The DOUNIS

Violin Players' Daily Dozen

TO KEEP THE VIOLINIST TECHNICALLY FIT FOR THE DAY'S WORK

Twelve Fundamental Exercises
For the Left Hand and the Bow

By

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* Vertical movement of the fingers is called the up and down movement of the fingers to and from the fingerboard. Horizontal movement is called the sliding motion of the fingers which is used for chromatic passages and for stretches.

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PREFACE

It is a well known fact that, after the violin is taken out of the case for the first time every day, the first two hours or more are wasted in REGAINING THAT FEELING OF EASE, FLUENCY AND SURETY WHICH THE VIOLINIST EXPERIENCES AT THE END OF HIS DAILY PRACTICE.—

How much time could be saved; how much energy could be spared; and how much more profitable would the daily practice be if that feeling of ease, fluency and surety could be had AT THE BEGINNING of the day's work instead of at the end, by practising specific exercises for a few minutes composed according to scientific rules based on psycho-physiological laws.—The scales, the etudes and the compositions to be learned would not present any more "ugly or rough" spots, as the fingers and the bow would be much more responsive and ready to obey the impulses of the player's mind.—

This is what the following exercises intend to do: TO GET THE PLAYER INTO FORM IN A VERY SHORT SPACE OF TIME AND KEEP HIM FIT FOR THE DAY'S WORK.—These exercises are composed according to the same scientific principles on which is based my method: "THE ARTIST'S TECHNIC OF VIOLIN PLAYING." They are especially composed to train the fingers and the bow as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.—In fact, the twelve exercises contained in this book form a most excellent technical breviary that may be used with unfailing and immediate results whenever the violinist wishes "TO GET INTO FORM IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME."—

The author would consider himself amply rewarded for his labors if the following exercises, conscientiously practised, would help to minimize the dreaded weariness of the first hours of daily practice.—

D. C. DOUNIS.

EXPLANATION OF THE SIGNS

This sign (—) indicates the sliding of the fingers.

I: First or E string.

II: Second or A string.

III: Third or D string.

IV: Fourth or G string.

⊓: Down-bow.

V: Up-bow.

FIVE GENERAL RULES

TO BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO

I CULTIVATE AT ALL TIMES A FEELING OF ABSOLUTE COMFORT WHILE PRACTISING

II IN PRACTISING FINGER-EXERCISES WATCH YOUR BOW; IN PRACTISING BOW-EXERCISES OBSERVE A GOOD POSITION OF THE LEFT HAND.—

III ACCENT THE WEAKER NOTES; MAKE EVERY NOTE SOUND WITH A CLEAR, FULL AND ROUND TONE.—

IV REMEMBER ALWAYS THAT IN TECHNIC EVENNESS IS THAT WHICH COUNTS MOST.

V FORM THE HABIT OF LISTENING TO YOUR PLAYING WITH THE UTMOST ATTENTION; SHARPEN YOUR HEARING SO AS TO DETECT THE SLIGHTEST DISTURBANCE IN THE FLOW OF TONE.—

FIVE LEFT HAND RULES

TO BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO

I KEEP THE ELBOW WELL UNDER THE VIOLIN AND THE FINGERTIPS PARALLEL TO THE STRINGS.—

II TRY TO FORGET THE EXISTENCE OF THE THUMB; NEVER PRESS IT AGAINST THE NECK OF THE VIOLIN.—

III DO NOT STRIKE THE FINGERS UPON THE STRINGS WITH TOO MUCH FORCE IT IS WASTING ONE'S PHYSICAL ENERGY. CULTIVATE A VERY SUDDEN AND ELASTIC SPRING-LIKE FINGER ACTION AND KEEP EVERY PRECEDING FINGER ON THE STRING.—

IV IN SHIFTING, PAY DUE ATTENTION TO THE GUIDING FINGER WHICH IS THE FINGER STOPPING THE LAST NOTE BEFORE SHIFTING.—

V IN A DOWNWARD SHIFT, REMEMBER THAT THE THUMB ACTS AS A FORERUNNER TO THE OTHER FINGERS.—

FIVE BOW RULES

TO BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO

I AT ALL TIMES CULTIVATE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT.—

II BEAR IN MIND THAT THE ELASTICITY AND FLEXIBILITY OF ALL JOINTS OF THE ARM AND THE FINGERS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS THOSE OF THE WRIST.—

III HAVE AND RETAIN ALWAYS A BALANCED HOLD OF THE BOW; TRY TO FEEL EVERY STROKE WITH YOUR FINGERTIPS.—

IV ACCENT THE UP BOW TO EQUALIZE IT WITH THE DOWN BOW.—

V NEVER FORGET TO ROUND OFF THE CROSSING OF STRINGS AND THE CHANGE OF BOW.—

FIRST EXERCISE

TO BE PRACTISED WITHOUT BOW

There are two fundamental "settings" of the left hand fingers which we will name the "easy" and the "difficult."

The "easy setting" is when the first finger stops a note on a lower string while the others are placed on higher strings. (Fig. I).

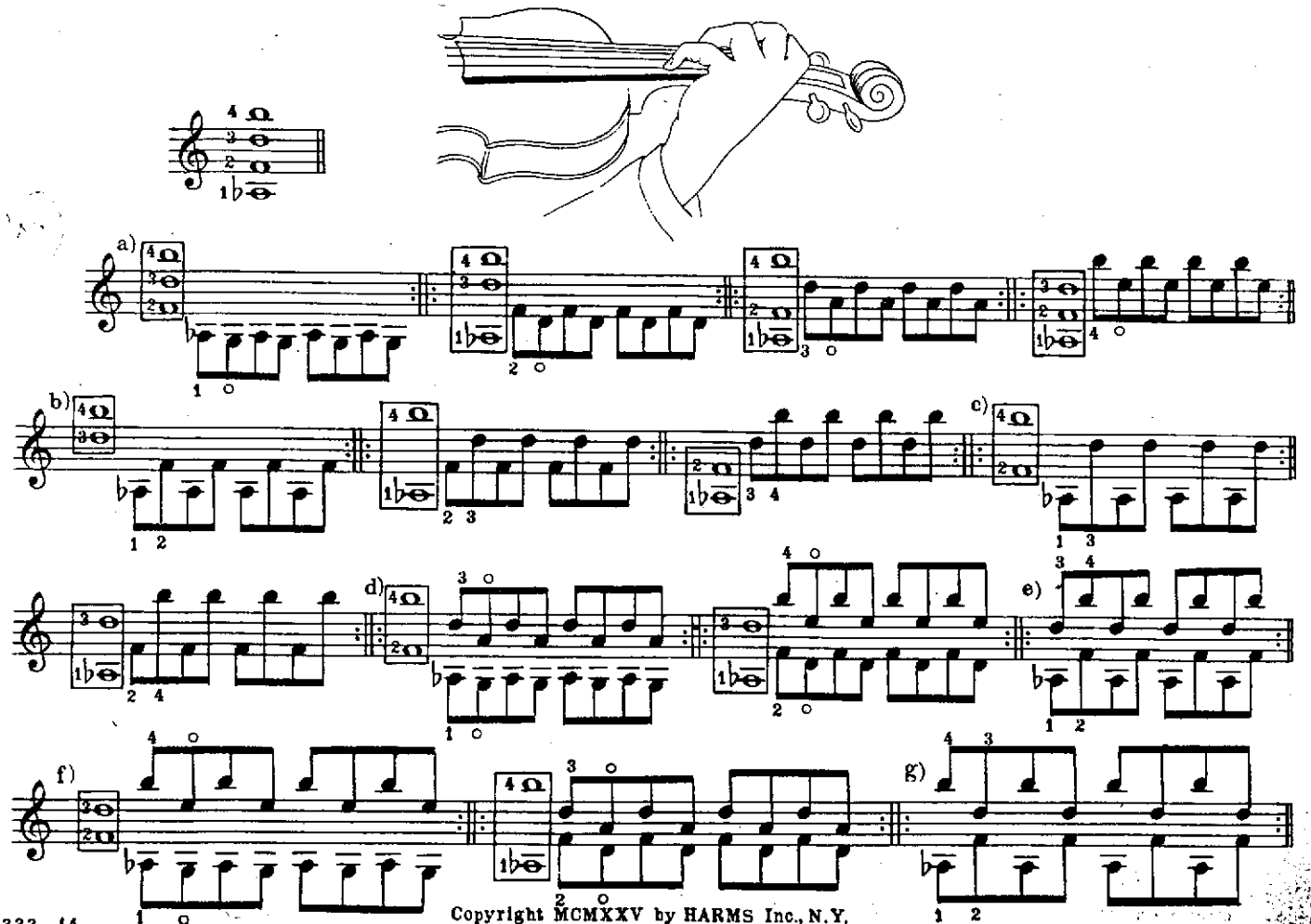
The "difficult setting" is exactly the opposite; first finger on a higher string, other fingers on lower strings. (Fig. II).

