

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Witch of Atlas, by Percy Bysshe Shelley

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Witch of Atlas

Author: Percy Bysshe Shelley

Release date: November 1, 2003 [EBook #4696]

Most recently updated: December 28, 2020

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WITCH OF ATLAS \*\*\*

Produced by Sue Asscher

The Witch of Atlas

by

Percy Bysshe Shelley

## **TO MARY (ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM, UPON THE SCORE OF ITS CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST).**

1.

How, my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten  
(For vipers kill, though dead) by some review,  
That you condemn these verses I have written,  
Because they tell no story, false or true?  
What, though no mice are caught by a young kitten, \_5  
May it not leap and play as grown cats do,  
Till its claws come? Prithee, for this one time,  
Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

2.

What hand would crush the silken-winged fly,  
The youngest of inconstant April's minions, \_10  
Because it cannot climb the purest sky,

Where the swan sings, amid the sun's dominions?  
Not thine. Thou knowest 'tis its doom to die,  
When Day shall hide within her twilight pinions  
The lucent eyes, and the eternal smile, \_15  
Serene as thine, which lent it life awhile.

3.

To thy fair feet a winged Vision came,  
Whose date should have been longer than a day,  
And o'er thy head did beat its wings for fame,  
And in thy sight its fading plumes display; \_20  
The watery bow burned in the evening flame.  
But the shower fell, the swift Sun went his way—  
And that is dead.—O, let me not believe  
That anything of mine is fit to live!

4.

Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years \_25  
Considering and retouching Peter Bell;  
Watering his laurels with the killing tears  
Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to Hell  
Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the spheres  
Of Heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers; this well \_30  
May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil  
The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.

5.

My Witch indeed is not so sweet a creature  
As Ruth or Lucy, whom his graceful praise  
Clothes for our grandsons—but she matches Peter, \_35  
Though he took nineteen years, and she three days  
In dressing. Light the vest of flowing metre  
She wears; he, proud as dandy with his stays,  
Has hung upon his wiry limbs a dress  
Like King Lear's 'looped and windowed raggedness.' \_40

6.

If you strip Peter, you will see a fellow  
Scorched by Hell's hyperequatorial climate  
Into a kind of a sulphureous yellow:  
A lean mark, hardly fit to fling a rhyme at;  
In shape a Scaramouch, in hue Othello. \_45  
If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate  
Can shrive you of that sin,—if sin there be  
In love, when it becomes idolatry.

## **THE WITCH OF ATLAS.**

1.

Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth  
Incestuous Change bore to her father Time, \_50  
Error and Truth, had hunted from the Earth  
All those bright natures which adorned its prime,  
And left us nothing to believe in, worth  
The pains of putting into learned rhyme,  
A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain \_55  
Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.

2.

Her mother was one of the Atlantides:  
The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden  
In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas  
So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden \_60  
In the warm shadow of her loveliness;—  
He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden

The chamber of gray rock in which she lay—  
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

3.

'Tis said, she first was changed into a vapour, \_65  
And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,  
Like splendour-winged moths about a taper,  
Round the red west when the sun dies in it:  
And then into a meteor, such as caper  
On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit: \_70  
Then, into one of those mysterious stars  
Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

4.

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent  
Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden  
With that bright sign the billows to indent \_75  
The sea-deserted sand—like children chidden,  
At her command they ever came and went—  
Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden  
Took shape and motion: with the living form  
Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm. \_80

5.

A lovely lady garmented in light  
From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are  
Two openings of unfathomable night  
Seen through a Temple's cloven roof—her hair  
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight. \_85  
Picturing her form; her soft smiles shone afar,  
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew  
All living things towards this wonder new.

6.

And first the spotted cameleopard came,  
And then the wise and fearless elephant; \_90  
Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame  
Of his own volumes intervolved;—all gaunt  
And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.  
They drank before her at her sacred fount;  
And every beast of beating heart grew bold, \_95  
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

7.

The brinded lioness led forth her young,  
That she might teach them how they should forego  
Their inborn thirst of death; the pard unstrung  
His sinews at her feet, and sought to know \_100  
With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue  
How he might be as gentle as the doe.  
The magic circle of her voice and eyes  
All savage natures did imparadise.

