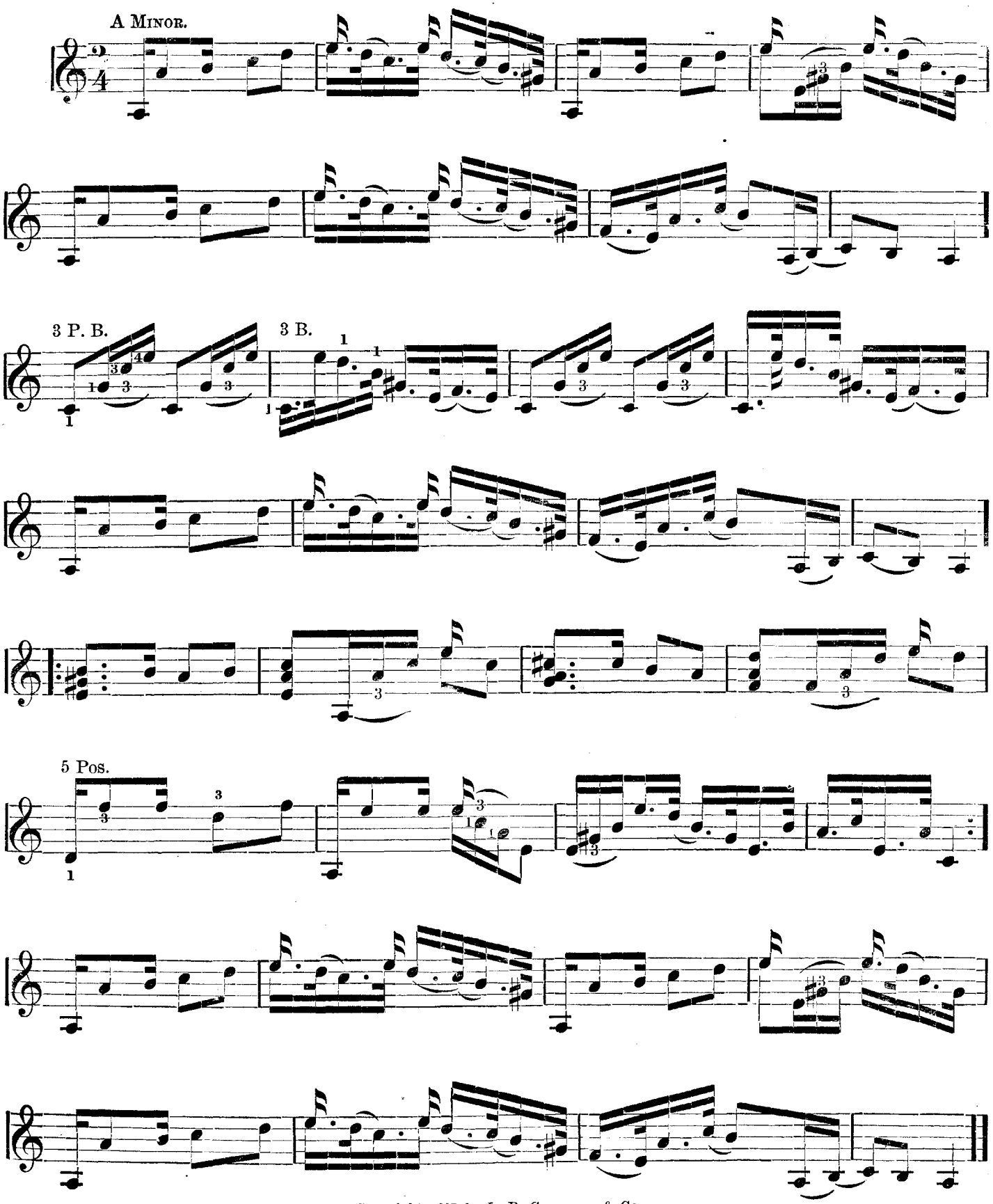

mf
f
1st.
D. C al Fine.

HANOVER JIG.

By G. L. LANSING.



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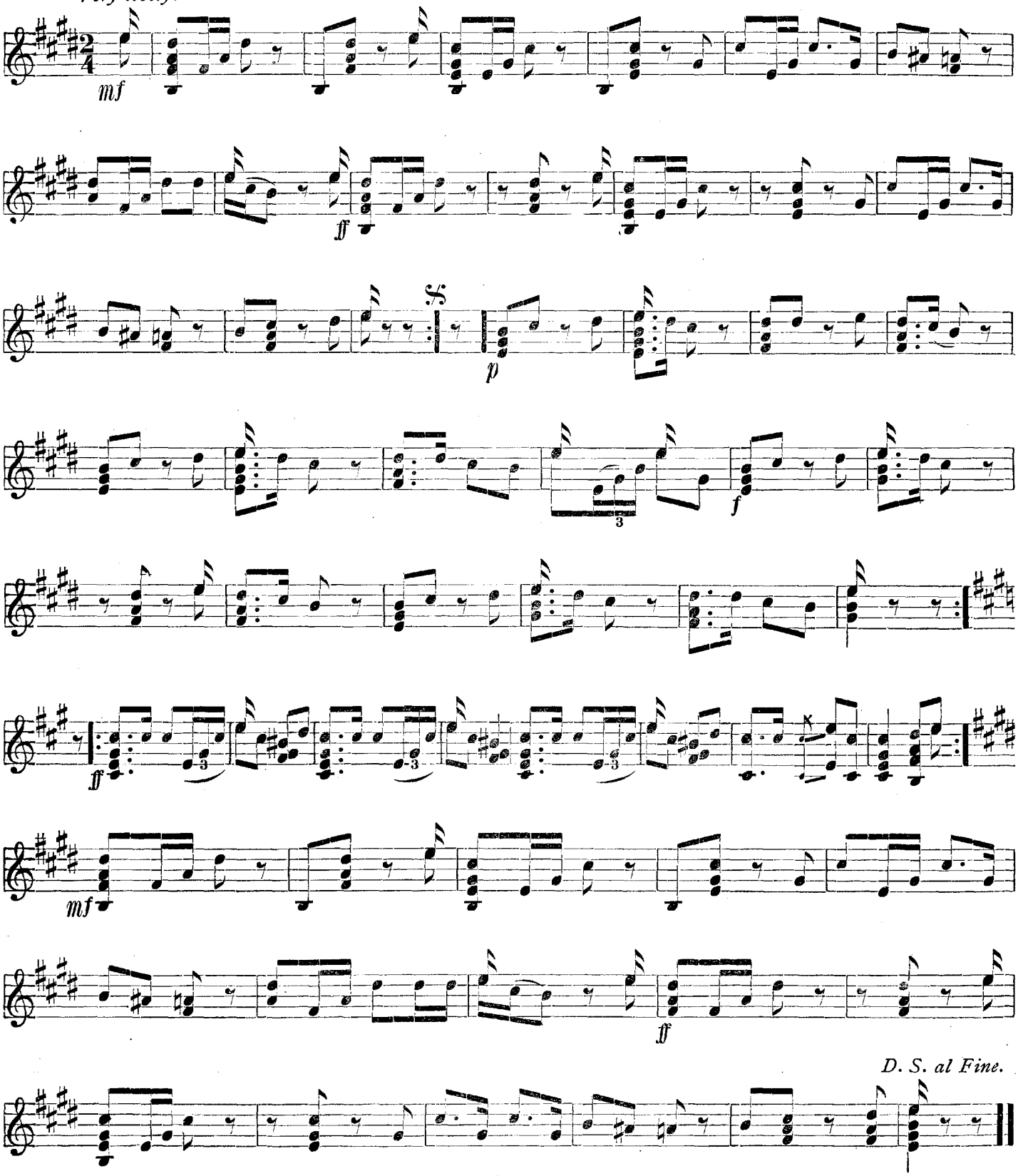
THE MOBILE BUCK.

