

(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*, Dec 20, 1890 to May 30, 1891)

“The Imperial Pint”

from the French

I

At this inn, when the blast
Rattles its swinging sign and blows fast,
And when Frost's in the air;
Bright is its kitchen and warm is its greeting,
See! the hearth glow with the fire up flitting.
—Never fails the flame there;—
A roast, or a stew,—a fry, or a broil?
Everything there from a fish to a fowl;
Command it; that's all!
And when the last rays of the yellowing Sun
Guilts its pots and its pans ere the day is done;
Come, enter its Hall!

II

When you will,—stop,— alight,—
In the full noon,—or the soft midnight,—
You are all welcome there!
The Host comes out smiling and bowing to greet you;
He says “There is room for the many or few”!
And I swear he speaks fair.
When he vows that there never did dawn a day
When a guest ever grumbled and went away!
Not his style; oh No!—
What every you want of the choicest, is there,
Good food and good wine and the best of cheer,
in this Inn, I trow!

III

In I walk,—hat in hand,—
Nowhere so royal an Inn in the land,
Or such linen and plate!
I wait for my friends too tardy in coming,
While without the wind is whirling and moaning;
— They were never so late!—
I push back the curtains, throw open the blinds,
Across the stiff plain are racing the winds;—

With his magic brush, traced.
Frost has painted the panes with his marvelous lines
Lo! mountains,— a Lake, — and a forest of pines!
One rub!—they'r effaced!—

IV

Life is rude,—Winter cold,—
Stiff and bent is a man when he's old,
And oft-times he is blind!
But here in this Inn is Gayety ever,
And laughter and song, what matter what weather,
Warm, — cold, — kind, — unkind;—
One moment of Hope, — one moment of Joy,
Drives into Limbo black cares that annoy!—
—Who says he is old?—
In the songs that we sing o'er the wine cups red,
Flames into fire the spark that's not lead,
In the embers not cold!

V

Farewell Care! — Farewell Pain!
When I greet my friends in this Inn again,
As so often before;
A full flow of wine, — a full flow of wit
Charms and enlivens the room where we sit!
— We four, with closed door,—
For many a year we have ever met here,
Where the wine is so good,— so hearty the cheer
“Good Lord, forgive us!”
When one dies will only three of us come?—
Then two,— Then one,— and then,— not anyone!
“Good Lord, receive us!”

Charles Dexter
March 28th 1891