

DURING THE CIVIL WAR I WAS SURGEON IN THE ARMY, AND AFTER THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG THERE WERE MANY HUNDREDS OF WOUNDED SOLDIERS IN THE HOSPITAL, TWENTY-EIGHT OF WHOM HAD BEEN WOUNDED SO SEVERELY THAT THEY REQUIRED MY SERVICES AT ONCE; SOME WHOSE LEGS HAD TO BE AMPUTATED, SOME THEIR ARMS, AND OTHERS BOTH THEIR ARM AND LEG. ONE OF THE LATTER WAS A BOY WHO HAD BEEN BUT THREE MONTHS IN THE SERVICE, AND BEING TOO YOUNG FOR A SOLDIER HAD ENLISTED AS A DRUMMER. WHEN MY ASSISTANT SURGEON AND ONE OF MY STEWARDS WISHED TO ADMINISTER CHLOROFORM PREVIOUS TO THE AMPUTATION, HE TURNED HIS HEAD ASIDE AND POSITIVELY REFUSED TO RECEIVE IT. WHEN THE STEWARD TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS THE DOCTOR'S ORDERS HE SAID, "SEND THE DOCTOR TO ME."
WHEN I CAME UP TO HIS BEDSIDE I SAID: "YOUNG MAN, WHY DO YOU REFUSE CHLOROFORM? WHEN I FOUND YOU ON THE BATTLEFIELD YOU WERE SO FAR GONE THAT I THOUGHT IT HARDLY WORTH WHILE TO PICK YOU UP, BUT WHEN YOU OPENED THOSE LARGE BLUE EYES I THOUGHT YOU HAD A MOTHER SOMEWHERE WHO MIGHT AT THAT MOMENT BE THINKING OF HER BOY. I DID NOT WANT YOU TO DIE ON THE FIELD, SO ORDERED YOU TO BE BROUGHT HERE, BUT YOU HAVE NOW LOST SO MUCH BLOOD THAT YOU ARE TOO WEAK TO ENDURE AN OPERATION WITHOUT CHLOROFORM, THEREFORE YOU HAD BETTER LET ME GIVE YOU SOME."
HE LAID HIS HAND ON MINE, AND LOOKING ME IN THE FACE SAID: "DOCTOR, ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, WHEN I WAS NINE AND A HALF YEARS OLD, I ACCEPTED THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS MY SAVIOUR. I LEARNED TO TRUST HIM THEN, I HAVE BEEN TRUSTING HIM EVER SINCE, AND I KNOW I CAN TRUST HIM NOW. HE IS MY STRENGTH AND MY STAY; HE WILL SUPPORT ME WHILE YOU AMPUTATE MY ARM AND LEG."
THE LOOK THAT BOY GAVE ME I SHALL NEVER FORGET. AT THAT TIME I HATED JESUS BUT I RESPECTED THAT BOY'S LOYALTY TO HIS SAVIOUR, AND WHEN I SAW HOW HE LOVED AND TRUSTED HIM TO THE LAST, THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT TOUCHED MY HEART, AND I DID FOR THAT BOY WHAT I HAD NEVER DONE FOR ANY OTHER SOLDIER-I ASKED HIM IF HE WISHED TO SEE HIS CHAPLAIN. "OH, YES SIR!" WAS THE ANSWER.
WHEN THE CHAPLAIN CAME, HE AT ONCE KNEW THE BOY FROM HAVING OFTEN MET HIM AT THE TENT PRAYER MEETING, AND TAKING HIS HAND, SAID, "WELL, CHARLIE I AM SORRY TO SEE YOU IN THIS SAD CONDITION."
"OH, I AM ALRIGHT SIR," HE ANSWERED. "THE DOCTOR OFFERED ME CHLOROFORM, BUT I DECLINED IT, AND NOW, IF MY SAVIOUR CALLS ME, I AM READY, AND CAN GO TO HIM IN MY RIGHT MIND."
"YOU MAY NOT DIE, CHARLIE," SAID THE CHAPLAIN; "BUT, IF THE LORD SHOULD CALL YOU AWAY, IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?"
"CHAPLAIN, PLEASE PUT YOUR HAND UNDER MY PILLOW AND TAKE MY LITTLE BIBLE, IN WHICH YOU WILL FIND MY MOTHER'S ADDRESS. PLEASE SEND IT TO HER, AND WRITE A LETTER, AND TELL HER THAT SINCE THE DAY I LEFT HOME I HAVE NEVER LET A DAY PASS WITHOUT READING A PORTION OF GOD'S WORD, AND DAILY PRAYING TO GOD."
TURNING TOWARDS ME HE SAID: "NOW, DOCTOR, I AM READY, AND I PROMISE YOU THAT I WILL NOT EVEN GROAN WHILE YOU TAKE OFF MY ARM AND LEG IF YOU WILL NOT OFFER ME CHLOROFORM."
I PROMISE, BUT I HAD NOT THE COURAGE TO TAKE THE KNIFE IN MY HAND TO PERFORM THE OPERATION WITHOUT FIRST GOING INTO THE NEXT ROOM AND TAKING A LITTLE STIMULANT TO NERVE MYSELF TO PERFORM MY DUTY. WHILE CUTTING THROUGH THE FLESH CHARLIE COULSON NEVER GROANED, BUT WHEN I TOOK THE SAW TO SEPARATE THE BONE, THE LAD TOOK THE CORNER OF HIS PILLOW IN HIS MOUTH, AND ALL THAT I COULD HEAR HIM UTTER WAS, "O, JESUS, BLESSED JESUS, STAND BY ME NOW!" HE KEPT HIS PROMISE, AND NEVER GROANED. THAT NIGHT I COULD NOT SLEEP, FOR WHICH EVER WAY I TURNED I SAW THOSE SOFT BLUE EYES, AND WHEN I CLOSED MINE THE WORDS, "BLESSED JESUS, STAND BY ME NOW," KEPT RINGING IN MY EARS. BETWEEN TWELVE AND ONE O'CLOCK I LEFT MY BED AND VISITED THE HOSPITAL, A THING I HAD NEVER DONE BEFORE UNLESS SPECIALLY CALLED, BUT SUCH WAS MY DESIRE TO SEE THAT BOY. UPON MY ARRIVAL THERE I WAS INFORMED BY THE NIGHT STEWARD THAT SIXTEEN OF THE HOPELESS CASES HAD DIED.
"HOW IS CHARLIE COULSON? IS HE AMONG THE DEAD?" I ASKED.
"NO, SIR," ANSWERED THE STEWARD; "HE IS SLEEPING AS SWEETLY AS A BABE."