

coming to England to live with her English relatives, but it is another 150 pages or so before the book ends.

—David Hall

BETWEEN THE ACTS

THE WIDENING CIRCLE, by John van Druten; Heinemann, English price 18/-.

NOT Mr van Druten's first autobiographical venture, this volume exhibits the same alternation of memoir and essay as *The Way to the Present*. The author ranges from reflections on his desert home in Southern California to the themes of his plays and his conclusions on why they have been successful or, more rarely, have failed. Two things stand out: the contemplative style, easy and natural; and the character, rather, the disposition of the author. For all his maturity and success he remains eager, ingenuous; and he is wise. The loveliness of the Yosemite Valley is a treasure to be displayed, with some trepidation because the snow may have changed its aspect, to a friend who may or may not appreciate it—and if he does not, the day will be spoilt. Famous stage artists of the past, the author's boyhood heroines, remain revered, their few letters carefully cherished. We are told of places which, though they seem to have little in common, have had for the author "a special and personal magic"—The Isle of Skye, Haiti, Tobago, and a small village on the Dordogne.

Books are discussed, the use of a personal journal, children's books, books that lose virtue as one grows up and sees them critically. We are led casually round the author's own shelves and given an idea of his tastes, and some shrewd asides about particular books.

Mr van Druten confides in us that he has been reading C. S. Lewis's "brief and mainly spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*." Mr Lewis's quality of joy has seized his imagination to such an extent that the latter part of the book is almost a testament and credo, divorced, nevertheless, from Mr Lewis's convinced Christianity. It would be hard to read *The Widening Circle* without developing a liking, almost an affection, for the author.

—S.P.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LITTLE WHITE KING, by Marguerite Steen; Michael Joseph, English price 7/6. The unusual story of a cat born deaf, the unexpected difficulties of rearing and training him, and eulogies on his beauty. With charming drawing by Clare Dawson.

DEATH OF A NAVY, by Andrieu d'Albas; Robert Hale, English price 18/-. A concise account of the Japanese Navy in action in the Pacific, written by a French naval officer who spent some years in Japan, mastered the language and married the daughter of a Japanese admiral. The ground (and water) has been covered several times before, but this is a worthwhile book for the general reader, and takes interesting account of Japanese character as well as tactics and strategy. Illustrated.

SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 1939-1956—the War and the Neutrals, edited by Arnold Toynbee and Veronica M. Toynbee; Oxford University Press, English price 50/-. A detailed and specialised but surprisingly readable book which makes a valuable addition to Chatham House's great fact-finding volumes on the war-time period. In a world preoccupied by the clash of principles apparently irreconcilable, there is particular interest in balanced discussion of neutrality in previous conflicts. Difficulties and mistakes on both sides are not glossed over.

N.Z. LISTENER, NOVEMBER 15, 1957.

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