(THE FAMOUS MISSISSIPPI STEAMBOAT DANCE.)

4th to B.

Arr. by G. L. LANSING.

Very lively.



Copyright, 1891, by L. B. Gatcomb.

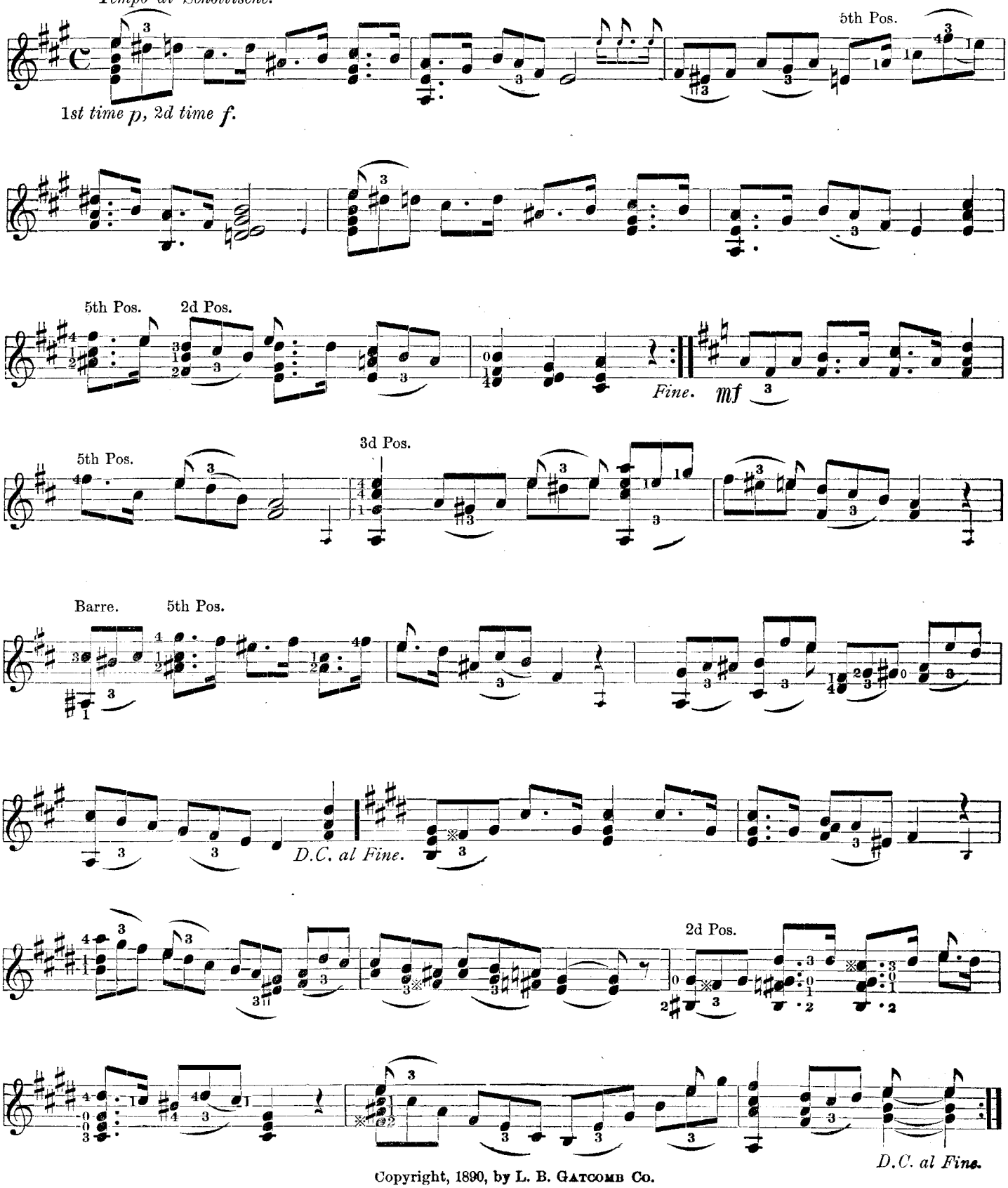
THE SKIRT DANCE.

(Introduced in Faust up to Date.)

BANJO.

By MEYER LUTZ.
Arr. by G. L. LANSING.

Tempo di Schottische.



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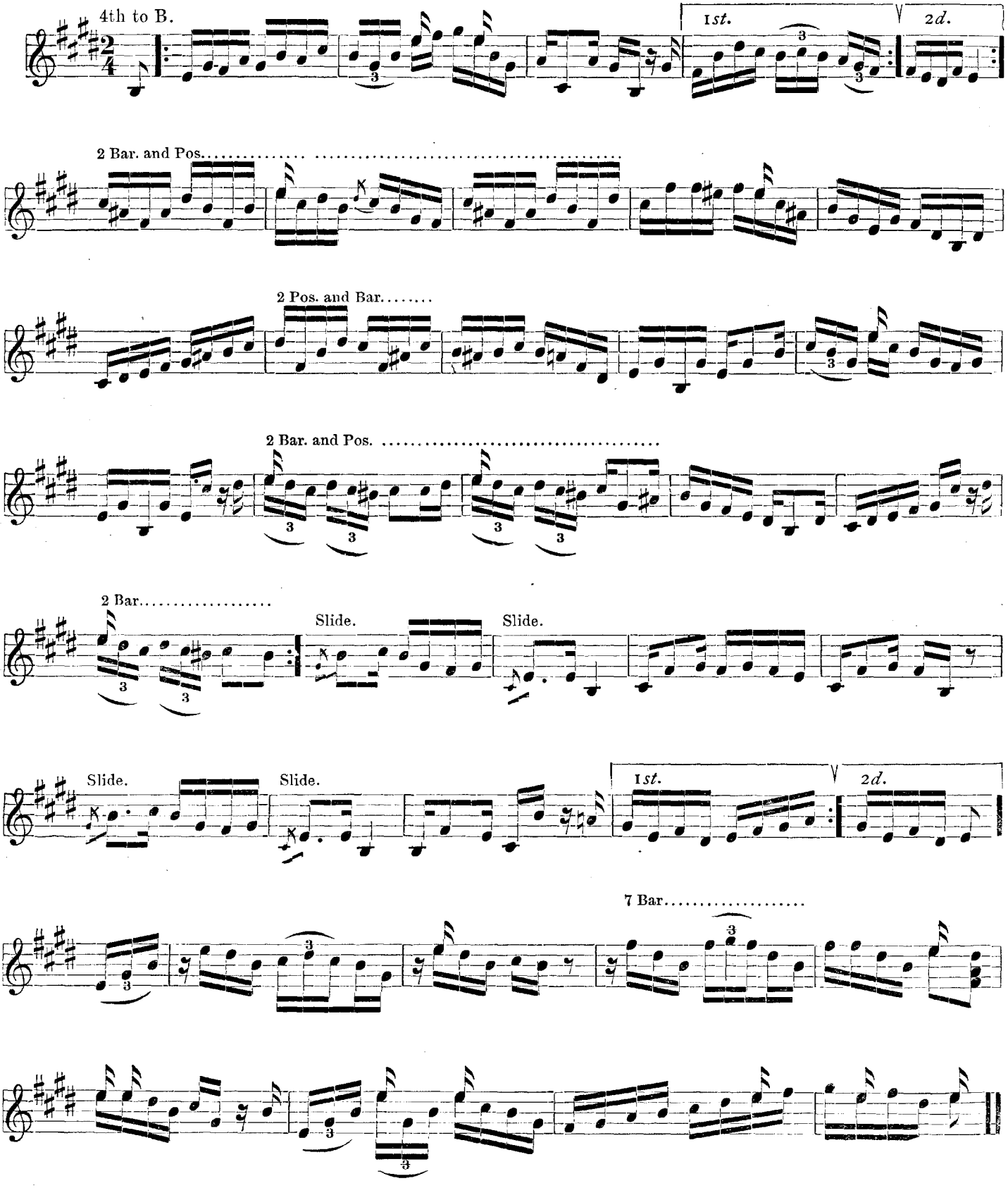
THE MCKINLEY QUESTION.