8.

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick \_105  
Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew  
Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick  
Cicadae are, drunk with the noonday dew:  
And Dryope and Faunus followed quick,  
Teasing the God to sing them something new; \_110  
Till in this cave they found the lady lone,  
Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

9.

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,  
And though none saw him,—through the adamant

Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air, \_115  
And through those living spirits, like a want,  
He passed out of his everlasting lair  
Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,  
And felt that wondrous lady all alone,—  
And she felt him, upon her emerald throne. \_120

10.

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,  
And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,  
Who drives her white waves over the green sea,  
And Ocean with the brine on his gray locks,  
And quaint Priapus with his company, \_125  
All came, much wondering how the enwombed rocks  
Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth;—  
Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

11.

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,  
And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant— \_130  
Their spirits shook within them, as a flame  
Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt:  
Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,  
Centaur, and Satyr, and such shapes as haunt  
Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead, \_135  
Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

12.

For she was beautiful—her beauty made  
The bright world dim, and everything beside  
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:  
No thought of living spirit could abide, \_140  
Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,  
On any object in the world so wide,  
On any hope within the circling skies,  
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

13.

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle \_145  
And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three  
Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle  
The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she  
As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle  
In the belated moon, wound skilfully; \_150  
And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—  
A shadow for the splendour of her love.

14.

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling  
Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,  
Which had the power all spirits of compelling, \_155  
Folded in cells of crystal silence there;  
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling  
Will never die—yet ere we are aware,  
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,  
And the regret they leave remains alone. \_160

15.

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,  
Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis,  
Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint  
With the soft burthen of intensest bliss.  
It was its work to bear to many a saint \_165  
Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,  
Even Love's:—and others white, green, gray, and black,  
And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

16.

And odours in a kind of aviary  
Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept, \_170  
Clipped in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy  
Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept;  
As bats at the wired window of a dairy,  
They beat their vans; and each was an adept,  
When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds, \_175  
To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

17.

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might  
Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,  
And change eternal death into a night  
Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep, \_180  
Could make their tears all wonder and delight,  
She in her crystal vials did closely keep:  
If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said  
The living were not envied of the dead.

18.

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device, \_185  
The works of some Saturnian Archimage,  
Which taught the expiations at whose price  
Men from the Gods might win that happy age  
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;  
And which might quench the Earth-consuming rage \_190  
Of gold and blood—till men should live and move  
Harmonious as the sacred stars above;

19.

And how all things that seem untameable,  
Not to be checked and not to be confined,  
Obey the spells of Wisdom's wizard skill; \_195  
Time, earth, and fire—the ocean and the wind,  
And all their shapes—and man's imperial will;  
And other scrolls whose writings did unbind  
The inmost lore of Love—let the profane  
Tremble to ask what secrets they contain. \_200

20.

And wondrous works of substances unknown,  
To which the enchantment of her father's power  
Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,  
Were heaped in the recesses of her bower;  
Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone \_205  
In their own golden beams—each like a flower,  
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light  
Under a cypress in a starless night.

21.

At first she lived alone in this wild home,  
And her own thoughts were each a minister, \_210  
Clothing themselves, or with the ocean foam,  
Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,  
To work whatever purposes might come  
Into her mind; such power her mighty Sire  
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run, \_215  
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

22.

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,  
Oreads and Naiads, with long weedy locks,  
Offered to do her bidding through the seas,  
Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks, \_220  
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,

And in the gnarled heart of stubborn oaks,  
So they might live for ever in the light  
Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

23.

'This may not be,' the wizard maid replied; \_225  
'The fountains where the Naiades bedew  
Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried;  
The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew  
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide;  
The boundless ocean like a drop of dew \_230  
Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must  
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

24.

'And ye with them will perish, one by one;—  
If I must sigh to think that this shall be,  
If I must weep when the surviving Sun \_235  
Shall smile on your decay—oh, ask not me  
To love you till your little race is run;  
I cannot die as ye must—over me  
Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell  
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so—farewell!'— \_240

25.

She spoke and wept:—the dark and azure well  
Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,  
And every little circlet where they fell  
Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres  
And intertangled lines of light:—a knell \_245  
Of sobbing voices came upon her ears  
From those departing Forms, o'er the serene  
Of the white streams and of the forest green.