The "easy setting" is used for playing octaves, also fingered, sixths and tenths; the "difficult setting" is used for thirds, fourths and descending scale passages.

Chords of three and four notes use both "settings," alternately or simultaneously.

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING: Repeat each bar four times. The whole notes should be held down firmly. In a) one finger only is moving. In b) and c) two fingers are moving alternately i. e. while the one ascends the other descends and vice versa. In d) and f) two fingers are moving simultaneously. In e) and g) four fingers are moving alternately; two against two. Practise every day the bars contained in one letter only from both Ⓐ and Ⓑ following immediately with Ⓒ which is the practical application of Ⓐ and Ⓑ.

Ⓐ EASY SETTING (Fig. I.)



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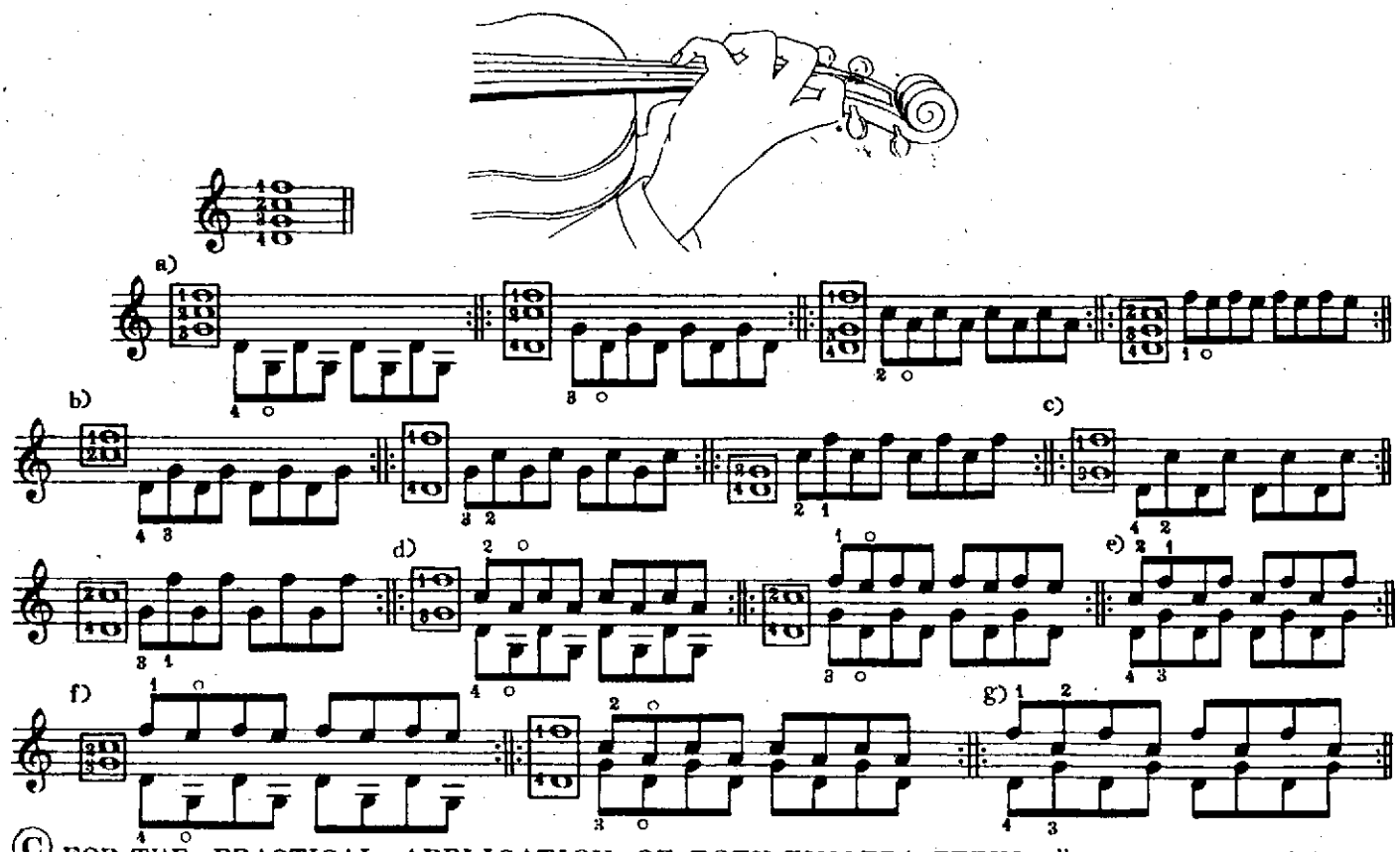
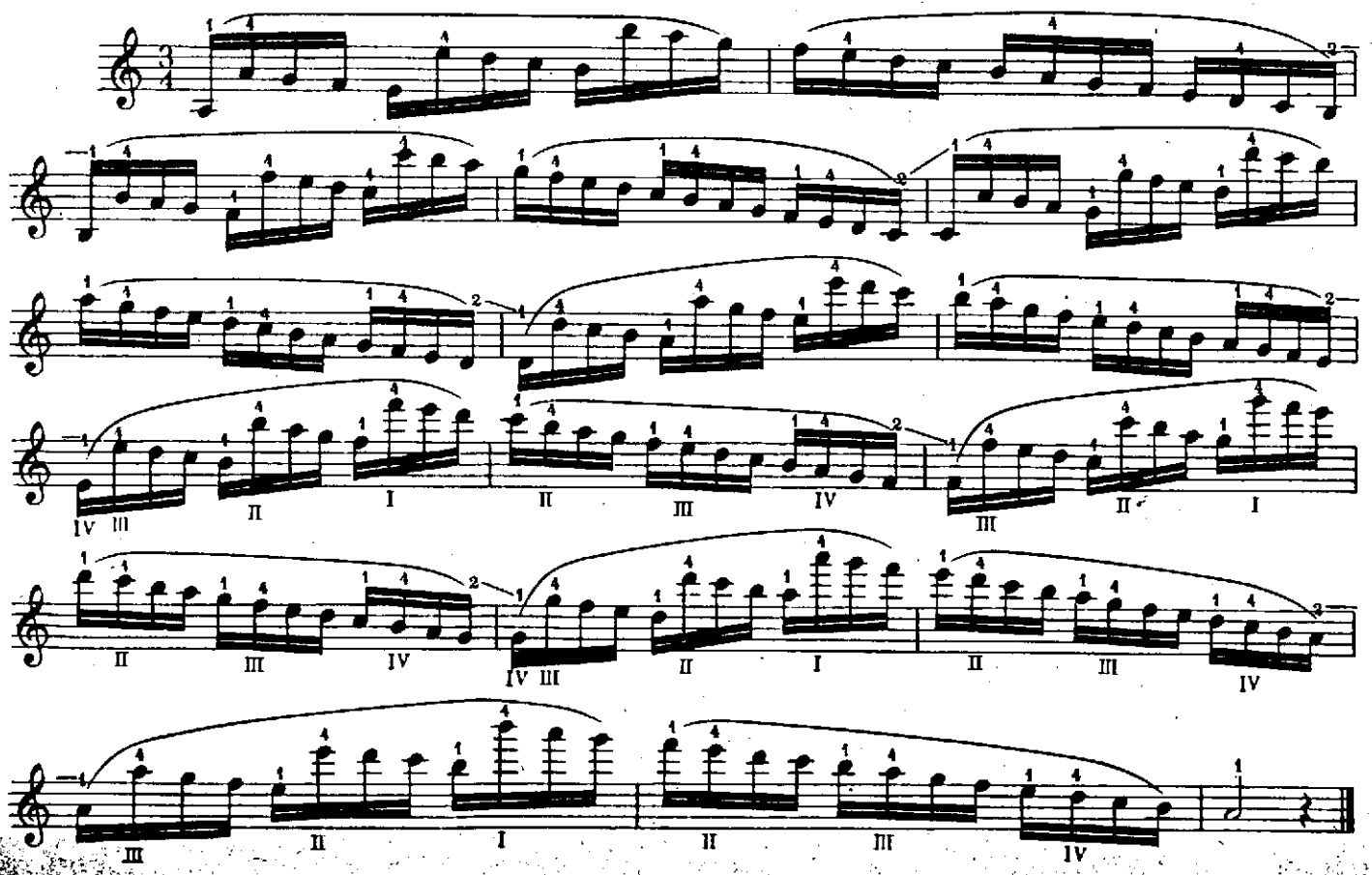
Ⓑ DIFFICULT SETTING (Fig. II.)



