

those considerations of form which are the foundation of instrumental music.

The necessity for an arbitrary form in composition will be seen, when it is considered that a composer may err, on the one side, by the employment of too many themes with too little repetition ; or, on the other side, by the employment of too few themes with too much repetition. Form, therefore, deals with the judicious employment and repetition of themes in composition.

In the course of the development of form in composition, various arbitrary forms have, from time to time been employed. Some of these, such as the canon and fugue, have been in use since the early days of the Belgian school, while others, especially the mediæval dance forms, have gradually become more or less obsolete.

The arbitrary forms employed by the greatest masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may be summarized as follows :—

1. Unitary form—the musical sentence.
2. Simple Binary and simple Ternary forms (sometimes called Song form).
3. Ancient Binary forms (now practically obsolete).
4. Ternary proper form.
5. Various Rondo forms.
6. Sonata form (also called Modern Binary form).
7. The Fugue, including the Canon, etc.

To the above may be added :—

The Theme with variations.

The Fantasia, etc. (compositions without any definite form), and

Certain modifications and combinations of the various forms.

It will now be our task to examine the construction