

WILTSHIRE

Wiltshire is an inland county, which contains 260,000 people. There is a great deal of chalk in it, and the surface of a large part of this is very bare of trees, and produces little besides short grass. This part of the county is called Salisbury Plain, and a great many sheep are fed upon it. The Northern portion is more thickly wooded, and in some parts very fine pigs are produced.

Some years ago there was a considerable quantity of carpet and cloth made in this county, particularly in the town of Wilton. But these manufactures have of late fallen off, and most of the carpet and cloth we use, is now made in the North of England.

The capital of Wiltshire is the city of Salisbury, which contains about 13,000 inhabitants. The Cathedral is a very beautiful building, and the spire is the highest in England. It was built in the reign of King Henry the Third.

Nearly close to Salisbury there is a very curious place, called Old Sarum. It is a low mound of earth, surrounded by a bank. It was once a Roman fortress, and in it the old Cathedral stood. But in consequence of the captain and the soldiers who kept it annoying the Bishop and Clergy, it was determined to erect the new one in its present situation.

The city of Salisbury is famous for the manufacture of knives, scissors, and other cutlery. It is said that the water of the place is particularly good for the tempering of steel.

The most wonderful things in the county are the two great druidical temples of Abury, or Avebury, and Stonehenge. The temple of Abury is the more extensive of the two, but the stones are much smaller, and there is not nearly so much of it remaining. Stonehenge is the most interesting monument of the kind in the world. It consists of very large stones, which were formerly placed in two circles, one within the other, cross stones being laid upon the tops of others placed upright, so as to unite them. The greater number of the stones are of a white sandstone, such as is found on the Marlborough Downs, about twelve miles off; but a few are of granite and black marble. They are rudely squared, and are fitted together by what carpenters call a mortice and tenon. Stonehenge stands near the middle of Salisbury Plain.