JIG.

By GEO. H. COES.



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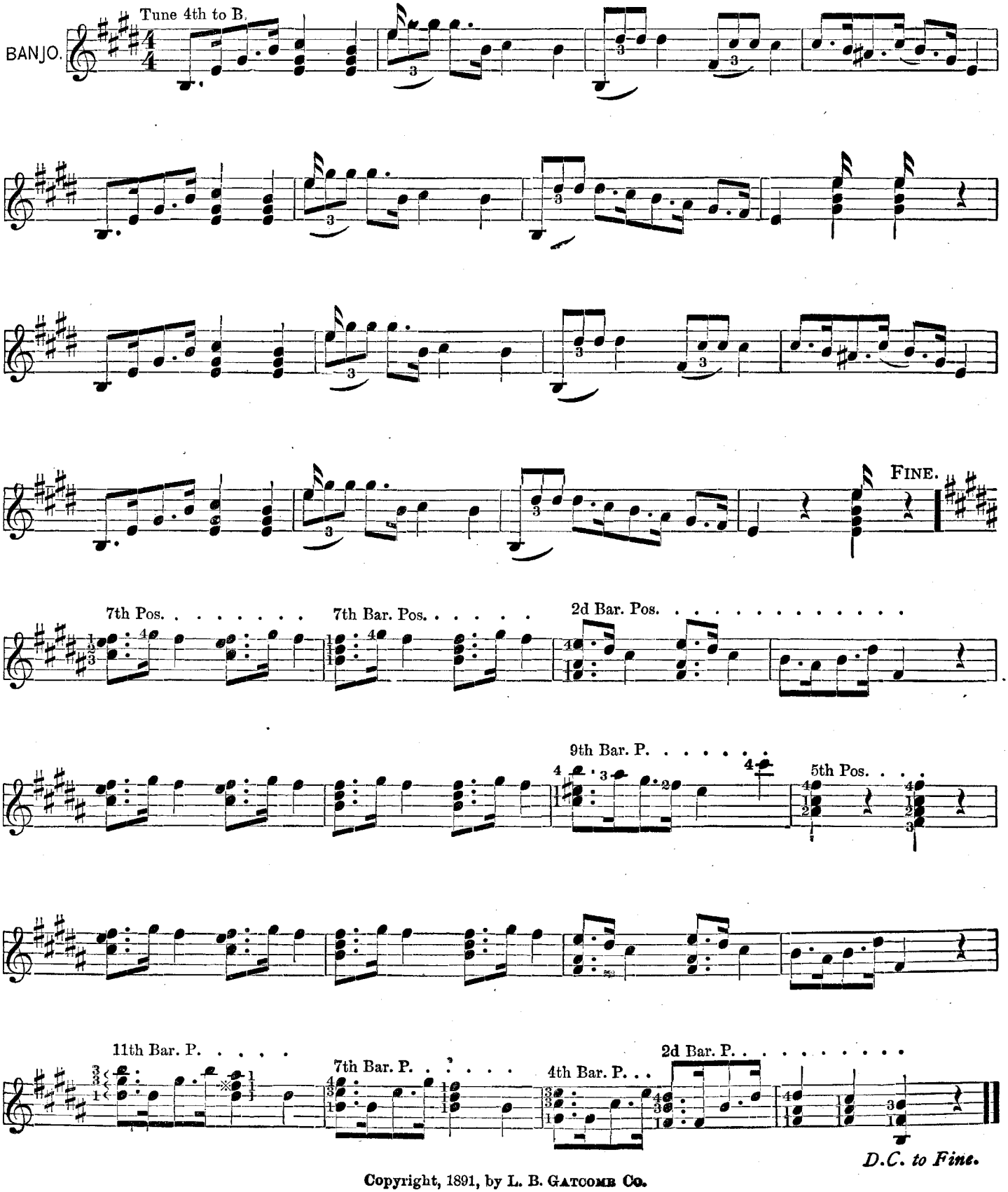
SUNBEAM SCHOTTISCHE.

By B. F. RUSSELL.



