MR. LANGSTON IN WASHINGTON

An Anderson Eidtor Almost Completely Recovered from an Attack of Illness.

News and Courier.

Washington, December 14.—Editor Charles C. Langston, of the Anderson Intelligencer, is in Washington for a few days homeward bound, after a successful quest of health and recuperation with friends and relatives at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Mr. Langston as secretary of the South Carolina Press Association, a position which he has creditably and faithfully filled for fourteen years, is known throughout the Palmetto State. It will be a source of gratification to his many friends and well wishers to learn that he has completely recovered from an attack of illness in which nervous prostration was threatened. He is anxious to get back home and resume his editorial and other duties, but his physician prescribes a restful period of several months and open air exercises and exposure to complete the treatment which has been given him so satisfactorily and successfully since he left South Carolina some time ago. While at the Capital, Mr. Langston called upon the members of the South Carolina delegation in Congress and was the recipient of hearty and sincere congratulations upon the beneficial effects of his recreation and recuperation among the mountainous recesses of the Keystone State.

W. S. L.

SUPERINTENDENT MARTIN ON COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

State Superintendent of Education O. B. Martin has completed the third of his articles which are to go in his annual report to the general assembly. This chapter deals with compulsory education and the proposed law on that subject by South Carolina. While no direct stand is taken against the general good effects of the law, Mr. Martin argues that there should be better conditions than now exist. He quotes a report from West Virginia, where the law is well enforced, which is of general interest. The article is as follows:

Compulsory attendance laws have accomplished much desired results in many states. The success of such laws depends largely upon facilities for enforcement. An ineffective, inadequate, helpless law tends to bring all law into disrepute. The provisions for the enforcement of the child labor law in this state are meager and impotent. Our school system is not strong enough to endure the ridicule and opprobrium that would come from the non-enforcement or the inefficiency of a complusory attendance act.

There is some logic in the argument that we should "go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. Such an argument, however, presupposes a great preparation —"a great supper." If the state of South Carolina has a good sum of money at this time which she can devote to the education of her children she should certainly place such an appropriation where it will do the most good. Will that be in paying for the enforcement of a compulsory attendance law? In some of our counties the average salary of teachers (white) is but a little more than $100. The buildings and equipment in a majority of such cases are in keeping with the salaries paid the teachers. The average salary of teachers of negro schools in some counties is higher than the average salary of the white teachers in others. I mention this to show the extreme need of thousands of our children of the opportunities of an education. It would be folly to take any of the funds from a school which gets only $100 a year and use such part to enforce compulsory education.

Of course there are wealthy counties and wealthy districts where a compulsory attendance law might be enforced successfully. I do not believe, however, that a great state should so manipulate its law of its finances as to have poverty and ignorance to tax and educate themselves. If so, what advantageth it them to be citizens of such state? To them it is not a commonwealth.

The experiences of other states clearly establish some points in this connection.

First. A compulsory attendance law is neither automatic nor self-enforcing.

Second. Such a law has never been successfully enforced by teachers or magistrates.

Third. It takes funds to provide facilities and agencies for the enforcement of such laws.

Fourth. It requires a well appointed system of truancy officers to do this work.

Compulsory attendance laws prevail in all of the states as far south as Maryland and Kentucky. Macon county, in North Carolina, has a special act which applies to that county alone. Kentucky at first passed a law and provided practically no means of enforcement. She found it unsatisfactory and then amended it so as to allow boards of education in cities to provide truant officers. Since then they have had some success.

Indiana has a typical compulsory education law. I shall here give the briefest digest of its provisions: Children between the ages of 7 and 14, must attend school. The county board of education appoints one truant officer for each county. When a child is habitually. tardy or absent, this officer gives written notice to parent or guardian. If this notice is disregarded, he brings complaint in any court of record. If parent is guilty he is fined not less than $5 nor more than $25 or imprisoned in the discretion of court. A city board of education may employ more officers in proportion to population. Truant officers and teachers furnish enrollment lists to the truant officers. Trustees furnish books and clothing to poor children. Confirmed truants are sent to reformatory school at the expense of home districts. A tax of one mill is levied to pay expenses of executing this law. An annual census is taken of all children of school age, and names of those of compulsory age are furnished to the truancy officers.

