

Florida—The Treasure Land

By
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A thousand miles of silvered shore.
An hundred thousand treasure isles
—That sun-laved line broad sparkling aisles,
Deep-steeped in wealth of Faery store;—
—Has Florida.

And countless lakes—each one a gem—
That flash their riches to the sun.
A myriad rivers gleaming run—
The Springs of Youth in each of them
—In Florida.

To East—a mythic crystal Sea:
To West—a Gulf of molten gold;—
And both a wealth of life enfold—
And ancient tales of mystery—
—'Round Florida.

And for her heart—an opal Lake;—
—(By Indian name—”the mighty sea”)—

...A Croesus Empire ther will be—
Where league-ward rolls an em'rald brake
—In Florida.

Ten thousand thousand fattened kine
Upon her rolling ranges graze;—
'Bove buried wealth of Earth's young days:—
The store-house rich of fossil mine,
—'Neath Florida.

The fairest mountains that arise
Pile peaks and crags in glowing change—
Like an enchanted fairy range—
Loom near;—then fade in tripic skies
—'Bove Florida.

The sweetest brath the fairies know;—
And perfumed deep of spices rare—
Borne from far countries whence they fare;—
Their stolen wealth—the trade-winds blow
—On Florida.

And here the flowers have caught the glow
Of glorious golden sunsets rare:—
Hibiscus—Poinciana—flare!—

Such splendid wealth what land can show
— Like Florida.

And Midas' spirit rides the breeze:—
...When it has passed... 'midst glossy leaves
Bright golden loads break em'rald trees—
Like Apples of Hesperides—
— Through Florida.

Along the diamond-glist'ning strand,
Where palm trees wave their froned arms;
Are ghosts that hear their faint alarms—
And guard the wealth of pirate band
— 'Neath Florida.

These men of Kidd's,— and Caesar— Black,
Who lawless roamed the India seas;
Lie,— bones by chests— 'neath tropic trees;—
For all their treasure they brought back
— To Florida.

Far fathoms deep, the turquoise blue
So clear as clearest crystal lies.—
Encrusted there—in coral guise—
Is gold as rich as Midas knew
— Off Florida.

As though their greater art to show:—
O'er buried shapes of Spanish skill,
The coral builders work their will
In jewelled forms:—that wondrous grow
—'Long Florida.

And this is how it came to be
That of all lands—their richest store,
Is part of thee.—In days of Yore—
The Fairies reigned on land and sea
—And Florida.

Of wealth of every plane and kind—
Of every gift that Nature bore—
Each Fay was Lord!—Each had his special store
(—And some gifts then you could not find
—In Florida.)

But some were good:—and some were bad.
Some—'tis sure—were Pirate Fays!
These lived those prehistoric days
Where—e'en their worst were always glad:—
—In Florida.

And from this Land they fared away—
So wild and free—In lawless quest.
(—And all the wise will know the rest!—)
'Tis said—they brought each captured Fay
—To Florida.

And here they made those luckless Fays:—
(—By dint of threat that fairies make,
When they force and break—and treasures take—)
leave their richest wealth: Their Fairest Ways—
—In Florida.