

necessary to emigrate with his family to America, in order to procure for them some sort of establishment—the event was regarded as a calamity in which the whole neighborhood shared. In those days (some twenty years ago) emigration was not what it now is, and he or she who set out for a land beyond the sea, was regretted almost as though the grave were about to shut him in forever. It is true that America was then regarded by our simple peasantry as “a land flowing with milk and honey”—or, to speak less metaphorically, as the land of gold and silver, where wealth rolled on in a ceaseless stream, and to be caught, needed but to reach out the hand. But then the penalty—the dread penalty—which must first be paid;—the separation from home and country—the dangers of the ocean, fearfully exaggerated in the mouths of rustic narrators, and the length of time which it then took to perform the voyage—all these conspired to make it an undertaking of great difficulty and much danger, and, El Dorado as it was, it had but few charms for either Burke or his wife. The latter especially had many and sad misgivings as to the result of the step they were about taking, and to the very last she could scarcely bring herself to look forward with hope. It was the Sunday evening before their departure when the worthy couple sat down together in melancholy mood, talking over the matter so often discussed before.