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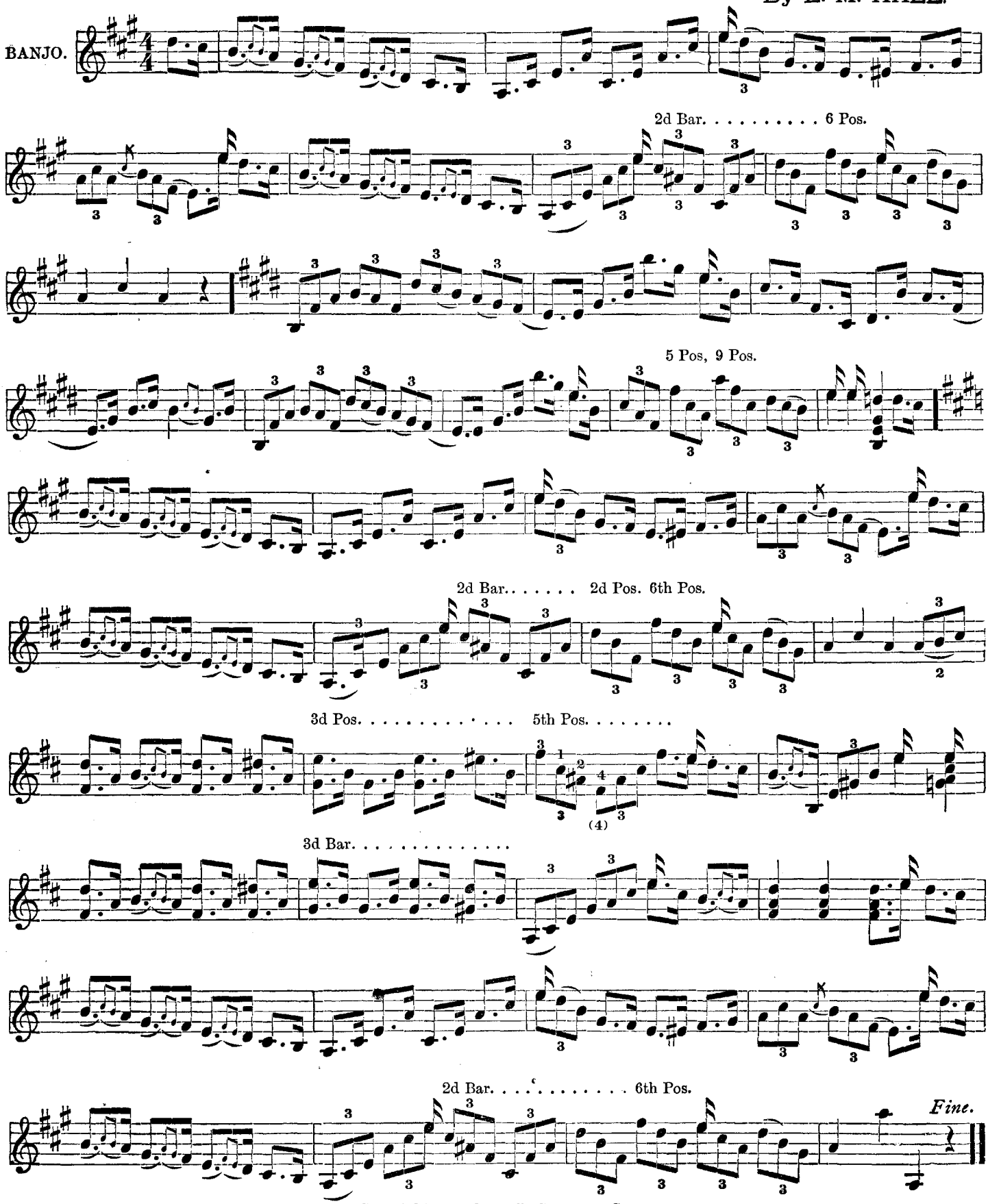
HALL'S FAVORITE CLOG.

By E. M. HALL.



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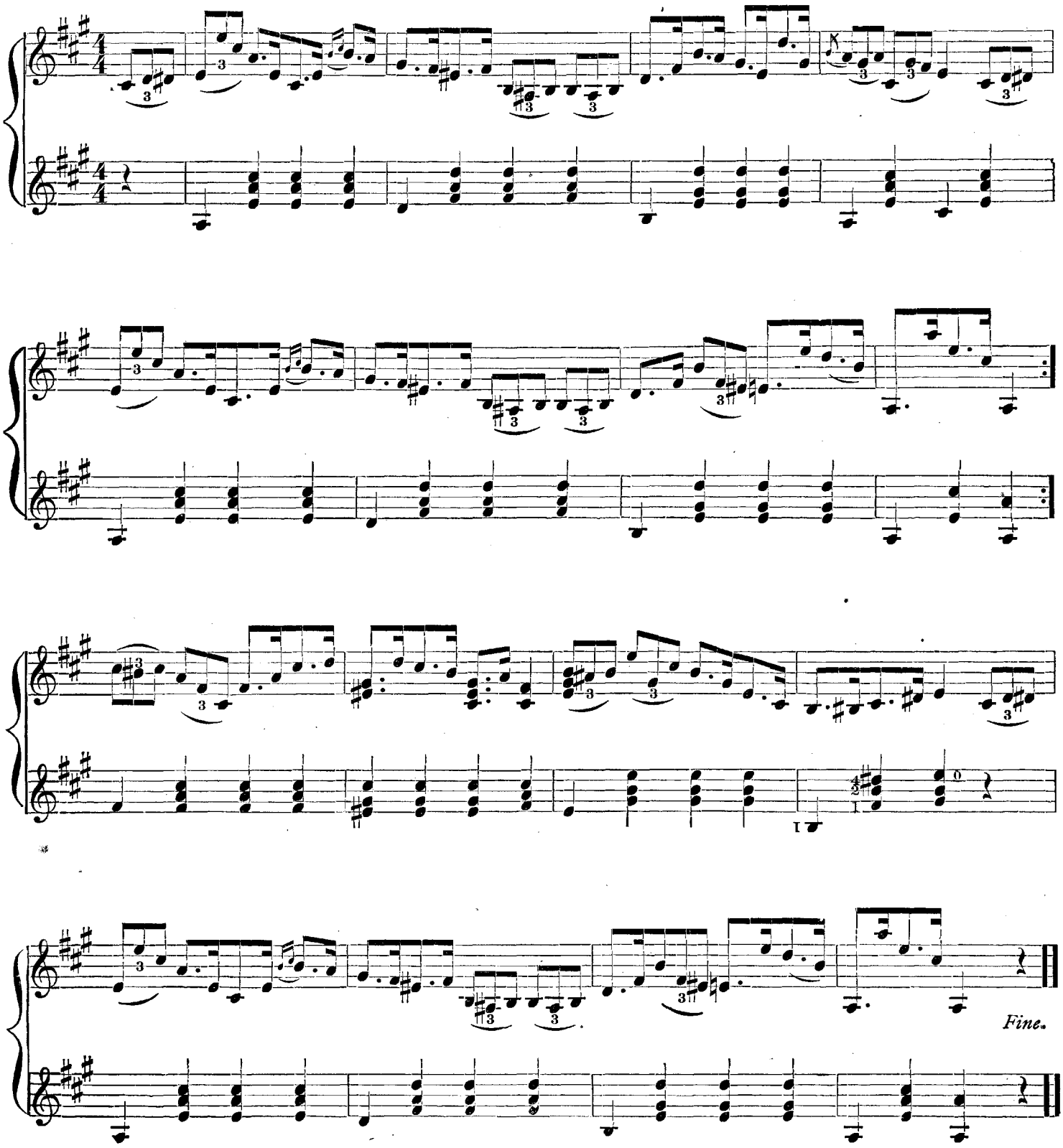
"TIP TOP" CLOG.

By JOHN H. PARKER.



