

CHAPTER XII.

ROAD LEGISLATION.

Turnpike System.

IT is owing to the turnpike system of road management, that England is so superior to other countries with respect to her public roads.

The Legislature, by giving powers to persons willing to come forward as subscribers, commissioners or trustees, and act together for the purpose of making new roads, or improving old ones, adopted the wisest principle for securing an abundance of good roads.

Had the Legislature refused to incorporate those persons who have executed the duties of turnpike trustees, and given the management of the roads to the Government, or left them wholly with the parishes, this country could never have reached the degree of wealth and prosperity to which it has arrived, for want of proper means of inland communication.

It must be quite clear to every one who has carefully examined this subject, that nothing but leaving the management of the roads to those persons who live in their neighbourhood, would ever have induced the people of England to pay as they now do, a road revenue, arising from turnpike tolls, to the amount of £1,200,000 a-year: for although tolls are in every respect fair and proper for maintaining a road; and although Government, by employing scientific engineers, might have expended the produce of them with greater skill than country gentlemen; the hostility to pay them, if they had been wholly at the disposal of Government, would no doubt have prevented the making of useful roads,