

Any European state, except Great Britain, would at once improve their acquisitions, taken and purchased by an immense quantity of blood and treasure, and turn them to the public benefit. At the end of the late war, the ministry, and their adherents, held up East and West Florida before the eyes of the public, as greatly superior to those West-India islands, which Spain and France were to receive back in exchange. The islands however are rich, and annually add to the wealth and strength of those respective powers: while East Florida, is the only place of that extensive and valuable tract ceded to us, that we have any way improved; and this is little more than a negative good to our other colonies, in preventing their negroes from sheltering in that dreary country, under the protection of Fort St. Augustine. The province is a large peninsula, consisting chiefly of sandy barrens; level four ground, abounding with tufts; here and there is some light mixt land; but a number of low swamps, with very unwholesome water in general. In proportion as it is cleared, and a free circulation of air is produced, to dispel the noxious vapours that float over the surface of this low country, it may become more healthful; though any where out of the influence of the sea air, the inhabitants will be liable to fevers and agues. The favourable accounts our military officers gave of the pure wholesome air of St. Augustine, are very just, when they compare it with that of the sand burning Pensacola, and the low stagnated Mobile: St. Augustine stands on a pleasant hill, at the conflux of two salt water rivers, overlooking the land from three angles of the castle, and down the sound, to the ocean. Their relation of the natural advantages of this country, could extend no farther than their marches reached. I formerly went volunteer, about six hundred miles through the country, with a great body of Indians against this place; and we ranged the woods to a great extent. The tracts we did not reach, we got full information of, by several of the Muskohge then with us, who had a thorough knowledge, on account of the long continued excursions they made through the country in quest of the Florida Indians; and even after they drove them into the islands of Florida, to live on fish, among clouds of musketoes. The method these Indians took to keep off those tormenting insects, as their safety would not allow them to make a fire, left the smoke should guide their watchful enemies to surprise them, was, by anointing their bodies with rank fish oil, mixed with the juice or ashes of indigo. This perfume, and its effluvia, kept off from them every kind of insect.