



THE MOTHER'S LESSON

THE Benediction was just over in the Church of Our Lady of Victories in Paris. The church was crowded — it was some fifty years ago — with men, but close to the door stood a young mother with her first-born son, her only-born as yet, in arms. She had been queen of that little treasure for now nearly three years, and how dear they were to each other it was clear to see. The little hand was stretched out for some holy water from that most sacred of sprinklers, a mother's hand, and then the mother held up her child, so that he could see above the crowd towards the Tabernacle.

"Say good-night to Jesus, Michael," she said ; and the little thing put its tiny hand to its lips and flung kiss after kiss towards its hidden lord :

"Good-night, Jesus ; dear Jesus !" and then turning to the mother put its baby arms round her neck. He did not quite know, he seemed to say, why he loved the Friend in the Tabernacle, but he did love and loved much, and it was reason enough for him that his mother loved.

Surely those kisses flung up the church, though there is yet but the dawn of reason in the soul and on the face, were not the least lovely nor the least pleasing of the gifts that were being gathered into the open Heart within the Tabernacle.

The act struck me as, long years ago when I was as yet