

SONNET ON AILSA ROCK

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean-pyramid,
Give answer by thy voice—the sea-fowls' screams !
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams ?
When from the sun was thy broad forehead hid ?
How long is't since the mighty Power bid
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams—
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams—
Or when gray clouds are thy cold coverlid ?
Thou answer'st not ; for thou art dead asleep.
Thy life is but two dead eternities,
The last in air, the former in the deep !
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies !
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
Another cannot wake thy giant-size !

BEN NEVIS

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud
Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist !
I look into the chasms, and a shroud
Vaporous doth hide them,—just so much I wist
Mankind do know of hell ; I look o'erhead,
And there is sullen mist,—even so much
Mankind can tell of heaven ; mist is spread
Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,
Even so vague is man's sight of himself !
Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,—
Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,
I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet
Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
But in the world of thought and mental might !