

Norman Douglas: *The Willing Exile*

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TO TALK of exile writers is to cover an extraordinary range of experience, for even when one has excluded those who have observed poignantly on their wanderings but have returned to their spiritual and physical homes to record those observations, like André Gide and Graham Greene and the classic nineteenth-century scientific wanderers, there remains the fundamental division between those one can call outcasts and those one can call expatriates.

The division seemed especially apparent to me when, in studying Norman Douglas' writings, I read what at first seemed to me a surprising passage in which he approved of Ouida's referring to Oscar Wilde as a *cabotin* (roughly, a ham actor), though he immediately qualified that slighting remark by condemning the judicial manoeuvres that had caused Wilde's downfall and the deterioration after release from prison that brought about his relatively early death. On the surface there seemed so much in common between Douglas and Wilde that such a clear expression of dissociation was at first surprising. Clearly it was not because of the fear of being linked with the homosexual fraternity that Wilde then symbolically represented, since Douglas was a known pederast and made no serious effort to conceal the fact, though he adroitly evaded its consequences. While Wilde foolishly stayed in England to face the music after the collapse of his case against the Marquis of Queensbury, Douglas — caught in very similar tangles — "bolted" no less than four times; on two of these occasions it was because of his involvement with boys.

Here, it seems to me, we have the essential clue. Wilde and Douglas were both practicing pederasts, and according to the

law as it existed in their times — 1890's in Wilde's case and the period between 1916 and 1936 in Douglas' case — were both culpable. Indeed, given the fact that they were both attracted to minors, they might even be hypothetically culpable under such laws as touch on homosexual behaviour in the 1980's. It is their differing reactions to similar predicaments that are germane to the present discussion. Wilde, after his libel action failed, had sufficient time to escape to France; his friends urged him to do so; the public prosecutor even allowed a reasonable interval to elapse before he issued the warrant for Wilde's arrest and set the detectives on the trail. In other words, the scene in the Cadogan Hotel that has become part of literary history and even poetry (celebrated by the incumbent laureate, Sir John Betjeman, in impeccable Georgian verses) was unnecessary except in terms of Wilde's personal myth — reinforced by the urgings of Sperenza and of Willie Wilde — which told him he must stay on whatever the consequences. Wilde really stayed on because the very world that was rejecting him — the world of the Mayfair salons and the country houses ("the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable") — was the world he had wished to inhabit and to dominate. He could not willingly leave that world; he was expelled by public clamour at the time of his trial, and later, when he was released and went to live out his exile's existence in France, by ostracism. He knew a return to England was impossible, since despite the loyalty of a few individuals like the admirable Ada Leverson, he could never have re-established that position as the lion of the salons (Ouida's *cabotin*) which was so important to him; he was wounded even in France by the hostility of English visitors whom he would normally have regarded with contempt, while to gain what publication he achieved after his release from prison he had to rely on the seedy pornographer, Leonard Smithers, of whom he said: "He is rather dreadful; I suppose many of us are rather dreadful now and do not realize to what we have come."

The difference between Wilde and Douglas can be found in that last sentence. Wilde felt his own degradation. As *De Profundis* demonstrated, on one level he accepted his conviction; he saw it as a fitting punishment for his attempt to gain the protec-

tion of society when his whole life had been based on a systematic defiance of accepted standards. He saw himself at the end, with a mixture of acquiescence and self-pity, in the role of the outcast, and there is little doubt that it was himself rather than the cricket-capped guardsman he had in mind when he wrote that poignant stanza of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, which his friends appropriately engraved on the monument Epstein made for him in Père Lachaise:

Yet all is well: he has but passed
To Life's appointed bourne;
And alien tears will fill for him
Pity's long broken urn,
For his mourners will be outcast men,
And outcasts always mourn.