Ⓒ FOR THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF BOTH FINGER "SETTINGS" IN SCALE PLAYING.. TO BE PLAYED WITH THE BOW



SECOND EXERCISE

TO GET THE FINGERS INTO PLAYING SHAPE AND FOR INDEPENDENCE.

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. Let the fingers fall upon the strings in an elastic and abrupt way. At the moment of passing from one position to another press the sliding fingers on the strings with great force. Make the sliding very slow and try to connect the preceding group of fingers with the next one as thoroughly and as smoothly as possible. Bow evenly; divide the bow in as many equal parts as there are notes in the same bow.

Very slow

SIX VARIANTS

To be practised one a day.

FOR DEVELOPING THE RYTHM AND THE TRILL-VERTICAL MOVEMENT

THIRD EXERCISE

FOR DEVELOPING THE SLIDING MOTION OF THE FINGERS — HORIZONTAL MOVEMENT.

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING - Same as for the SECOND EXERCISE

Very Slow

FOURTH EXERCISE

FOR THIRDS

The whole art of third playing on the Violin, lies in the difficulty of correctly using the second and fourth fingers in ascending passages and the first and third fingers in descending passages.

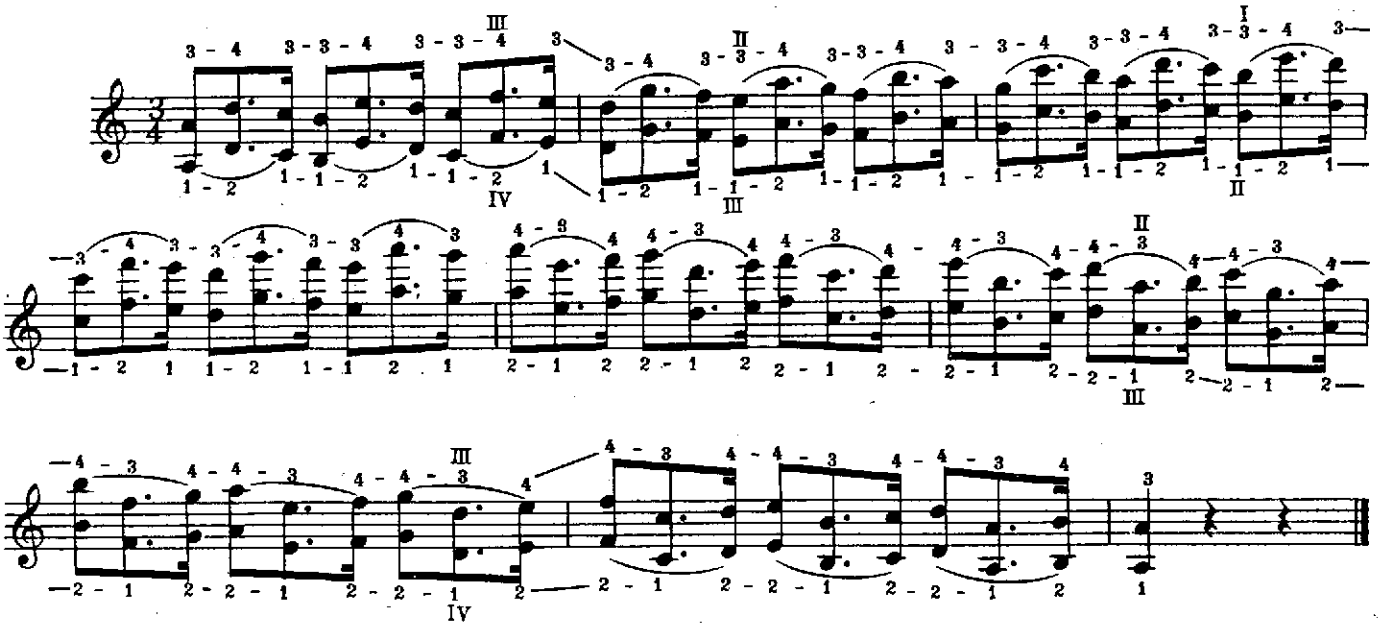
The following exercise is specially composed to overcome that difficulty by scientifically training the two groups of fingers mentioned above, in the correct placing, both in ascending and descending passages.

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. The first and third fingers should always remain on the strings except where open strings are used. Aim at attaining the utmost perfection in the simultaneous movement of the second and fourth fingers. Practise this Exercise in a new key every day.

