

**THE MISSION OF INTELLECT;
A POEM DELIVERED AT
METROPOLITAN HALL, NEW
YORK, DECEMBER 20, 1852**

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The Mission of Intellect; A Poem Delivered at Metropolitan Hall, New York, December 20,
1852 by Augustine Duganne

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AUGUSTINE DUGANNE

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A POEM DELIVERED AT
METROPOLITAN HALL, NEW
YORK, DECEMBER 20, 1852**

TO THOSE WHO LABOR
INTELLECTUALLY AND MORALLY

For the Good of Humanity,

THIS POEM IS

LOVINGLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR

The Mission of Intellect.

PART FIRST.

THE VISION.

I was a student in the schools of earth —
I was a wrestler in the strife for gain —
Until a Voice, which was not of myself,
Out-led my soul from life. My reflux thought,
Upon the electric wires of wondrous sleep,
Had compassed the immeasurable Past,
And journeyed with the Ages! I had trod
The ice-tassellated temples whose dread shrines
Are the upthrown vitals of extinct volcanoes ;
Whose columns are gnarled clouds, — whose awful arch
Is the indrawn chest of storms — whose architraves

Are the garnered winds — whose visionless capitals
Are the footstools of that unseen deity
Whom men call SCIENCE' —

And my soul had sunk —
Even from those wildering deserts it had sunk,
Sounding a measureless deepness, through the maze
Of whirlpools that engulf the Northern seas,
Down to the interminable caves of Ocean !
I trod the unfathomed waters, — where the forms
Of vasty snakes like islands lie entombed —
I passed the innumerable host of Dead,
Marshaled like armies, where attraction wanes,
And bodies have no weight. I climbed the hills
Of long-forgotten treasures — heaps of gold,
And piles of gorgeous merchandry, that years
And ages have collected, in the marts
Of that dead empire Ocean — whence again
No caravan shall bear them — whence not one
Of all the uncounted fleets that in the ports
Of sunless silence ride in endless lines,
Shall voyage forth — beneath the flag of ΜΑΜΜΟΝ.

THE VISION.

Cold SCIENCE — throned upon her awful snows ! .
And MAMMON — reigning o'er the withered wrecks
Of a dead ocean ! — these my soul surveyed,
Like one who lifts the mantle of his fate,
And seeth perdition. — These had been my quest !
Science I wooed — to freeze in her embrace ;
And Mammon conquered — to be Mammon's slave.
Too late I learned it, as in agony
My spirit moaned aloud. — “ Behold ! ” I cried —
“ The Heritage of Science cannot bless —
The Power of Mammon cannot save mankind !
Tell me, O angel of my dreams ! reveal
The glorious talisman which shall redeem
Humanity from its curse ! ”

Once more the Voice of Truth
Went out before me, as a wind, —
And drew my weeping soul ! Night came and went,
And days fled swiftly on the rolling wheels
Of golden suns ; and seasons, like swift steeds,
Burdened with wealth, and driven by ancient Time,
Rushed past my sight, and vanished. On, and on —

My soul moved, trembling, through the deeps of space :
Cherubim brushed it with their snowy wings,
And radiant angels of the mercy seat
Breathed Eden's odors, as they earthward passed,
Drying my tears with their celestial smiles.
On, through the deeps of space — a million worlds,
Dazzling in hazy glory, crossed my sight ;
Myriads of stars stretched gleaming from my gaze,
And countless suns in bright effulgence burned.

Then fell my soul into a wildering trance
Of mystic silence. Solitude seemed bowed
By the awful weight of an eternal hush :
There was no atmosphere — no pulse, to thrill
With the faintest whisper : — vision was no more,
For light was absent. All was darksome void,
Where matter and its attributes were not —
Where Chaos yet was viewless ! —

And there pressed
A thought upon my brain, as if a weight

Of madness were approaching — and I cried.
That this was Death — and that there was no God !

Then answered me the Voice of Truth : “ Behold !
Thus is Life dead — thus Godless is the world —
When Intellect bows down at Mammon’s feet.”

Then suddenly, as with electric flame,
A light fell all around me, and a sound,
As of a thousand pinions, rocked my soul !
The immensity of visible space revealed
Itself before me, — and the stars fled back,
And systems melted into mist — and suns dissolved
In ambient radiance, — until space — all space
Was peopled by my soul alone ! —

My vision swept the untenanted universe,
And from the shadows of Infinity
I heard the whisper of the Uncreate,
And bowed my listening spirit. Then arose —
Slowly, and like a phantom shape, from out

The invisible Beyond, a shadowy globe ;—
And my soul knew it was — the Earth !
An atmosphere of congelated tears
Covered her brow as with a hoary frost,
And the deep stirred around her — as with sighs.

Once more the awful accents of that Voice
Shook my hushed heart. “ Now may'st thou mark the earth !
And, from the Universe of thy Intellect,
Behold Humanity even as it is !”

Then, with a measureless reach, as if one blind
Should strain for sight, my soul looked trembling down,
And saw where, stretched athwart the boreal snows
An old man, tossed with a tempestuous grief,
Lay writhing — while above, in midway light,
Rose, like a sorrowing god before mine eyes,
The Angel of the Wretched. He was crowned
With thorns that gleamed amid the light like gems ;
His brow was rigid, as with conquered grief,
And his bright eyes glittered with unwept tears !