

## THE SCEPTIC SUBDUED.

"I cannot feel as you do, I wish I could, but I was born a sceptic, I cannot help my doubts; other people swallow down these visionary things, but as for me I can't. I do not know there is a God, and if there is, what he has to do with us particularly I can't see. Nature has her laws, and whoever breaks them will bring evil upon his own head, that is about all that I can see."

Thus spoke an eminent politician as he walked with a Christian friend through the blackness of a winter's night. It was bitter cold, and the snow flakes powdered the rich fur coat wrapped around him, and whitened the thick clusters of raven hair that peeped out from beneath his cap.

Yes, John Hunter was a sceptic. A man of rare intellectual powers, wielding a mighty influence, and yet no God! No hope for the future—walking in the darkness, satisfied, contented.

Almost every body had given him up. He parried reason skillfully and calmly, and to all human appearance, it seemed impossible to make an impression on the rocky soil of his heart.

But one friend had never despaired of him; they had been boys together, sat on the same form at school, played at the same games—manhood opened to both invitingly.

Ambitious of worldly honor, and feeling what it is, the power to sway men to his will, John Hunter early entered the political arena, and it was not long before his fellow-countrymen applauded to his heart's content. He was a successful man.

The other, Jasper Schumann, was a quiet unobtrusive man, an humble mechanic, supporting his family by his daily labor—a cheerful, happy, Christian man; and though so widely apart in the journey of every day life, these two were still friends whenever they chanced to meet; and when absent on his political circuit, John Hunter was always remembered as Jasper Schumann gathered his loved ones around the family altar.

It chanced on this particular night Jasper Schumann had been pressing the matter of personal religion on the attention of John Hunter, and now his only reply was:

"God has more power over your heart than you have, John, and I mean still to pray for you."

"Oh, I'm willing that you should do that, if it's a comfort to you; go on, but I shall never change. I've read more books of divinity than most ministers. I've about as much as I can do in this world and must run the risk of another. However, let's change the subject. Whew! how the snow flies! Here's a restaurant; let us stop and order supper."

How warm and pleasant it looked as they entered! The bright gas-light streamed over the glitter of cut glass and silver, falling into the hearts of the flowers lavishly strewn over the richly tinted carpet, while splendid mirrors and marble tables reflected the waves of light dazzlingly. Goodly viands were placed before them, and their conversation had been genial and pleasant. John Hunter was on the point of rising, when a strain of soft music came through a half opened door—a child's voice. Passionately fond of music, the politician stopped to hear.

"Sweet, isn't it?" as his eye caught Jasper Schumann's.

"We've no time to hear you now, out of the way!" cried the waiter, and the little voice was hushed.