Very Slow

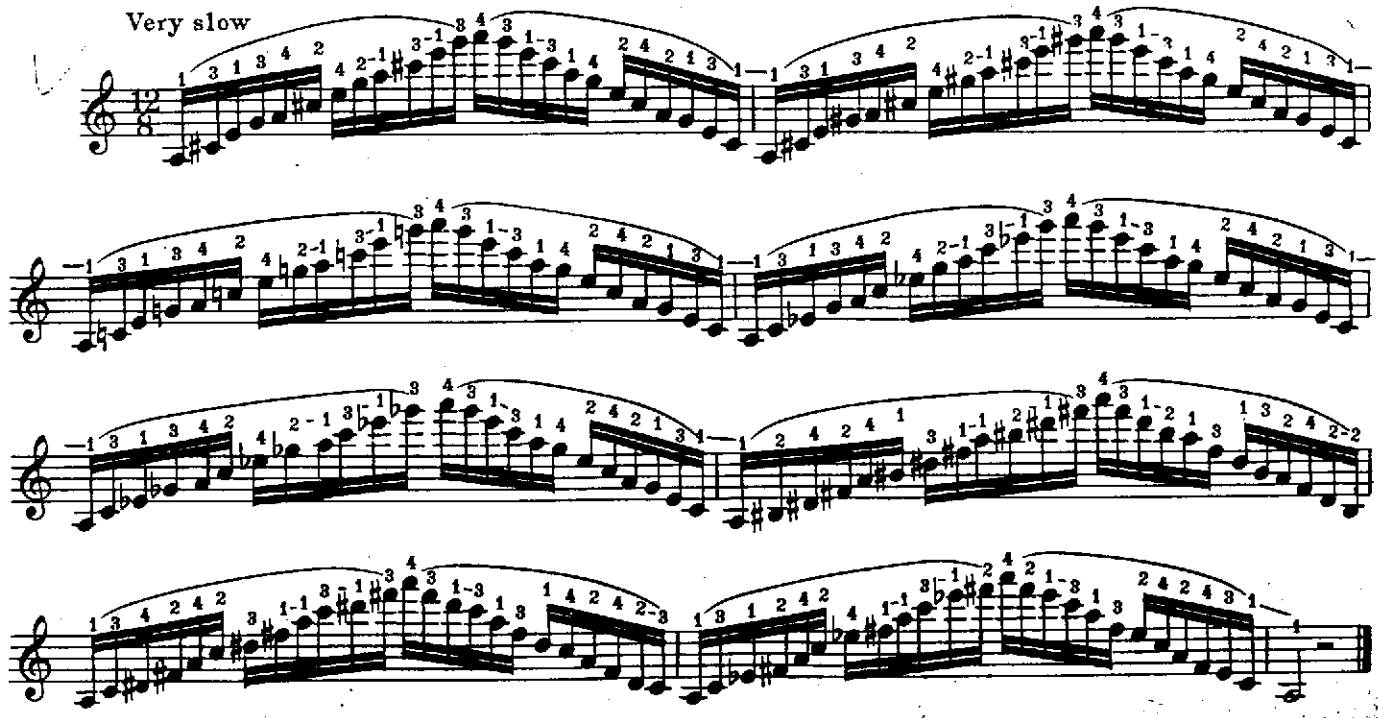
VARIANT
FOR FINGERED OCTAVES

The fundamental technical principles of fingered octaves are absolutely the same with those of thirds. The directions for practising given for thirds apply here as well. Less advanced players should practise the following exercise using the ordinary octave fingering $\frac{4}{1}$ throughout, instead of $\frac{3\ 4}{1\ 2}$.—



FIFTH EXERCISE
FOR INTONATION

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. The greatest care should be exercised in bringing out the subtle alterations in tone color in the enharmonic changes.—

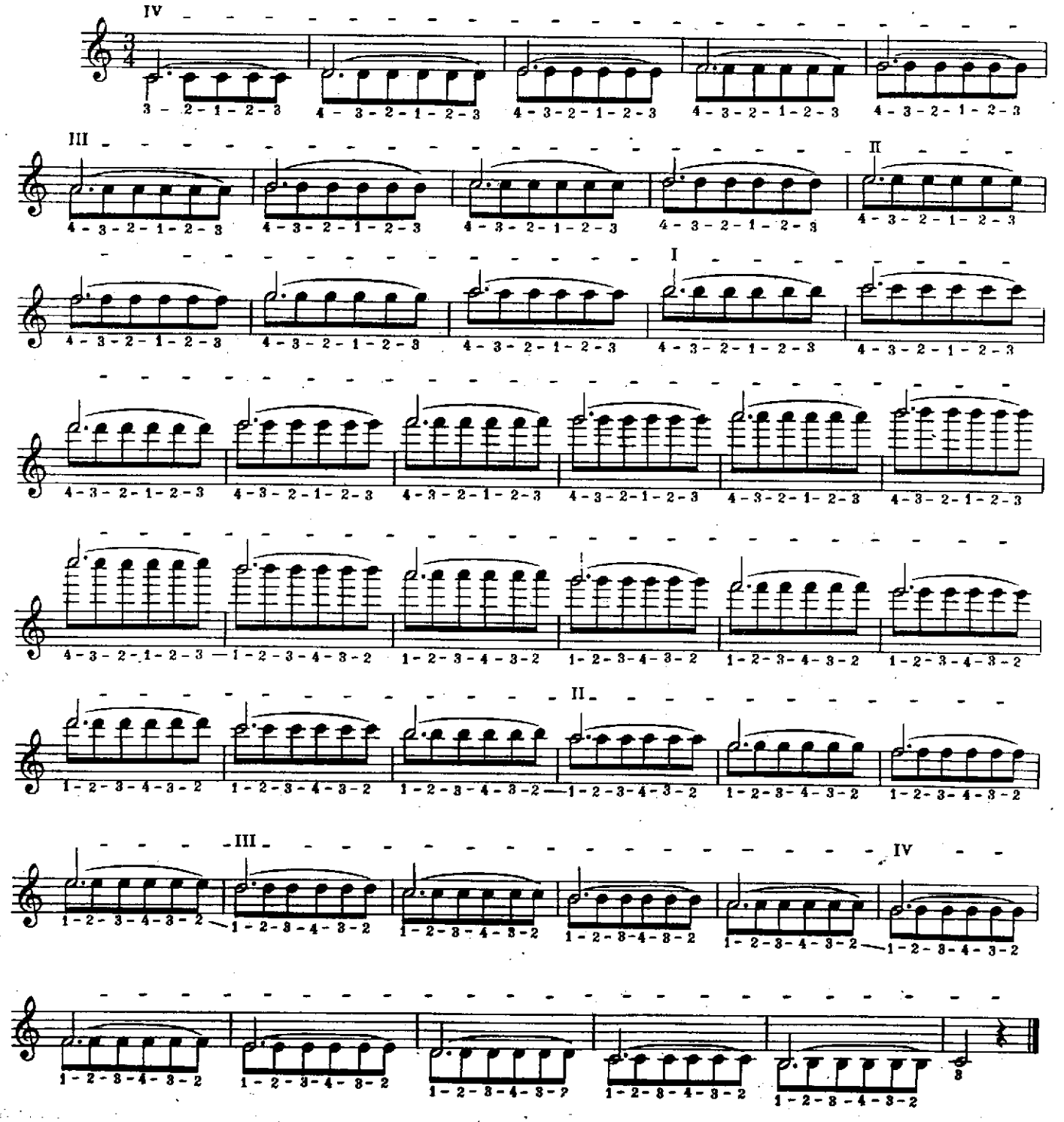


SIXTH EXERCISE

Ⓐ FOR SHIFTING

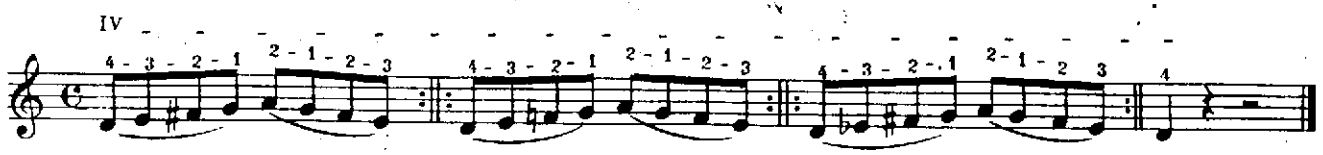
DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING: The thumb should always follow the hand in an upward shift; while in a downward shift it acts as a forerunner to the other fingers. Shifting should never have any effect on the evenness of the bow stroke; the bowing should give the same impression as if the notes were played in the same position, without shifting.

Practise slowly and with full tone; aim at producing the effect of a sustained note. Practise in a new key every day.



