



NATIVE CABIN IN GRANTSTOWN, NASSAU.

WEST INDIES.

4.—THE DIOCESE OF NASSAU.

WE have seen that originally two dioceses were formed simultaneously (in 1824) in the West Indies, viz: those of Jamaica and Barbados; and that from the latter sprang, in 1842, two separate dioceses, namely Antigua to the north, and Guiana to the south, on the mainland of South America. Thus the islands, with the mainland territories of British Guiana and British Honduras, were divided into four sees, and so continued for a period of nineteen years, when our attention is called to the old Diocese of Jamaica. For thirty-seven years this diocese continued its work, as originally constituted, the bishop having charge of the Bahama Islands, lying beyond the large Spanish Island of Cuba to the north, and the distant mainland territory of British Honduras to the west.

A glance at the map will shew that the Bahama Islands form a distinct group by themselves, and so in civil matters they are regarded, having a government and parliament of their own. This archipelago of the Bahamas is of much greater extent than one would imagine, stretching as it does almost from San Domingo to Florida, a distance of about six hundred miles and comprising twenty-nine islands, 661 keys (or "cays" as the word is now sometimes spelt) and 2,387 rocks, of all sizes. The most important of these islands is New Providence,

probably because it contains a very fine harbour, not because it is the largest, for it is only twenty-one miles long and seven broad, while the great Bahama and others are very much larger, some of them being a hundred miles long. The chief town of New Providence is Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas. Here lives the English Governor, and here, since 1861, has lived an English bishop, a new diocese having been formed that year from that of Jamaica, the Rt. Rev. C. Caulfield, D.D., being the first bishop.

The ordinary fruits and produce of tropical climates are to be found in these islands; but it is a remarkable fact that, except in the island of Andros, no streams of running water are to be found in the whole group. The inhabitants have to depend upon wells, which seem to be connected in some way with the sea, as they rise and fall with the tide. The aborigines of these islands were a quiet credulous people, whom the Spaniards treated with much heartless cruelty. The islands were first visited by the English in 1629, and a settlement formed in New Providence. From this they were expelled by the Spaniards in 1641, but again assumed possession in 1667. Again expelled, New Providence became the home of notorious pirates, making matters so intolerable that the English merchants petitioned the Crown to take possession and restore order. This was done by sending out Captain Woods Rogers in 1718, who thus became first Crown Governor. From this time a fair amount of progress marked the Bahamas.

Bishop Caulfield remained bishop for only