

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers 1*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is badly faded.

Betting

George Lindemann

“The great Burnett,” father of the renowned painter Horace Burnet, once returned from Marseille to Paris in so heavy and clumsy a vehicle, that it took almost three weeks to accomplish that task. Among the passengers stowed away in this modern Noah's Ark was a man who drew the attention of every passenger on account of his broad red face and being very fat. His face did not disclose much intelligence, and this probably was the reason that the passengers allowed themselves to expand a good deal of their humor and wit on his account.

Burnet entered into conversation with this fatty, and treated him very pleasantly, to all of which, in a rather awkward way, answer was made. One day, the road lay up a rather steep hill. To give relief to the poor horses, both left the wagon and walked ahead on a footpath which was winding alongside of the turnpike. They struck a ditch. Burnet, who was a skillful turner, proposed a bet that he would jump across. “Why,” said fatty in astonishment, “can you jump that far?” “Oh, yes,” was the answer, “that will not take much of a jump.” “I should, however, like to see how you will do it” said fatty. “I do it in this way,” answered Burnet, and in an easy manner he jumped across.

“By Jove, you tempt me to venture it also.” “You,” cried the great painter with loud laughter. “I should like to see that indeed, I'd bet for our dinners that you will land in the middle of the ditch.” “Don't scare me; you say for the dinner? Will it be expensive?” asked he somewhat timidly. “No, but not less than 5 francs.” “That is much money, but I will risk it.” Our fatty took a start; he stopped; he looked about himself; he measured with his eyes; he jumped, and landed about one foot further than Burnet had done.

“You have to give me revenge for this,” excitedly cried Burnet, “Well, well,” rejoined our fat friend, “that is rather a risky business; perhaps I have been lucky; and will likely not be so lucky again. But, honest game; let us jump tomorrow for the dinners again.” On the next day another opportunity offered for a jumping place, and our fat friend came out of the contest again victorious, beating his opponent again by one foot; expressing great joy at this good luck. The tried the game every day and Burnet was beaten each time, which made him terribly mad.

Cracking jokes at the expense of our fat friend had ceased as they had reached the last station, and were about to part company. Burnet was approached by his fat opponent, who reached out his hand and made a bow in the best style, saying with a twinkle in his eye, “My dear Sir, I am very much obliged to you for your kindness, paying my dinners so many times. I thank you very much indeed. Permit me now to present you these

admission tickets to Nicolet, (celebrated acrobats at that time,) I will be happy to see you in the circus, as I have the honor to be the clown with the company. Day after tomorrow, I will make my debut and at it you will see that you have no cause to regret that I beat you jumping.

And indeed, all Paris was soon in a blaze of enthusiasm over the agility and elasticity (*sic*) of Mons. Burnet's fat traveling companion.