Articles
for Lincoln
Memorial University
Cumberland Swamp

No. 21, Vol. 8

J. A. Bond

Subject
A. Monument
for the Mountain People
It is doubtless disappointing to artists, who busily themselves for the most part in the erection of monuments, commemorative of past events, to notice articles in the press of a condemning nature. But in these times when there is so large a class of men, women and children without sufficient work to make life comfortable in spite of every effort they may put forth, is it not well to consider whether it be wise to put up monuments which will cost millions upwards of a million of dollars?

Workers in granite would have a good job while it lasted, and all the laborers, directly or indirectly connected with the structure, would get their share of the outlay. The historic monument is always an educator, especially to multitudes who have read very little of history, and to those who have read, it is a reminder of past knowledge, and emphasizes important events in their minds.

When erected to a great man it magnifies his work and character, and the country, that has erected it in honor of one of her sons, is the richer in its existence. Such a monument indeed is a contribution of the people of an important generation to children and children's children. The more we think of it the less real objection do we find to historic monuments, however elaborate, provided they are in good taste and well constructed. Those that have ascended upon a field like Gettysburg, to mark the greatest event in our history delight every visitor, awaken the patriotism of the old and middle aged and afford striking object lessons to the younger; would not decorate monuments, yet when we think of a character like that of Abraham Lincoln, who was so much beloved by his generation and whose reputation has become coextensive with the wide world, we cannot think that any more monuments of bronze, marble or granite are needed to incite or increase the affection of the people for his memory. There is no city in the country where some sort of statue does not already exist.

There is another kind of monument which will better suit the
man, better portray his life and make a wider sweep of his history. It should consist in good substantial structures, not devoid of art, without or within, structures so grouped and so located that their purpose will be plain enough, namely for the education of the youth.

The conception of such a monument, as a memorial to Abraham Lincoln, will consist in the advantages that will flow from this rich fountain, a fountain of knowledge. It will do good to the first hundred young people who go there and gather in its culture, its helpfulness in the battle of life, its practical teachings, its industrial suggestions, its scientific features, its wholesome morality and the sweet precepts of religion, such as Lincoln taught when he told us how to act "with malice toward none and with charity for all".

If such a monument, an academy, a normal school, a college or a university were to be erected at Springfield, Illinois, most men would say, if the institution were needed at that center, put it up, and glorify it with him in his largeness of frame and of soul without and within. But there are places where such large expenditures will do more good and where a group of schools of thoroughly practical kind, industrial and academic, are a thousand times more needed.

Mr. Lincoln himself called my attention to a people in the mountains, in the Appalachian Range, the Cumberland Mountains, if you please, grown since his day to upwards of a million of men, women and children, who were then loyal to the government, loyal to the flag and loyal to our fundamental institutions, who were nevertheless at that time between two fires; who were disturbed by the operations of the great war, and who were for years deprived of the advantages that other people in this country possessed and enjoyed. Mr. Lincoln and those who acted with him endeavored to cover their case in the laws of the land by the use of the word, "White Refugees". Those immediate wants were sought to be provided for, and indeed a beginning was made in the interest of their schools. Still they are left behind, they, his own people among whom he was born and he loved; he loved to speak of them.
where girls are wedded from twelve to fifteen years of age, and boys
grow without being able to write their names. The valleys and the
hills of this region were peopled from the north of Ireland, from
Scotland, from the Huguenots of France, with a sprinkling of the
Anglo-Saxon. There is no better heredity and as soon as a little
training comes in, as at Washington College, Asheville, North Car-
olina, or Berea, Kentucky, the results are so quick and the harvest
so abundant that educators and friends of humanity are astonished
at the reposement for so long a time.

Certainly an educational monument, well located, with sufficient
grounds, sufficient cultivatable land, and well selected teachers,
with an endowment no larger than that contemplated for the great
Lincoln monument at Springfield, Illinois, will be vastly better,
much more suitable and more productive of good. It will be a spring from
which sweet waters will flow; it will be the headwater of rivulets
that will increase into larger streams and make a garden in every
valley.

Possibly the people of Illinois could appropri]e $100,000 for it; but they could save the appropriation for something better;
for surely Lincoln's monument is not needed there, not in the form
they contemplate, because Lincoln's tomb, at that center, a veritable
shrine for multitudes from other states to visit and cherish.

The United States Congress would hardly be willing to appropriate
$300,000 for a group of schools, though that would a grand
national project, and a remunerative act; they view surely would not
be willing to give it for an elaborate obelisk which every man would
feel to be but a poor expression of the nation's regard.

The time has come when legislators and statesmen must consider
how to build up what are called common people, whom Lincoln loved,
and enable them to attain a self-support. There will be a turning
and overturning until this done. The boys and girls of the mount-
ains have had but a poor chance at common schools, especially where
there have been no schools of any kind within their reach. And
finally to call upon the people to give by voluntary contributions
$400,000 for a stone structure with less in it than the Sultan's
Mosque or the Egyptian pyramid, will not, I believe, suit the temper of our people.

A charter was secured, a few years since, to cover just such an educational monument to be located in that beautiful nest among the mountains, called Cumberland Gap. Under that charter a board of directors was organized, whose president was Dr. W. C. Gray of Chicago. The work had already commenced at that center under another name; but with a new charter, extensive grounds were secured and the enterprise thoroughly launched. Many of our best men have put their shoulders to the wheel and there is no doubt about the future of the institution. But in order to do more for those mountain people we covet rich gifts; we do hope that capitalists will toward us and make there the safest of investments.

But far more earnestly do we desire that the people, far and wide, who love Lincoln and his memory, may contribute, be it ever so little to this monument which is to endure for the ages.