

BRODY

Prince, King And Duke

GONE WITH THE WINDSORS. By
Iles Brody. Illustrated. 327 pp.
Philadelphia: The John C. Winston
Company. \$3.50.

By ROGER PIPPETT

WITH felicitous assists from Jefferson, Hemingway, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Voltaire, Stendhal, Goldsmith, Balzac, Proust, Kipling, Margaret of Navarre, Edward VII and a score of others, Mr. Brody has written a book to end all books about the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. His qualifications as a writer on horsemanship and gastronomy, together with the fact that he is not British-born, allow him, according to the blurb, to "view the situation as a cool, unbiased observer, undisturbed by hero-worship."

Until Mr. Brody read "A King's Story" he had "esteem and even a certain affection for the Windsors." But after he read "these naive, opinionated self-revelations, this royal apology without precedent," his feelings changed. He decided that the Duke's memoirs ought never to have been written. The Duke, in Mr. Brody's cool, unbiased view, had whitewashed the facts. Someone must tell the world the Truth. Hence "Gone With the Windsors," which had to be written. (The author himself says so.)

RIDING hard at his fences, Mr. Brody puts on quite a show. But when the dust has settled and the thundering hooves are stilled, that indestructible old nag, Dame Gossip, is seen to have led the field. We learn, for instance, that the Duke, when King, drove 3,000 golf balls off the deck of his yacht, exclaiming, "I love a splash!" We learn that the Duchess once owned a 22-carat gold bathtub. That although she wears glasses at home for reading, she never carries them when she is going out. That the Duke is a poor tipper. That the Duchess occasionally "sports a beautiful, tremendous ostrich fan."

On what might be charitably termed the historical level, Mr. Brody makes much of Lord Beaverbrook's remark that the Duke told him he thought he could get away with it, meaning a morganatic marriage. Yet, on a later page, he speaks approvingly of Edward VII as "a great King who was safely married and had safe mistresses," as a monarch who, "unlike his grandson," seemed to know the meaning of the word "trust."

With that last word, but with little or no help from Mr. Brody, we reach the nub of the Windsor story, which will continue to pose the question: can a kingdom ever be well lost for love? One of the answers may be found, perhaps, in the extremely candid illustrations to this not exactly cool, not obviously unbiased book.

Mr. Pippett, a former British editor and critic, is an editorial associate at Collier's.

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