



CODRINGTON COLLEGE, BARBADOS.

THE WEST INDIES.

II.—DIOCESE OF BARBADOS AND WINDWARD ISLANDS.

HILSON, in his article on Barbados in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," tells us that that island is about the size of the Isle of Wight, being twenty-one miles in length and about fourteen miles and a half in its broadest part, and is largely under cultivation—30,000 acres of sugar cane alone being cut annually. It is almost encircled by coral reefs, which extend in some parts for miles into the sea, and on its surface presents every variety of scenery—hill and valley, smooth table land and rugged rocks. For eight months in the year the climate, owing to the sea breezes, is kept delightfully cool for a tropical country. Bridgetown, the capital and port of the island, has a population of about 23,000. As early as the year 1666 it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt on a more substantial scale. The Government buildings are a handsome pile close to the sea.

In 1605 a crew of Englishmen landed on this island and cut upon the bark of a tree its dedication to King James, erecting at the same time a cross as a memorial of the event, and Barbados (a word of uncertain derivation) has remained ever since a possession of the British crown. From the beginning it has enjoyed representative government and the full measure of English freedom. The earliest English settlement of the island dates from 1625, when

thirty settlers laid the foundation of a town which they called Jamestown, after the reigning sovereign, and chose one Capt. Deane as their governor. An important trade was founded in indigo, cotton, wool, tobacco, ginger and aloes; but the sugar cane, when once commenced, was found to be the most lucrative.

During the Commonwealth prisoners of war were sometimes sent to Barbados and were employed in labour. Throughout the eighteenth century the island quietly progressed, with occasional military enterprise which shewed that it was not destitute of the ordinary martial spirit of the age. In 1761 it entered enthusiastically into a project for breaking completely the power of the French in the West Indies. It is in connection with this that we read of the names of Admiral Rodney and General Monckton. The island suffered great privations during the war between England and America, and was obliged to depend upon the generosity of the mother land for provisions. It suffered still more from internal disputes, its misery being intensified by a hurricane which wrought much destruction, and the home Parliament in 1782 voted £80,000 for its relief.

In the year 1805 Barbados received a flying visit from Lord Nelson, as he was in search of a French fleet. In October of the same year the battle of Trafalgar was won, and Bridgetown soon after had its Trafalgar Square and its Nelson statue. Shortly after this the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe were re-captured from the French, and when the war ended in 1810 the British were supreme in that region.