

**DEERLEAP DUSK, A
DREAM OF SORROW;
BRAMBLE CLOISTERS**

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Deerleap Dusk, a Dream of Sorrow; Bramble Cloisters by John Watkins Pitchford

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JOHN WATKINS PITCHFORD

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A

DREAM OF SORROW.

BY

JOHN WATKINS PITCHFORD.

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DEERLEAP DUSK,

A

DREAM OF SORROW.

I

NYMPHS of the crimson dusk,
Who, ere the glow of lingering twilight leave
The realms of golden eve,
Diffuse your dews of pearl and airs of musk,
Ye, to man's tearful gaze,
Standing aloof, nothing for sorrow reck;
Nor will your shuttle check,
That weaves remorselessly in rapid flight,
The sable shroud of night,
Beyond eve's portals vast of reddening haze.

Musing thus, methought a spell
Adown the darkening woodside fell;
Light dance of gnats, from sport released,
With boom of passing beetle ceased.

Sheep bells chiming from the hill
Jangled faintly, then grew still ;
Under the fronds of arching fern
Ceased the glow worm's lamp to burn ;
Beneath the eaves and frowning brow
Of wide out-branching oaken bough,
From day's jewelled fringe afar,
Sparkling died the evening star ;
Earth's mighty fabric seemed to swim ;
Hushed, the glimmering world grew dim,
Rose flushed sky, and dusk hillside,
Now failing, faded, quivering died.

Then, it seemed my sorrowing thought
Brief glimpse of nature's workings caught,
As pageant after pageant vast,
All draped in transient beauty passed,
Bewildering, strange, majestic, splendid,
Yet oft with scenes familiar blended.

Dark as midnight of the tomb,
Rayless Acherontian gloom,
Outspread a cavern's broad extent,
Trending like some continent ;
A world of darkness, dense, prolonged,
Darkness with existence thronged ;
Where myriad myriad beings range,
Through countless forms in endless change.

The sepulchre and womb of earth,
E'er quickening with mysterious birth,

Lives unnumbered here prepare
Death's dread havoc to repair :
Vital currents noiseless flow,
Murmuring voices come and go,
With movement startling, mutterings deep,
Like dreams that range through fevered sleep ;
Vague rustlings, dim suggested fancies,
Frantic flights, delirious dances,
Buzzing of startled bats in caves,
Or earth-falls down steep-sided graves :
Nameless alarm around was thrown,
And horror of the dread unknown,
To hear from Stygian depths below,
Life's river sound in awful flow.

Through earthen roof and rocky vein,
Tricklets dripped from sun-smit rain,
That welling round the clasper root,
Life blood gave the quickening shoot.
Here thirsting mouths in darkness drank
The river of God which downward sank :
While underneath where sunbeams fell,
Breathed with tender trembling swell,
Like fairy strains, all softly flowing,
Æolian music, gently blowing.

Deep in these domains of night,
Beyond the bourn of mortal sight,
A frenzied laughter wildly rang,
A mirth, which not from reason sprang ;
Where lives grotesque, mis-shapen, bide,