In May, 1869, a commission of three Government Engineers, General Wright, General Newton, and Major King, were appointed, by the War Department, in compliance with an act of Congress, to report upon the East River Bridge, in regard to its being an obstruction to navigation as well as upon the general feasibility of the project.

Those gentlemen recommended an increase of five feet in the elevation of the floor of the main span of the Bridge, fixing it at one hundred and thirty-five feet above mean high spring tides.

In order to avoid the increase in grade caused by this additional elevation, and also to save the increased amount of masonry in towers and approaches, which would have entailed an extra expense of $300,000; it was determined to overcome it by making an entire change in the plan of the superstructure, throwing the trusses altogether above the floor in place of partly above and partly below as contemplated in the original plan. At the same time the floor of the Bridge was widened from eighty to eighty-five feet, to accommodate two double tracks for vehicles in place of two single tracts. The Government Commission also decided that no part of the permanent masonry of the towers above water should extend beyond the pier lines, and that no part of the foundation of the towers should extend above the natural bed of the river, beyond the pier line. In June work was commenced on the

Surveys.

The general line known as the park route had before been determined on, but no actual line had ever been located upon the ground, the proposed line having simply been traced upon the best maps procurable. Several centre lines were run on trial. The one finally fixed upon narrowly escapes the Fulton Ferry slip on the Brooklyn side, and the Williamsburgh Ferry on the New York shore, being restricted at the same time to the two termini fixed by the charter.

In the location of most bridges some attention is paid to the difficulties likely to be incurred in getting foundations