

# The Croppy Boy

The musical score is written on three staves in a 3/4 time signature with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The lyrics are: "It was ear - ly, ear - ly in the spring. The small birds they did sweet - ly sing, Sound - ing their notes from tree to tree, And the song they sang was old Ire - land free." The third staff includes a triplet of eighth notes over the words "And the song they sang".

It was early, early last Thursday night  
The yeoman cavalry gave me a fright.  
The yeoman cavalry was my downfall  
When I was taken to Lord Cornwall.

It was in his guardhouse where I was laid,  
And in his parlor where I was tried,  
My sentence passed and my spirits low  
When to New Guinea I was forced to go.

As I was marching through the street  
The drums and fifes did play so sweet,  
The drums and fifes did so sweetly play  
As we were marching so far away.

As I was marching by my father's door  
My brother William stood on the floor,  
My aged father did grieve full sore  
And my tender mother her hair she tore.

When my sister Mary heard the express,  
She ran downstairs in her morning dress,  
Saying, "Five hundred guineas I would lay down  
To see you marching through Wexford town."

As we were marching though Wexford Street  
My sister Mary we chanced to meet.  
That false young woman did me betray  
And for one bare guinea swore my life away.

## The Croppy Boy

As we were marching o'er Wexford Hill  
Oh, who could blame me to cry my fill?  
I looked behind and I looked before,  
But my aged mother I could see no more.

I wore the red and I wore the blue,  
I wore the gray and the orange, too,  
I forsook all colors and did them deny.  
I wore the green and for it I die.

When I was mounted on the gallows high,  
My aged father was standing by.  
My aged father did me deny,  
And the name he gave was the Croppy Boy.

When I am taken to my grave,  
A decent funeral pray let me have.  
Come, all good people, as you pass me by,  
Say, "The Lord have pity on the Croppy Boy."

Note: Lord Cornwallis was lord lieutenant with supreme military command.

"Croppy Boy" means one of the insurgents of the uprising in Wexford in 1798. Wearing the green means that he would not renounce his faith and become a Protestant.

The picture this song brings to mind is of myself as a small child sitting in my little splint-bottomed rocker with my doll, while mother stood by her spinning wheel, spinning. It was a cold, windy day in October and the dreary whistle of the wind combined with the whir of mother's wheel as she drew the thread and sang this sad song to an inexpressibly sad tune was a combination I can never forget. Mother had a very sweet, sympathetic voice and I never have heard that tune since without feeling the cold shivers run up and down my spine just as they did on that dismal day.