The want of confidence which existed in the public mind a few years ago, as to the safety of Iron Bridges for Rail-road and other purposes, having mostly yielded before the light of experience, it is not now necessary to make use of argument in favor of such structures.

A few badly proportioned, and carelessly managed iron bridges have failed, with results more or less disastrous. But in most such cases, the causes of failure have been so apparent, and the remedies so obvious, that the general confidence in this class of structures, has grown and increased with the extension of their use.

There is still, however, a lurking doubt as to the propriety of the use of Cast iron in bridges; so that there may be said to be two Schools or parties of the advocates and builders of Iron Bridges; one in favor of a combination of Wrought & Cast Iron, and the other, advocating the use of Wrought Iron exclusively, in Iron Bridge Construction.

It is known to many, that the author of this Work, has advocated, and practiced to a considerable extent, the Wrought and Cast Iron System, as the one producing much the cheaper, and equally safe and reliable bridges, when judiciously constructed; and, in support of his views in this regard, he would simply refer to the experience hitherto had, in the use of Wro't & Cast Iron Bridges.