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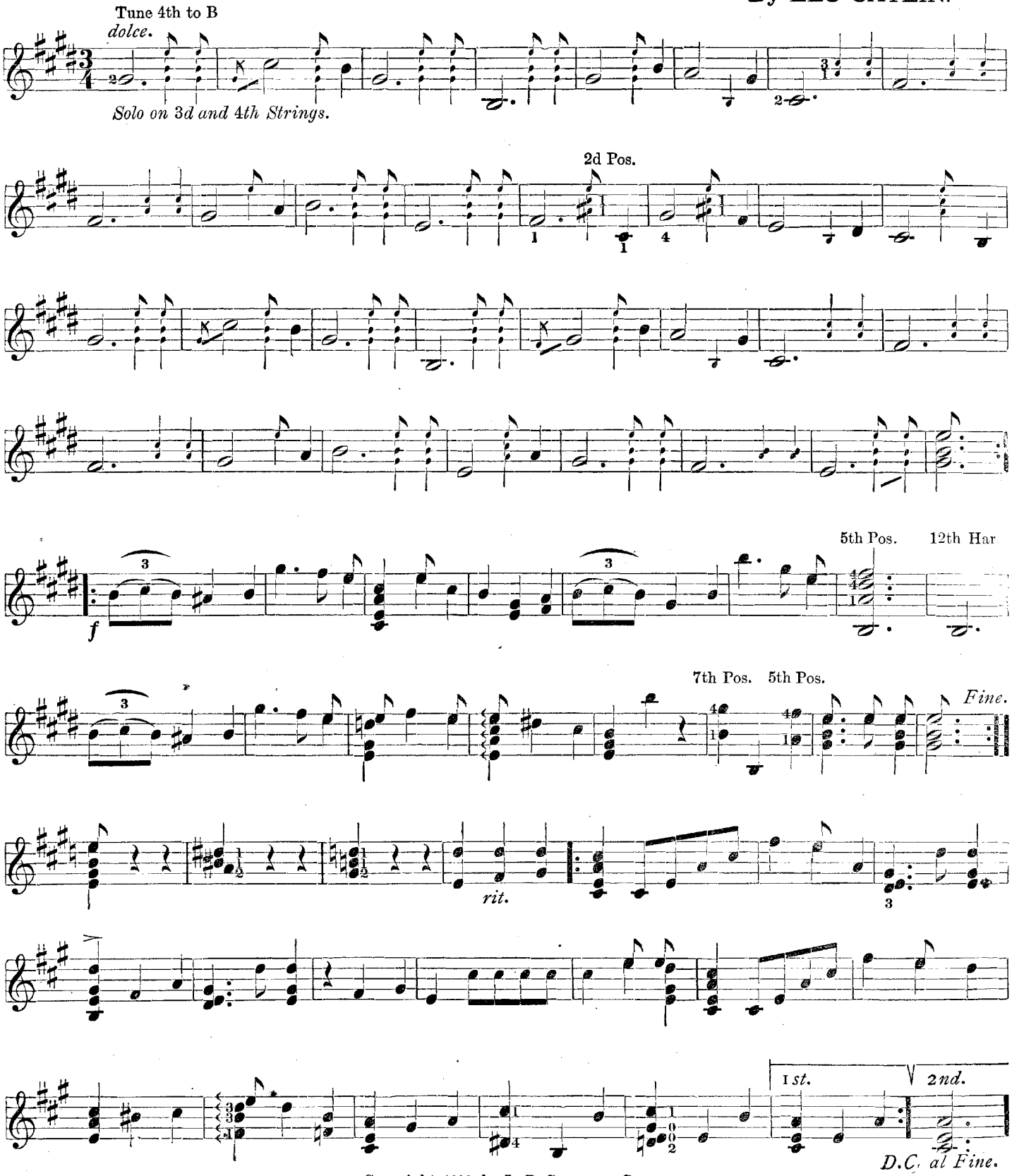
SAPPHO WALTZ.

By LEO CATLIN.



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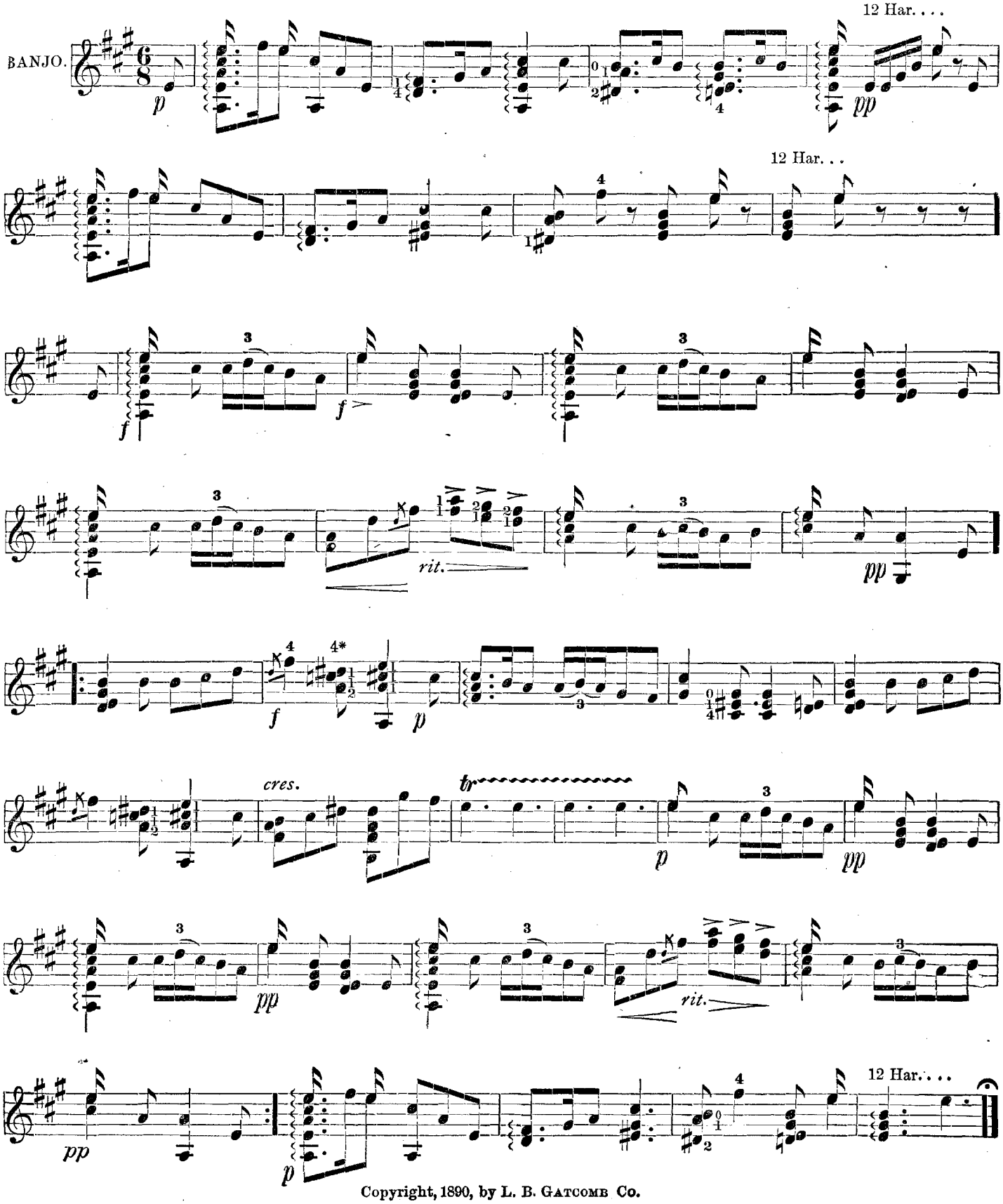
THE SHEPHERD BOY.

