

OF FLORIDA.



FLORIDA is bounded on the North-East, with *Virginia*; on the East, with *Mare del Noort*; on the South, and some part of the West, with the Gulf of *Mexico*; on the rest of the West, with part of *New Galicia*, and some Countreys hitherto not discovered. Extended from the River of *Palme* in the 25th. degree of *Latitude*, to *Rio de Seco* in the 34th. which evidently speaketh it for a Countrey of large dimensions.

It was first discovered by the *English* under the conduct of *Sebastian Cabot*, Anno 1497. afterwards better searched into by *John de Ponce*, a *Spaniard*, who took possession of it in the name of that King, Anno 1527. and by him called *Florida*, either because he landed there upon Palm-Sunday, which the *Spaniards* call *Pascua de Flores*, or *Pascua Florida*; or else quia *Florida erat Regio*, by reason of that fresh verdure and flourishing estate in which he found it. But by the *Natives* it is said to be called *Taquasa*.

This Countrey lying Parallel to *Castile* in *Spain*, is said to be of the same temper both for Air and Soyl, but that it is abundantly more fruitfull: the best of the ground not being here worn out by continual Tillage, as perhaps it may be in the other. For here they have great abundance of *Maize* (the natural bread-Corn of the Countrey) which they sow twice a year, viz. *March* and *June* and reap in the third month after, laying it in some publick Barns, and thence distribute it to the necessities of particular persons. Well stored with several sorts of Fruit, as *Mulberries*, *Cherries*, *Chestnuts*, *Grapes* and *Pistons* of both excellent taste and colour: Beasts wilde, and tame, of all kinds which these Countreys yield; and of like sorts of Fowl. The Woods and Forrests full of the largest Oakes, and the softest Cedars; some Cypress-Trees, and Bays, of a large proportion: with great plenty of that Wood which the *Inhabitants* call *Pavane*, and the *French* name *Sassafras*, the bark whereof is Medicinal against some Diseases, and another Tree which we call *Esquime*, affirmed to be a Sovereign & present Remedy for the *French* Distease. It is also said to be enriched with some Mines of Gold, and Silver; neglected by the *Natives* at the coming of the *Spaniards*, and *French*, put a price upon them: and to have in it *Emeralds* of great worth and beauty, with many *Turquoises* and Pearls. Others report that all the Gold and silver which they have amongst them, came from some ships which had been wracked upon those Coasts: contrary whereunto it is said by the *Natives*, that in the Hills which they call *Apalati*, there are found great Vens of a reddish Metal, which the *French* concluded to be Gold, though they wanted time and opportunity to search into them.

The people are of an *Olive colour*, great stature, and well proportioned; naked, except their Privities, which they hide with the skins of Stags: their arms and knees stained with divers paintings, not to be washed off; their hair black, and hanging down as low as their thighs. Cunning they be, and excellent in the Arts of dissimulation. So stomachfull, that they do naturally love War and Revenge, inasmuch that they are continually in War with one, or other. They are crafty also and very intelligent, as appeareth by the answer they gave to *Ferdinando Soto*, a *Spaniard*, who was here amongst them, An. 1594. For when he went to persuade the people that he was the son of God, and came to teach them the Law: Nor so, replied a *Floridan*, for God never bad: thee to kill and slay, and work all kinde of mischief against us. The Women when their Husbands are dead, use to cut off their hair close to their ears, and strew it on his Sepulchre: and cannot marry again, till their hair be grown long enough to cover their shoulders. *Hermaphrodites* are here also in great plenty, whom they use as beasts to carry their luggage, and put them to all kinde of drudgery. They have all a grosse belief of the Souls immortality, but are otherwise Idolaters.

Mountains this Countrey hath not many, as being generally plain, and level; the chiefest, those called *Apalati* before mentioned, supposed by the Inhabitants to be rich in Mines of Gold. Rivers of most note. 1. *Rio Seco*. 2. *Rio Grande*. 3. *Serravahi*: the two first named so by the *Spaniards*, and the last by the *Natives*. 4. *Gavurna*. 5. *Ligeia*. 6. *Axona*. 7. *Seguana*, and 8. *Charente*, so called by the *French*, according to the names of the best Rivers in *France*: both *French* and *Spaniards* having severally and successively the possession it. Here are also 9. *Rio de Flores*, or the River of Flowers; 10. *Rio de Neives*, or the River of Snow; and 11. *Rio de Spirito Santo*, or the River of the Holy Ghost; all of them falling into the Bay of *Mexico*. A particular description of these Rivers, their rise, course, and greatnesse, I finde not in any of my Authors. Onely *Mercator* telleth us of a twelfth River, called *Perte Riale*, reckoned the chiefest of this Countrey, the mouth whereof is three miles broad: where it openeth into the Sea betwixt two Promontories, the one towards the West, and the other pointing to the North. Some of these Rivers are affirmed to be haunted with *Crocodiles*, a Creature dangerous alike both by Land and Water.

The Countrey not so well discovered and planted hitherto, as to be divided into Provinces, is commonly distributed into several Tribes; as were all Nations of the World at their first Discovery. The principall of these they reckon the *Quevenes*, *Marianes*, *Canagadi*, *Camoni*, *Avavares*, and *Malicones*, the *Susulas*, *Quitones*, and other names not usual unto us of *Europe*: though these more passable than many which have gone before: mollified perhaps by the *French*, and *Spaniards*, and not presented to us in their natural roughnesse; all governed by their *Paracussi* or several Chiefs, and those at deadly Feuds, and continual Wars with one another. Some have adventured on the names of particular Provinces, as