Ⓑ TO DEVELOP INDEPENDENT FINGER ACTION IN SHIFTING

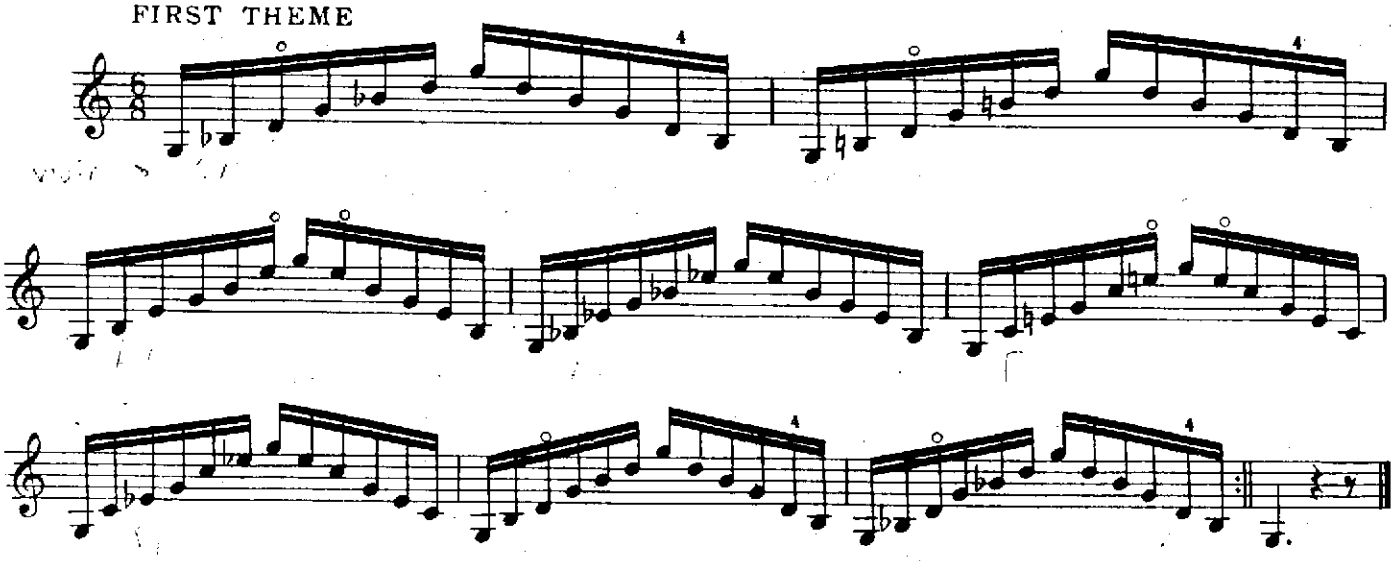
DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. Same as for Ⓐ Repeat each bar four times.



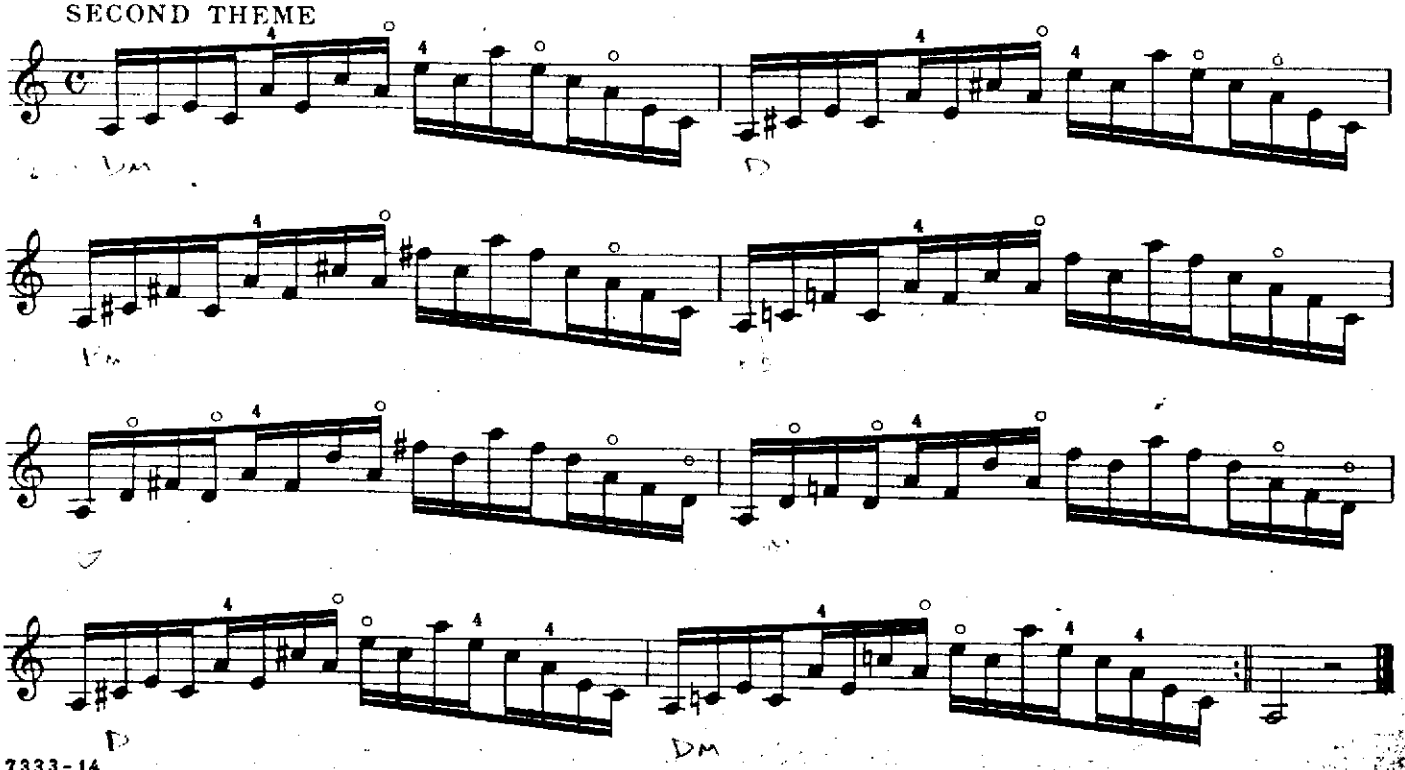
To be transposed and practised on the other strings as well.

