

Correspondence.

A WINTER IN FLORIDA.

Having now arrived in Terra Florida, as named by Juan Ponce de Leon, a few words about it may be in order. The peninsula is about 450 miles in length, with an average width of 130 miles. The country is flat and intersected with lakes and rivers, the Back-bone Ridge which extends from the mountains of Georgia to the Gulf of Mexico, runs through middle Florida at a height of 150 to 200 feet, and gradually slopes off on the east and west to the sea level. The soil is mainly loose and sandy, the top strata being vegetable mould, then from 3 to 6 feet of party-coloured sand resting on a formation of clay, shells, and small pebbles known as Coquina rock. Between the ridge and the Atlantic Coast lies a tract of low, sandy land, some forty miles in width, with a slight descent to the north, this flat area is drained by the St. John River, which rises in a cypress swamp and slowly flows northward for over 400 miles, then turns at right angles to the east and enters the Atlantic at 30 degrees north latitude, it is tidal for over 100 miles, and so little fall has this sluggish stream, that at Lake Harney, 250 miles from its mouth, it is only about four feet above tide level.

This river with its tributary the Ocklawaha is the great highway from north to south, and along its banks are many of the best health resorts of Florida. A few invalids push on as I have done to the Indian River Country, to get above the frost line and into the pine lands that fringe the west side of that river. I write this from Desoto Grove, the homestead of the late James Paterson, Esq., of Toronto. It is situate on the east side of Banana River, distant about 6 miles from Cape Canaveral Lighthouse. The grove is well placed on a rich hummock; the strip of land between the river and the Atlantic Coast

is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide. There are some 160 trees in full bearing, and a large number coming on. The loss of a new and commodious house by fire last June was a heavy trial to Mr. Paterson. The large lagoon of salt water known as Indian River, is here divided into two parts by Merritt's Island; this lagoon stretches along the coast to Jupiter Inlet, a distance of over 150 miles. South and west of Indian River the land is very low, rarely more than 6 feet above the sea level.

The surface is muddy and often covered with water, with reeds and rank grass growing on it, a resort for cranes, pelicans, duck, aligators and snakes; during some months of the year the miasma from these lowlands is sickening, and chills and fevers the daily routine of the Florida "crackers."

To the south lies Lake Okeechobee, a dreary waste of water drained from the Everglades, a remarkable form of vegetable life; they cover an area of over 4,000 square miles, and appear to be a vast prairie of sawgrass springing from a soil of mud and quicksand. During the whole year the water is from 2 to 4 feet deep, here and there rise small islands, covered with a rank growth of semi-tropical plants and trees, but the appearance of the glades is very monotonous, and few hunters and tourists find their way into the recesses. The climate on the coast east of the Everglades is said to be superb, and tables of mortality based on statistics of the U. S. army, show the most equable temperature of the coast line,—but the want of accommodation or facilities for reaching that part of the coast prevents visitors from testing its advantages.

The Indian River climate is highly extolled for its freshness and salubrity, and to those invalids who are able to "rough it" and live on "hog and hominy" as a staple product, it may be advantageous; the natives say "they