

“Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain-tops, that freeze,
Bow themselves when he did sing:
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

“Everything that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.”

SHAKESPEARE.

This talent waxed greater as the years passed by, and became so remarkable, that the youth's fame was very widespread; and when he fell in love with Eurydice, he brought all his skill into play to serenade her, and wooed her with voice and glance and with tender, passionate music. Eurydice was touched by his courtship, and ere long requited the love lavished upon her by conferring her hand upon Orpheus.

Shortly after their union, while walking alone in the fields, the bride encountered a youth named Aristæus, whose bold admiration proved so distasteful, that she fled from him as quickly as possible. In her haste she accidentally trod upon a venomous serpent lurking in the long grass, which immediately turned upon her, and bit her heel. A short period of agonized suffering ensued; then Eurydice died, and her spirit was conducted down into the gloomy realms of Pluto, leaving Orpheus broken-hearted.

Plaintive, heartrending laments now replaced the joyous wedding strains; but even the charms of music failed to make life endurable, and Orpheus wandered off to Olympus, where he so piteously implored Jupiter to restore his wife to his longing arms, that the great god's heart was moved to compassion. He gave him permission, therefore, to go down into the Infernal Regions to seek his wife, but warned him at the same time that the undertaking was perilous in the extreme.

Nothing daunted, Orpheus hastened to the entrance of Hades, and there saw the fierce three-headed dog, named Cerberus, who

guarded the gate, and would allow no living being to enter, nor any spirit to pass out of Hades. As soon as this monster saw Orpheus, he began to growl and bark savagely, to frighten him away; but Orpheus merely paused, and began to play such melting chords, that Cerberus' rage was appeased, and he finally allowed him to pass into Pluto's dark kingdom.

The magic sounds penetrated even into the remote depths of Tartarus, where the condemned suspended their toil for a moment, and hushed their sighs and groans to listen.

“E'en Tantalus ceased from trying to sip
The cup that flies from his arid lip;
Ixion, too, the magic could feel,
And, for a moment, blocked his wheel;
Poor Sisyphus, doomed to tumble and toss
The notable stone that gathers no moss,
Let go his burden, and turned to hear
The charming sounds that ravished his ear.”

SAXE.

No living being had ever before penetrated thus into the Infernal Regions, and Orpheus wandered on until he came to the throne of Pluto, king of these realms, whereon the stern ruler sat in silence, his wife Proserpina beside him, and the relentless Fates at his feet.

Orpheus made known his errand in operative guise, and succeeded in moving the royal pair to tears, whereupon they graciously consented to restore Eurydice to life and to her fond husband's care.

“Hell consented
To hear the Poet's prayer:
Stern Proserpine relented,
And gave him back the fair.
Thus song could prevail
O'er death, and o'er hell,
A conquest how hard and how glorious!
Tho' fate had fast bound her
With Styx nine times round her,
Yet music and love were victorious.”

POPE.



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ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.—Beyschlag.

But one condition was imposed before he was allowed to depart; i.e., that he should leave the Infernal Regions without turning once to look into his beloved wife's face.

Orpheus accepted the condition joyfully, and wended his way out of Hades, looking neither to the right nor to the left, but straight before him; and as he walked he wondered whether Eurydice were changed by her sojourn in these rayless depths. His longing to feast his eyes once more upon her loved features made him forget the condition imposed by Pluto, and turn just before he reached the earth; but he only beheld the vanishing form of the wife he had so nearly snatched from the grave.

All was now over. He had tried and failed. No hope remained. In despair, the lonely musician retreated to the forest solitudes, and there played his mournful laments,—

“Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.”

MILTON.

But there were none to hear except the trees, winds, and wild beasts in the forest, who strove in their dumb way to comfort him as he moved restlessly about, seeking a solace for his bursting heart. At times it seemed to his half-delirious fancy that he could discern Eurydice wandering about in the dim distance, with the selfsame mournful expression of which he had caught a mere glimpse as she drifted reluctantly back into the dark shadows of Hades.

“At that elm-vista's end I trace
Dimly thy sad leave-taking face,
Eurydice! Eurydice!
The tremulous leaves repeat to me
Eurydice! Eurydice!”

LOWELL.

At last there dawned a day when some Bacchantes overtook him in the forest, and bade him play some gay music, so they

might indulge in a dance. But poor Orpheus, dazed with grief, could not comply with their demands; and the sad notes which alone he now could draw from his instrument so enraged the merry-makers, that they tore him limb from limb, and cast his mangled remains into the Hebrus River.