Wilde saw himself as an outcast, lived his few remaining years as an outcast, and was buried as an outcast by men and veiled women who came furtively to his funeral. That is one of the several personae in which he haunts us even to this day, and it represented in its most eloquently rendered form one of the two principal kinds of exile — the tragic kind.

Norman Douglas could in no way be considered an outcast or a tragic exile, and this reflects in the most obvious way his difference from Wilde, whom he otherwise resembled in many ways, even apart from the pederastic inclinations they shared. Douglas, who spent his life "bolting," as he put it, from one comic scrape to another, never showed any sign of acquiescing in society's condemnation. There was no music seductive enough for Douglas to feel impelled to face it, and nothing delighted him so much as the exercise of jumping bail. He refused society and the state any claim on him; on the other hand he seems never to have pitied himself for the troubles into which the defiance of society sometimes led him.

Undoubtedly one of the reasons for Douglas' persistent non-acceptance of conventional social rules and of any laws that inconvenienced him was the special character of his exile. He did not see himself as an outcast, for there was no community to which he felt enough attachment or loyalty for his casting out from it to affect him emotionally. He was indeed perhaps the

best example among English-speaking writers of the other kind of literary exile: the expatriate. His expatriation, I suggest, was manifest on two levels. He lived by far the greater part of his life away from both the land of his birth, which was the Austrian province of Vorarlberg, and the land of his legal citizenship and his ancestry, which was Scotland. On the other level, he had developed the true wanderer's inclination to agree with Milton that "the mind is its own place," and to find a home wherever the ambient culture for the time being most strongly appealed to him.

The origins of this role of the exile as multiple expatriate which Douglas continued to play to the end of a long life (he lived hard and survived to eighty-four) are to be found in a history that almost destined him to a wanderer's life. He was born in 1862 in a village of the Vorarlberg, that outlying province which, isolated to the west of the great mountain wall of the Arlberg, is itself a land almost exiled from its country of Austria. Douglas' mother was by ancestry half-Scottish and half-German; his father, James Sholto Douglas, was a Scottish cotton miller who had become virtually naturalized in this far corner of the already decaying Austro-Hungarian empire. It was not until after his father died in a mountaineering accident that Norman Douglas, at the age of six, first saw Scotland, and in later years he rarely visited it. For nine years of boyhood he endured an unsatisfying range of English educational approaches (a preparatory school in Staffordshire, private tuition in a Leicestershire vicarage, and low-grade public school training at Uppingham), but it was only in the less insular atmosphere of the Gymnasium at Karlsruhe in Germany that he was happy in his studies; in the six years there — he did not leave until he was twenty — he became an exceptional linguist (adding Latin, Greek, French, Italian and Russian to the English he had learnt in childhood), a good pianist and an accomplished field naturalist in the nineteenth-century tradition; shortly afterwards he was in active correspondence with Alfred Russell Wallace.

Douglas made his first visit to Italy and to an unspoilt Capri in 1888, long before he celebrated the island in literature or even contemplated writing as a career, and though for most of the

next few years (from 1890 to 1894) he lived in Kensington, this was also the period when he visited Greece and the Lipari Islands and formed the attachments to the Mediterranean world and especially to Magna Graecia that were to dominate the rest of his life.

But there were interludes in which his restless nature led him to experience other countries and cultures. He joined the British Foreign Office and from 1894 to 1896 served in St. Petersburg, "evaporating" hurriedly when he got into the first of his notable scrapes, this time a heterosexual one with a lady of the Russian court whose identity is still a matter of speculation. After leaving Russia, he acquired a villa at Posilipo near Naples; restless as ever, he travelled to Tunis (the first of four trips) and to Ceylon, married in 1898 and divorced six years afterwards, and in 1904 moved to Capri. Even before he was married he had shown evidence of homosexual inclinations and now, after his divorce, they began to manifest themselves in pederasty as the Greeks understood it, the love of boys. It was during this period on Capri that the image of Naughty Uncle Norman began to emerge.