G. D. WILSON. Arranged by LEO CATLIN.



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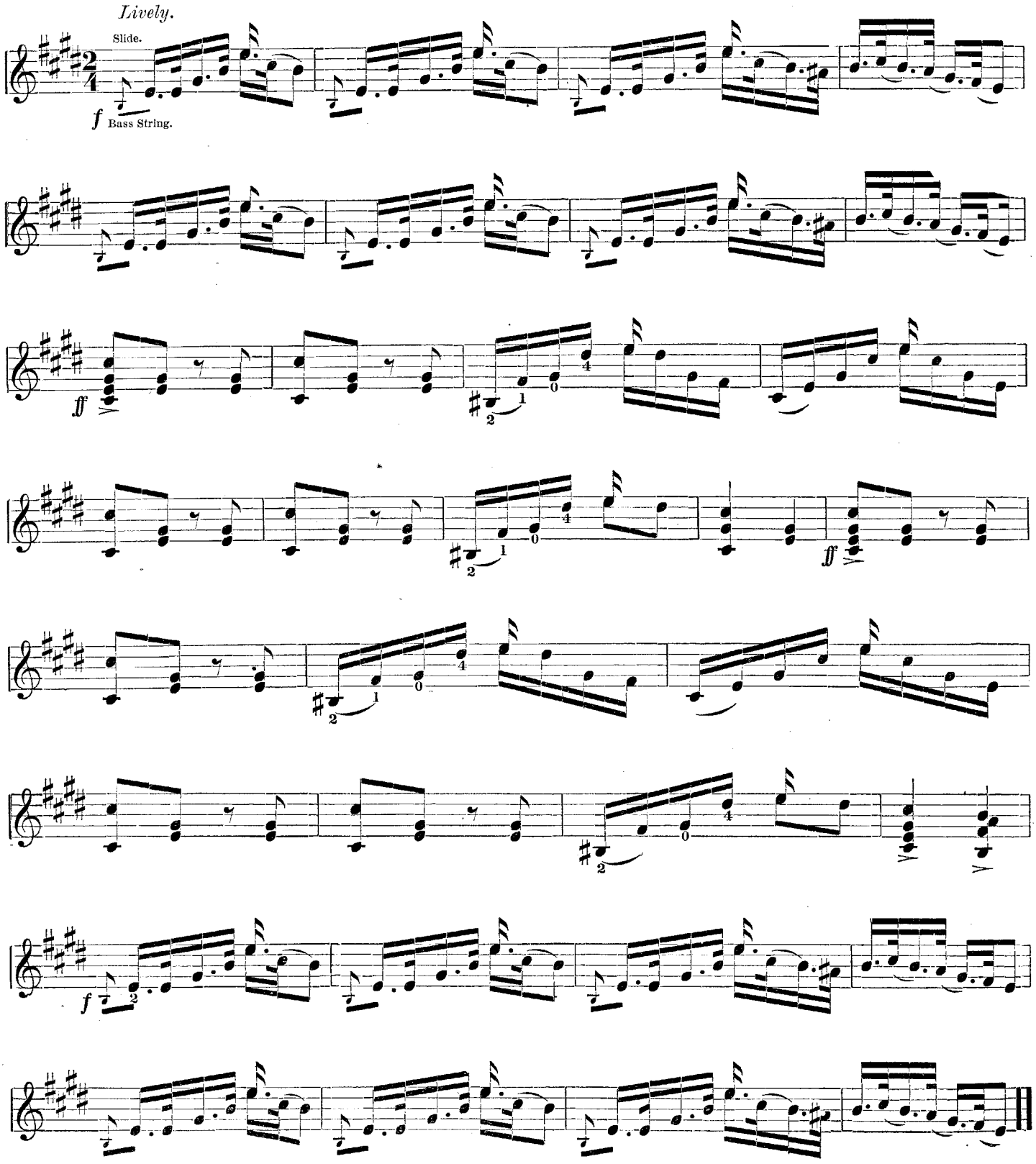
OLD ABE'S REEL.

Composed by CHARLES C. BERTHOLDT.



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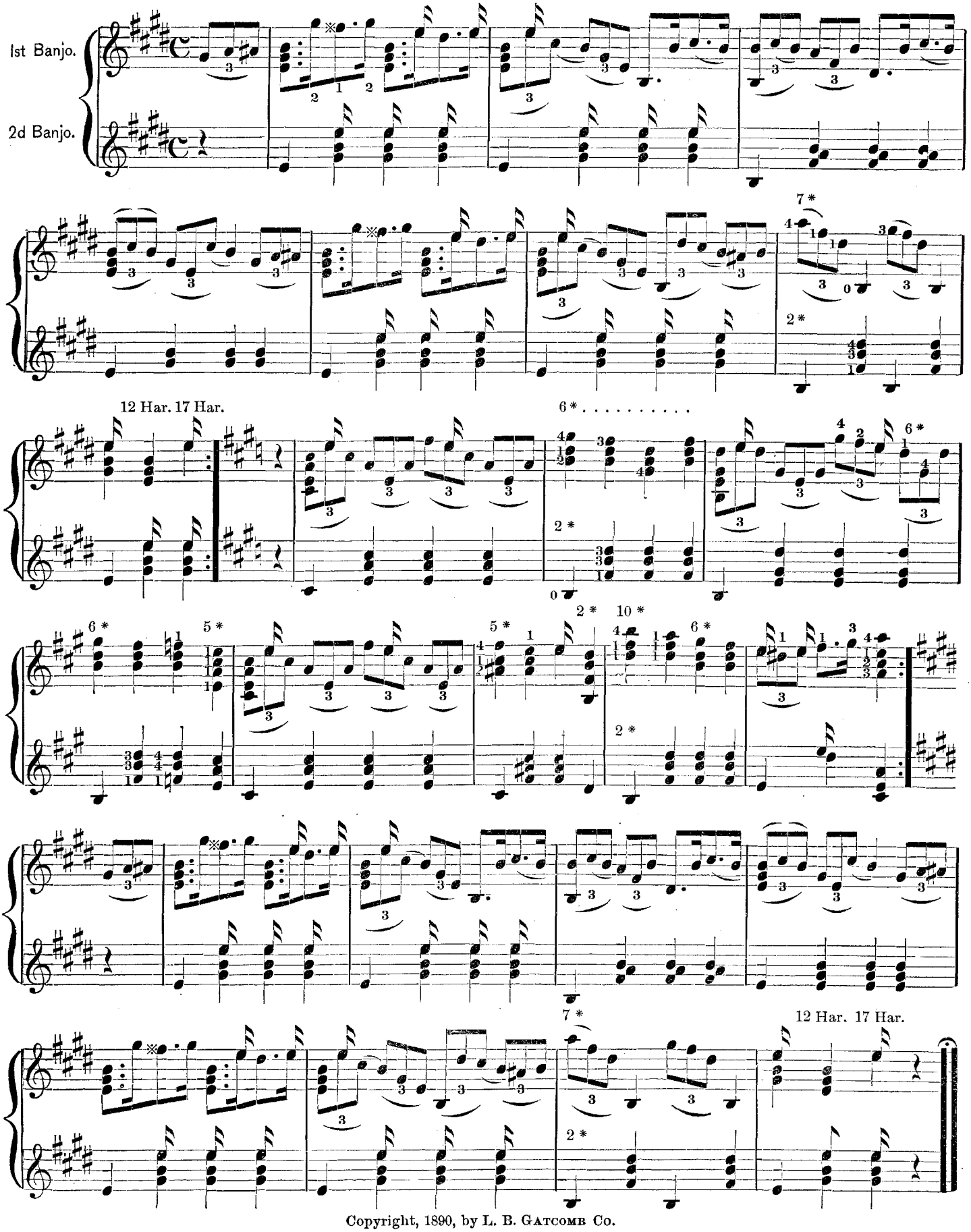
LEAH SCHOTTISCHE.

