

OF EAST FLORIDA.

Extract from Ellicott's Journal published in 1814.

"East Florida is but little better than a wilderness; the soil is not superior to that of West Florida, & none of its navigable waters rising in the United States, being from its present situation, well calculated to give security to the commerce between the Atlantic and the Western States; and may be considered one of the main keys to the trade of the Gulph of Mexico. On the west side, it affords two remarkably fine harbors; one is known by the name of Hillsborough bay, (Bay Tompa, or Spiritu Santa) the latitude is stated to be 27 32 north, and the longitude 83 west of Greenwich. It is very capacious, and will admit any vessel over the bar not drawing more than 24 feet water. The other harbor is called by the spaniards Bocca Grande; and by the English Charlotte Harbor; stated to be in latitude 36 43 north, and 82 30 west longitude. It has fifteen feet water on the bar, and good anchorage within.

Exclusive of those harbors, there are several others, well calculated for coasting vessels, that draw not more than seven feet of water. The Florida Keys & Reef likewise furnish a great number of harbors proper for coasting vessels, and advantageous stations for cruizers; particularly that of Key Biscano, situated at the northern entrance of the Reef, and capable of commanding the whole coasting trade which should take that passage. This being the entrance of the Reef, and the most proper place to depart from in sailing northwardly, would be one of the most eligible positions on the whole coast, and perhaps on the continent, for a light house. But, instead of any advantage being derived, either to the U. States, or his Catholic Majesty, from these favourable situations they serve as dens and hiding places for the privateers and picaroons of the Bahama Islands, by which the trade of both nations has suffered immensely in spoliations; and, extraordinary as it may appear, it is no less true, that nearly the whole coast of East Florida, so far as maritime possession gives a right, is under the dominion of the Bahama Islands; the coast and islands being uninhabited, even by a single solitary settler, from Appalacy almost round to St. Augustine; from which the inhabitants of the Bahama Islands cut and carry off, without interruption, as much of the valuable ship timber as they find necessary or convenient."
