



NOT THE WALL AND TURRETS OF AN ANCIENT CITY, BUT THE DAM, MARCH 15, 1917

Hydraulic Development

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hart began to sharpen pencils and oil up adding machines.

The first stage setting of the "blues" dispenser revealed to our anxious eyes a gang of workmen cutting an opening in the center of the upstream cofferdam, so that the Yadkin, which for nearly four years (except when on the rampage) had passed every last drop of its volume through two enormous tunnels could again return to its natural course. Did we say cutting? Well, it looked more like whittling. It looked so much like whittling that "Captain" Rickey wired to know how his bank balance stood, and upon finding out hunted up S. S. Scott and laid down a wager, which (after serious consultation with his general foreman) Scott accepted, to the effect that the job could not be done by the end of the week. That was on Tuesday. In about an hour that hole in the cofferdam was a seething mass of humanity. There were so many in it, and working so strenuously, that they didn't even let the mud and dirt stay on each other's shoes. They couldn't; they were too close together!

On Saturday evening (via the over-time route), the hole was open, and the old Yadkin once more flowing down its natural course.

Then came payday, and the end of the week, with a job well done tucked away; and Sunday was to be a day of rest and rejoicing. But the "Captain" decreed otherwise. At five a. m. (well, maybe it was six), he was up and on his way to see how much form work had been completed by those carpenters working in the tunnels. (Because these tunnels, which had taken so long to dig, were to be filled with concrete, so as to help hold back the water in the lake.) Well, would you believe it, not a jack hammer on the job! Two enormous tunnels full of nothing. WHY?

We have often thought that at least one man must have been determined to have that question answered, because he climbed back up those 350 feet of Stanly hillside which has increased many blood pressures and reduced much avoirdupois, but never had been climbed for the fun of doing it. He did not return alone, however; with him was a small sized army of carpenters, and into those tunnels they waded, splashed, and almost swam, and down to hard work they got.

It was on Sunday, June 6, that one of the very important, if not the most important, parts of the work began. Day and night shifts kept at the work of plugging these tunnels until, another Sunday morning, three weeks later, it was found that ninety-five pounds of air could penetrate no more cracks and

crevices in the rock, and the job was pronounced satisfactorily completed.

It is necessary to return at this stage of our story to the Whitney dam, and pay what little homage we owe it. Worthless as that structure is today, covered with twelve feet of water when the lake is full, it can at least be said that for the brief period of a few hours it was master of the situation, and held back the rushing waters of the Yadkin long enough to allow the final closure to be made in tranquility at the Narrows (and incidentally to lodge high and dry on the rocks a party of our good friends from Montgomery County, who were attempting to cross the river at Pennington ferry on their way to Badin to see the event of the day!)

At four o'clock p. m. on June 27, 1917, the two large gates were lowered into place, effectually closing the last opening in the Narrows dam, and the Yadkin River was harnessed. Simultaneously with the construction of the dam, the erection of the powerhouse and appurtenances was under way. The completion of this was so timed that when the water in the lake reached an elevation sufficient to enter the penstocks and turn the waterwheels, the machinery was ready to develop power.

Throughout the course of events leading to the construction of the Narrows Dam, the impelling force back of the entire project was our president, Mr.