

Adam Smith says, " Good roads, canals, and navigable rivers, by diminishing the expense of carriage, put the remote parts of a country, nearly on a level with those in the neighbourhood of a town ; they are upon that account the greatest of all improvements."

The establishing generally, throughout a Country, of perfect roads, is an object of no small importance in regard to public economy. In proportion as roads are level and hard, there will be a saving of horse labour ; fewer horses will be required ; they will last longer and a cheaper description of horse may be employed ; less food will be consumed and fewer servants will be wanted. In consequence of this reduction of expense, the charges for travelling will be lowered, and also the rates for the carriage of goods.

The first attempt to put the roads into order occurred when the turnpike system was introduced. The ancient method employed to mend roads in England, until after the restoration of King Charles 2d, was by a pound rate in the respective Counties on the landholders ; and by the supplying of carts and horses of parishes for a limited number of days. But when, after the last named period, commerce was become so generally increased, and in consequence thereof, wheel carriages and pack horses, were so extremely multiplied, the first turnpike road was established by law (the 16 Charles 2d, cap. 1, anno 1653) for taking toll of all but foot passengers on the northern road, through Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire ; which road was then become very bad, by means of the great loads of barley and malt, &c., brought weekly to Ware in waggons and carts, and from thence conveyed by water to London.