

**A FLORA OF THE ISLAND OF JERSEY,
WITH A LIST OF THE PLANTS OF THE
CHANNEL ISLANDS IN GENERAL, AND
REMARKS UPON THEIR DISTRIBUTION
AND GEOGRAPHICAL AFFINITIES**

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INTRODUCTION.

I. Jersey, the largest of the Channel Islands, lies in the Bay of St. Malo, off the north-west coast of France, in lat. $49^{\circ} 15'$ N. and long. $2^{\circ} 10'$ W. The distance from the French coast is about 18 miles on the east and about 30 on the south.

The shape is a rough parallelogram, the sides of which are indented on the east, south, and west by sandy bays. The length (from east to west) is about 11 miles, and the breadth about $5\frac{1}{2}$. The longest diagonal (N.W. to S.E.) measures about 13 miles. The total land area is about 45 square miles, and the acreage 28,717 (64,613 vergées). The general character of the surface is a flat plateau, sloping gently from north to south, and intersected by a number of nearly parallel valleys which run right across the island, so that almost the whole of the drainage finds its way to the south coast. The north coast is harbourless and fringed with high cliffs and precipitous rocks. The great sandy waste of St. Ouen's Bay occupies almost the whole of the west side. On the south and east the sandy bays of St. Brelade's, St. Aubin's, St. Clement's, and Grouville follow one another in the order named. In St. Aubin's, St. Clement's, and Grouville Bays a tract of low-lying alluvial land, formerly marshy but now drained and cultivated, intervenes between the edge of the plateau and the sea. In the south-west there is a remarkable accumulation of blown sand known as the Quenvais. There is no hill* in Jersey, as distinguished from the cliffs on the coast and the sides of the valleys. The streams are necessarily mere rivulets, and the only piece of water of any importance is St. Ouen's Pond.

* The highest points in the Island are Mont Mado and the cliffs to the west of Bouley Bay, each 473 feet.

From a physical point of view, Jersey is a part of France. Like the other Channel Islands, it is merely an excrescence upon a submerged platform of rocks which extends under water from the French coast. An elevation of land to the extent of about 30 fathoms would fill up most of the Bay of St. Malo, and the surrounding sea is so full of rocks and reefs (some of them, Les Îles Chausey, Les Minquiers and the Écréhos Rocks, of considerable extent) as to render the navigation difficult and dangerous in hazy weather. At present the sea appears to be gaining very slowly upon the land. Without accepting the venerable fable that the Bishop of Coutances was once able to cross the silver streak that then divided Jersey from France on a plank, it may safely be assumed that the Island was once much larger than it is now. The fall of the tide, which is sometimes over 40 feet, lays bare enormous stretches of wild, desolate rocks which were once land; and at various points of the coast detached rocks may be seen which are covered with the same superficial deposits as the nearest shore, and are obviously nothing but broken fragments of the land, and not rocks which have emerged from the sea. Again, there are traces of a "submerged forest" in St. Ouen's Bay, near L'Étac, and the character of the peat deposits on the low-lying land seems to suggest a derivation from a larger land area than the present. On the other hand, the presence of raised beaches at various levels seems to prove that in still earlier times the island was buried more deeply than it is now in the sea.*

The rocks of Jersey consist almost entirely of granite (or syenite), metamorphic schists and porphyries, with an ancient conglomerate in the north-east. It is doubtful whether there is any unaltered sedimentary rock in the Island. Chalk and limestone are entirely absent. Inequalities in the original surface are largely filled up with superficial quaternary deposits of brick clay or brick earth, generally unstratified. In some of the low-lying districts (*e.g.*, under St. Helier's) there are deposits of peat, gravel, and stiff blue clay.

* The best account of the geology is contained in "Géologie de Jersey," by Father C. Noury, S.J. Cf. also Dr. A. Dunlop's paper "On the Superficial Deposits of Jersey and Guernsey," in the Transactions of the Guernsey Society of Natural Science for 1897.

The granitic and metamorphic rocks are all of enormous antiquity, none later than the Cambrian formation. The whole of the Secondary and Tertiary series are entirely unrepresented. A few remains of animals have been found in the quaternary deposits, but fossils can hardly be said to exist. On the other hand, to the mineralogist

Noury, p. 185.

Noury, p. 4. "L'Ile de Jersey offre dans le voisinage immédiat du Cotentin un massif éruptif du plus haut intérêt et riche en types vraiment exceptionnels."

