

Dictated.

Mayville, N.Y.
Oct. 12th 1889

H. D. Niles Esq.
Belle Plain, Marshall Co.
Ills.

My dear old Friend:

I have your letter of the 9th inst, and am very sorry indeed to hear of your sad condition.

I do not remember the facts of your injury, though now that you mention it, I recall having heard something about it, whether from yourself or others, I could not say.

I know something of Hall's antipathy to you, however, as well as of his utter ~~unscrupulousness~~ unscrupulousness? Were he living I would not believe him on oath in a case in which he had any personal interest, and if he had lived ^{a little} longer, I do not think anybody would. I do not think, however, that a general attack upon his character and veracity could now be sustained, for the reason,~

(1) That so many men are loath to tell an unpleasant truth about a dead man—especially one who had so many dashing and valuable qualities as a soldier as Hall unquestionably had.

(2) He was very shrewd. He kept Tolls, who was a good man, though easily misled, under the "hack" from the first. He avoided all collision with Perkins, who besides being rich, was a nephew of Gov. Tod. Though a splendid good man, Perkins is and was very cautious and non-committal as to Hall.

(3) He had quite a following of favorites who had, and still have, more or less reason to speak well of him. For these reasons, I do not think a general attack on his character would avail you anything. I knew something, as a law-student in Ashtabula, about the matter with the Treasurer, or heard something about it rather. My recollection is that it was about as you recite it. However, I do not know that I have ever had full information as to the facts.

In Canfield's case, he undoubtedly perjured himself in order to save himself from blame. To prevent detection, he urged the dismissal of Canfield, -- who was then a prisoner of war -- without any hearing, trial or opportunity to defend himself whatever, -- one of the grossest acts of outrage ever perpetrated on an officer or a man. There is no doubt that Canfield obeyed Hall's order to the letter, and that order was the necessary and unavoidable cause of the capture of the train. So too, if it had not been for that command, its capture would have been an impossibility. Hall gave the order merely to have the eclat of getting ahead of the "Division Train", he was ordered to send a detail to join, and would no doubt have been sashiered if the truth had been known. Hence, his ^{zeal} ~~order~~ against Canfield.

His ambition was boundless, and his resentment undying. He was cruel by nature and altogether capable of falsifying any record to secure either his interest or his revenge.

The endorsement itself, as it seems to me, would show this; unless he had some personal knowledge of how the injuries were incur-

red, which does not seem probable. I think he had an antipathy to all the officers of Company "B",--who did not always endorse his high-handed and tyrannical acts. I think he had also a special dislike for you because of your disability, and it is possible that he may have arrived at that conclusion and written it down in resentment at your lack of endurance. He was a man of wonderful physique, and remarkable fortitude and had an infinite contempt for any man who could not endure as much as he.

While, therefore, Hall may have made this endorsement as a matter of personal ill-will, it is quite possible that it may have been only a matter of mistaken duty--an extra-judicial declaration of his notion as to the fact. As to its truth, of course I know nothing.

I should say, however, that it would not take much to overthrow the force of such a statement to which you were not a party. Capt. Braden and others of your company should know ~~enough~~ enough of the facts in the case to set that matter in its true light, and it seems to me it would be much better to proceed in this manner than make a general attack which, even if ~~sustained~~ sustained, might do you no good

Canfield is- or was in Indiana^{apolis}; Braden in Canton, O.

^{there} Hoping that you may be able to establish the facts and that ~~you~~ you may establish your claim, and also regretting that I am able to give you only empty advice, which may after all be useless, I remain,

Sincerely yours, *Abion W. Tourgee*