TWO THEMES FOR BOW EXERCISES

FIRST THEME



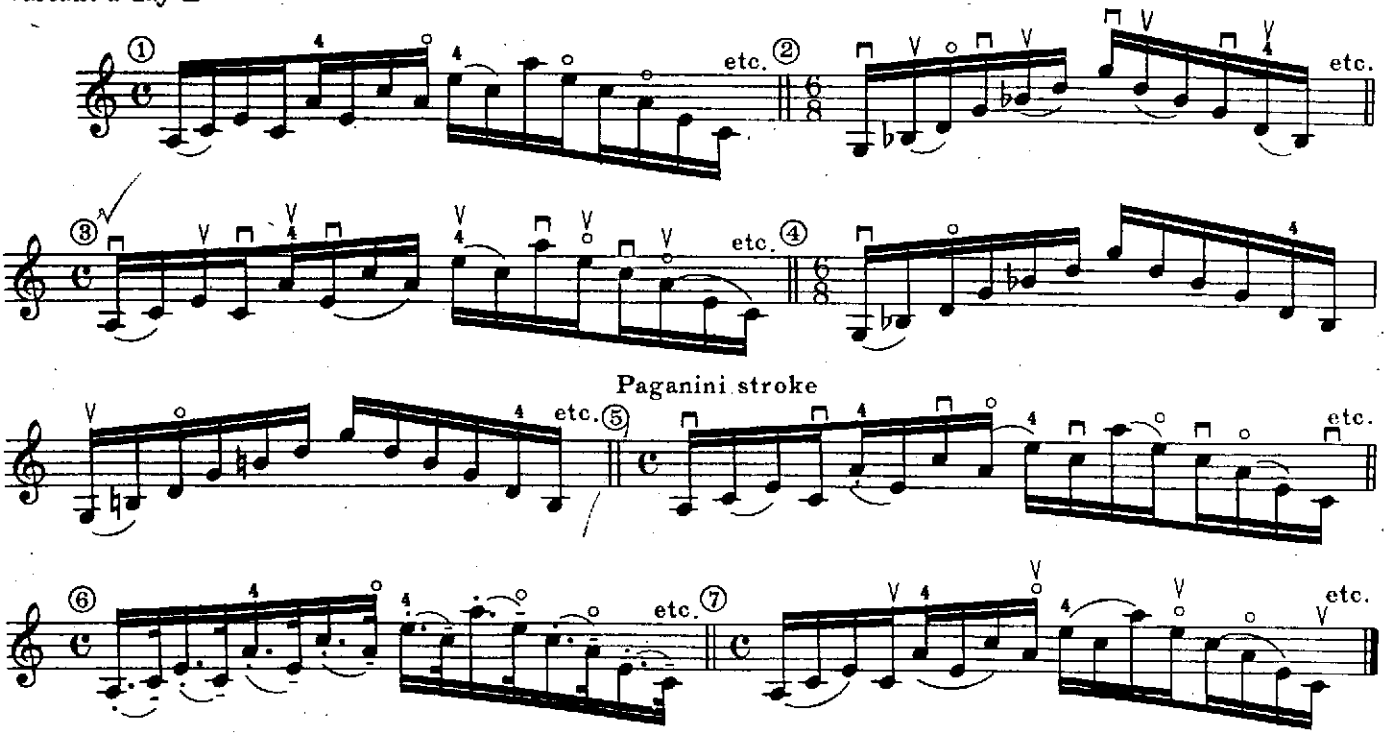
SECOND THEME



SEVENTH EXERCISE

THE NUT OF THE BOW - SEVEN VARIANTS

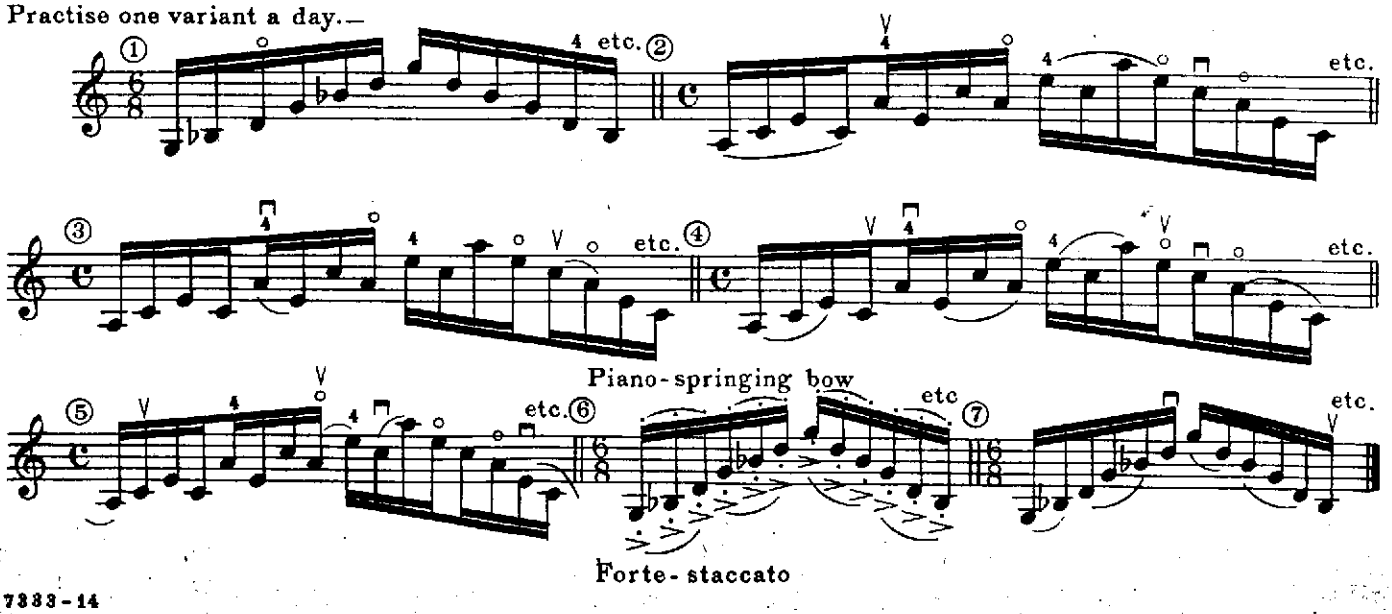
DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. All variants should be practised at the nut of the bow. Try to ascertain the weight of the bow and balance it with the little finger. Variants ② and ④ should be practised on the FIRST BOW THEME. Variants ①, ③, ⑤, ⑥ and ⑦ should be practised on the SECOND BOW THEME. Repeat each variant four times, the first two times FORTE and VERY SLOWLY, the detached notes with broad détaché, the last two times a little FASTER and PIANO, the detached notes with SPICCATO. Practise one variant a day.



EIGHTH EXERCISE

THE MIDDLE OF THE BOW - SEVEN VARIANTS

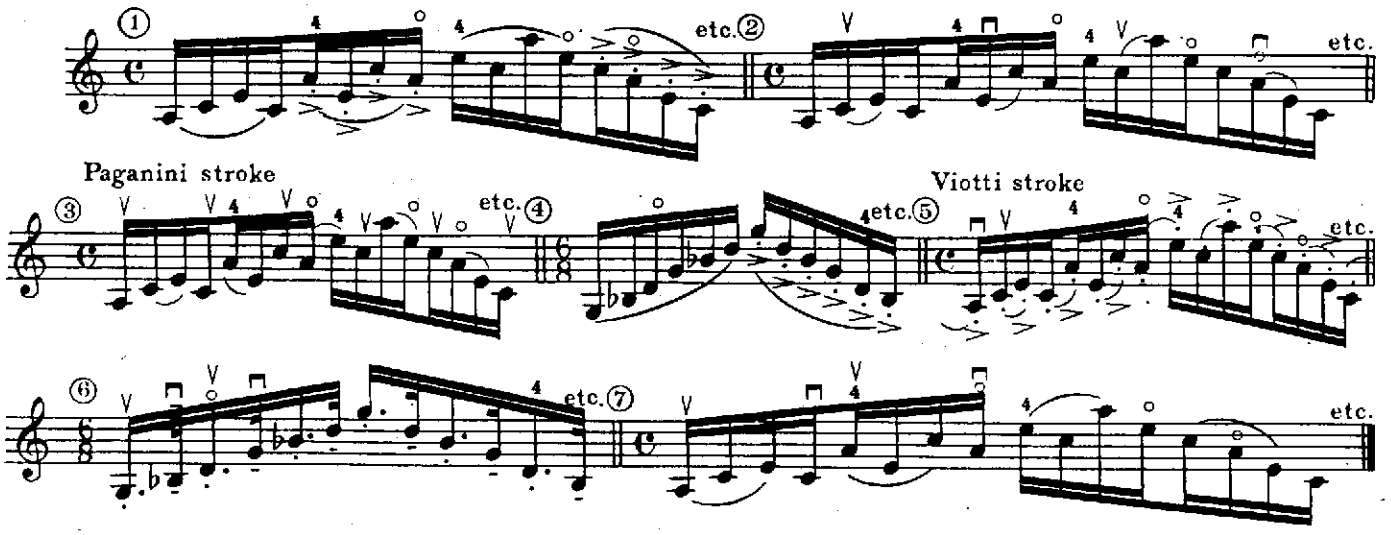
DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. All variants should be practised with the middle of the bow. Variants ①, ⑥ and ⑦ should be practised on the FIRST BOW THEME. Variants ②, ③, ④ and ⑤ should be practised on the SECOND BOW THEME. Repeat four times, the first two times FORTE and VERY SLOWLY, the detached notes with broad détaché, the last two times a little FASTER and PIANO, the detached notes with SPICCATO. Practise one variant a day.



