

**FROM BRAIN TO KEYBOARD:
A SYSTEM OF HAND
AND FINGER CONTROL FOR
PIANISTS AND STUDENTS**

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From Brain to Keyboard: A System of Hand and Finger Control for Pianists and Students by
MacDonald Smith

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In presenting to the American public the work upon which the Author has been engaged for half a lifetime, he does so with the earnest hope that it will prove as useful to music-lovers in America as it has already to thousands in England and elsewhere.

On a first inspection of this book many will see only the strangeness of the new method, but when understood it will be recognized as merely a rational application of science to the necessities of the case.

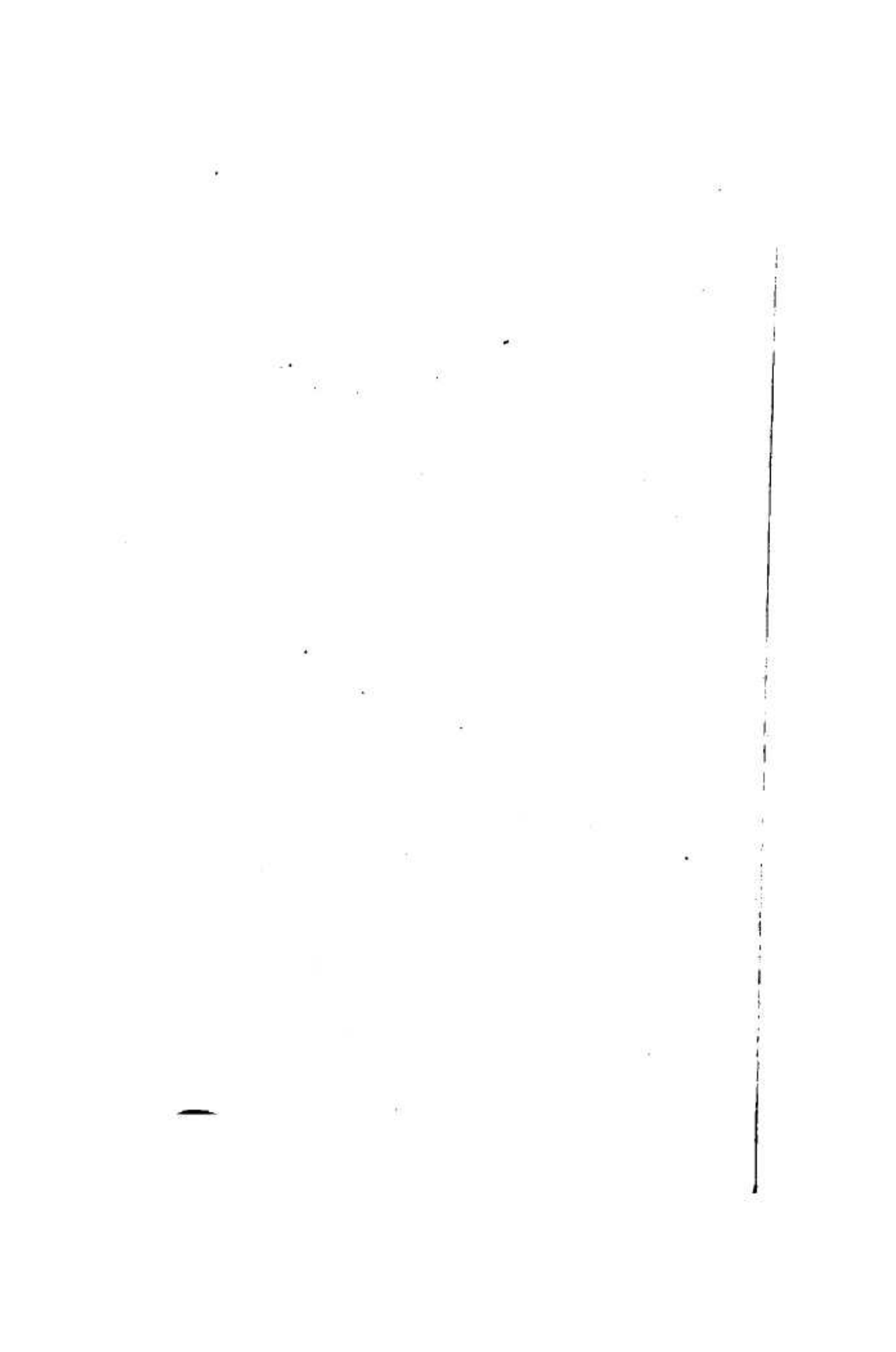
When one drives a perfect motor car of recent model, one moves levers which bring into play laws of mechanics and other sciences, such as physics and chemistry, about which one may, merely as owner or driver, know nothing. The car races along well, nevertheless.

In pianoforte-playing, it has been found that by the discovery of a new principle of muscular and nervous development, and the application of such laws of physiology and of mechanics as belong legitimately to the subject, an advance on former methods of training has been made possible, perhaps as great as is that of the motor car compared with the ordinary horse vehicle.

People were nervous at first about riding in motor cars, but now everyone uses them, though they do not often understand them. It is hoped, therefore, that this method for pianists, even though strange, will be generally adopted by American students and players when its advantages, easily verified, are appreciated, and that the day of tiresome daily scale-practicing will soon become a thing of the past.

