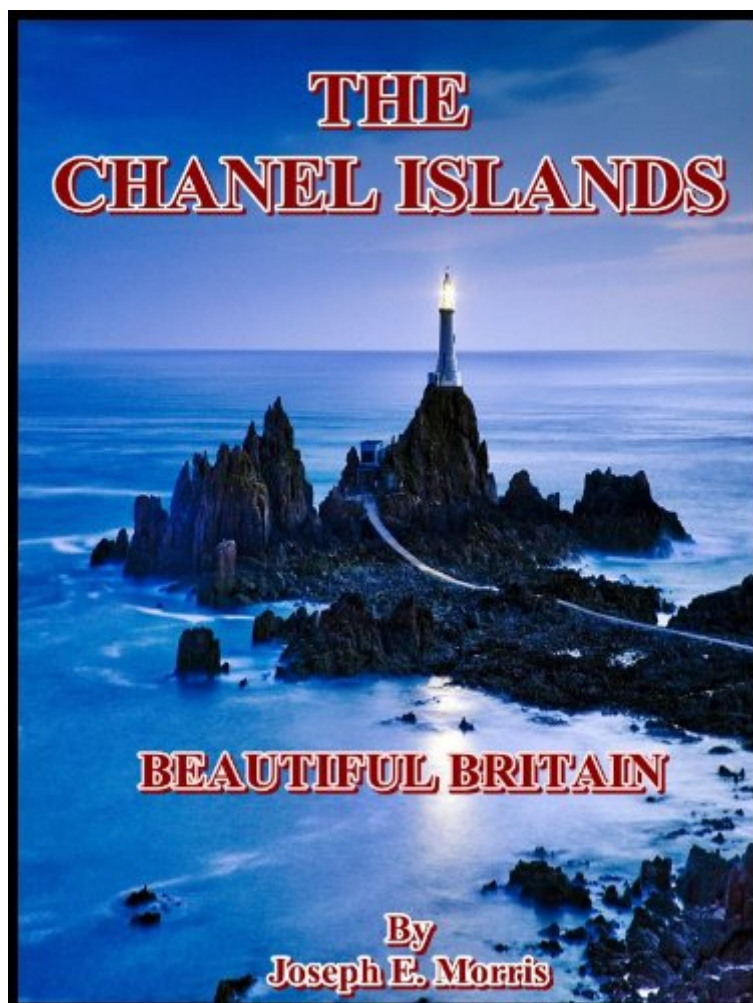


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The Channel Islands



Synopsis

If on a fine day we take our stand on one of the terraces, or battlements, of Mont Orgueil Castle— and there is hardly a pleasanter spot in Jersey in which to idle away a sunny summer afternoon— we shall realize more completely than geography books can tell us that the Channel Islands really constitute the last remnants of the ancient Norman dukedom that still belong to the English Crown. For there, across the water, not more than twenty miles away, and stretching from north of Carteret far southwards towards Granville and Mont St. Michel, is the long white line of the Norman coast itself— on a clear day it is even possible to make out the tall, twin spires of Coutances, half a dozen miles inland, crowning, like Lincoln or Ely, their far-seen hill. No part of France, it is true, approaches so closely to Jersey as Cap de la Hague (the extreme north-west point of the Cotentin) approaches to the north-east corner of Alderney. Still, under certain atmospheric conditions— such, for example, as Wordsworth experienced when he wrote his fine sonnet headed Near Dover, September, 1802— the "span of waters"— hardly greater than the Straits of Dover themselves— really seems almost to shrink to the dimensions of "a lake or river bright and fair." Contrast with this proximity the long stretches of open sea that separate these islands from Weymouth or Southampton, and we begin to realize how, physically at any rate, Jersey is more properly France than England:

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