

## A CHILD OF THE CHURCH.

SO nearly allied are the Beautiful and the True, that it is not surprising to find Art flourishing most luxuriantly where Religion is. Whether turning to poetry, sculpture or painting, we see that within the shadow of the Rock of Peter, genius finds encouragement and assistance. Especially is this fact perceived in regard to painting and music, for these are the sisters the Church has called to her aid the more frequently, the former, in educating the soul by the sense of sight, the latter by that of hearing.

In the middle ages Europe possessed two kinds of music, that of the Troubadour, the patriotic, impulsive, often warlike and always unwritten lyrical popular sentiment of the hour and country, and that of the Church, encouraged since the time of Constantine, or even earlier, and which in an especial manner owes much to the patronage of Saint Ambrose and Saint Gregory. When abuses crept in and degenerate composers and choristers stooped to debase the art they should have striven to have elevated, there arose the father of church music as we now know it—Palestrina—who “established a type which has been more or less adhered to ever since” in the *Missa Papae Marcelli*.

The impetus thus given to the use of music devoted to sacred purposes resulted in the birth of the Oratorio. Crescembini, quoted by Sharp, writes: “The Oratorio, a poetical composition, formerly a co-mixture of the dramatic and narrative styles, but now entirely a musical drama, had its origin from Saint Philip Neri, who in his chapel after sermons and other devotions . . . had hymns, psalms and prayers sung by one or more voices. Among these spiritual songs were dialogues, and these entertainments becoming more frequent and improving every year, were the occasion that in the seventeenth century

oratorios were invented, so called from their origin.” These brief facts sufficiently justify the statement that the Church has ever been solicitous in fostering the beautiful wherever found, for “Music is the true type or measure of consummate art.” It is not remarkable, then, that the greatest of composers have found delight in setting the liturgies and hymns of the ancient faith to the most ennobling flights of their almost inspired genius, genius which has not infrequently consoled where all else has failed. Many are there, many there yet will be, who in perplexity, with Du Maurier cry:

“I am sick of idle words past all reconciling;

Words which worry and perplex and pander and conceal:

Wake the sounds which cannot lie for all their sweet beguiling—

The sounds which one need fathom not, but only know and feel.”

In the list of those great men who have reproduced for the church militant the echoes of the hosannas of the Church triumphant, the name of Mozart (the centenary of whose death has recently been celebrated) is pre-eminent. Haydn said, “I consider him the greatest composer I have ever heard.” To praise Mozart would be to paint the lily, and gild refined gold, yet it is pardonable for THE MONTH to bring its tribute of admiration in the train of the eulogies of Weber, Mendelssohn, Rossini, Wagner, and others of lesser fame perhaps, but equal sincerity. It is proper to remember him with affection whose mere name never failed to excite the loving tears of Meyerbeer, that composer whose works fill so large a place in French music, for which Mozart himself had, curiously enough, a deep-seated abhorrence.

Mozart is an exceptional instance of extravagant and phenomenal youthful talent maintained to the end of life. He was a musician born, and from his cradle days almost, gave