

High on a rock of ice the structure lay,
 Steep its ascent, and slippery was the way;
 The wondrous rock like Parian marble shone,
 And seem'd, to distant sight, of solid stone.
 Inscriptions here of various names I view'd,
 The greater part by hostile Time subdued;
 Yet wide was spread their fame in ages past,
 And poets once had promised they should last.
 Some fresh engraved appear'd of wits renown'd;
 I look'd again, nor could their trace be found.
 Critics I saw, that other names deface,
 And fix their own, with labour, in their place:
 Their own, like others, soon their place resign'd,
 Or disappear'd, and left the first behind.
 Nor was the work impair'd by storms alone,
 But felt the approaches of too warm a sun;
 For fame, impatient of extremes, decays
 Not more by envy than excess of praise.
 Yet part no injuries of heaven could feel,
 Like crystal faithful to the graving steel:
 The rock's high summit, in the temple's shade,
 Nor heat could melt, nor beating storm invade.
 Their names inscribed unnumber'd ages past
 From Time's first birth with Time itself shall last;
 These ever new, nor subject to decays,
 Spread, and grow brighter with the length of days.
 So Zembla's rocks (the beauteous work of frost)
 Rise white in air, and glitter o'er the coast;
 Pale suns, unfelt, at distance roll away,
 And on the impassive ice the lightnings play;
 Eternal snows the growing mass supply,
 Till the bright mountains prop the incumbent
 sky;

As Atlas fix'd, each hoary pile appears,
 The gather'd winter of a thousand years.
 On this foundation Fame's high temple stands;
 Stupendous pile! not rear'd by mortal hands.
 Whate'er proud Rome or artful Greece beheld,
 Or elder Babylon, its frame excell'd.

Four faces had the dome, and every face
 Of various structure, but of equal grace:
 Four brazen gates, on columns lifted high,
 Salute the different quarters of the sky.
 Here fabled chiefs in darker ages born,
 Or worthies old, whom arms or arts adorn,
 Who cities raised, or tamed a monstrous race,
 The walls in venerable order grace.
 Heroes in animated marble frown,
 And legislators seem to think it stone.