

real* and the *Cocos crispa* of the northern coast. Porous limestone (of the Jura formation) appeared from time to time in the plain.

Batabano was then a poor village, and its church had been completed only a few years previously. The Sienea begins at the distance of half a league from the village; it is a tract of marshy soil, extending from the Laguna de Cortez as far as the mouth of the Rio Xagua, on a length of sixty leagues from west to east. At Batabano it is believed that in those regions the sea continues to gain upon the land, and that the oceanic irruption was particularly remarkable at the period of the great upheaving which took place at the end of the eighteenth century, when the tobacco mills disappeared, and the Rio Chorrera changed its course. Nothing can be more gloomy than the aspect of these marshes around Batabano. Not a shrub breaks the monotony of the prospect: a few stunted trunks of palm-trees rise like broken masts, amidst great tufts of *Juncus* and *Irides*. As we staid only one night at Batabano, I regretted much that I was unable to obtain precise information relative to the two species of crocodiles which infest the Sienea. The inhabitants give to one of these animals the name of cayman, to the other that of crocodile; or, as they say commonly in Spain, of *cocodrilo*. They assured us that the latter has most agility, and measures most in height: his snout is more pointed than that of the cayman, and they are never found together. The crocodile is very courageous, and is said to climb into boats when he can find a support for his tail. He frequently wanders to the distance of a league from the Rio Cauto and the marshy coast of Xagua, to devour the pigs on the islands. This animal is sometimes fifteen feet long, and will, it is said, pursue a man on horseback, like the wolves in Europe; while the animals exclusively called caymans at Batabano, are so timid, that people bathe without apprehension in places where they live in bands. These peculiarities, and the name of *cocodrilo*, given at the island of Cuba, to the most dangerous of the carnivorous reptiles, appear to me to indicate a different species from the great animals of the Orinoco, Rio Magdalena, and Saint Domingo. In other parts of the Spanish

* *Oreodoxa regia*.