



Pigot & Co. 1822

Directory Description of Wiltshire



This county is situated in the province of Canterbury, in the diocese of Salisbury, and contains 29 hundreds, one city, 15 boroughs, and 10 other market-towns. On the north and west side of it lies Gloucestershire; its western boundary is Somersetshire; Dorsetshire confines its southern extremity; and Hampshire and Berkshire enclose it on the east. Its extreme length is 54 miles, and breadth 34, and its area measures about 878,000 acres.

The air of Wiltshire like that of other counties, is various, according to the different parts of it, but on the whole it is agreeable and salubrious. On the downs and higher parts, it is sharp and clear; in the valleys mild, even in winter. Throughout the county, in a north-east direction, runs the chalk ridge, spreading in large high plains, called the Wiltshire downs. These downs, in the southern part called Salisbury plain, the surface consists a kind of chalky loam of various depth. There are also some very singular veins of sand, which run through this district; the western and northern parts principally consist of a rich tract of vale land.

Over the extensive wilds, called Salisbury plain, roam immense flocks of sheep, who with their shepherds, are the sole tenants, if the bustard, the wheatear, and a few other solitary birds be excepted, which avoid the haunts of men. The summer stock of sheep on these plains and downs, is computed to be 500,000; the wool, which in course forms a considerable article of trade, is moderately fine. On the borders of Dorsetshire many cows are kept, and much butter is made; the north-western part is famous for its cheese, second only to that of Cheshire. The manufacturing part of the county is on the Somersetshire borders, the principal article worked is superfine broad cloth; besides which there are manufacturers of Serges, and other woollen stuff; of dowlas, bed-ticking, gloves, &c.

The rivers of this county are the Lower Avon; the Thames or Isis; the Cole; the Kennet; the Bourne; the Upper Avon; the Willey; and the Nadder.