4th. to B.

WM. K. BEDFORD.



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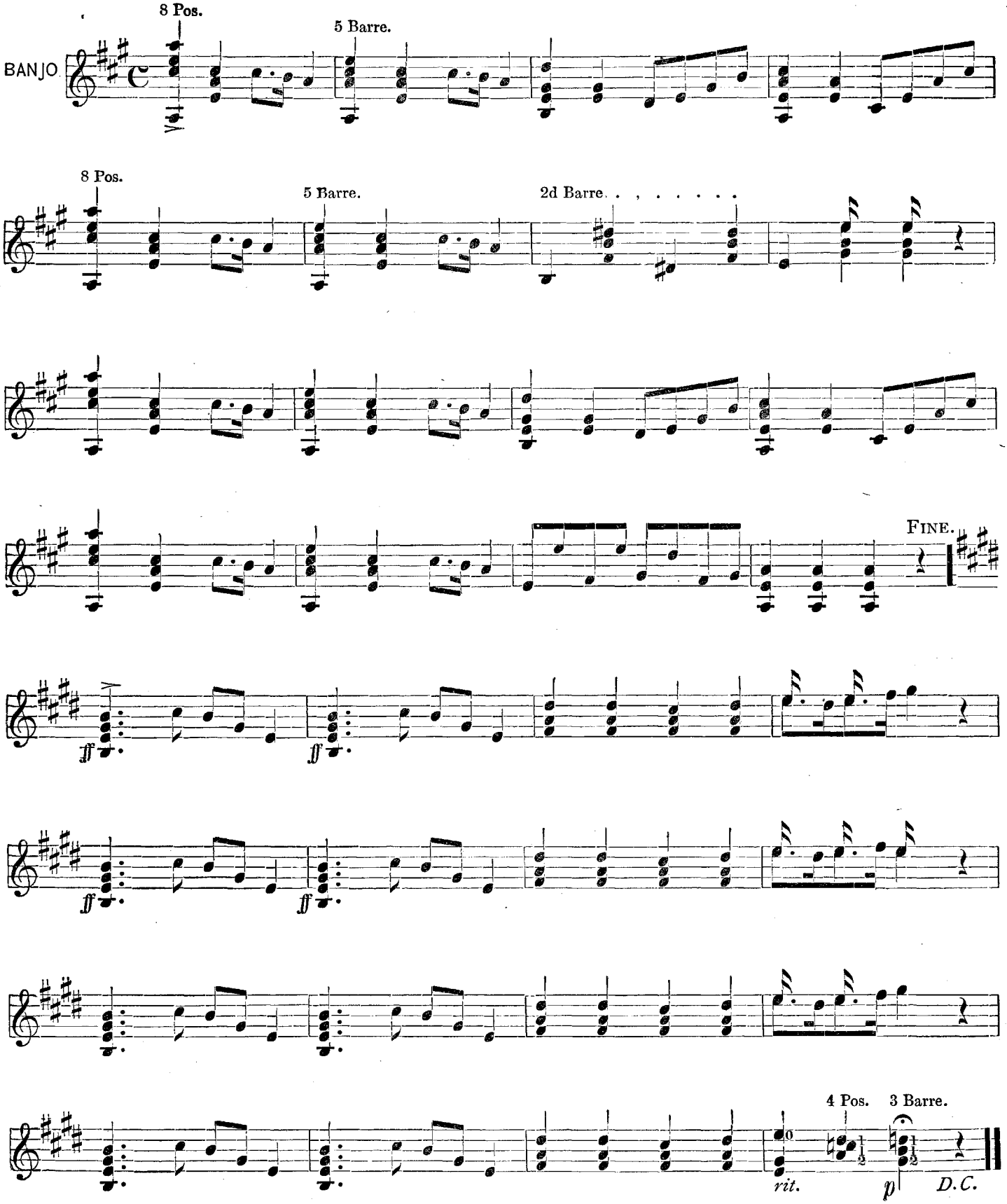
CLUB SCHOTTISCHE.

IKE BROWNE.



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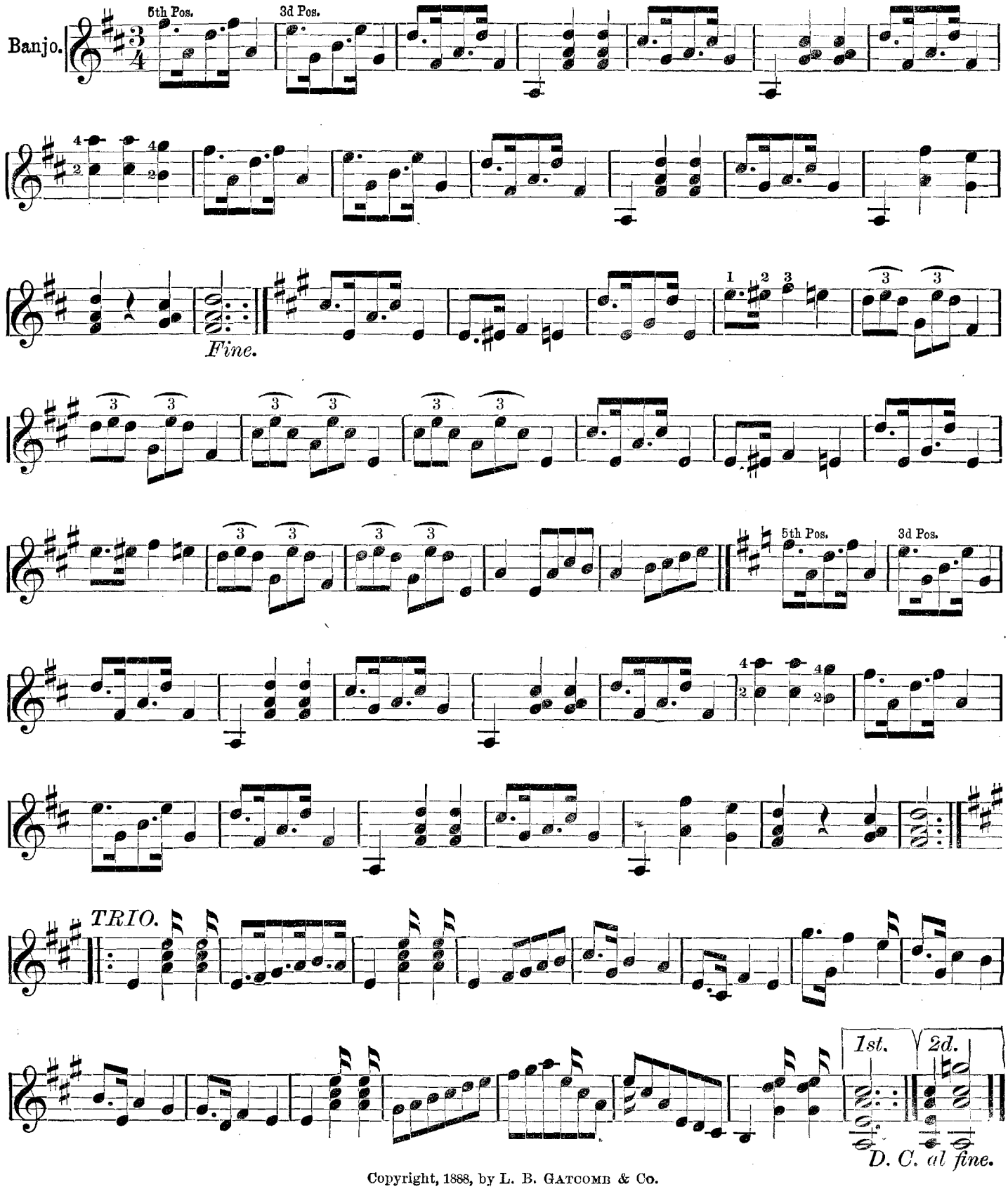
THE KITTY L. WALTZ.