NINTH EXERCISE

THE POINT OF THE BOW–SEVEN VARIANTS

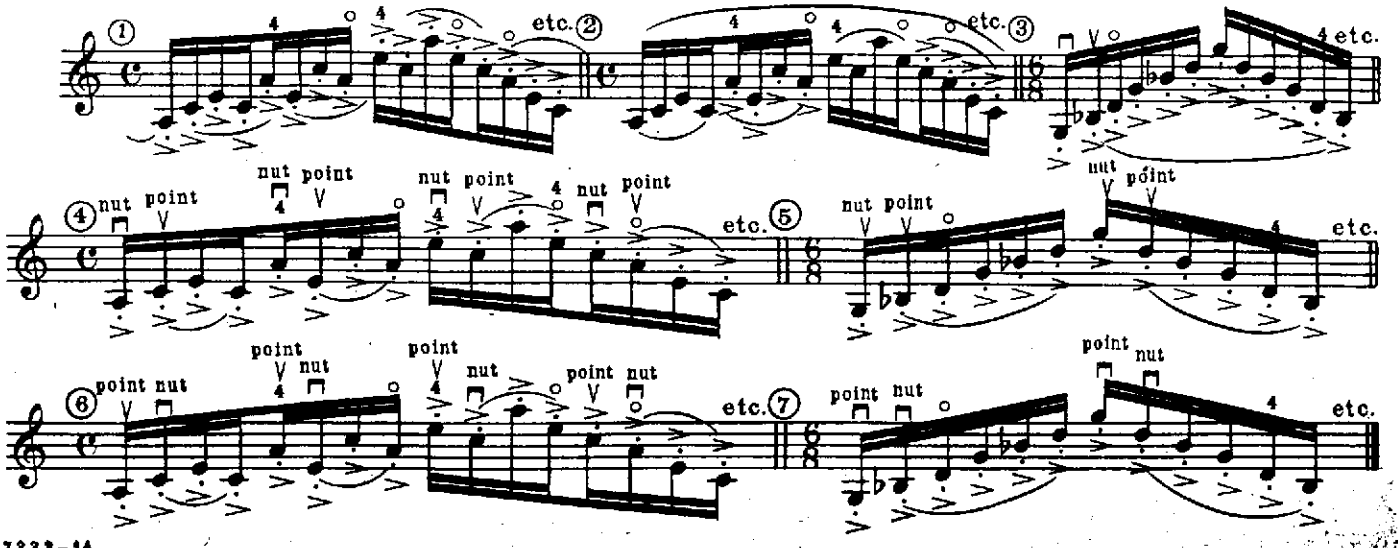
DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. Practise the following variants at the point of the bow. Retain an almost straight position of the wrist when playing at the point. "DO NOT BREAK THE WRIST". Accent sharply the staccato notes and observe a slight pause after each staccato note. Repeat each variant four times – the first two times FORTE and VERY SLOWLY, the detached notes with martelé stroke; the last two times a little FASTER and PIANO, the detached notes with smooth détaché bowing. Practice one variant a day. Variants ④ and ⑥ should be practised on the FIRST BOW THEME; Variants ①, ②, ③, ⑤ and ⑦ should be practised on the SECOND BOW THEME.



TENTH EXERCISE

THE WHOLE BOW – SEVEN VARIANTS

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING. Variants ③, ⑤ and ⑦ should be practised on the FIRST BOW THEME; Variants ①, ②, ④ and ⑥ should be practised on the SECOND BOW THEME. Variants ①, ② and ③ should be played with the whole bow; for the detached note in variant ③ use also the entire bow. The detached note in variant ④ should be played at the nut of the bow, using very little bow; the remaining three staccato notes should be played at the point of the bow, drawing and pushing the bow as quickly as possible HALF AN INCH ABOVE THE STRINGS, so as to play alternately without any break at the nut and at the point of the bow. In exactly the same way are to be practised variants ⑤, ⑥ and ⑦. Repeat each variant four times – the first two times FORTE and VERY SLOWLY, playing the staccato notes in ACCENTED LEGATO, i.e. accentuating each note without stopping the bow; the two last times a little FASTER and PIANO, playing the staccato notes in FIRM STACCATO, i.e. observing a slight pause between each note. Practise one variant a day.