As the poet-musician's head floated down the stream, the pallid lips still murmured, "Eurydice!" for even in death he could not forget his wife; and, as his spirit drifted on to join her, he incessantly called upon her name, until the brooks, trees, and fountains he had loved so well caught up the longing cry, and repeated it again and again.

Nothing was now left to remind mortals of the sweet singer who had thus perished, except his lute, which the gods placed in the heavens as a bright constellation, Lyra, also called by Orpheus' name.

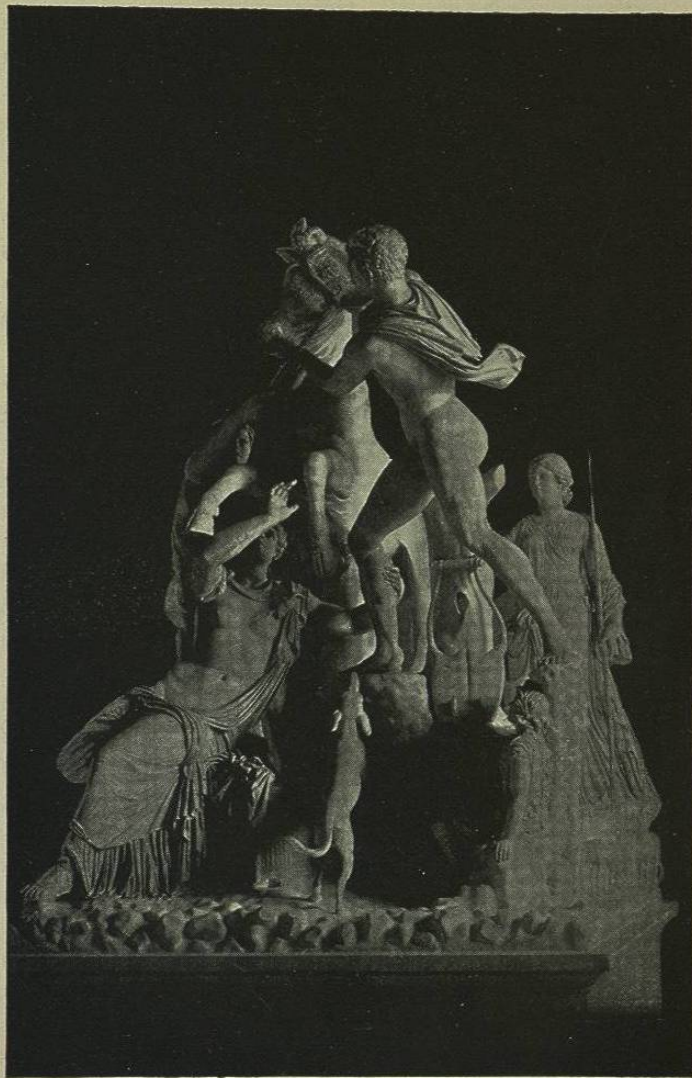
Another musician celebrated in mythological annals is Amphion, whose skill was reported to be but little inferior to Orpheus'.

"'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes."

TENNYSON.

This musician, a son of Jupiter and Antiope, had a twin brother Zethus, who, however, shared none of his artistic tastes.

Story of Amphion. Hearing that their mother Antiope had been repudiated by her second husband, Lycus, so that he might marry another wife by the name of Dirce, these youths hastened off to Thebes, where they found the state of affairs even worse than represented; for poor Antiope was now imprisoned, and subject to her rival's daily cruel treatment.



FARNESE BULL.
(National Museum, Naples.)

Zethus and Amphion, after besieging and taking the city, put Lycus to death, and, binding Dirce to the tail of a wild bull, let him loose to drag her over briars and stones until she perished. This punishment inflicted upon Dirce is the subject of the famous group once belonging to the Farnese family, and now called by their name.

Amphion's musical talent was of great use to him when he subsequently became King of Thebes, and wished to fortify his capital by building a huge rampart all around it; for the stones moved in rhythmic time, and, of their own volition, marched into their places.

Second to him only, in musical fame, was Arion, the musician who won untold wealth by his talent. On one occasion, having gone to Sicily to take part in a musical contest which had attracted thither the most famous musicians from all points of the compass, he resolved to return home by sea.