Parallel to it emerged the reality of the writer. Douglas was already in his fortieth year when, in 1908, he started to write *Siren Land*, the first of his books, which was published in 1911. Up to this time his writings had been the essays of an accomplished amateur scientist, such as *On the Herpetology of the Grand Duchy of Baden* (he harboured an enduring interest in reptiles) and *On the Darwinian Hypothesis of Natural Selection*, which earned him the respect of professional biologists and showed an inclination towards scientific humanism that was to influence his writings when, in travel books and novels, he turned to the evocation of human characters and the depiction of landscapes.

The scientific essays, born of a passionate observation of the natural environment, were Douglas' apprentice work. *Siren Land* was the book of a man who had already reached the beginning of his prime as a writer; he knew what he wanted to say, and he was eminently aware of how it should be said. It set the tone for all his later work, since it was the testament of a willing expatriate, a celebration of the Graeco-Latin world that henceforward

Douglas would regard as his spiritual homeland. It offered a pattern that was to be repeated in later books, of visually evocative descriptions of landscape, sketches of individuals and incidents that not only evoke persons encountered but also outline the shape of a culture, and historical interludes that often present us with revisionist views of episodes and personalities of the past, like the rehabilitation of the Emperor Tiberius into one of the most modest and clement figures of the ancient world that is one of the more controversial passages of *Siren Land*. And all the time, in the tone and style of the book as well as in the opinions expressed, one is aware of an insistent personality breaking through.

A decade afterwards, in *The London Mercury*, Douglas wrote a long essay on Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, and there he outlined his view of the essential qualities of a good travel writer:

It seems to me that the reader of a good travel-book is entitled not only to an exterior voyage, to descriptions of scenery and so forth, but to an interior, a sentimental or temperamental voyage, which takes place side by side with that outer one; and that the ideal book of the kind offers us, indeed, a triple opportunity of exploration — abroad, into the author's brain, and into our own. The writer should therefore possess a brain worth exploring; some philosophy of life — not necessarily, though by preference, of his own forging — and the courage to proclaim it and put it to the test; he must be naïf and profound, both child and sage.
(*Experiments*, 1925)

At their best, and notably in the earlier works like *Siren Land*, *Fountains in the Sand* (1912) and especially *Old Calabria* (1915), Douglas' own travel books certainly meet these desiderata. The later travel narratives, *Alone* (1921) and *Together* (1923), while they retain the limpidity of style and the classical scholarship with its haunting implications for the modern world that make *Old Calabria* and *Siren Land* still so engaging seventy years after they were written, lack the tension between the subjective and the objective elements that sustained one's interest even in the most erudite passages of *Siren Land* and *Old Calabria*. Similarly, there was a lapsing of the intellectual tension, which even in Douglas' fiction is the most vital element, in the later novels — *They Went* (1920) and *In the Beginning* (1928),

so that in this field *South Wind*, written in the same period as *Old Calabria* and published two years later (in 1917) has remained the book by which Douglas is known to the widest public — a book that has shown an amazing durability as a popular classic.

When one has sorted out Douglas' books, there is perhaps only one out of more than a score that can be dismissed as bad — an uninspired collection of opinionated notes about English and French hypocrisies called *How About Europe* (1930) which Douglas wrote as a kind of political pot boiler after the appearance of a sensational attack on Hindu ways of life, *Mother India*, by an American writer, Katherine Mayo. But even this book has its relevance to the attitudes which Douglas' expatriation fostered.

