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(page 12)

Many Colours.

Mr. Norris and I. By Gerald Hamilton. Prologue by Christopher Isherwood: Epilogue by Maurice Richardson. (Wingate.) 15s.)

Once upon a time when we were all trying to live by our wits in Berlin, somebody—Christopher Isherwood, I suppose—told me of a conversation with Gerald Hamilton (sometimes alleged to be the only begetter of “Mr. Norris Changes Trains”) about the possibility of doing some business with a German Millionaire, a railway speculator.

“If,” my friend reported Mr. Hamilton as saying, “he knew that we were on terms of intimacy with the Persian Minister of Transport, he would surely be prepared to finance a mission of some kind to . . .”

“But we don’t even know the Persian Minister of Transport.”

“Good heavens, my dear boy”—Mr. Hamilton, my friend said, had been petulantly wistful—“if our mission were properly financed, we very soon *should* be on intimate terms with him.”

At the time I did not know or appreciate Mr. Hamilton sufficiently to grasp the realism and truthfulness of his remark. Later—and readers of this book, which both fascinates and tantalizes me, will possibly feel the same way—the only surprising part of the episode seemed simply that he chanced not to know that particular Minister.

After all, he had negotiated with the Khedive of Egypt, King Constantine of Greece, the late Duke of Bedford, and the German Communist leader Muenzenberg: had been a friend of Sir Roger Casemont, Talaat Pascha, Lord Alfred Douglas, Father Martindale, Henri Barbusse, Gaby Deslys, “Snakehips” Johnson, Guy Burgess, **Aleister Crowley**, and the present Professor of Poetry at Oxford: had known Chicherin, . . .