

The air is generally temperate ; but near the sea and the Thames, among the hundreds, it is moist ; and the inhabitants are subject to agues. It abounds with corn, cattle, wood, and wild fowl ; and the north parts of it, especially about Saffron-Walden, produce great quantities of saffron ; the best in the world : The soil in some places thereabouts being so rich, that after three crops of saffron it yields good barley, for near twenty years together, without dunging. In other parts it produces hops.

It is particularly observed of this county, that, generally speaking, the soil is best where the air is worst, and *è contra* ; for the parts next to the sea and the Thames among the fenny hundreds, which are so aguish, abound with rich pastures and corn lands ; whereas the inland parts, though healthy, are many of them gravelly and sandy, and not so good either for corn or grass, but more productive of furze, broom, brakes ; yet there are others of clay and loam soils, which bear excellent corn and pasturage. No county affords provisions of all sorts in greater plenty than this, both by land and water, for the supply not only of its own inhabitants, but of the city of London. Many good and serviceable horses are bred in the marshes. Abundance of fat oxen and sheep are also brought from thence to their markets ; and corn is weekly sent up to that city in great quantities. Great dairies of cows are also kept here, which bring forth calves admired for the whiteness and delicacy of their flesh, insomuch that, As good as an Essex calf, is a common proverb, with the citizens, to denote what they like, as is the other saying, As valiant as an Essex lion, to ridicule what they despise.

About forty-five miles north-east of London, in this county, is carried on the great manufacture of Colchester baize, so famous throughout Spain, Portugal, and their American plantations ; which are brought to London in waggons containing eighty or ninety hundred weight each, drawn with six horses only ; the roads being so very hard and level. N. B. The Essex farmers buy lean calves at Smithfield market, London, and having fattened them, bring them to the same place to sell again.

Hertfordshire is an inland county, and abounds in grass, wood, and corn fields, covered with loose stones. As there is little or no manufacture in this shire, which is full of malsters, millers, dealers in corn, &c. so their trade would be inconsiderable, was it not for its being every way a great thoroughfare, and for its neighbourhood to London, which makes the chief market towns to be much frequented, for the sale of wheat, barley, and all sorts of grain, not only the growth of this, but several other counties. Wheat, barley and malt are its chief commodities. And the barley of Hertfordshire is so much prized in London, that many hundred quarters are sold by that name in a year, of which not a grain was ever sown in this county.

From Hertfordshire we travelled into Bedfordshire, which we found to be a fruitful country ; especially the north parts, which yield plentiful crops of plump, white, and strong barley, which, made into malt, is frequently sold in London, and other parts, for that of Hertfordshire. It has forests and parks well stored with deer, fat pastures with cattle, produces great quantities of butter and cheese, with fuller's earth, and woad for dying, and has plenty of poultry. Its chief manufactures are bone-lace, and straw-hats.

The woad, for which this county is famous, is the plant with which the ancient Britons used to dye their bodies, that they might appear the more terrible to their enemies ; but rather, as some think, to preserve them from the inclemency of the weather. It is cultivated here after this manner : it is sown every year, and the old woad, except what they save for seed, is plucked up. The beginning of March is the