Douglas defended the Hindus, but his main aim was to attack European hypocrisies. Most of what he says in *How About Europe*, when he is not dredging through newspaper quotations for examples of the perfidy of Albion or Gaul, is related to the themes of his major books, and particularly to the kind of genial hedonism which in *Old Calabria* he attributed to the ancient Ionian philosopher Xenocrates, whose philosophy he summed up as the belief that "happiness consists not only in the possession of human virtues, but in the accomplishment of natural acts." Douglas' definition of "natural acts" was broader than his reputation as a libertine might suggest, for he harboured an unexpected vein of practical and non-pharisaical humanitarianism that is defined in *How About Europe* when he comes to talk about moral busybodies:

A commendable form of meddlesomeness is that of a Howard or a Shaftesbury. One cannot blame Christianity for originating the most discommendable form — that which preoccupies itself with other people's spiritual well-being. It started so far as we are concerned, with Pythagoras, though the Christians, once they began to exist, soon claimed it as a specialty of their own invention.

Pythagoras was Douglas' antique *bête noire*; he saw him as the hypocritical mystagogue who was responsible for the destruction of hedonistic Sybaris and displayed for him an unreserved and — in my view — entirely deserved contempt. But it will seem

curious to most readers of Douglas to find Howard and Shaftesbury among the people he approved, unless they read his eccentric autobiography, *Looking Back* (1934), and learn of his actions during the great Messina earthquake of 1908. Douglas, then in Capri, learnt of the suffering of the survivors, and knew enough about Italy to realize that — then as in more recent natural disasters in that country — “the money filtered through committees, and many families might be starving before they received their share.” So Douglas determined to go personally to the site of the disaster and to give money directly to the victims:

With this end in view, and knowing nearly all the foreigners on the island at that time, I managed to cajole or blackmail most of them into giving something, however little.

During this operation I had occasion to observe, not for the first time, that when it is a question of relieving distress the poorer folk are more generous, relatively speaking, than the wealthy ones.

Nevertheless, it was a rich American woman who topped off Douglas' collection by giving him twice as much as the other Capri foreigners combined, and he went off with a friend to seek out personally the people who needed help and to thrust the money into their hands in defiance of committees and bureaucrats.

The significance of the incident is not merely anecdotal. It is, I suggest, particularly germane to the theme of this essay, since it shows the extent to which Douglas was by this time identifying with the people of southern Italy, not only in the way they accepted the joys of life, but also in the way they endured its sorrows. This the Italians realized, to the extent that the people of Capri regarded him as one of their own and made him one of their few honorary citizens; there is an extraordinary description by Bryher, quoted by Mark Holloway in his *Norman Douglas* (1976), of his return to the island in 1921 after having been several years away:

The news of his arrival spread from mouth to mouth. I have never seen a political leader enjoy so great a triumph. Men offered him wine, women with babies in their arms rushed up so that he might touch them, the children brought him flowers. I slipped away as he walked slowly through a crowd of several

hundred people, shouting jokes in ribald Italian, kissing equally the small boys and girls and patting the babies as if they were kittens. The *signore* had deigned to return to his kingdom and I am sure that they believed that the crops would be abundant and the cisterns full of water as a result.

In the opening lines of *Old Calabria*, when he is talking of the Apulian town of Lucera at the start of his journey through the mountains and plains of Italy's foot, Douglas says that "the character is there, if one could but seize it, for every place has its genius." And it is clear — if one compares *Fountains in the Sand*, good as it is, with *Old Calabria* and *Siren Land* and even *South Wind* — that the local genii whose characters Douglas most easily seized upon were of places in southern Italy. *Fountains in the Sand* evokes the Tunisian scene with great visual conviction; it makes one feel in an almost physical way the discomforts of desert travel; it discourses intelligently on the peculiar flaws of French colonialism; it sharply characterizes the people encountered and projects the author's personality through his reactions to people and to experiences. Yet, while in this book Douglas shows himself very much *in* this bizarre marginal world through which he travels, one never has the sense that he is *of* it. There is never the sense of naturalization into a land, a culture, a tradition, of which one is so often aware in the Italian books. "It is good," Douglas said of East Africa in recollection, "to live in strange places, in places where, a day's march distant, there are districts marked as 'unexplored' on the map." But he could not live *for long* in such places; they remained "strange" to him, and Italy — one feels — never was.

