

for the difference in extent. As to foreign trade, surely no shire but Middlesex will compare with one that has the city of Bristol to boast of; not to mention the coasting trade in the little ports of Bridgewater and Minhead.

We then entered Wiltshire, the northern part of which is full of pleasant risings, and watered with clear streams. It was once overspread with woods, which are now in a manner quite destroyed. The soil of this part of the country being clay, is consequently troublesome sometimes to travellers; but here is a great variety of delightful prospects, to make them amends. And my tutor told me, that a good author of their own made this remark of Wiltshire: "That an ox, left to himself, would, of all England, choose to live in the north of this county, a sheep in the south part of it, and a man in the middle between both; as partaking the pleasure of the plain, and the plenty of the deep country." The soil of the vale is very fruitful, and affords great quantity of as good cheese as any in England; and though that of the hills is in some places chalky, and barren enough, yet its cheapness makes it beneficial to the neighbouring farmers. I have been told on the spot, that on the downs betwixt Sandy-lane and Marlborough, and between the Devizes and Salisbury, hundreds of acres have been rented at a groat an acre per annum. But the numerous flocks of sheep fed there turn much more to the profit of the proprietors. The abundance of wool which these sheep produce, invited the inhabitants to fall very much into the clothing trade; and the best broad cloths, both white and dyed, in England, are made in the west and north parts of this county, and indeed, in the south and east parts too, but not in such quantities.

Fuel is not very plenty in this county, which has no coal pits, nor indeed much wood: 'Tis productive, however, of all sorts of grain, especially wheat.

From Wiltshire we departed for Hampshire or Hantshire, by some called the county of Southampton. This is the county where I saw, what my tutor had before told me, the tract of land, called New Forest, which was enlarged by William the Conqueror at the destruction of several towns and villages, and thirty-six parishes, being computed fifty miles in compass; and became remarkable for the death of two of his sons and a grandson, who lost their lives strangely in this forest.

The air of this country is most pure and piercing, especially the downs, of which there is a ridge that runs almost athwart it, and affords plenty of game. The soil is various as to its fertility, the hilly parts being barren, like other downs, and fit only for sheep; but the lower grounds are fruitful in corn and herbage. It produces great quantities of all manner of grain, particularly wheat and barley, with which it supplies the flourishing markets of Farnham, Basingstoke, and Reading; and their teams of horses, many of which are fit for the best coach in the kingdom, shew the wealth of the farmer. The arable ground, though very stony, is fruitful; for the stones lie loose upon the soil: and those who are well skilled in agriculture affirm, that they keep it warm, and that therefore the taking them away would do more hurt than good. This county is particularly famous for its honey, with which they make most excellent mead and metheglin. Hampshire bacon is allowed by all to be the best in England, the swine being supplied with acorns in plenty, from the New Forest, and other woods, in which they are suffered to run at large: And the delicacy of their flesh is attributed to their not being pent up in styes. Kersey and cloth are made here; and though not in so great plenty as in Wiltshire, Somersetshire, and Gloucestershire, yet there is enough made, not only for home consumption, but for a foreign trade. Its sea-coasts furnish oysters, lobsters, and other salt water fish. And indeed, both for profit and pleasure, there is not a more inviting county in Great Britain.