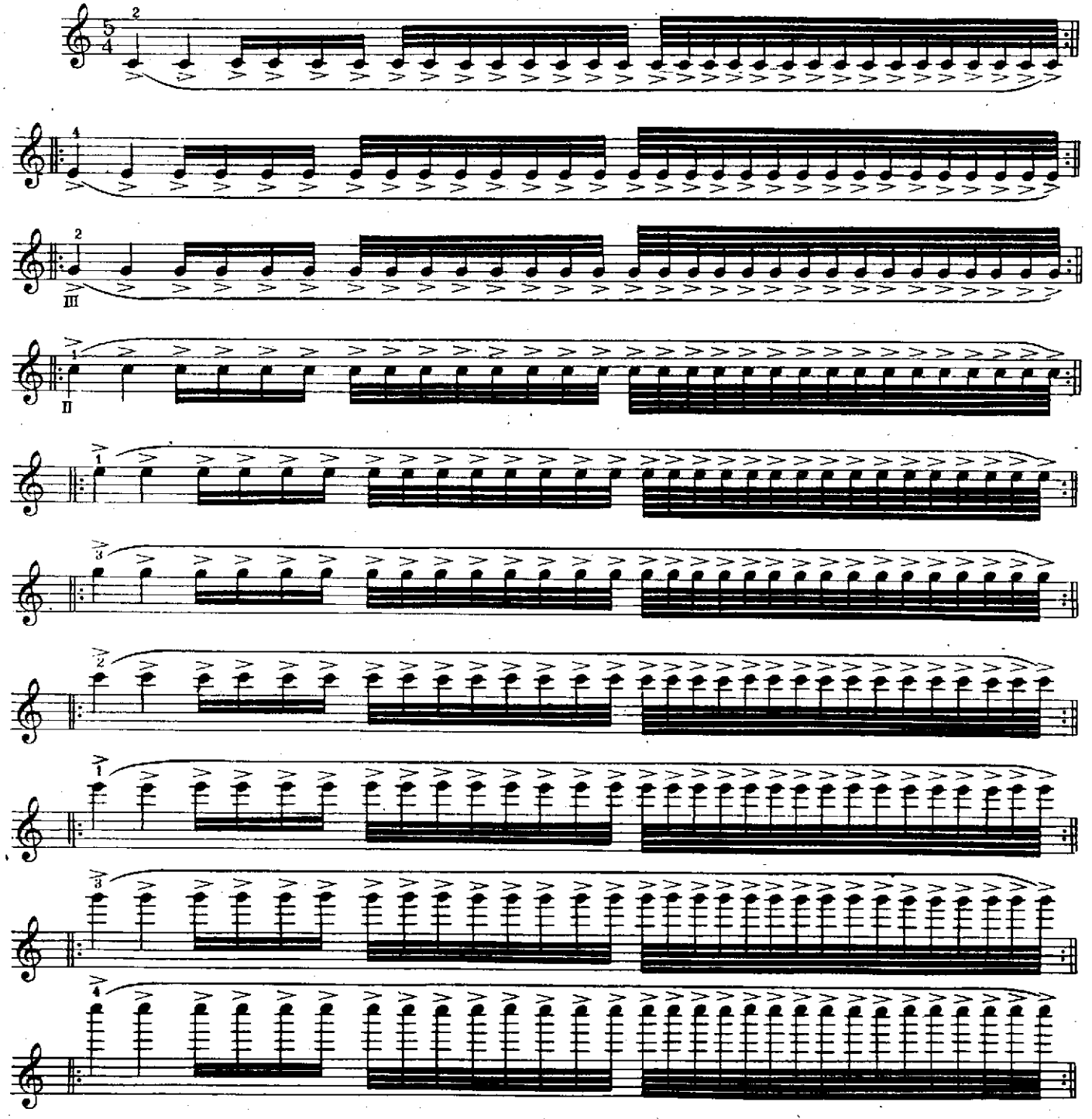


ELEVENTH EXERCISE

FOR TONE PRODUCTION

(A) TO DEVELOP A BEAUTIFUL AND SINGING TONE

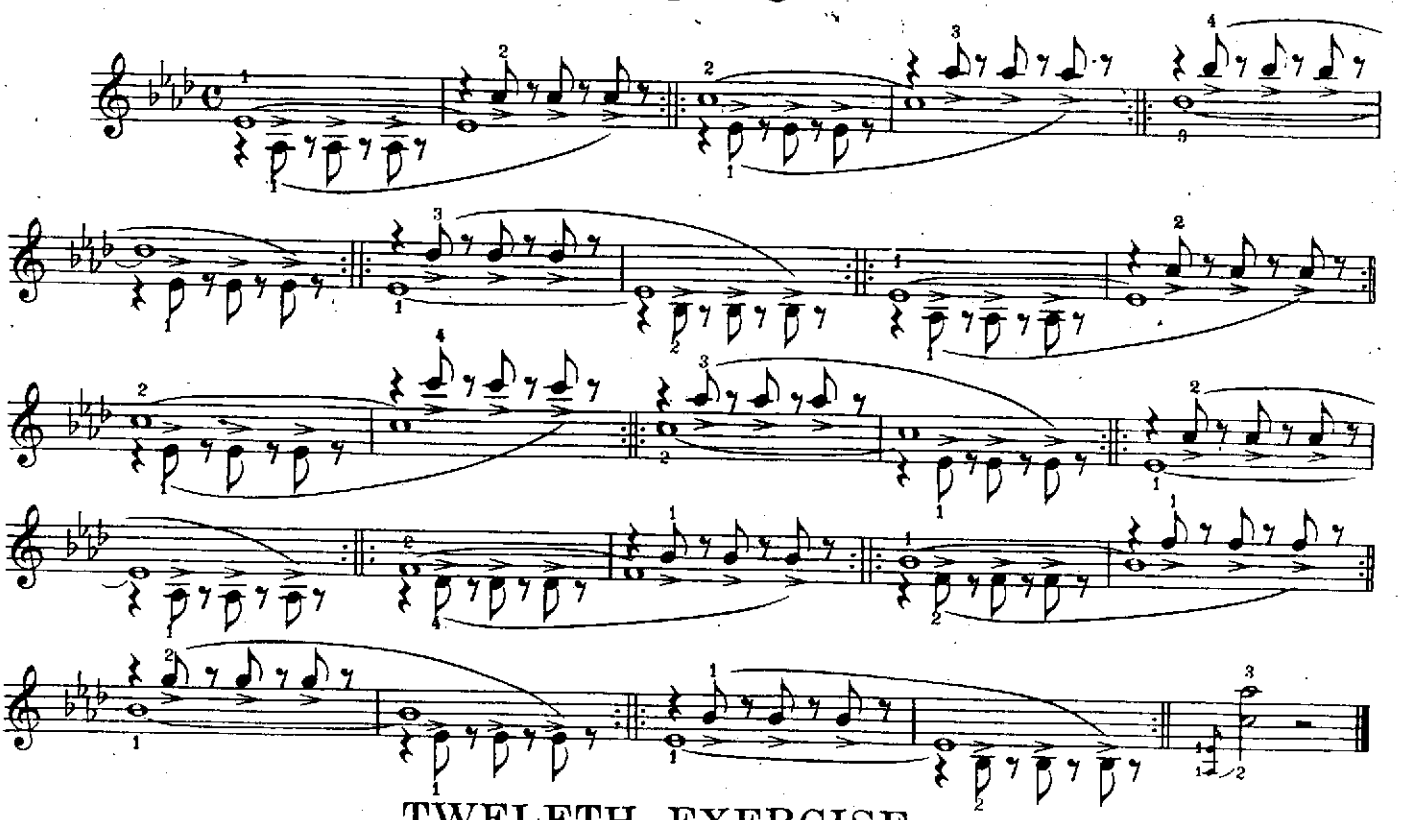
DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING.. Accentuate every note as indicated by imparting added pressure to the bow for each note. This pressure should come from the right hand fingers and it should in no way interfere with the even drawing and pushing of the bow. Accent the notes exactly as indicated i. e. $f > p$ $f > p$ etc. Do not stop the bow; there should be no pause between the notes.. Practise very slowly and with full tone.—



It will be found benificial to practise a new chord every day in exactly the same manner as the above one.. Repeat each bar twice.—

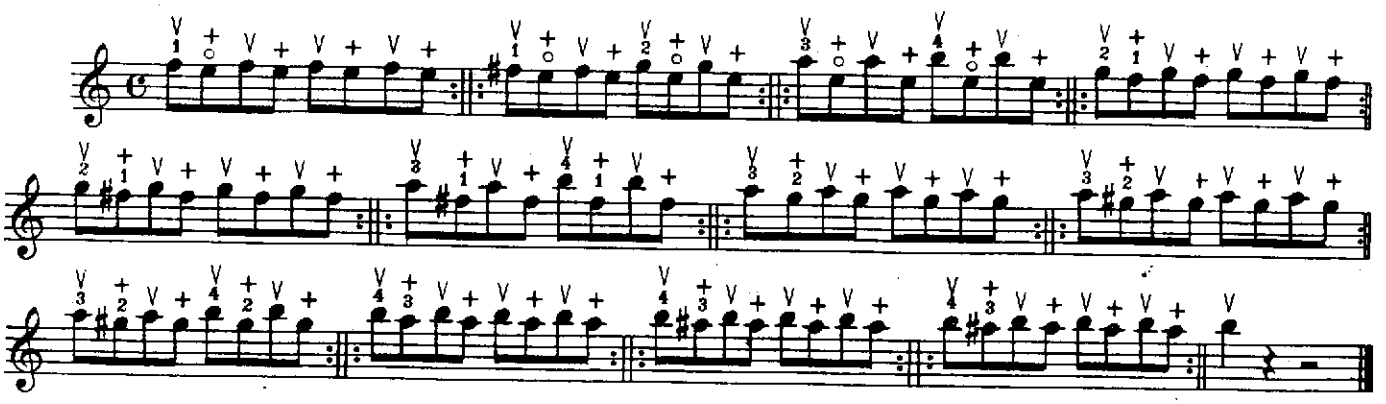
Ⓑ TO DEVELOP A POWERFUL LARGE TONE

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING.- Pratise as slowly and as loudly as possible.- The intensity of the tone of the whole notes should not be lessened, nor there should be any break in the tone while playing the accompanying eighth notes.- Accent the eighth notes and play them very broadly.—Repeat every two bars twice.- Practise alternately every day exercises Ⓐ and Ⓑ.—



TWELFTH EXERCISE
FOR LEFT HAND PIZZICATO

DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING.- The string should be plucked with the fingers swiftly and with great strength. The pizzicato notes are marked thus: (+) They should be played with the same finger used for the previous note. Transpose the following exercise on all four strings; practise one string a day.-Use the point of the bow for the up-strokes.- Repeat each bar twice; practise SLOWLY and VERY FORTE.—



TO CONCLUDE-A LAST WORD OF ADVICE

"PLAY EVERYTHING ALWAYS IN AN ABSOLUTELY FREE AND EASY MANNER WITHOUT ANY CONSTRAINT OR STIFFNESS, WHETHER MENTAL OR PHYSICAL. HAVE CONTINUOUSLY IN MIND THAT ELASTICITY-SUPPLENESS- IS THE BASIS OF ARTISTIC PLAYING. THINK OF THE ACROBAT WHO PERFORMS THE MOST DIFFICULT AND MOST INTRICATE "TOURS DE FORCE" ALWAYS "SMILING." THE SECRET OF TECHNICAL PERFECTION BEING NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY IN CONQUERING A DIFFICULTY."

THE END