

Roddy McCorley

By Anna Johnston, who used the pen name Ethna Carbery (1866–1902)

Oh, see the fleet-foot hosts of men who speed with faces wan
From farmstead and from thresher's cot
along the banks of Ban They come with vengeance in their eyes;
too late, too late are they For young
Roddy McCorley goes to die on the bridge of Toome today.

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 today.

Up the narrow street he stepped, so smiling, proud and young.
About the hemp-rope on his neck, the golden ringlets clung;
There's ne'er a tear in his blue eyes, fearless and brave are they,
As young Roddy McCorley goes to die on the bridge of Toome today.

When last this narrow street he trod, his shining pike in hand
Behind him marched, in grim array, an earnest stalwart band.
To Antrim town! To Antrim town, he led them to the fray,
Now young Roddy McCorley goes to die on the bridge of Toome today.

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 today.

Oh, how his pike flashed in the sun! Then found a foeman's heart,
Through furious fight, 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 today.

There's never a one of all your dead more bravely died in fray
Than he who marches to his fate in Toomebridge town today;
True to the last! True to the last, he treads the upwards way,
And young Roddy McCorley goes to die on the bridge of Toome today.

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Last update: **2018/07/09 11:40**

