



PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA (DIOCESE JAMAICA).

## THE WEST INDIES

### I.—DIOCESE OF JAMAICA.

**T**HE attention of Canadians is at this time specially drawn to the West Indies, on account of the trade relations which it is hoped will be established between the two countries. It may be well, perhaps, to set forth some of the history, more particularly from a Church point of view, of this interesting part of the world. James Anthony Froude, in his excellent book on "The English in West Indies," from which many of the illustrations accompanying these articles are taken, has given us somewhat of a painful picture of the beautiful, tropical islands, largely because they seem to be slipping slowly, yet surely, into the possession of the black's, who once were the slaves who did the white man's bidding. From his standpoint, a vigorous policy on the part of the Imperial Government, on the model of that pursued in the East Indies, would save these valuable islands from the dark fate which otherwise seems to await them. Let us hope that some such plan as this will be pursued ere it is too late, to remedy the evil which seems imminent.

The West Indies are situated between the Atlantic Ocean on the one side, and the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico on the other, in about latitude 20° north and 75° west longitude. The name was given by Columbus, who thought

that through this archipelago he had found a new route to India; but the islands are sometimes known as the Antilles, a designation, however, which belongs more properly to a portion of them. Antilla was an imaginary country, occupying a vague situation in some of the old geographies.

At first the islands, as they were discovered, were claimed by Spain, who carried on an active trade amongst them. Part of this trade consisted in capturing the natives, a quiet, inoffensive people, and selling them into slavery beyond the seas; a mode of procedure certainly unbecoming a country which bore the name of Christian. By degrees other countries, attracted by fabulous accounts of gold, which was said to exist there in vast quantities, turned their attention to it, and English, French, Dutch and Spanish adventurers struggled for the mastery in these supposed El Dorado waters, which became the scene of notorious piracy.

In the year 1670, Spain gave up her claim to the exclusive possessions of the islands, and some thirty years afterwards, sugar-cane began to be cultivated with marvellous success, and built up for the country a substantial prosperity. Convicts, for many years were sent out from England to the West Indies, and made to work under the hot, blazing sun like slaves.

In 1655, a British force attempted to capture Hayti and Jamaica, failing as to the former, but succeeding as to the latter; the rich and beauti-