

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed April 15, 1930.

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WIND PSYCHOLOGY

A few years ago Dorothy Scarborough published a powerful and unpleasant novel entitled "The Wind," which pictured the havoc wrought on the sensitive soul of a woman by the winds of Texas, and about the same time Norman Douglas gave us "South Wind," which exhibits in a whimsical way the strange effects of the Mediterranean sirocco on human minds and morals.

The scene of the latter tale is an imaginary island off the African coast, and its events take place during a persistent spell of the famous hot, dry wind from the south. Under its influence the bishop witnesses a murder and says nothing about it; a naturally conscientious artist fakes antiques; and a discriminating dealer buys them, pretending to be deceived. Everybody's latent defects of character are brought forth, but nobody is scandalized by the seemingly inevitable lapses of his neighbors. The wind is the scapegoat that explains everything. Then comes a refreshing breeze from the north, and "normalcy" reigns anew.

Of course Douglas did not discover the evil magic wrought by the sirocco, for that is proverbial in Mediterranean lands. The parching foehn of the Alps is notorious for its effects on people's nerves. The similar zonda of Argentina is reputed to cause temporary insanity and drive people to suicide.

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