Here we return in another way to the difference between the exile as outcast and the exile as expatriate. The exile as outcast never really finds a new home. He longs to return to the places he has been forced to leave, and if he cannot, his life is irremediably unhappy. The exile as expatriate, already an alien in his own country, finds a new home which he prefers to that he has abandoned, as Henry James and T. S. Eliot and Joseph Conrad did in England. In a similar way Douglas found his true and new home in those parts of Italy that bear indelibly the mark of the Greek beginnings of their civilization. There is something fated,

something even of deliberation (however unconscious), in his departures from Russia in 1896, from England in 1917, from his native Vorarlberg in 1936, departures precipitated by scandals that prevented his return. "Burn your boats!" he remarked when he considered his past in *Looking Back*. "This has ever been my system in times of stress." He burnt his boats even in Florence when in 1937 he was forced to flee after he had departed temporarily from pederastic adventuring and had become involved with a small girl instead of a small boy. But, significantly, he burnt no boats in southern Italy. Capri was always safe for him to return to like a homecoming prince, and even though in 1934 he lamented that it had become "too cosmopolitan, too meretricious," he went back there to die.

Thinking of his childhood, Douglas once said, "Some few of us are born centrifugal. The head-system and team-life, congenial to many, went against my grain" (*Looking Back*). And centrifugal, in terms of Anglo-Saxon society and its mores, he remained. Yet so far as southern Italy is concerned one might almost call him centripetal, returning always to that still centre of his prime which I think was most eloquently and figuratively localized, not in *Old Calabria*, which offers one the panorama of a whole region and its traditions, nor in *South Wind*, which proceeds by fictional indirection, but in one of the earlier passages of that indispensable Douglas source book, *Looking Back*, where he describes the spot on Capri — a boulder-strewn tract leading to a pine-grove — that became for a long time his image of refuge, the heart of the island *patria chica* to which his attachment ran so much deeper than honorary citizenship:

As to that secluded grove of pines — what an inspiring place to spend the evening of one's days! One of many attractions was its inaccessibility. And yet, I thought, once a path has been constructed across that wilderness of boulders and through a rocky spur of the hill, where a gate should be placed, you are within a few minutes' walk of the piazza, the centre of such life as there is. Go to that centre, if you wish to see fellow-creatures; lock your gate, and wall up that fissure in the rock higher up, and only a bird can reach you. An aerial situation; you are posed between earth and sky. Here, if anywhere, one might still find peace from the world; here one might gather together the wreck

of one's belongings and dream away the hours, drinking the heady perfume of the pines and listening to that Theocritean melody of theirs, which is not truly a whisper, but an almost inaudible breathing: summer music. Here, if anywhere, one might —

Douglas bought the Petrara in 1907 and hoped to build a villa there in which he might live out his life. He failed to raise enough money for the building, and eventually circumstances forced him to sell the pine wood. But he never forgot the place, just as he never departed, in mind, far from the Italy of the Greeks. It is perhaps evidence of the intensity of the feeling he retained for them that he wrote his best Italian books — *Old Calabria* and *South Wind* — during the period between 1912 and 1916 when he was living not very happily in England and working for the *English Review*; the writing was a kind of surrogate presence.

Even more than *Siren Land*, which celebrated the relatively small island which was the heart of Douglas' Italy, *Old Calabria* stands as his real testament to the land he made his home. Once, reviewing a book of travel sketches by Lowes Dickinson in the early 1920's, Douglas came very near to defining the virtues of his own narratives of journeys when he remarked: "That capacity of assimilating the ideas of strange folk, of remaining true to his own standard while unravelling an alien mentality with sympathetic discernment — that gift of insight is the Englishman's prerogative" (*Experiments*). Whether or not that is true in a general sense, or true even of Lowes Dickinson, it was certainly true of Douglas, for one is perpetually surprised in *Old Calabria*, following his progress from Apulia down to the toe-point of Reggio de Calabria, by the way he seems to enter the minds of the people he encounters even when he is forced into confrontations with them through their obstinacy or their failure to understand his needs; there is a triumph of empathy in the way he projects a collective portrait of a people, as well as many individual sketches, whose truth came from sympathetic external observation.

