BOOKS

SERPENT IN THE SKY by Irwin Rose, Associated Booksellers, $3.50, 246 pp.

Two socially underprivileged persons, Mike and Gloria, try to better themselves through relations with an advertising executive, Paul Rothman, whom they little dream to be a schizophrenic with a Messianic obsession. Paul, who is impotent, is reawakened sexually by Gloria, but soon his perversions degrade her. Paul's relations with men are orally focussed. All the characters in the book are perhaps more or less psychotic.

Risque, pulp writing with poorly connected incidents is the book's style. The author assumes that sensational incident, murder, sex perversions and religious mockery can substitute for good writing and excuse his unnatural style. The book adds nothing commendable to homophile literature. In fact it contributes nothing heretofore unknown about the seamier sides of life.

A most repellant book for those readers who hope to be edified and it's too trite to even shock. Too many writers have very tiresome axes to grind without ever contributing anything to the spiritual needs of the reader.

MY ROYAL PAST: The Memoirs of Baroness von Bülop, neé Princess Theodora Louise Alexina Ludmilla Sophie von Eckermann-Waldstein. As told to Cecil Beaton. Revised Edition. N.Y.: The John Day Company, 1960. $5.00.

If you've not the "gay" side to your homophile soul, if you've never said, "It's a camp!", if you're the butch type that gets the vapors at the very idea of drag—then this is not for you.

"As told to" Cecil Beaton (Library of Congress calmly catalogs the book as fiction under only his name), the Baroness, poor homely, pompous, fatuous " 'Hilda", tell us her royal life, filled with mad royalty ("The sister of the Grand Duke would sometimes have the delusion that she was a teapot and, crooking her arm to her forehead, would shout, 'Pour me out!' "), with the gay baron she was married off to (who ignored her for sailors and turkish baths), with singular asides ("I envied the peasants . . . plying, under the haystacks, their crude implements"), crazy queenly recipes ("brown gently, ever so gently . . . Put on ice an hour before and after serving"), and with a wild "errata" and index ("Lesbians, 69") that has nothing to do with the text.

And there are the wonderful Cecil Beaton photographs of the royal crew, including—and the best of all—those of (and guess who) "Hilda" herself in My-Fair-Lady-ish drag, royal to the last mile of train and the last inch of tiara, osprey plume, ostrich fan and dogcollar.

Summing Up: Not for the butch. Especially the *really* butch. K.O.N.

THE ZOO STORY

In New York, as in England, also in Europe—Germany, soon in Paris—and now in Los Angeles, there is a one-act play by a young New Yorker, Edward Albee, which is having great success on these stages, *The Zoo Story*.

The story is of a lost young man in a big city, wanting, searching to find love from either men or women or—animals; but he doesn't find it. Even the bisexual nature of the hero does not help him adjust to life.

A wonderfully written play, with epic-like theme, of so many of our lonely young men. Thank you, Mr. Albee! R. H. Stuart