

# The School of Octave Playing

## Preparatory Exercises.



### Section I.

#### Preliminary Remarks.

T. Kullak

(1) Dexterity in octave-playing is essentially dependent on the training of the wrist, the assistance of which is required in two different directions:

a. In *staccato* playing, in order that the rise and fall of the hand required by the separation of the tones, may be executed easily and without stiffness.

b. In *legato* playing, in order to facilitate the rising and falling of the hand, which has to serve as a weight augmenting the pressure required of the finger depressing the key, thus facilitating a sustained and connected style of execution. For this rising and falling are necessary to prevent overexertion and exhaustion. In contradistinction

to *legato* playing, which is based on the simple "finger-stroke from the knuckle-joint," we term this style "*legato* playing by the aid of the wrist."

(2) In the second place, we must consider the training of those fingers which are chiefly employed in octave-playing. The principal finger is the thumb; the fifth and fourth fingers are next in importance, the third and second being utilized only in a very subordinate capacity. The three principal fingers 1, 4 and 5, require special training (particularly for the *legato* execution of successive octaves), for the reason that they are obliged, by the distance between the lower and higher tones of the octave, to assume positions and perform duties at variance with those demanded by the simple finger-*legato*.

#### I. Staccato Playing.

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Repeated striking of one and the same key; fingering 1-5; the simple wrist-stroke.

Assuming that the pupil knows the correct attitude of the body and position of the seat, as well as the correct angle between the forearm and upper arm, the simple form of the wrist-stroke requires independence of the hand of the arm, which latter must strive to retain its normal position.

The up-strokes and down-strokes of the

hand must be executed as evenly as possible. Accents require a higher up-stroke, so that the down-stroke may gain greater power. Each of the following exercises is to be repeated several times in succession in the same manner. The unemployed fingers should assume an easy attitude. With increasing facility, the *tempo* may be accelerated and various degrees of force (*p*, *f*, etc.) may be taken into account.