

WHY WE SHOULD BUILD THE MONUMENT

BY MRS. J. B. WORTH.

In the stirring times of '61, when the voice of war was heard in the land, and the cry was, "To arms!" the first North Carolina regiment that marched forth to the roll of the drum contained two companies from old Cumberland—the La Fayette Light Infantry and the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry. In the first general engagement of the war, the battle of Bethel, these companies participated. From then on her people never faltered, (the story of the troops that were raised and sent forth has often been told, and needs no repetition here—a number in excess of her voting population) until at the last, when Lee and Johnston surrendered the last remnants of a valiant host, the men of Cumberland were among those who laid down their arms; and, accepting the results of the war, turned their faces homeward. During those four arduous years, how many laid down their lives for their country on the field of battle? How many languished in prison? How many suffered from wounds and exposure?

Shall their sacrifices be forgotten, or their noble deeds be unrecorded? Nay, rather let them be carved on stone and written in brass, that future ages may know that, though the cause was lost, the heroes of it are remembered; their honor and fame are far dearer in defeat to the women of the Southland than if they had returned, crowned with victory, and needed no vindication.

As Cumberland was among the first in the field, it is fitting she should lead the way, among the counties in the State of North Carolina, to erect a soldiers' monument. The chivalry and nobility of character of a people may be judged by its monuments, the memorials it rears to those who have served or suffered for their country.

The nation that does not feel the impulse to commemorate noble acts, to raise a stone or inscribe a tablet so that the memory of those who have gone before shall not perish from off the earth, must indeed be sunken in ignorance or steeped in selfishness. Thank Heaven, the race to which we belong are not so. In working for a monument, we think of those who are gone, and are apt to imagine that we are doing something for them, something that will do them some good, and so we are so far as we cause their memory to be held in respect and justice done to their motives. But they have passed to the great beyond; to us and our children accrues the benefit. We have the privilege of working for a noble cause, the good that comes to us from toiling unselfishly without hope of reward; to our children comes the knowledge that deeds of bravery and nobility are not forgotten; that there is something higher in life than mere getting and keeping; that love and remembrance, honor and renown, await those who serve their country in sincerity, although success may not crown the effort.

So we say to our sisters of the town and county, come and join us in rearing this shaft on the historic site of the old court house, a location excelled by none in beauty and fitness, where four broad streets meet, near by "the city of the silent", where so many of our brave ones lie—mothers, wives, and sisters, who still remember how blithely our soldiers marched away, who still hold dear the memory of those who returned not; those who saw not again the riverside, the sunny uplands, the pine forests of the land of their birth.

Women of Cumberland, let's all unite and never cease our efforts until the monument to the soldiers of Cumberland county rears its crown toward the blue skies of our beloved North Carolina.