26.

All day the wizard lady sate aloof,  
Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity, \_250  
Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof;  
Or broidering the pictured poesy  
Of some high tale upon her growing woof,  
Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye  
In hues outshining heaven—and ever she \_255  
Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

27.

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece  
Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon;  
Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is—  
Each flame of it is as a precious stone \_260  
Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this  
Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.  
The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand  
She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

28.

This lady never slept, but lay in trance \_265  
All night within the fountain—as in sleep.  
Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance;  
Through the green splendour of the water deep  
She saw the constellations reel and dance  
Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep \_270  
The tenour of her contemplations calm,  
With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

29.

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended

From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,  
She passed at dewfall to a space extended, \_275  
Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel  
Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,  
There yawned an inextinguishable well  
Of crimson fire—full even to the brim,  
And overflowing all the margin trim. \_280

30.

Within the which she lay when the fierce war  
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor  
In many a mimic moon and bearded star  
O'er woods and lawns;—the serpent heard it flicker  
In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar— \_285  
And when the windless snow descended thicker  
Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came  
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

31.

She had a boat, which some say Vulcan wrought  
For Venus, as the chariot of her star; \_290  
But it was found too feeble to be fraught  
With all the ardours in that sphere which are,  
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought  
And gave it to this daughter: from a car  
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat \_295  
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

32.

And others say, that, when but three hours old,  
The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,  
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,  
And like a horticultural adept, \_300  
Stole a strange seed, and wrapped it up in mould,  
And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept  
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,  
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

33.

The plant grew strong and green, the snowy flower \_305  
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began  
To turn the light and dew by inward power  
To its own substance; woven tracery ran  
Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er  
The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan— \_310  
Of which Love scooped this boat—and with soft motion  
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

34.

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit  
A living spirit within all its frame,  
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it. \_315  
Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,  
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit—  
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame—  
Or on blind Homer's heart a winged thought,—  
In joyous expectation lay the boat. \_320

35.

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow  
Together, tempering the repugnant mass  
With liquid love—all things together grow  
Through which the harmony of love can pass;  
And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow— \_325  
A living Image, which did far surpass  
In beauty that bright shape of vital stone

Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

36.

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth  
It seemed to have developed no defect \_330  
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—  
In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked;  
The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth,  
The countenance was such as might select  
Some artist that his skill should never die, \_335  
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

37.

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,  
Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,  
Tipped with the speed of liquid lightnings,  
Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere: \_340  
She led her creature to the boiling springs  
Where the light boat was moored, and said: 'Sit here!'  
And pointed to the prow, and took her seat  
Beside the rudder, with opposing feet.

38.

And down the streams which clove those mountains vast, \_345  
Around their inland islets, and amid  
The panther-peopled forests whose shade cast  
Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid  
In melancholy gloom, the pinnacle passed;  
By many a star-surrounded pyramid \_350  
Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,  
And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

39.

The silver noon into that winding dell,  
With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,  
Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell; \_355  
A green and glowing light, like that which drops  
From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,  
When Earth over her face Night's mantle wraps;  
Between the severed mountains lay on high,  
Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky. \_360

40.

And ever as she went, the Image lay  
With folded wings and unawakened eyes;  
And o'er its gentle countenance did play  
The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,  
Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay, \_365  
And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs  
Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,  
They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

41.

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud  
Upon a stream of wind, the pinnacle went: \_370  
Now lingering on the pools, in which abode  
The calm and darkness of the deep content  
In which they paused; now o'er the shallow road  
Of white and dancing waters, all besprent  
With sand and polished pebbles:—mortal boat \_375  
In such a shallow rapid could not float.

42.

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver  
Their snow-like waters into golden air,  
Or under chasms unfathomable ever



Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear \_380  
A subterranean portal for the river,  
It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear  
Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray,  
Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

43.

And when the wizard lady would ascend \_385  
The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,  
Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—  
She called 'Hermaphroditus!'—and the pale  
And heavy hue which slumber could extend  
Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale \_390  
A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,  
Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

44.