In *Old Calabria* Douglas' ever-active curiosity is transferred from the reptiles of his boyhood to the oddities of human behaviour in the ancient world and the middle ages, which remain

presences in the country he traverses and whose physical shape he renders so vividly. But one is not provided merely with amusing tales from history or reflections on history, though both of these are there in abundance. The ultimate fascination of *Old Calabria* comes from two of its features: Douglas' travelling persona, curious, complaining, enduring, and constantly mediating between those he meets and those he addresses; and the philosophy of life, with the courage to maintain it, of which he had talked in praising *Arabia Deserta*. He does not attempt to reconstruct the pagan life of ancient Magna Graecia, though he touches on some of the historical questions evoked by visiting its almost obliterated sites. But he does draw, out of his experience of the landscape and his knowledge of what happened there, a neo-pagan personal stance which he relates to the setting and the ways of life men have evolved within it. There is a noble serenity to the fine last paragraphs of *Old Calabria* that belies the pose of amoral egotism which Douglas sometimes liked to affect, and shows how in this setting he had found not merely a physically appealing, but also a spiritually stimulating home:

This corner of Magna Graecia is a severely parsimonious manifestation of nature. Rocks and waters! But these rocks and waters are actualities; the stuff whereof man is made. A landscape so luminous, so resolutely scornful of accessories, hints at brave and simple forms of expression; it brings us to the ground, where we belong; it medicines to the disease of introspection and stimulates a capacity which we are in danger of unlearning amid our morbid hyperborean gloom — the capacity for honest contempt: contempt of that scarecrow of a theory which would have us neglect what is earthly, tangible. What is life well lived but a blithe discarding of primordial husks, of those comfortable intangibilities that lurk about us, waiting for our weak moments?

The sage, that perfect savage, will be the last to withdraw himself from the influence of these radiant realities. He will strive to knit closer the bond, and to devise a more durable and affectionate relationship between himself and them. Let him open his eyes. For a reasonable adjustment lies at his feet. From these brown stones that seam the tranquil Ionian, from this gracious solitude, he can carve out, and bear away into the cheerful din of cities, the rudiments of something clean and veracious and wholly terrestrial — some tonic philosophy that shall foster sunny mischiefs and farewell regret.

As with most good writers, the division between fiction and travel narrative in Douglas' work is somewhat blurred. For formal reasons the good travel writer will arrange and adjust his material so that the patterns of a journey as they emerge from his book will not be exactly those that the chance of the road imposed on them in real life. Similarly, individuals encountered on the way will often be reshaped and enlarged. That Douglas followed this practice is shown by an odd little note in *Looking Back* in which he mentions an engineer named Robert Duterme encountered in Tunis, and remarks: "... he helped, I think, to form the character of 'Paul Dufrénois' in my *Fountains in the Sand*." Now *Fountains in the Sand* passes for a travel book, and undoubtedly its basis and its general structure were provided by the Tunisian journey which Douglas undertook, but within the frame he introduced persons fictional enough to be described as "characters" and clearly based on individuals in real life rather than being exact portraits.

Douglas' best novel, and the only one to survive in public esteem, is *South Wind*. Its successors, *They Went* (1920) and *In the Beginning* (1928) move away from the present world into the realm of historical fantasy, in the case of *They Went*, which is set in the Merovingian age, and reconstituted myth, in the case of *In the Beginning*, which is based on Middle Eastern religious tales. It is only in a far-fetched way, by noting their distance from contemporary reality, that one can relate these books to Douglas' exile. *South Wind*, on the other hand, is clearly both the product and the expression of his expatriation.

