

She loves people...!

INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA
WEST INDIA REFERENCE LIBRARY

WHEN the ship bringing to Jamaica for the first time Mrs. Norman Manley, the young wife of a young Jamaican barrister, sailed into Kingston harbour over 30 years ago, and Mrs. Manley saw the reflection of the skies and the mountains in the calm waters of the harbour, it is understandable that she said quite breathlessly "This is it, I have come home."

Ever since she could remember she had been hearing stories of Jamaica. Her "exiled" mother, a Jamaican living in England, always entertained her children with tales of Jamaica as if to deaden the pain of her longing — anancy stories, stories of the warmth and sunshine, of the birds singing in the early morning, the friendliness of the people who were always dancing, singing and laughing. These things appealed to a young girl who liked fun and gaiety and was herself inclined to rebel against staid respectability.

First rebellion

● Born and brought up in England, one of the three daughters of the Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Swithenbank. Mrs. Manley as a child developed a strong resistance to discipline, a resistance without which her artistic talent might have remained latent. Her first rebellion was at boarding school at West Cornwall College.

Her passionate love of horses made her harness the dormitory beds and encourage the other girls to join her in "riding horses" creating quite a disturbance in the dormitory after lights out. Next morning in face of the brewing storm, Edna went off and spent the day at the moors, hiding from punishment but at the same time enjoying nature which she loves. Within a couple of days she returned to school—as a day scholar.

The effect of her second resistance was more far-reaching. Her parents were determined that young Edna should be trained as a school-teacher. Edna was equally determined that she wanted to be an artist, but in those days Art, the Theatre and similar professions were not considered suitable for young ladies, particularly daughters of clergymen.

The result of this opposition was that, at the age of 16, Edna ran away from home to London where she worked during the daytime and went to Art School at night. The wisdom of her decision is borne out by the fact that in Mrs. Manley we have one of the world's finest sculptresses and artists whose life has been dedicated to her art and to developing culture and art in the community. She has given several one-man shows in London and here in Kingston, and her paintings hang in galleries in England, the United States, Canada and in Ireland.



MR. AND MRS. MANLEY AND THEIR DOG TUNDEH, in the pine-grove at "Drumblair"

tional Party staged a march through the streets of the city. Mr. Manley developed a bad throat and was unable to address the 10,000 persons gathered at the Kingston Race Course. Mrs. Manley was asked to speak instead. Those who heard her that night speak of the inspiration which that address gave them although they were unaware of the nervous strain under which it was made.

Her political and social duties take Mrs. Manley round the island frequently, visiting Girls and Women's Clubs and she always comes away with intense admiration for Jamaica's women who carry their responsibilities and burdens with such courage. "They are wonderful", she says and for that reason she does everything she possibly can to help particularly young girls who need training for the future. Her Club where young girls of East St. Andrew learn to sew and embroider, she still supervises and helps organise. One has to talk to her only for a few

minutes to discover how intense is her devotion to the cause of children and women.

Simplicity

● Mrs. Manley's most conspicuous virtue is her simplicity—simplicity in her manner, in her way of life, in the clothes she wears. There is also in her an unquenchable spirit of adventure which was undoubtedly responsible for her marriage the day before Mr. Manley sat for his finals at Oxford, and the subsequent journey on two bicycles two weeks later to spend a delayed honeymoon in a tent in the New Forest, cycling over two days to get there.

Mrs. Manley is a competent swimmer. For many years she lived at Hay Moor, a village near Lands End in Cornwall, in close proximity to the sea. Swimming and horseback riding are her favourite forms of relaxation. When she be-

comes tense the day before an election, a long ride helps to soothe her nerves.

Mrs. Manley, the grandmother, likes too to be with her grand-children Norman, Roy and Rachel. Rachel lives with her, and when the three children get together at "Drumblair," the Manley's residence, is a supremely happy moment for Mrs. Manley.

She loves people and loves to entertain them. The doors of her home are often thrown open for large, enjoyable parties.

The atmosphere and character of "Drumblair," are tribute to the personality of Mrs. Manley. It is impossible to be there without being aware of the forceful presence of the charming wife of the Chief Minister, unmistakable in any crowd with her attractive snow-white hair.