

BRIDGE BUILDERS

1. APPROACHING the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains, the end of the new railway became a scene of greater activity than ever. In advance for many miles engineers' camps made preparation, and countless yokes of oxen and horses struggled knee-deep through the mire, dragging immense timbers for the trestle-work. Near the junction of Wolf Creek and the McLeod River a bridge was in course of construction.

2. Here the McLeod is but 200 feet wide, and its deep channel is formed of solid rock from which all the soil has long been washed away. Nothing at this point would serve, therefore, but the erection of a massive steel bridge 600 feet long, with a central height of 180 feet.

3. Anyone suddenly appearing on the scene found his ears assailed by a terrific din, thundering through the once quiet valley. On the structure overhead the "bridge flies" were to be seen working with vast energy and great speed. They were placing in position and bolting together the enormous ribs of metal, and at the moment some of their number had just thrown out a span from the top of the concrete pier in the middle of the stream.

4. A yard engine cautiously approached, bearing the great shaped bands of steel. Like a human creature a crane dipped over and seized the right piece. Slinging it upward, and securely holding it in its mouth, it ran out to the end of the span. There the busy workers, standing upon the narrowest footways, took hold, and, pushing the weighty bars into position, slipped in the temporary bolts.

5. Upon other flimsy levels appeared small but terribly energetic furnaces, wherein the bolts to be used might be heated. Becoming more than red-hot, a man grasped a rivet with his tongs, and, uttering a warning cry, sent it