Unfortunately for him, the vessel upon which he had embarked was manned by an avaricious, piratical crew, who, having heard of his treasures, resolved to murder him to obtain possession of them. He was allowed but scant time to prepare for death; but, just as they were about to toss him overboard, he craved permission to play for the last time. The pirates consented. His clear notes floated over the sea, and allured a school of dolphins, which came and played about the ship. The pirates, terrified by the power of his music, and in dread lest their hearts should be moved, quickly laid hands upon him, and hurled him into the water, where he fell upon the broad back of a dolphin, who bore him in safety to the nearest shore.

“Then was there heard a most celestial sound
Of dainty musicke, which did next ensue
Before the spouse: that was Arion crownd;
Who, playing on his harpe, unto him drew
The eares and hearts of all that goodly crew,
That even yet the Dolphin, which him bore

Through the Agean seas from Pirates vew,
Stood still by him astonisht at his lore,
And all the raging seas for joy forgot to rore.”

SPENSER.

To commemorate this miracle, the gods placed Arion's harp, together with the dolphin, in the heavens, where they form a constellation.

In the sunny plains of Greece there once dwelt Clymene, a fair nymph. She was not alone, however, for her golden-haired little son Phaeton was there to gladden her heart with all his childish graces.

Early in the morning, when the sun's bright orb first appeared above the horizon, Clymene would point it out to her boy, and tell him that his father, Apollo, was setting out for his daily drive. Clymene so often entertained her child with stories of his father's beauty and power, that at last Phaeton became conceited, and acquired a habit of boasting rather loudly of his divine parentage. His playmates, after a time, wearied of his arrogance, and, to avoid the constant repetition of his vain speeches, bade him show some proof of his divine origin, or keep his peace.

Stung to the quick by some insolent taunts which they added, Phaeton hastened to his mother, and begged her to direct him to his father, that he might obtain the desired proof. Clymene immediately gave him all necessary information, and bade him make haste if he would reach his father's palace in the far east before the sun chariot passed out of its portals to accomplish its daily round. Directly eastward Phaeton journeyed, nor paused to rest until he came in view of the golden and jeweled pinnacles and turrets of his father's abode.

“The sun's bright palace, on high columns rais'd
With burnish'd gold and flaming jewels blaz'd,
The folding gates diffus'd a silver light,
And with a milder gleam refresh'd the sight.”

ADDISON.

Quite undazzled by this splendor, the youth still pressed on, straining his eyes to catch the first glimpse of the godly father, whose stately bearing and radiant air his mother had so enthusiastically described.

Apollo, from his golden throne, had watched the boy's approach, and, as he drew nearer, recognized him as his own offspring. Timidly now Phaeton advanced to the steps of his father's throne, and humbly waited for permission to make his errand known. Apollo addressed him graciously, called him his son, and bade him speak without fear. In a few minutes the youth impetuously poured out the whole story, and watched with pleasure the frown which gathered on Apollo's brow when he repeated his companions' taunts. As soon as he had finished his tale, Apollo exclaimed that he would grant him any proof he wished, and confirmed these words by a solemn oath.

“ ‘By the terrible Styx!’ said the angry sire,
While his eyes flashed volumes of fury and fire,
‘To prove your reviler an infamous liar,
I swear I will grant you whate’er you desire!’ ”

SAXE.

This oath was the most solemn any god could utter, and in case of perjury he was obliged to drink the waters of this river, which would lull him into senseless stupidity for one whole year. During nine years following he was deprived of his office, banished from Olympus, and not allowed to taste of the life-giving nectar and ambrosia.

With a flash of triumph in his dark eyes, Phaeton, hearing this oath, begged permission to drive the sun chariot that very day, stating that all the world would be sure to notice his exalted position, and that none would ever dare doubt his veracity after such a signal mark of Apollo's favor.

When the god heard this presumptuous request, he started back in dismay, for he alone could control the four fiery steeds which drew the golden-wheeled sun car. Patiently he then ex-

plained to Phaeton the great danger of such an undertaking, earnestly begging him to select some other, less fatal boon.

“ Choose out a gift from seas, or earth, or skies,
For open to your wish all nature lies;
Only decline this one unequal task,
For 'tis a mischief, not a gift, you ask.”

ADDISON.