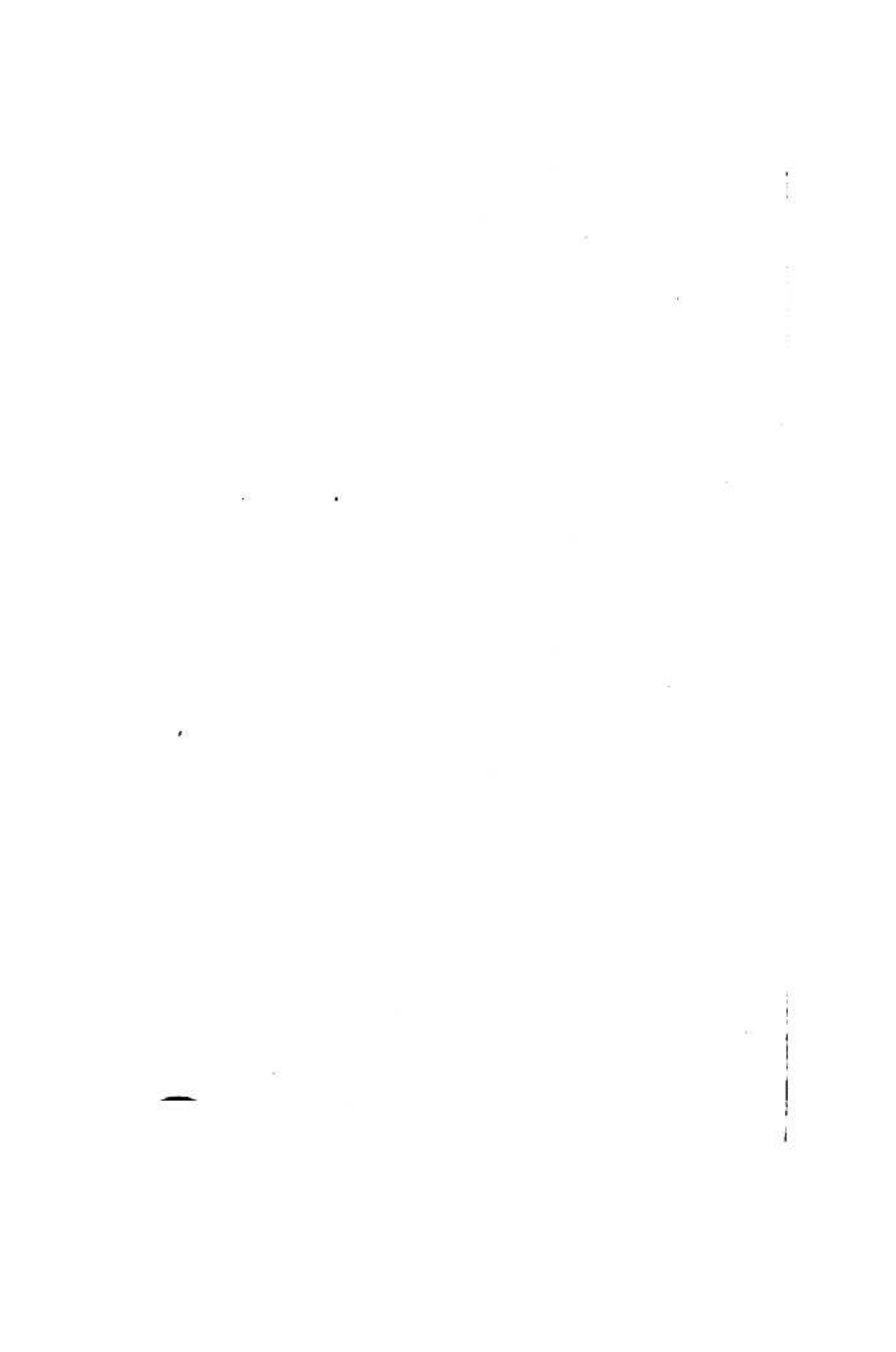
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INTRODUCTION

PIANO PLAYING IN GENERAL

How many among your friends can you count whose performance touches you, whose playing gives you real pleasure or could soothe you when you feel wearied or worried? How many of them can accompany at sight sympathetically and reliably, a simple ballad? You smile as if I were asking an impossibility.

A. Neumegeu, *Music as it is Taught*.

Music as conceived in the brain of the composer is entirely mental; as played on a mechanical piano or organ it has nothing mental about it; and as executed by a performer on any instrument it is partly dependent on mental conditions and partly upon mechanical or rather physical ones, besides, of course, the purely mechanical condition of the instrument itself.

Take an experienced pianoforte professor of fifty or sixty years of age — if he cannot play an even scale his difficulties are purely *physical*; a strong young pupil of his who can "do anything" with her fingers fails to play as she should from difficulties which are purely *mental*. The beauties of a favorite piano composition may be thoroughly enjoyed by many by simply reading it over, the reader being then untrammelled by technical imperfections, but music in general cannot be practiced in quite such an imaginative and ethereal manner and requires for its interpretation, first and foremost, no doubt, the musical soul; but secondly the delicately regulated contractions of many muscles to produce the required sounds from whatever instrument is being played. In the case of the piano, very great attention and study has been given to that part of the mechanism which intervenes between Keyboard and String; but it is the remaining part of the chain — and this chain is no stronger than its weakest link — that has hitherto caused most trouble.