The state superintendent of Indiana estimates that the efforts of truancy officers brought 23,267 children within the school in one term at a total expense of $39,424.29—$19,209.91 for the salaries of officers and $20,215.02 for clothing and books for poor children.

Dr. Waitman Barber of the University of West Virginia gives the following testimony in regard to the operations and defects of the law in that state: "In two-thirds of the counties truant officers have been appointed in one magisterial district or more in each county. (A magisterial district includes from 10 to 35 schools.) In the vast majority of cases where truant officers were appointed the results have been very satisfactory. An increase in attendance from 12 1-2 to 25 per cent. is generally reported. One magisterial district had a gain of 50 per cent. in one year. In some districts truant officers failed to do anything and in some districts the justices of the peace accepted trivial excuses and failed to enforce the law. In a few counties the law as it now stands undoubtedly a failure, but as a whole where truant officers were appointed with care and an honest effort made to enforce the law the results have been admirable. In some places it is difficult to get suitable men to serve as truant officers."

There is no question but that hundreds of children who are now out of school should be in school. Truancy must increase illiteracy and in many cases it leads to vagrancy. Idleness and vagrancy are the parents of numerous crimes. The time will come in this and other Southern states when it will be necessary to enact laws similar to those in Indiana and other states. When the subject comes up for consideration let us hope that real effective legislation will rsult, and not weak, impotent acts which merely bring the school system—into ridicule. Just now I do not believe South Carolina is prepared for such a law as has been outlined. We have a great deal to do before such a law will be timely and appropriate. We are making some headway in providing better salaries and beter teachers, better buildings and equipment, and, with it all, a better supporting sentiment.

Before such law can be enforced there must be some equalization of funds is one of the most difficult of all problems in connection with a state system of schools. In our state the inequalities are appalling. A child in one county gets $10 spent on his education while another child gets less than half of that amount in the adjoining county. In one county the negro schools run 26 weeks. In an adjoining county the white schools run 21 weeks. Our main source of revenue, the three mill tax, is a county tax. The poll and dog tax must be spent in the districts where collected. Of course any district may vote a special tax of not more than four mills, but in a poor district this does not solve the difficulty. A four mill tax in some districts raises less than $50. The dispensary funds have been distributed as a state school fund, but this source of revenue has decreased and the weaker schools will soon feel the effects of such decrease, because this money has been distributed to all of the schools in the state on the basis of enrollment.

The inequality of apportionment operates somewhat in this manner: A wealthy and a poor county are situated side by side. It so happens that railroads converge, and manufacturing and commercial enterprises congregate in the richer county and give it taxable property to assess. Only a few miles of railroad run through the poorer county, but the people in that county ride on the trains and pay frieghts on their merchandise.

They have few factories, but they furnish material to and use the manufactured products of the factories in the adjoining county. There are few commercial institutions in the poorer county, but the people buy their goods from the wholesale and retail stores in the richer county. When it comes to taxation for schools every dollar levied in the strong county is kept there, but the weaker county must content itself with taxing its own property while contributing to the richer county.

The people of a wealthy community should not be willing to receive altogether and give nothing. Such a community constitutes a misanthropic and unproductive dead sea. I fear we have some such communities in our state. We are sure to be impressed with this fact if we study the selfishness which is displayed in our local legislation for schools. We can never perfect our school system in any important particulars until we recognize and remedy the inequalities which now exist. An annual appropriation of $200,000 is badly needed to equalize the apportionments of the various counties. Such an appropriation could be applied first to the weaker counties, until the apportionment on enrollment shall reach a certain amount—say $6 per child. When this is done we can begin to think and plan for a compulsory education law, as well as a great many other laws which have been enacted in states with state school systems and not inconsistent local hotch-potch legislation.

Love's young dream is apt to develop into a matrimonial nightmare.

Ludicrous Legal Lore.