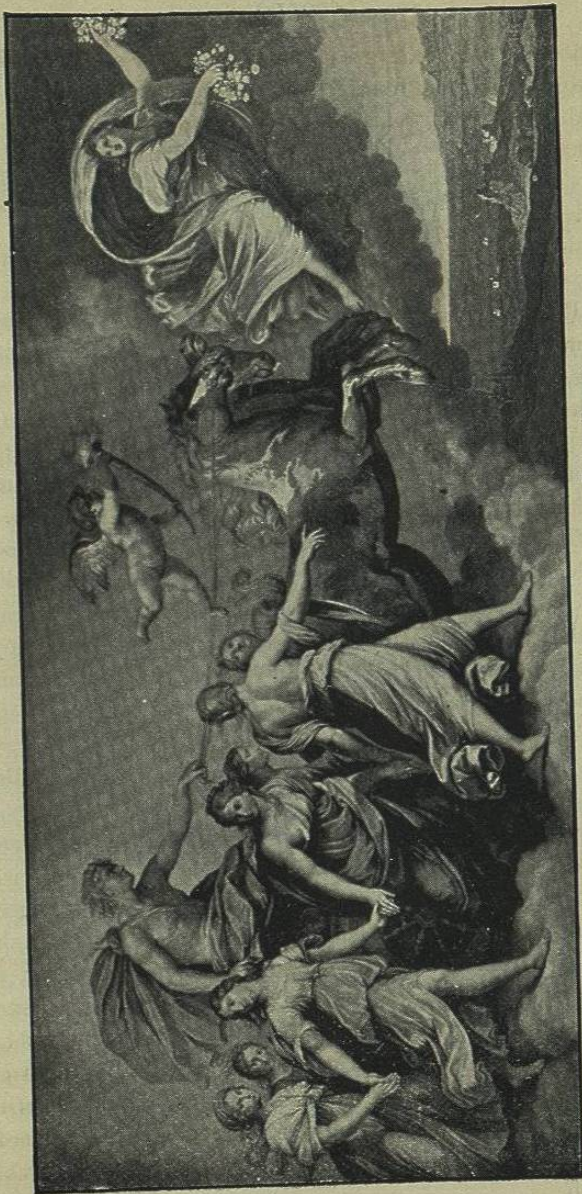
But Phaeton, who, like many another conceited youth, fancied he knew better than his sire, would not give heed to the kindly warning, and persisted in his request, until Apollo, who had sworn the irrevocable oath, was obliged to fulfill his promise.

The hour had already come when the Sun usually began his daily journey. The pawing, champing steeds were ready; rosy-fingered Aurora only awaited her master's signal to fling wide the gates of morn; and the Hours were ready to escort him as usual.

Apollo, yielding to pressure, quickly anointed his son with a cooling essence to preserve him from the burning sunbeams, gave him the necessary directions for his journey, and repeatedly and anxiously cautioned him to watch his steeds with the utmost care, and to use the whip but sparingly, as they were inclined to be very restive.

The youth, who had listened impatiently to cautions and directions, then sprang into the seat, gathered up the reins, signaled to Aurora to fling the gates wide, and dashed out of the eastern palace with a flourish.

For an hour or two Phaeton bore in mind his father's principal injunctions, and all went well; but later, elated by his exalted position, he became very reckless, drove faster and faster, and soon lost his way. In finding it again he drove so close to the earth, that all the plants shriveled up, the fountains and rivers were dried in their mossy beds, the smoke began to rise from the parched and blackened earth, and even the people of the land over which he was passing were burned black,—a hue retained by their descendants to this day.



AURORA. — Guido Reni. (Rospigliosi Palace, Rome.)

Terrified at what he had done, Phaeton whipped up his steeds, and drove so far away, that all the vegetation which had survived the intense heat came to an untimely end on account of the sudden cold.

The cries of mortals rose in chorus, and their clamors became so loud and importunate, that they roused Jupiter from a profound sleep, and caused him to look around to discover their origin. One glance of his all-seeing eye sufficed to reveal the damaged earth and the youthful charioteer. How had a beardless youth dared to mount the sun chariot? Jupiter could scarcely credit what he saw. In his anger he vowed he would make the rash mortal expiate his presumption by immediate death. He therefore selected the deadliest thunderbolt in his arsenal, aimed it with special care, and hurled it at Phaeton, whose burned and blackened corpse fell from his lofty seat down into the limpid waves of the Eridanus River.