And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,  
With stars of fire spotting the stream below;  
And from above into the Sun's dominions \_395  
Flinging a glory, like the golden glow  
In which Spring clothes her emerald-winged minions,  
All interwoven with fine feathery snow  
And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,  
With which frost paints the pines in winter time. \_400

45.

And then it winnowed the Elysian air  
Which ever hung about that lady bright,  
With its aethereal vans—and speeding there,  
Like a star up the torrent of the night,  
Or a swift eagle in the morning glare \_405  
Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight,  
The pinnacle, oared by those enchanted wings,  
Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

46.

The water flashed, like sunlight by the prow  
Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven; \_410  
The still air seemed as if its waves did flow  
In tempest down the mountains; loosely driven  
The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro:  
Beneath, the billows having vainly striven  
Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel \_415  
The swift and steady motion of the keel.

47.

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,  
Or in the noon of interlunar night,  
The lady-witch in visions could not chain  
Her spirit; but sailed forth under the light \_420  
Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain  
Its storm-outspeeding wings, the Hermaphrodite;  
She to the Austral waters took her way,  
Beyond the fabulous Thamondocana,—

48.

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven, \_425  
Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,  
With the Antarctic constellations paven,  
Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake—  
There she would build herself a windless haven  
Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make \_430  
The bastions of the storm, when through the sky  
The spirits of the tempest thundered by:

49.

A haven beneath whose translucent floor  
The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,  
And around which the solid vapours hoar, \_435  
Based on the level waters, to the sky  
Lifted their dreadful crags, and like a shore  
Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly  
Hemmed in with rifts and precipices gray,  
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay. \_440

50.

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash  
Of the wind's scourge, foamed like a wounded thing,  
And the incessant hail with stony clash  
Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing  
Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash \_445  
Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering  
Fragment of inky thunder-smoke—this haven  
Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,—

51.

On which that lady played her many pranks,  
Circling the image of a shooting star, \_450  
Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks  
Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,  
In her light boat; and many quips and cranks  
She played upon the water, till the car  
Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan, \_455  
To journey from the misty east began.

52.

And then she called out of the hollow turrets  
Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermilion,  
The armies of her ministering spirits—  
In mighty legions, million after million, \_460  
They came, each troop emblazoning its merits  
On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion  
Of the intertexture of the atmosphere  
They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

53.

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen \_465  
Of woven exhalations, underlaid  
With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen  
A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid  
With crimson silk—cressets from the serene  
Hung there, and on the water for her tread \_470  
A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,  
Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

54.

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught  
Upon those wandering isles of aery dew,  
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not, \_475  
She sate, and heard all that had happened new  
Between the earth and moon, since they had brought  
The last intelligence—and now she grew  
Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—  
And now she wept, and now she laughed outright. \_480

55.

These were tame pleasures; she would often climb  
The steepest ladder of the crudded rack  
Up to some beaked cape of cloud sublime,  
And like Arion on the dolphin's back  
Ride singing through the shoreless air;—oft-time \_485

Following the serpent lightning's winding track,  
She ran upon the platforms of the wind,  
And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

56.

And sometimes to those streams of upper air  
Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round, \_490  
She would ascend, and win the spirits there  
To let her join their chorus. Mortals found  
That on those days the sky was calm and fair,  
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound  
Wandered upon the earth where'er she passed, \_495  
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

57.

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,  
To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads  
Egypt and Aethiopia, from the steep  
Of utmost Axume, until he spreads, \_500  
Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,  
His waters on the plain: and crested heads  
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,  
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

58.

By Moeris and the Mareotid lakes, \_505  
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,  
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,  
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,  
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes  
Of those huge forms—within the brazen doors \_510  
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,  
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

59.

And where within the surface of the river  
The shadows of the massy temples lie,  
And never are erased—but tremble ever \_515  
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,  
Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever  
The works of man pierced that serenest sky  
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight  
To wander in the shadow of the night. \_520

60.

With motion like the spirit of that wind  
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet  
Passed through the peopled haunts of humankind.  
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,  
Through fane, and palace-court, and labyrinth mined \_525  
With many a dark and subterranean street  
Under the Nile, through chambers high and deep  
She passed, observing mortals in their sleep.

61.

A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see  
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep. \_530  
Here lay two sister twins in infancy;  
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;  
Within, two lovers linked innocently  
In their loose locks which over both did creep  
Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm \_535  
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

62.