By W. P. CHAMBERS, Omaha, Neb.



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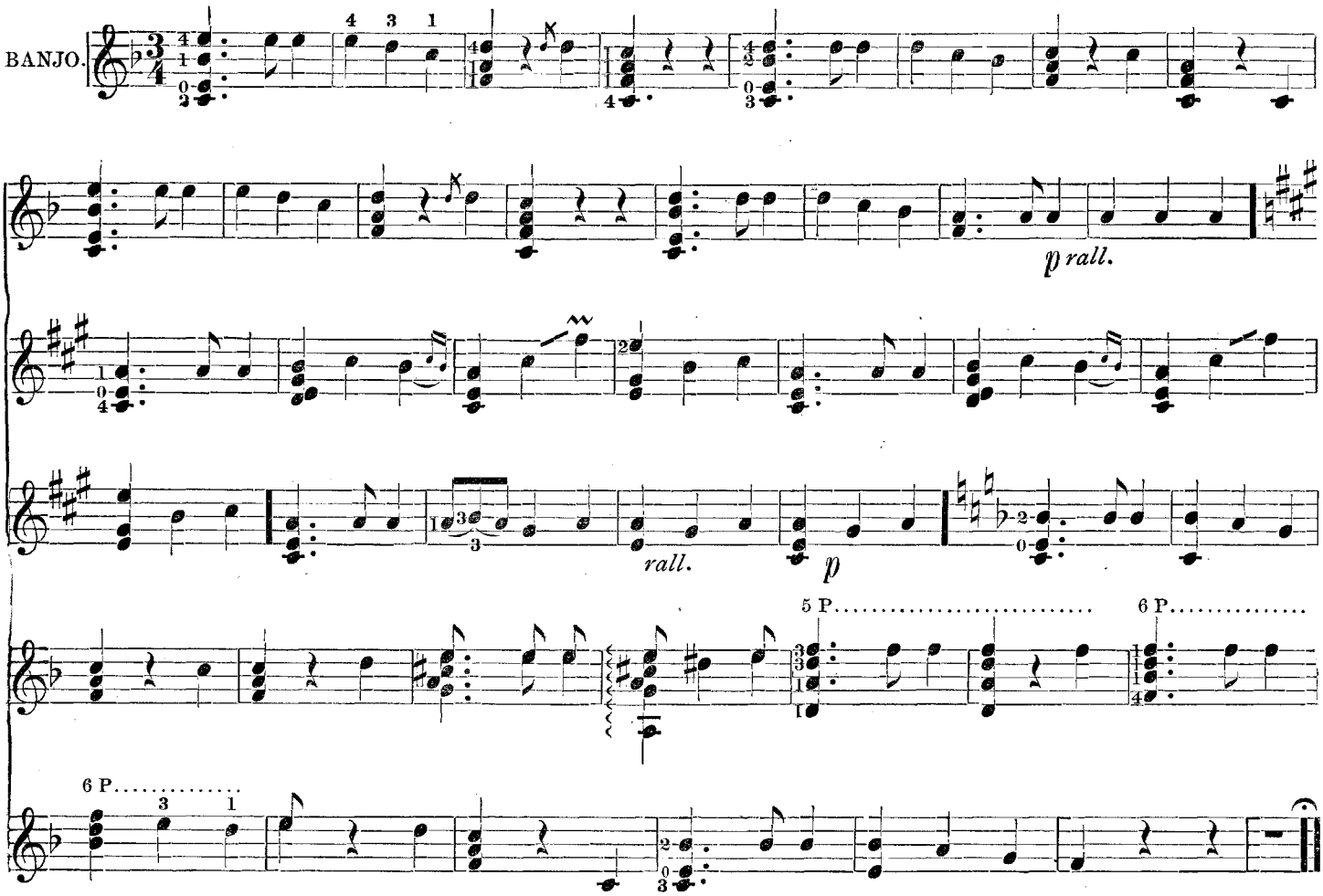
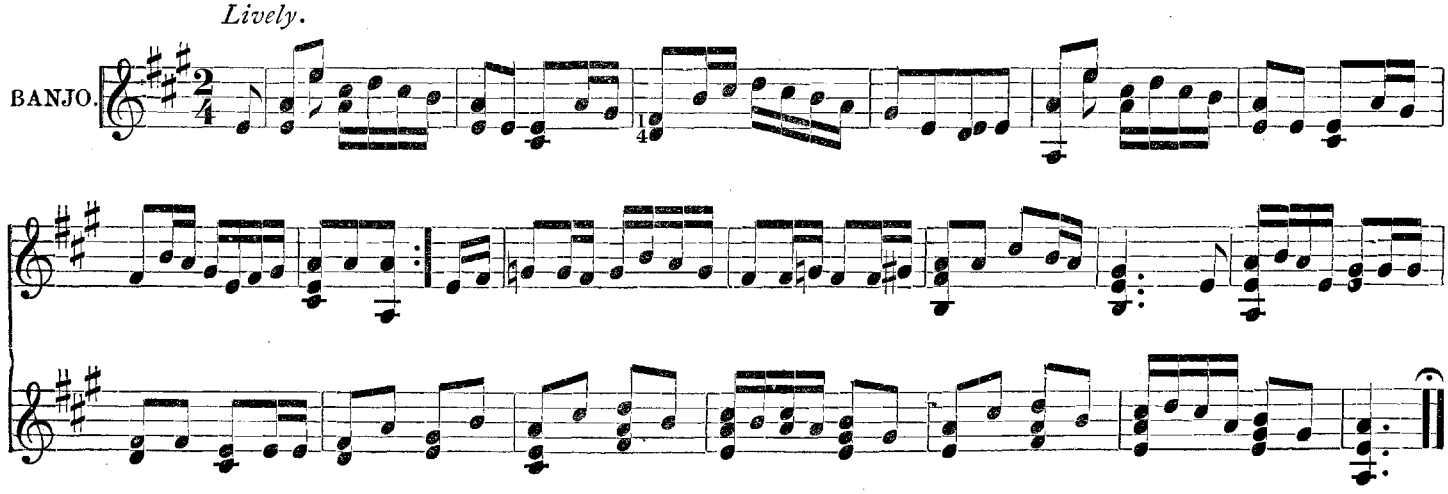
AIR FROM POET AND PEASANT.

(FOR BANJO.)

Arr. by G. L. LANSING.



HORNPIPE.

Arranged for Banjo from ARTHUR SULLIVAN'S Comic Opera, "RUDDYGORE."