II. The climate of Jersey is mild and equable. Summer merges almost imperceptibly into autumn, and autumn into winter, and cold weather is rare before the New Year. Severe frosts are very unusual, and snow seldom lies long upon the ground. The coldest months are January and February, the warmest July and August. The number of hours of bright sunshine is large,* but the air is always laden with moisture and often feels more chilly than the thermometer readings would seem to indicate.

Since 1894 meteorological observations have been regularly and scientifically made at the Observatory connected with the Maison St. Louis by Father M. Dechevrens, S.J. (see next page). These may be regarded as absolutely reliable, but eight years is a short period to take as a basis for meteorological means, and the amount of rainfall in the appended table is certainly too low, for 1899 and 1901 were exceptionally dry years.

These figures are taken from the yearly *résumé* published in the *Bulletins Annuels* of the *Société Jersiaise*. A paper on the climate of Jersey by the Rev. H. W. Yorke was printed in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society* (vol. xxv. No. 111) in 1899. His conclusions were based on data derived from several different sources, covering a far larger space of time (1844 to 1898), and may usefully be compared with the table already given. He gives the following yearly means:—

Barometer ... 29.977 inches	Sunshine..... 1930 hours
Shade Temperature ... 52°	Rainfall..... 84 inches
Coldest month (Jan.)... 42°	Rainy days 190
Warmest month (Aug.) 68°	Hail or snow30
Frost (in air) 13 days	Humidity 82
Frost on grass 49 days	Temperature of sea 54°

* 1930 on an average of 16 years. (Rev. H. W. Yorke, *Quarterly Journal of Meteorological Society*, July, 1899.)

METEOROLOGICAL DATA FOR JERSEY.

	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	Mean of 8 years.
Barometer—Mean	30.000	29.946	30.078	30.003	30.270	30.020	30.046	29.984	30.043
Air Temperature (Fahr.)—									
Mean	51.6	50.6	51.3	52.0	52.6	52.9	52.3	51.3	51.8
Max.	84.0	86.0	82.2	83.5	86.3	88.0	89.8	86.9	86
Min.	13.5	14.9	29.1	27.9	31.3	25.0	30.0	21.6	28.9
Humidity	84	78.5	80	81	79	76	77	76	78.9
Rain in inches	85.060	81.434	29.772	32.931	27.216	23.898	30.237	23.903	29.418
Days on which rain fell ...	200	181	132	132	170	153	184	169	176
" " snow " ...	4	18	5	9	8	7	8	20	10
Mean of January	40.9	38.3	42.5	40.0	44.3	48.0	44.7	42.1	42.3
Mean of July	60.8	60.4	63.1	62.0	61.2	63.5	64.6	63.7	62.4

III. For at least two centuries Jersey has been a much-cultivated island. As early as Dr. Falle's day there was "little barren ground," and "not a wood, hardly a thicket or coppice"; and though he and later writers speak of the thickly wooded appearance of the country, they all ascribe it to the trees which bordered every hedgerow, and to the small size of the fields. In the eighteenth century the chief production was cider, and the land was largely occupied with orchards. Falle* thought that no country produced so much cider, not even Normandy, though little had been made in the time of William the Third. In 1808 more cider was still made than in any other equal area in Europe.† In 1833 it was still the chief export,‡ but potatoes were becoming important. Now the orchards have to a very large extent disappeared, and most of the land is devoted to the cultivation of the profitable but prosaic early potato, to make room for which much rough land has been doubtless broken up, and many wooded hillsides deprived of their covering of trees. After the potatoes, which are dug in May and June, a crop of "roots" of some kind generally follows. In the sandy fields in low-lying parts of the coast, lucerne and clover have been sown for at least a century and a half, and with the seed have been introduced several Continental plants which have established themselves and become naturalised, e.g., *Centaurea paniculata* and *Scabiosa maritima*.

Much of the waste land which once existed has been brought under cultivation within the last fifty years, and some of the most interesting Jersey plants have been destroyed. St. Peter's and St. Lawrence Marshes have been drained; so has the marshy tract which once existed between St. Helier's and Samarès. The whole character of the sandy bays is being gradually altered by the sea-walls which are being built in various parts. The Bay of St. Aubin's, a great part of which was within living memory much as Nature made it, is now occupied with an almost unbroken succession of houses, and an imposing Promenade. The process will doubtless continue.

At the present time Jersey presents six different kinds of station, and each, to a very large extent, has its own flora.

(a) Sandy beaches, sand-dunes, and sandy fields near the sea.

* Falle's "Cæsarea," p. 154.

† Lyte's "Jersey," p. 32.

‡ Inglis, "Channel Islands," p. 123.