

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN (in 4/4)

lyrics: Cathal McGarvey (1866 - 1927)

tune: traditional

A Am F C G Am F Em

5 Am F C G Am F Am

9 **B** C G Am F Em

13 Am F C G Am F (Repeat for Chorus) Am Am

The melody for the well-known song "The Star of the County Down" is much older than the lyrics, which were written by Cathal McGarvey (variations with slightly different wording exist, such as "The Flower of the County Down"). The melody predates these lyrics by centuries, and has been associated with a number of different ballads, one of the oldest of which is "Dives and Lazarus" (Child Vol. 2, No. 56). The song is traditionally presented cheerfully and briskly in duple meter (4/4 or 2/2), with a repeated B-part to accommodate the chorus.

Verse 1: Near Banbridge town in the County Down, one morning last July,
Down a boren green came a sweet coleen, and she smiled as she passed me by.
She looked so sweet, from her two bare feet to the sheen of her nut-brown hair,
Such a coaxing elf, sure I shook myself, for to see I was really there.

Chorus: From Bantry Bay down to Derry Quay and from Galway to Dublin Town,
No maid I've seen like the brown coleen that I met in the County Down.

Verse 2: As she onward sped, sure I scratched my head, and I looked with a feeling rare
And I says, says I, to a passer-by; "Who's the maid with the nut-brown hair?"
He smiled at me and he says, says he; "That's the gem of Ireland's crown,
Young Rosie McCann from the banks of the Bann; she's the Star of the County Down."

Repeat Chorus...

Verse 3: At the harvest fair she'll be surely there; so I'll dress in my Sunday clothes
With my shoes shone bright and my hat cocked right, for a smile from my nut-brown rose.
No pipe I'll smoke, no horse I'll yoke, til my plough is a rust-coloured brown,
Til a smiling bride by my own fireside sits the Star of the County Down.

Repeat Chorus...