

Sweet Portaferry

(in 1840 Edward Bunting published a tune called Sweet Portaferry. Cathal O'Boyle searched for words and finally found a version collected by Thomas Polland from his aunt)

You may gaze from green mountains across the bright seas
Where wonder and pleasement are taking their ease
You may search the world over from here to Japan
Transported by nature and the glory of man
But why should men toil foreign lands to explore
When wonder and pleasement are here at their door?
And who would go roving through country and town
From sweet Portaferry and the Kingdom of Down

It lies on a harbour convenient and free
Where the waters of Strangford run into the sea
To bear on their bosom the yield of our toil
When farmer and fisherman plough the lake and the soil
Their bright silver comes in our nets to the strand
Our gold and our glory are planted by hand
But who would change beauty for gain or renown?
And leave Portaferry and the Kingdom of Down

Oh if I were a poor man I'd work on my land
Content with the beauty at every hand
But if I were a rich man my care to beguile
I'd fill up my pockets and wander a while
And what though I'd wander on strange lands or seas
And think my land middling against these
I know when old age makes a sage of clown
I'd seek Portaferry and the Kingdom of Down