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OVER ON THE YADKIN

High Power Development Out Across the Montgomery Chicken Belt

BY BION BUTLER



A FEW miles to the west of Pinehurst is one of the most gigantic industrial developments going on in the world. It is the construction of a vast water power, and the application of the power is to a big aluminum reduction works, which will be possibly the first in size of plants of its character. The dam is building on the Yadkin River, at an interesting place known as "The Narrows," a spot where Nature has devoted much energy toward making a highly desirable condition for water power development. The dam will have a fall of a hundred feet or more, and develop a hundred thousand horse power. The cost of the plant will be many million dollars. It is one of those things that start out with an idea of expending a given sum of money and wind up with the spending habit fully contracted, but the limit of spending lost sight of forever. What will be spent at the new settlement can be determined better ten years from now, but it will be a wagon load of money.

THE MIGHTY RIVER

The Yadkin is a fine big river, rising away up in the counties of Caldwell and Watauga in the Blue Ridge. At Patterson it is over twelve hundred feet above tide water, and from that lofty elevation it falls to the sea in a distance of 410 miles. Draining a vast area, catching a rainfall of some fifty inches annually, and carrying the water down more than twelve hundred feet from the mountain tops to the sea it affords a vast power.

By the time the river has reaches "The Narrows" over on the west side of Montgomery County it has swelled to a considerable tide. Normally the stream is about a quarter of a mile wide, flowing in docile fashion between well-defined banks, a majestic, well-behaved stream. At the Narrows it enters a defile that closes in between the rocky walls not more than sixty feet at some places. In a distance of a mile the river tumbles through this narrow passage about forty feet of a fall, and before the disturbed portion of the river is passed the total fall in four or five miles is almost a hundred feet.

THE DAM ON THE REBOUND

Not far above that turbulent stretch of the river Whitney and Stephenson, of Pittsburgh, a few years ago projected a big improvement and they went so far as to build a big dam that was to provide fifty thousand horse power. They built a town called Whitney, spent several million dollars, allowed themselves to be caught by one of those stock flurries that they helped to stir up from time to time, for they were stock brokers, and one

morning their financial hide was tacked to the fence. They had some friends in Pittsburgh and New York who had been wanting that hide, as Whitney and Stephenson had been in the fur catching business themselves some in the past. When the blow fell it hit the dam proposition a hard jolt in what Mrs. Bob Fitzsimmons called the slats, and the dam heard itself alluded to many a time before it passed through court, where it was not big enough to square off accounts. A fifty thousand horse power dam cannot do everything.

The dam at Whitney was a magnificent creation of masonry and engineering. It rose sixty feet high above the water level, the massive masonry having a thickness of about fifty feet up and down stream, and the work was laid down there on the rocky base of the river as substantially as though the job had been done in that thorough and enduring style that characterized things on the morning of creation.

Aluminum is a comparatively new metal. It is a highly valuable one. It has not yet found its limits. It has not yet been produced in sufficient quantities to meet the wants for it. The raw material from which aluminum is procured is clay, one of the most abundant things imaginable. The supply depends on the ability of men to reduce the clay to a metallic state, and that is evidently dependent on the amount of electrical energy available, for the economical reduction is an electrical process. A bunch of men with money concluded to take a look at the Whitney scheme, and when they looked they annexed the place. They were men of bigger notions. They planned a bigger dam. When the plan was fitted to the location it was found that a new dam, twice as big and twice as powerful, had grown out of the Whitney failure. There on the Yadkin, just below the Whitney dam is a bigger dam, entirely drowning out the several millions that were put into the Whitney dam, but promising just about twice as big a return of power as the submerged dam at Whitney was expected to give.

THE PROPHETIC SOUL

The new dam will be one of the big dams of the world. The resulting industrial plant will be one of the big things. A town is building to provide the necessary community for the big factory, which will be a thing by itself in its magnitude and importance. Over here electricity will be exploited in a way that will make the Yadkin valley the center of an advanced electrical civilization. Everything is fashioned with the latest electrical discovery and invention under control. The whole outfit will be a model of applied electricity. It will be a place to study the theory and prac-