

## MORE WOMAN THAN ANY OTHER WOMAN

**T**he Virgin Mary was the most perfect creature who ever came from the hands of God; yet her stay in the world was barely noticed by her contemporaries!

Despite the fact that she was so elevated by grace as to approach the borders of the divine, she remained none-the-less a woman. It was her divinely planned role to be true woman and true mother, and it would mar our relations with her for us to lose sight of that. All the wonders accomplished in her did not diminish her womanhood, but indeed intensified it; so that she was more a woman than any other woman. This sounds startling, but it is a truth proceeding from the circumstances that, unlike any other, she did not suffer from the warping of original sin. She began as a perfect woman. Then she became subject to the law of graces; her practice of virtue brought increase. She grew in holiness. With apparent contradiction in terms, her perfection became each new moment more perfect. When her earthly career finished, she was so full of grace that she had reached the limit of the human condition. She had responded faithfully to God's giving. He had His way fully with her.

### MARY, PATTERN OF ALL WOMANHOOD

She was the original pattern in God's mind for all woman-kind. No other has achieved it. All other women fall short in some respects and in varying degrees. Some are too feminine. Others are insufficiently feminine. Softness need not mean gentleness, nor hardness strength. Interest may be only curiosity. Sentiment may not mean love. Prudery is not modesty. Prudence may be only worldly caution. Courage may be really recklessness. Calm may mask indifference. Honesty be no more than shrewdness. Refinement may cover a multitude of sins. And so on through the gamut of human qualities.

But there is in all these things an ideal point where balance lies. To fall short of it means defect. To go beyond it means defect. So if we were to think of the human race as a great mass inside a circle, all of its members would be at various distances and directions from that perfect point, the exact centre. Mary is that centre, and there is no other with her or indeed anywhere near her.

Let us have an enquiring, reverent look at this extra-ordinary creature: So great that it has been said that the angels rejoice more in her birth than in their own creation. So modest and normal that she could live under the intimate gaze of 3,000 Nazareans without attracting undue notice.

