

“Well, after all, Andy,” said his wife, “I can’t help thinkin’ that it would have been as well, ay, an’ better, for us to stay at home, where, if we came to trouble or desolation, we’d have the old neighbors and friends about us to comfort us.”

“An’ sure there’s ne’er a one knows that better than myself, Biddy, *asthore machree*,” said Andy, as he took the pipe from his mouth and laid it on the hob (*i. e.* back-stone) beside him, “but then, as I often told you before, this poor old country’s growin’ every day worse an’ worse, an’ where’s the prospect for a large family risin’ up about us? Sure, as it is now, it’s just all we can do to pay the landlord and the tithe-proctor, and all the rest, so that we’re only workin’ the skin off our bones for them that doesn’t thank us; and when the boys an’ the girls are grown up, what have they before them here but a life of hard labor, an’ nothin’ for it — that’s the worst of all. No, no, *agra!* for their sakes we must go to the strange country, while we have a little money in our hands; for if we waited some time longer it ’id slip through our fingers, and leave us without the means of goin’ anywhere.”

“Well, I know it’s all true enough, Andy, dear,” replied Biddy with a heavy sigh, “an’ I’m not the one to gainsay what I know is God’s truth, but then wouldn’t it be better to live in poverty here, where we have our chapel an’ our priest within a mile of us — an’ where