

## The Island of Jersey.



THE sunniest spot in the British Isles. Don't be sceptical, reader, the reports of the Meteorological Council prove that Jersey enjoys more sunshine than any other station in Great Britain. It is the largest of the Channel Islands, having an area of 45 square miles, and situated within the bay formed by the projecting coast lines of Normandy and Brittany. The northern coast presents a rugged and somewhat wild appearance, the cliffs rising to a height of 300 feet above the level of the sea; from these heights down to the south coast is a gradual slope to the sea, the tableland being crossed by numerous valleys and, I was going to say, "mountains," as they are really mountains in miniature. Here we have rivers, lakes, and waterfalls, all of course in proportion to the size of the Island, but so beautifully arranged and giving such a diversity of scenery that it has to be seen before even a faint notion of its beauty can be formed, and the modest opinion of the writer is that nowhere else is such a variety of landscape to be found comprised in so small a space, no, and more than that, not in any space at all the wide world over. The Island is divided into twelve Parishes and contains one town only, St. Helier, on the south-west coast, open to the sea, and sheltered on the north and east by hills. The population is nearly 55,000, and of this number 29,000 are in St. Helier.

Before speaking of the occupation of the inhabitants it may not be out of place to take a glance into the history of Jersey. Little is known of it beyond tradition till the time of the Norman Conquest except that Christianity was introduced into the Island by St. Magliore in 565, and a church built within three centuries of that date is still extant and in a good state of preservation. The walls and ceiling are covered with paintings representing scenes in the life of Jesus Christ. In 1066 when the Duke of Normandy was crowned King of England, Jersey, by transition, became a dependency of the British Crown and has been ever since. Think of this, reader, and if ever you felt inclined to think that so small a place could be of no importance, remember that the natives of this isle had something to do with shaping the destinies of the greatest nation of the world as they were among Duke William's trusty warriors and fought with him at Hastings.

In the sixteenth century the French attempted to land on the north coast, but the natives, assembling on the cliffs above, rolled down boulders and stones upon them with very good effect, thus preventing their landing.

In 1779, the Duke of Nassau made an attempt at landing, but was repulsed.

In 1781, the French under Baron Rullecourt succeeded in effecting a landing, and marched from the east coast where they landed at St. Helier. Here they were met by the "Royal Jersey Militia," led by Major Pierson, and after a spirited encounter were defeated and driven back to their boats. Many, however, lost their lives among the rocks which abound around the coast.

Since that time the inhabitants have lived at peace with mankind in general, enjoying special privileges from the English Government as a reward for their loyalty. Not least of their privileges is the enjoyment of "Home Rule." The laws are enacted by the "States" or Parliament, composed of 43 or 44 members, representing the different Parishes. These laws may be enforced for three years only, when they have to be re-enacted, or to become permanent they must receive the sanction of Her Majesty in Council.

While considering the history it will be interesting to note a few

buildings connected with the tales of the past. Mont Orgueil Castle, built on a rock at the south east of the Island, is a splendid specimen of Norman architecture in the way of fortresses. It dates back from the tenth century, but some parts of it show that the site was fortified before that time and indicate by their structure that the Romans had something to do with the building up of this noble pile. Within these walls Charles II. was entertained during his exile, and here, though under somewhat different circumstances, William Pryme, the Paritan, wrote his "Divine Meditations." In the centre of the Castle is a well of Roman origin, 100 feet deep, cut out of solid rock.

Another Castle, named after Queen Elizabeth, in whose reign it was built, stands in St. Aubin's Bay about half a mile from the harbour of St. Helier. It was the residence of Sir Walter Raleigh when he was Governor of the Island, and is now used as a station for a regiment of artillery.

Along the east, south and west coasts are a number of "Martello Towers" at intervals of a mile or so. These are circular towers built for purposes of protection. Druidical remains have been found in several parts of the Island. We might go on indefinitely enumerating places of historical interest but both time and space forbid.

The chief occupation is agriculture. Farms average from about 20 to 25 acres in size, but they will carry as much stock as is generally kept upon a Canadian farm of 100 acres. Every available foot of land is cultivated and crops follow one another in quick succession. Potatoes form the main crop. Last season, that is between the months of May and July, the sum realized by their export was over a million and a half dollars. There are no manufactures of any importance, being so near to England goods may be imported at a very low figure, which defies competition, but the town of St. Helier presents all the appearance of a thrifty, wide awake business centre. The shops are such as would be a credit to even London or New York. Some idea of the business they do may be realized when we consider that 50,000 visitors come annually from England and France to spend part of the summer in the delightful climate of this Isle of the Sea, which is free from extremes of heat, and enjoy the refreshing and invigorating sea breezes that make life worth living.

Now, as to the Flora of this "Flower garden of Europe." There are no less than 622 native varieties of wild flowers and ferns; 51 kinds of trees and shrubs; 626 of flowering plants; 183 of lichens; 195 of sea weeds; and 82 of grasses. The plants of Japan, China, Central America, etc., are grown outside air flourish in sub-tropical confusion. On the west coast are found plants which do not grow anywhere else in Europe except in Spain. This is accounted for by the strong winds blowing across the Atlantic Ocean from the Bay of Biscay, bringing the seeds of these plants which fall into congenial soil and take root. Oranges and lemons are grown outside, though not to any great extent, but the fact that they can be grown goes far to prove that the climate is an enjoyable one. Grapes and figs, more common, especially the latter, which are found in almost every garden.

As for the cattle, they are so well known that it is not necessary to say much about them. They are both pretty and profitable, and have again and again proved their right to the title of "Monarchs of the Dairy." They are very docile and tractable, and may be led to and from pasture by little children of four or five years of age with perfect safety. It may be well to state that the Jersey farmer never turns his cows out to pasture free, but always tethers them, and someone has to be in attendance every two or three hours to move the pegs two or three feet closer to the grass, according to its quality and abundance.

Concluding this somewhat inadequate description, I would say to you, reader, if ever you have the opportunity of crossing the Atlantic, don't fail to pay a visit to this little land which is in a literal sense flowing with milk and honey, and where a man may dwell under the shadow of his own vine and fig tree.

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