“ And Phaethon, caught in mid career,
And hurled from the Sun to utter sunlessness,
Like a flame-bearded comet, with ghastliest hiss,
Fell headlong in the amazed Eridanus,
Monarch of streams, who on the Italian fields
Let loose, and far beyond his flowery lips
Foam-white, ran ruinous to the Adrian deep.”

WORSLEY.

The tidings of his death soon reached poor Clymene, who mourned her only son, and refused to be comforted; while the Heliades, Phaeton's sisters, three in number, — The Heliades. Phaetusa, Lampetia, and Ægle, — spent their days by the riverside, shedding tears, wringing their white hands, and bewailing their loss, until the gods, in pity, transformed them into poplar trees, and their tears into amber, which substance was supposed by the ancients to flow from the poplar trees like teardrops. Phaeton's intimate friend, Cycnus, piously collected his charred remains, and gave them an honorable

burial. In his grief he continually haunted the scene of his friend's death, and repeatedly plunged into the river, in the hope of finding some more scattered fragments, until the gods changed him into a swan; which bird is ever sailing mournfully about, and frequently plunging his head into the water to continue his sad search.

Apollo, as the dearly loved leader of the nine Muses, — daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne, goddess of memory, — was sur-named Musagetes.

“Whom all the Muses loved, not one alone; —
Into his hands they put the lyre of gold,
And, crowned with sacred laurel at their fount,
Placed him as Musagetes on their throne.”

LONGFELLOW.

Although the Muses united at times in one grand song, they had each separate duties assigned them.

Clio, the Muse of history, recorded all great deeds and heroic actions, with the names of their authors, and was therefore generally represented with a laurel wreath and a book and stylus, to indicate her readiness to note all that happened to mortal men or immortal gods.

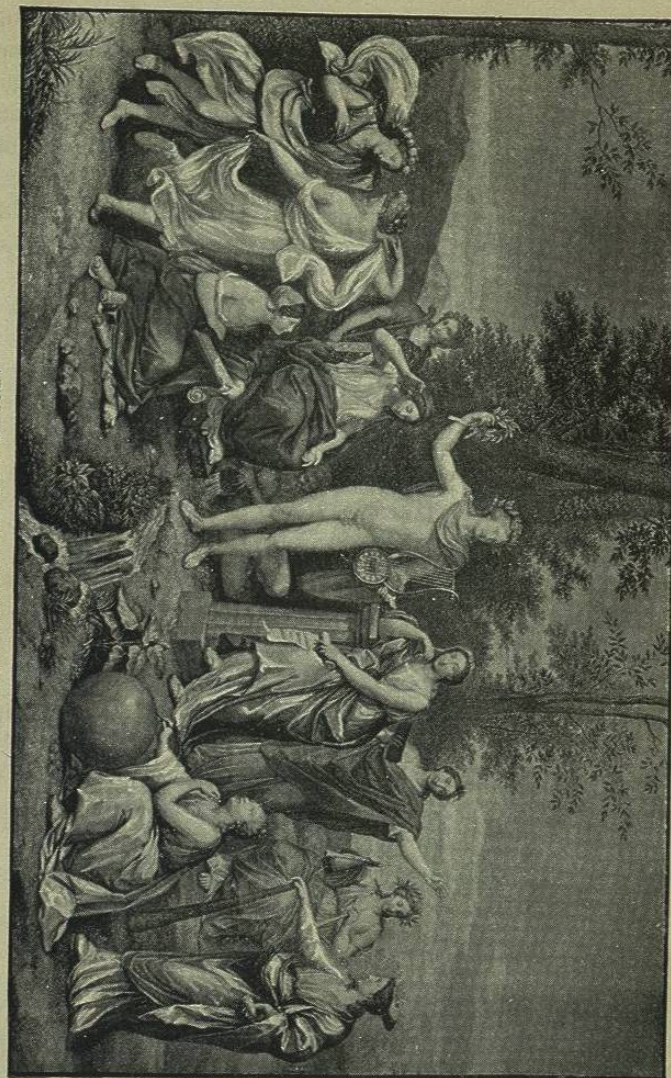
Euterpe, the graceful “Mistress of Song,” was represented with a flute, and garlands of fragrant flowers.

Thalia, Muse of pastoral poetry, held a shepherd's crook and mask, and wore a crown of wild flowers.

“Mild pastoral Muse!
That, to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
Preferr'st a garland culled from purple heath!”

WORDSWORTH.

