

FOUNTAINS FOR THE MOUNTAIN

(Originally published July 1964)

The Atlanta newspapers last month alerted the citizens of Georgia to what has been going on atop Stone Mountain. While the implied shenanigans and political patronage involved in using up over eleven million dollars of state tax money to produce an imposing reflection pool and a luxury motel on the bald dome of the mountain with no accessible way for tourists to reach them was amusing enough, the item that caught our fancy was the disclosure that there were seventy-six bidets on hand and in storage there. These apparently were meant for use in the motel, but no one seemed to know who ordered them, how they got there or what to do with them. The one or two that did get installed were ripped out—at a cost of over \$1,000 apiece for the repair work—by someone who decided that the Georgian tourist was not sophisticated enough to appreciate them.

The bidet, a standard French accoutrement of off-bedroom nature, enjoyed its greatest popularity years ago in the days of early, continental plumbing. Although described with an eye to modesty and propriety as a “kind of Sitz bath” by the Atlanta journalists, the European function of the bidet was primarily that of a douche receptacle that performed a contraceptive function as it cleansed and refreshed. As a modern luxury item of plumbing, the bidet has been trying hard to make a comeback in some of today’s fancier buildings. However, its successful return has been frustrated by modern developments in the nature of the daily pill and foam applicators. Whatever the ultimate fate of the state’s bidets, we hope that they eventually do get installed up there on the mountain. If not in the motel rooms, they might look nice spaced along the sides of the reflecting pool. There they could double as water fountains for children, or if the Stone Mountain Memorial Authority saw fit, they could all be turned on at once and utilized in excellent fashion as a water-display spectacular.