

Batabano an important point of communication between the island of Cuba and the coast of Venezuela. The port is within a bay bounded by Punta Gorda on the east, and by Punta de Salinas on the west: but this bay is itself only the upper or concave end of a great gulf measuring nearly fourteen leagues from south to north, and along an extent of fifty leagues (between the Laguna de Cortez and the Cayo de Piedras) inclosed by an incalculable number of flats and chains of rocks. One great island only, of which the superficies is more than four times the dimensions of that of Martinique, with mountains crowned with majestic pines, rises amidst this labyrinth. This is the island of Pinos, called by Columbus *El Evangelista*, and by some mariners of the sixteenth century, the *Isla de Santa Maria*. It is celebrated for its mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*) which is an important article of commerce. We sailed E.S.E., taking the passage of Don Cristoval, to reach the rocky island of Cayo de Piedras, and to clear the archipelago, which the Spanish pilots, in the early times of the conquest, designated by the names of Gardens and Bowers (*Jardines y Jardinillos*). The Queen's Gardens, properly so called, are nearer Cape Cruz, and are separated from the archipelago by an open sea thirty-five leagues broad. Columbus gave them the name they bear, in 1494, when, on his second voyage, he struggled during fifty-eight days with the winds and currents between the island of Pinos and the eastern cape of Cuba. He describes the islands of this archipelago as verdant, full of trees and pleasant* (*verdes, llenos de arboledas, y graciosos*).

* There exists great geographical confusion, even at the Havannah, in reference to the ancient denominations of the *Jardines del Rey* and *Jardines de la Reyna*. In the description of the island of Cuba, given in the *Mercurio Americano*, and in the *Historia Natural de la Isla de Cuba*, published at the Havannah by Don Antonio Lopez Gomez, the two groups are placed on the southern coast of the island. Lopez says that the *Jardines del Rey* extend from the Laguna de Cortez to Bahia de Xagua; but it is historically certain that the governor Diego Velasquez gave his name to the western part of the chain of rocks of the Old Channel, between Cayo Frances and Le Monillo, on the northern coast of the island of Cuba. The *Jardines de la Reyna*, situated between Cabo Cruz and the port of the Trinity, are in no manner connected with the *Jardines* and *Jardinillos* of the *Isla de Pinos*. Between the two groups of the chain of rocks are the flats (*placeres*) of La Paz and Xagua.