

## Unknown Artist "A Prisoner For Life"

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A Prisoner For Life

My old father advised me when I was but young,  
"Of ramblin' an' gamblin', bad company shun.  
These words you'll remember when I'm old an' gray,  
These words you'll remember when I'm cold in my  
grave."

But I kept on a-ramblin' in that terrible band,  
Till I was attackted by the laws of the land,  
Was tried an' convicted for mail robbery,  
Nine years was transported across the salt sea.  
Then I met my old father a-leavin' the dock,  
He wrang his poor hands an' he tore his gray locks ,  
Sayin', "Son, they have ruint you, I've advised you  
before,

But now we are partin' to meet here no more."  
If I was on shipboard, pretty Molly by me,  
Bound down in strong Ireland I'd feel myself free,  
Bound down in strong Ireland an' kept like a slave,  
'Twas in my own country I did not behave.  
Farewell, little doogie, to an embel you fly,  
You sing an' you sorrow your troubles all by;  
Oh, what would I give in such freedom to share,  
To roam at my ease an' to breathe the fresh air.  
Oh, farewell, kind comrades, I'm willin' to own  
That such a wild outcast has never been known;  
'Tis the cause of my ruin an' sudden downfall,  
An' caused me to labor behind the stone wall.

Note: One of many local variants, each, apparently with  
an

"authentic" local history. In next to last verse, I find  
myself

utterly charmed by "..little doogie, to an embel you'll  
fly.."

Any Missourians have a clue?

From Ozark Folksongs, Randolph. Collected from Carrie  
Baber, MO,

1922

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