McPherson's Lament

McPherson's Lament

My father was a gentleman,
Of fame and honor high,
Oh mother, would you ne'er had borne
The son so doom'd to die.

chorus- Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring (sprig), and danc'd it round (a jig)
Below the gallows-tree.

I've spent my life in rioting,
Debauch'd my health and strength,
I squander'd fast, as pillage came,
And fell to shame at length.

Farewell, yon dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
M'Pherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

O what is breath but parting breath?
On many a bloody plain
I've dar'd his face, and in this place
I'll scorn him yet again.

But vengeance I never did wreak,
When pow'r was in my hand,
And you, dear friends, no vengeance seek,
It is my last command.

Forgive the man whose rage betray'd
MacPherson's worthless life;
When I am gone, be it not said,
My legacy was strife.

He took his fiddle in both his hands
And he broke it all a stone,
Saying there's nae a han' shall ply on thee
When I am dead and gone.

Now farewell light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!

May coward shame disdain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!

O reprieve was coming o the Brig o' Dans
for tae set MacPherson free,
For they set the clock a quarter before
And they hanged him from a tree.

recorded by Jeannie Robertson on Heather and Glen
AJS

Visit www.traditionalmusic.co.uk for more songs.