

The Mountains of Mourne

Percy French



1. Oh Mary, this London's a wonderful sight,
With people here working by day and by night.
They don't sow potatoes nor barley nor wheat
But there's gangs of them diggin' for gold in the street.
At least, when I asked them that's what I was told
So I just took a hand at this diggin' for gold;
But for all that I've found there, I might as well be
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.
2. I believe that when writin' a wish you expressed
As to how the fine lAdies of London are dressed.
Well if you believe me, when asked to a ball
They don't wear no tops to their dresses at all.
Oh, I've seen them myself and you could not, in truth
Say if they were bound for a ball, or a bath,
Don't be startin' them fashions now, Mary Machree,
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.
3. I've seen England's king from the top of a bus
And I've never known him, but he means to know us.
And tho' by the Saxon we once were oppressed,
Still I cheered, God forgive me, I cheered with the rest.
And now that he's visited Erin's green shore
We'll be much better friends than we've been heretofore
When we've got all we want, we're as quiet as can be
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.

4. You remember young Peter O'Loughlin of course
Well now he is here at the head of the Force.
I met him today, I was crossing the Strand
And he stopped the whole street with a wave of his hand.
And there we stood talking of days that are gone
While the whole population of London looked on;
But for all these great powers, he's wishful, like me
To be back where the dark Mourne sweeps down to the sea.
5. There's beautiful girls here Oh, never you mind,
With beautiful shapes nature never designed.
And lovely complexions all roses and cream,
But O'Loughlin remarked with regard to the same
That if at those roses you venture to sip
The colors might all come away on your lip
So I'll wait for the wild rose that's waitin' for me
Where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea.

The lyrics to the song "The Mountains of Mourne" were written by Irish musician Percy French about 1900. It is normally sung to the traditional Irish folk tune "Carrigdhoun". This was the same tune used by Thomas Moore (1779–1852) for his song "Bendemeer's Stream".

Perhaps one of French's most famous songs is "Are Ye Right There Michael", a song ridiculing the state of the rail system in rural County Clare. The song caused such embarrassment to the rail company that it led to a libel action against French, though this ultimately failed. (It is said that French arrived late for the libel hearing at the court, and when questioned by the judge on his lateness, he responded "Your honour, I travelled by the West Clare Railway," resulting in the case being thrown out.)