

Cottondale

Feb. 26th 1896

Gov. Elias Carr
Raleigh, N. C.

Dear Sir: -

Knowing the value of your time I will be brief as possible, and hope the necessary details of my subject will not too severely tax your patience.

When I was trying to arouse an interest in having a Virginia Dare desk in the Woman's Building at the World's Fair, in order to make my "talks" interesting I tried to inform myself thoroughly on this subject. Among other obscurities, I found scattered fragments of an Indian tradition about Virginia Dare being changed by magic into a white Doe, but found no one who could relate this tradition - only that they had heard that there was one about it. I persevered in my inquiries until from many sources I finally resurrected the main points of the legend, which I wrote out in prose, thinking to have it published so all Carolinians might become familiar with it.

I was kept so busy that this was not done. After the World's Fair I found it among my papers. It-

seemed such a pretty legend, on such an interesting and mysterious subject that I concluded it was worthy of a better rendering. So, having both time and inclination I wove it into a poem of some length, holding fast to all the historic facts on which it was based — adroitly weaving a history lesson with the warp and woof of the legend. Encouraged by the favorable criticism of friends to whom I submitted it, I decided to publish it in book form. I find that publishing will be very expensive, and in these stringent times I do not like to place this extra expense upon Mr. Cotten. So I have decided to make an effort to earn for myself the necessary money, by reading my poem in such places as I can make satisfactory arrangements. I am engaged to read it in Wilmington soon after Easter, under the auspices of the Society of Colonial Dames, the members of which are studying colonial history, and of which Mrs. Kidder is President. — It had occurred to me to make a suggestion to you along this line, which is, of course open to your criticism or disapproval.

The Vance Monument Assn., of which you are Pres., seems anxious to augment its fund, and perhaps we can make an arrangement by which we may be

mutually benefitted. The suggestion is, that I read my poem, which is called "The White Doe", in Raleigh and the net proceeds, after all expenses are paid, to be equally divided between the Vance Assn. and myself.

The expenses of the entertainment can be minimized in this way — with your permission, and under the auspices of the Vance Assn., I might read the poem in some large room at the Mansion, thus giving greater eclat to the occasion, drawing a larger crowd perhaps, and saving Hall hire.

There are many things which redeem this suggestion from the imputation of audacity on my part. Gov. Vance was the only man who ever attempted to secure some national recognition of the history of Roanoke Island. This makes it very appropriate for the legend, which relates to the history of that island to be read for the benefit of the proposed monument to his memory. Several unique features of such an entertainment occur to me, such as — a genuine N. C. legend, founded on N. C. history, written by a N. C. woman, read in the N. C. Mansion, under the

patronage of a N. C. Governor, in the interest of the perpetuation of the memory of a former N. C. Gov. who had in life made a great effort to secure national recognition of the subject embodied.

I know the Raleigh people do not rush wildly to hear lectures and readings, but curiosity about the legend might prove a stimulus, and the result might add something to the Vance Monument fund and also to my fund for publishing my book.

It requires one hour for its reading. Some music might be added to give variety, and in introducing me to the audience I think a brief resumé of the historic points embraced in the legend, should be given, so as to enable the hearers to easily understand such references. You could do this appropriately and gracefully, and this would make the entertainment long enough for an evening in April.

Now, I do not wish to entail any extra trouble on Mrs. Carr. I could, and would cheerfully attend to any details of preparation (seats &c) which might be necessary. In justice to you, that you may take no step blindly, I am willing to send you the MS. You can read and judge for yourself of the merits of the legend. I think I can guarantee to entertain

the audience, while not claiming to be much of a poet.

Please remember that you are at liberty to decline my proposition, if you view it unfavorably, without fear of giving me offence. Believing you to be my friend, I am willing to be advised in the matter, and would not like to attempt anything which you think unwise. — Other details such as press notices, price of admission, date &c can all be arranged later, if you approve of the suggestion.

At your convenience I hope to hear from you. With high regards for Mrs. Carr and yourself I am

Very Respectfully
Sallie S. Cotten

Mrs. R. R. Cotten, } P.S. If you think the girls from
Falkland, } Peace and St. Mary's would come
N.C. } and a crowd could be secured for
a hall I would not object. I should
like to have a crowd which would
mean success, no matter where gathered.