

## PREFACE.

IN no country in the world, perhaps, is the subject of Iron Bridges of more importance than in the United States. The vast extent of our country, the breadth and volume of the rivers, the length of our railroads and mail routes, which already exceed those of any other nation, render the subject one of general interest, and of increasing importance.

Primitive constructions of wood over the smaller streams, and ferry boats for crossing the larger, were all that could be undertaken in the early history of the country. But as population and wealth has increased, these cheap and temporary structures are gradually giving way to those of a more reliable, permanent and costly character.

As any new structure built of durable materials is supposed to possess an interest to the public commensurate with its importance, it is thought that a brief description of the new Iron Bridge just completed on the line of the Hartford and New Haven railroad across the Connecticut River—the largest work of the kind yet erected in the country—will not be uninteresting.

Many of the details of construction and dimensions of the several parts, although not attractive to the general reader, will be interesting to engineers and others having similar works in charge.

A brief history of Iron Bridges has been prepared as an introduction, which it is hoped will prove interesting to all who take an interest in the progress of modern engineering.