

Jamaica: 'A Botanist's Paradise'

Kingston, Jamaica—It is morning on this tropical island and the sun shines hot through the half-closed wooden shutters. An impatient moment and these are thrown open. Now only the Spanish grill-work separates us from the grey-chimned thrust whose song was our alarm clock. He is perched on a low branch of the almond tree just outside our window.

THE TERRACED garden is a blaze of color. It is rimmed with tropical trees, aloes, poinciana, coccinea palm, lime and breadfruit.

Periwinkle, rose, sweet alyssum, nasturtium and salvia are familiar friends among a bewildering array of tropical plants. Of these, hibiscus and bougainvillea with their rich reds, corals and purples are the most striking.

A sharp drop-off beyond the third terrace leads to the valley below. High wooded mountains make a back drop for the sand liveoaks, sclagmellas, mosses and lycpodiums.

lies the city of Kingston. It occupies a plain stretching out to the sea, blue and calm in the morning light.

WE WERE EARLY in our way to Hartwar Gap in the Blue mountains, following a narrow road which climbed upward with many a hairpin turn.

Everywhere was the great forest with the light feathery green of bamboo; the dark shiny green-gloss of mango and breadfruit and many other tropical trees.

THE WAYSIDE flowers were most abundant. Here we noted some of our northern bruse and garden plants like lantana, heliotrope, solens and begonia, growing wild. Ferns were everywhere, and as we reached Hartwar Gap (4050 ft. high), we found the rocks covered with an amazing display of liverworts, sclagmellas, mosses and lycpodiums.

All this was truly a botanist's paradise. At the top of our climb we ate a picnic lunch while we enjoyed the view over the mountains and out beyond Kingston to the sea.

Our trip back was equally rewarding since we caught a glimpse of a wild pig and saw a mongoose speeding across the road into the undergrowth. The latter was imported from India to kill the cane rats.

ON ANOTHER DAY we drove to Ocho Rios on the North shore. Our way led through "Spanish Town," the island's first capital with its old brick buildings. En route we passed by acres of sugarcane, bananas and coconuts. These are the three most important crops on the island.

We also stopped at the site of the largest tree these eyes have ever seen. It is an ancient silk-cotton tree (Ciebe), and kapok is made from the cotton-like fibers attached to its seeds.

EN ROUTE AT Ewarton, we went through a factory which extracts bauxite from the native red clay and processes it to make a white powder, called alumina. From this substance aluminum is made.

Continuing on we noted many signs of Jamaica's past, including moss-covered Spanish walls and ancient "great houses" built by the first British plantation owners. Well on toward the north shore is Fern Hill, a deep spectacular canyon carved by an extinct stream. Its sides are festooned with an amazing display from tiny spleenworts and small polypodes to the great tree ferns, remnants of our ancient coal forests.

WE FOUND Ocho Rios to be a lively tourist center. Here we lunched in one of the many large hotels and admired the town's wide

expanse of sandy beach. On our way home via Antonio Bay we enjoyed Eastleton Gardens with its fine display of tropical plants including the cannon ball tree and its enormous fruits.

There is scant space here to tell of our visit to Kingston's famous straw market, or of our trip through the cane processing plant at Inniswood Estate where we saw cane juice reduced to sugar and sugar made into rum, or of the famous Royal Botanic garden at nearby Hope with its orchid house, aquarium and zoo, or of the morning we spent at one of the outdoor markets where colorful Jamaican women sell their equally colorful fruits and vegetables.

At some future time when Spring is not knocking on our door we hope to write more about this enchanted island called Jamaica.

Local Best Sellers

RAISE HIGH THE ROOF BEAM CARPENTERS and SEYMOUR, an Introduction—J. D. Salinger

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GRANDMOTHER AND THE PRIESTS—Taylor Caldwell

THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT—Hedda Hopper
FEMINE MYSTIQUE—Betty Friedan
HAPPINESS IS A WARM PUPPY—Charles Schulz

Local People Take Part in Bach Program

An "all Bach" program will be performed in the Detroit Institute of Arts Lecture Hall on May 7 by the Cantata Academy. Arthur Stephan, conductor of the Birmingham Chamber Orchestra will begin at 8:30 p.m.

The opening number will be the Brandenburg Concerto #5 in D Major with Miss Shirley Mathews, harpsicord, from the Baltimore Symphony (formerly a resident of Birmingham), Gordon Staples, violin and Irvin Gilman, flute, both from the Detroit Symphony. Miss Edith Yoder, 421 Madison, Birmingham, and William Seaback, 1611 Hazel, Birmingham, are members of the Cantata Academy, chorus.

The Cantata Academy chorus is

4-D THE BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC May 2, 1963
a group of selected voices and was organized in spring, 1962 by conductor Arthur Stephan. The choir had its Debut concert in May '62 with an "a cappella" concert in the Ravenel Gallery of Fine Arts. Since then the chorus had concert engagements with the WSU-Alumnae Club of Birmingham and the Ravenel Gallery. Out of town concerts are planned along with local engagements for the next season.

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Painting

(Continued from 1-D)

don't "do" anything for the painting you can always color scheme the room to the painting.)

A BOOM with one or more good paintings seems popular.

People always search, sometimes unconsciously, for a human image to relate to. They find castles in clouds, figures in rock formations and faces in flowers.

Most home furnishings are beautifully machine-constructed pieces but lack the warmth and individuality of a hand done art object. People are more affected than they realize by paintings. Curiously, if you move your paintings, people often think you have moved the furnishings in your rooms. They are responding to the human element in paintings.

This is not to say that paintings must have recognizable subject matter. They need only to project the human searchings and probings of the artist to interest people. The more complex the strivings of the painting, the longer the viewer ponders the import. (In decorator terms you have a "conversation piece.")

YOUR FIRST painting may have everything wrong with it, unshaped subject matter, poorly done technically, badly framed—but it is still a step in the right direction. As you look at it and compare it with other paintings, your discrimination sharpens. You can see its faults and good points and know better how to choose the next one.

Most galleries will allow you to bring a painting home on approval to see how it looks in a different environment. There are also picture rental programs. You may wish to try a daring painting that you are hesitant about buying.

Occasionally a painting just doesn't look right at home, but more often it gives your room new sparkle and life; you wonder what you ever did without it.

MOST PAINTINGS mellow with exposure. As you pass your painting daily and study it new and then, you will feel the renewed warmth and companionship generated by owning your own painting. Move it occasionally so it does not become so familiar you don't see it. Soon you'll discover the painting you have chosen has become your friend.

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