The early history of the jurisprudence of Michigan, if faithfully chronicled, would furnish forth an entertainment abounding with the soul and point of humor. Many of these little legends yet float around the scenes which have given birth to them and serve sometimes to give best to a bar dinner or to enliven a bar meeting. Among them is the following:

Judge B., a plain and worthy man, but no lawyer, was once county judge of Oakland under the old system. A case came on for trial before him on one occasion in which the action was founded in tort, and the plea of the defendant, which was special, was such as to give him the affirmative of the issue, upon the strength of which he claimed the right to open and close the case. This point was denied by the counsel for the plaintiff, "who never in the whole course of his practice had heard of such an enormity as the defendant's presuming to open the case." Authorities were brought and cited, however, and the judge, after mature consideration, determined that such was the defendant's right and so pronounced his decision. After a short pause, during which the plaintiff was grumbling his dissatisfaction, the court told the defendant's lawyer to go on.

"Your honor," said he, rising, "I am not quite ready to open the case. When I get ready I will let the other side know!" This opened, if not the case, at least the eyes and mouth of the other side, who sprang to his feet and bellowed forth denunciation upon the stupidity of the judge, whose absurd decision had placed him in such a dilemma. "You see, your honor, what you have done. You have actually placed the case in the hands of the defendant. He took possession of our oxen, and when we brought an action to recover them he took possession of that also." "I can't help it, sir," said the learned judge, with great sternness. "The decision is made, and it is too late to alter it. The law must take its course. You must withdraw your action and sue again."

"If he does, your honor," said the defendant's counsel. "I shall plead the pendency of this action in bar and beat him." "Then, Mr. —," said the judge, "I see no other way for you but to sit down quietly and wait till the defendant gets ready to try this case." The plaintiff took the judge's advice, but the "time appointed" has never elapsed, and he is waiting yet.—Philadelphia North-American.

CHAS. B. HANFORD.

Delights a Good-Sized Audience With Production of Julius Caesar.

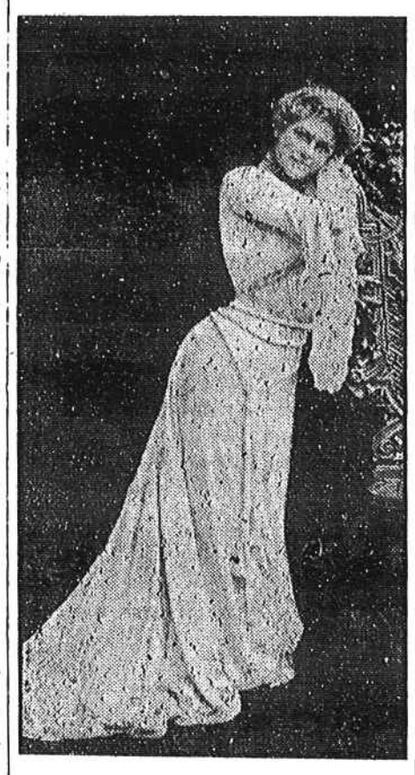
There has been no presentation of a Shakespearean play in Roanoke that has surpassed that of Julius Caesar, as given by Mr. Charles B. Hanford and a very capable company at the Academy of Music last night. In the production of such a play it requires the very highest type of histrionic artists, and stage settings that are elaborate and in keeping with the character of the play.

The production given by Mr. Hanford was fully up to every requirement in every particular, and there has never been brought South a more elaborate production except possibly that which was given by Mr. Mansfield and his stupendous company a few years ago.

Mr. Hanford was seen in the role of Anthony, and well did he sustain the part. In the forum scene, when he entered with the dead body of Caesar, there was a realism that is rarely equalled on the mimic stage, and when the curtains fell on the final scene, he was forced to respond to numerous encores.

Mr. Kline, as Brutus, and Mr. Henning, as Cassius, shared honors with Mr. Hanford, and their parts were taken as they can be acted only by artists of highest type. Both these gentlemen have been with Hanford for several years, and between the three there is a sympathy that renders their acting rarely entertaining.

The production of Julius Caesar, is given by Mr. Hanford and his company last night, was a dramatic treat of the highest order, and while the weather prevented many from attending, it is gratifying to note that there was a good-sized audience present, who appreciated the refined and elevating performance to the very utmost.—The Roanoke Times.



MISS MARIE DROFNAH,
Leading lady with
CHARLES B. HANFORD.