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,

Not to be mirrored in a holy song—  
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,  
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong; \_540  
And all the code of Custom's lawless law  
Written upon the brows of old and young:  
'This,' said the wizard maiden, 'is the strife  
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life.'

63.

And little did the sight disturb her soul.— \_545  
We, the weak mariners of that wide lake  
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,  
Our course unpiloted and starless make  
O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal:—  
But she in the calm depths her way could take, \_550  
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide  
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

64.

And she saw princes couched under the glow  
Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court  
In dormitories ranged, row after row, \_555  
She saw the priests asleep—all of one sort—  
For all were educated to be so.—  
The peasants in their huts, and in the port  
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,  
And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves. \_560

65.

And all the forms in which those spirits lay  
Were to her sight like the diaphanous  
Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array  
Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us  
Only their scorn of all concealment: they \_565  
Move in the light of their own beauty thus.  
But these and all now lay with sleep upon them,  
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

66.

She, all those human figures breathing there,  
Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes \_570  
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,  
And often through a rude and worn disguise  
She saw the inner form most bright and fair—  
And then she had a charm of strange device,  
Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone, \_575  
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

67.

Alas! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given  
For such a charm when Tithon became gray?  
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven  
Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina \_580  
Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven  
Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,  
To any witch who would have taught you it?  
The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

68.

'Tis said in after times her spirit free \_585  
Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—  
But holy Dian could not chaster be  
Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,  
Than now this lady—like a sexless bee  
Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none, \_590  
Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden

Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

69.

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave  
Strange panacea in a crystal bowl:—  
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave, \_595  
And lived thenceforward as if some control,  
Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave  
Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,  
Was as a green and overarching bower  
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower. \_600

70.

For on the night when they were buried, she  
Restored the embalmers' ruining, and shook  
The light out of the funeral lamps, to be  
A mimic day within that deathly nook;  
And she unwound the woven imagery \_605  
Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took  
The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,  
And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

71.

And there the body lay, age after age.  
Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying, \_610  
Like one asleep in a green hermitage,  
With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing,  
And living in its dreams beyond the rage  
Of death or life; while they were still arraying  
In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind \_615  
And fleeting generations of mankind.

72.

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain  
Of those who were less beautiful, and make  
All harsh and crooked purposes more vain  
Than in the desert is the serpent's wake \_620  
Which the sand covers—all his evil gain  
The miser in such dreams would rise and shake  
Into a beggar's lap;—the lying scribe  
Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

73.

The priests would write an explanation full, \_625  
Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,  
How the God Apis really was a bull,  
And nothing more; and bid the herald stick  
The same against the temple doors, and pull  
The old cant down; they licensed all to speak \_630  
Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese,  
By pastoral letters to each diocese.

74.

The king would dress an ape up in his crown  
And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,  
And on the right hand of the sunlike throne \_635  
Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat  
The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one  
Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet  
Of their great Emperor, when the morning came,  
And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same! \_640

75.

The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and  
Walked out of quarters in somnambulism;  
Round the red anvils you might see them stand

Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,  
Beating their swords to ploughshares;—in a band \_645  
The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism  
Free through the streets of Memphis, much, I wis,  
To the annoyance of king Amasis.

76.

And timid lovers who had been so coy,  
They hardly knew whether they loved or not, \_650  
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,  
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;  
And when next day the maiden and the boy  
Met one another, both, like sinners caught,  
Blushed at the thing which each believed was done \_655  
Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

77.

And then the Witch would let them take no ill:  
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find,  
The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill  
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind. \_660  
Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,  
Were torn apart—a wide wound, mind from mind!—  
She did unite again with visions clear  
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

80.

These were the pranks she played among the cities \_665  
Of mortal men, and what she did to Sprites  
And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties  
To do her will, and show their subtle sleights,  
I will declare another time; for it is  
A tale more fit for the weird winter nights \_670  
Than for these garish summer days, when we  
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

End of Project Gutenberg's The Witch of Atlas, by Percy Bysshe Shelley

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE WITCH OF ATLAS \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE  
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE  
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works,

by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

## **Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up,

nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.



1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and

distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.