In form *South Wind* belongs to a slender but respectable tradition within English fiction. In its concern with propagating ideas, and also in its considerable dependence on conversation as a means of revealing character and precipitating action it is clearly descended, perhaps in part via George Meredith for whom Douglas appears to have had some admiration, from Thomas Love Peacock. (Eventually, through *South Wind*, the Peacockian tradition would be transmitted to writers emerging in the early 1920's, like Aldous Huxley and Evelyn Waugh.) Like Peacock, Douglas gathered a number of characters into a limited area for a short stretch of time, choosing an island

favoured by expatriate strangers rather than a Peacockian country house. In such a restricted locale the eccentricities of the characters, and hence their reactions to each other, become more pronounced, and conversation provides the means by which their *idées fixes* are revealed in conflict. The author does not sit in judgement; he allows the drama of ideas and temperaments to play itself out, with some assistance from nature, in the form of the volcano which sends a night of falling ash over the island of Nepenthe. Those who are permanent residents, like the opinionated Keith, a kind of Norman Douglas with the unlikely attribute of great wealth, are not much changed by the events that take place in the novel. But those who come to Nepenthe and depart at the end of *South Wind*, are "changed utterly," the Anglican bishop Heard finding that his set prejudices have been replaced by a liberating moral relativism which allows him to condone the murder of an evil man, while the naïf young man Denis sheds his romanticism for an unsentimental pagan realism. He has learnt the wisdom of Keith's exhortation:

Of course I live sensibly. Shall I give you my recipe for happiness? I find everything wonderful and nothing miraculous. I reverence the body. I avoid first causes like the plague. You will find that a pretty good recipe, Denis.

How far Douglas made *South Wind* from his observation and experience of life on Capri it is difficult to say with any accuracy, and it is made no more easy by his own pronouncements. Clearly, an autobiographical fiction, it has deficiencies, since there are aspects of Naughty Uncle Norman's life on Capri that could not, in 1917, be safely described in print. But geographically Nepenthe resembles Capri, and the mixture of natives, foreign residents and tourists that Douglas presents is plausible enough. As for his characters, he seems to have built them up in the same way, though rather more elaborately, as those who figure in his travel books. One of the leading figures in *South Wind* is an American woman who has acquired by marriage the Italian title of Duchess. In *Looking Back*, commenting on a visiting card received long ago from a "Mrs. Snow," Douglas remarks:

She finally returned to America. A vision of her helped me to portray the 'Duchess' in a certain story; other ladies contributed their share of suggestion; imagination also played its part. I have never tried to draw a figure from life, as they say. My creed is that a human character, however engrossing, however convincing and true to itself, must be modelled anew before it can become material for fiction. It must be licked into shape, otherwise its reactions, in a world of fictitious characters, would be out of focus. No authentic child of man will fit into a novel.

History is the place for such people; history, or oblivion.

Even so, one can say that generically the characters of *South Wind* are taken from life. They form a living gallery of expatriate types, all of them exiles in a double sense. Their natures or their personal histories have made their former homes either unsatisfying or inhospitable. And their experience of exile has changed them into the willing denizens of strange lands. For the ultimate intent of *South Wind* is to show the transforming effects on Gothic temperaments of a warm and beautiful southern land steeped in Hellenic traditions. The people of *South Wind* are not outcasts; they are glad exiles, as Douglas was.

NOTE

Like Norman Douglas, that very learned man, I eschew all but explanatory footnotes. However, I list below the publications to which reference has been made in this essay:

On the Herpetology of the Grand Duchy of Baden, 1894.

On the Darwinian Hypothesis of Natural Selection, 1895.

Siren Land, 1911.

Fountains in the Sand, 1912.

Old Calabria, 1915.

South Wind, 1917.

They Went, 1920.

Alone, 1921.

Together, 1923.

Experiments, 1925.

In the Beginning, 1928.

How about Europe, 1930.

Looking Back, 1934.

and

Mark Holloway, *Norman Douglas*, 1976.