

RODDY MCCORLEY

By Ethna Carbery

Ho! See the fleet-foot hosts of men
Who speed with faces wan,
From farmstead and from fisher's cot
Upon the banks of Bann!
They come with vengeance in their eyes -
Too late, too late are they -
For Roddy McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Oh Ireland, Mother Ireland,
You love them still the best,
The fearless brave who fighting fall
Upon your hapless breast;
But never a one of all your dead
More bravely fell in fray,
Than he who marches to his fate
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Up the narrow street he stepped,
Smiling and proud and young;
About the hemp-rope on his neck
The golden ringlets clung.
There's never a tear in the blue, blue eyes,
Both glad and bright are they -
As Roddy McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Ah! When he last stepped up that street,
His shining pike in hand,
Behind him marched in grim array
A stalwart earnest band!
For Antrim town! For Antrim town!
He led them to the fray -

And Roddy McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

The grey coat and its sash of green
Were brave and stainless then;
A banner flashed beneath the sun
Over the marching men -
The coat hath many a rent this noon,
The sash is torn away,
And Roddy McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Oh, how his pike flashed to the sun!
Then found a foeman's heart!
Through furious fright, and heavy odds,
He bore a true man's part;
And many a red-coat bit the dust
Before his keen pike-play -
But Roddy McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.

Because he loved the Motherland,
Because he loved the Green,
He goes to meet the martyr's fate
With proud and joyous men,
True to the last, true to the last,
He treads the upward way -
Young Roddy McCorley goes to die
On the Bridge of Toome to-day.