Her graver sister, Melpomene, who presided over tragedy, wore a crown of gold, and wielded a dagger and a scepter; while Terpsichore, the light-footed Muse of dancing, was represented treading an airy measure.



APOLLO AND THE MUSES—Mongis.

Erato, who preferred lyric poetry to all other styles of composition, was pictured with a lyre; and Polyhymnia, Muse of rhetoric, held a scepter to show that eloquence rules with resistless sway.

Calliope, Muse of heroic poetry, also wore a laurel crown; and Urania, Muse of astronomy, held mathematical instruments, indicative of her love of the exact sciences.

This glorious sisterhood was wont to assemble on Mount Parnassus or on Mount Helicon, to hold their learned debates on poetry, science, and music.

Apollo's favorite attendant was Eos (Aurora), the fair goddess of dawn, whose rose-tipped fingers opened wide the eastern gates of pearl, and who then flashed across the sky to announce her master's coming.

"Hail, gentle Dawn! mild blushing goddess, hail!
Rejoiced I see thy purple mantle spread
O'er half the skies; gems pave thy radiant way,
And orient pearls from every shrub depend."
SOMERVILLE.

This dainty goddess loved and married Tithonus, Prince of Troy, and won from the gods the boon of everlasting life to confer upon him. Alas! however, she forgot to ask at the same time for continued youth; and her husband grew older and older, and finally became so decrepit, that he was a burden to her. Knowing he would never die, and wishing to rid herself of his burdensome presence, she changed him into a grasshopper.

At this time the goddess fell in love with Cephalus, the young hunter, and frequently visited him on Mount Hymettus.

"'Come,' Phoebus cries, 'Aurora, come — too late
Thou linger'st slumbering with thy wither'd mate!
Leave him, and to Hymettus' top repair!
Thy darling Cephalus expects thee there!
The goddess, with a blush, her love betrays,
But mounts, and, driving rapidly, obeys."
KEATS.

Story of
Aurora and
Tithonus.

The principal temples dedicated to the worship of Apollo were at Delos, his birthplace, and at Delphi, where a priestess called Pythia gave out mysterious oracles purporting to have come from the god. The ancients everywhere could not fail to recognize the sun's kindly influence and beneficent power, and were therefore ever ready to worship Apollo.

"I marvel not, O sun! that unto thee
In adoration man should bow the knee,
And pour his prayers of mingled awe and love;
For like a God thou art, and on thy way
Of glory sheddest with benignant ray,
Beauty, and life, and joyance from above."
SOUTHEY.

The most renowned among the numerous festivals held in honor of Apollo were, without exception, the Pythian Games, celebrated at Delphi every three years.

A manly, beardless youth of great beauty, Apollo is generally crowned with laurels, and bears either a bow or a lyre.

"The Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life, and poesy, and light —
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity."
BYRON.

One of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, the famous Colossus of Rhodes, was a statue of Apollo, his head encircled with a halo of bright sunbeams, and his legs spread wide apart to allow vessels, with all their sails spread, to pass in and out of the harbor, whose entrance he guarded for many a year.



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DIANA OF VERSAILLES.
(Louvre, Paris.)

CHAPTER VI.

DIANA.

DIANA (Cynthia, Phœbe, Selene, Artemis), the fair twin sister of Apollo, was not only goddess of the moon, but also of the chase.

“Goddess serene, transcending every star!
Queen of the sky, whose beams are seen afar!
By night heaven owns thy sway, by day the grove,
When, as chaste Dian, here thou deign’st to rove.”

BYRON.

In works of art this goddess is generally represented as a beautiful maiden, clad in a short hunting dress, armed with a bow, a quiver full of arrows at her side, and a crescent on her well-poised head.

Proud of her two children, Apollo and Diana, Latona boasted far and wide that such as hers had never been, for they excelled all others in beauty, intelligence, and power.

The daughter of Tantalus, Niobe, heard this boast, and laughed in scorn; for she was the mother of four-
teen children,—seven manly sons and seven beautiful daughters. In her pride she called aloud to Latona, and taunted her because her offspring numbered but two.

Story of
Niobe.

Shortly after, Niobe even went so far as to forbid her people to worship Apollo and Diana, and gave orders that all the statues representing them in her kingdom should be torn down from their pedestals, and destroyed. Enraged at this insult, Latona called her children to her side, and bade them go forth and slay all her luckless rival’s offspring.