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# BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

Edwin Muir can provide little. Beginning with private emblems and a preoccupation with the mystery of time, he has developed slowly and naturally towards a specifically Christian interpretation of experience. His verse method is plain to the point of monotony; but how expertly he moves within his chosen limits—

Legendary Abraham,
The old Chaldean wanderer,
First among these peoples came,
Cruising above them like a star
That is in love with distances
And has through age to calmness grown,
Patient in the wilderness
And untarrying in the sown

One feels (perhaps on too slight evidence) that here at least is one poet who will never be strangled by the cliques, who has braved out the demons of sterility and melancholia, who could not write a smart poem if he tried, though he might produce an honest, dull

one. Where does the peculiar sweetness of Muir's poetry spring from, like honey from a hive in the rock? I think it may come from his never having really lost contact with the first world of experience, the child's vision of indubitable reality in man and nature—

And shapes too simple for a place In the day's shrill complexity Came and were more natural, more Expected than my father's face Smiling across the open door

We others, who have lost contact and scarcely desire to regain it, recognise all the same the language of home, both foreign and familiar. Edwin Muir communicates that most difficult truth: the holiness of the familiar world.

-James K. Baxter

### RUSSIAN SCIENTIST

KAPITSA, by A. M. Biew, translated from the German by James Cleugh; Frederick Muller, 18

KAPITSA is a Russian trained in electrical engineering who in 1921 escaped to England, joined Rutherford's group of bright young men, and from 1934 was Director of an important section of the Cavendish Laboratory. In 1934 he attended a congress in Soviet Russia, was won over apparently by Stalin himself, and from 1937 was the leading physicist of the Supreme Atomic Energy Commission of the Soviet Union.

The author, evidently a deserter from the Russian Secret Police, does not give his authority for his sources of information; one is left to infer from what is generally known about conditions in Russia that his story could be substantially correct. Accepting this we have an extraordinary record of the vast resources and organisation concentrated on nuclear research, of successful Russian espionage in various centres of Western atomic research, and of the intricate tactics by which Russia succeeded in misleading the world about the progress being made.

It appears that in the interests of science and humanity Kapitsa made an attempt in 1946 to arrange an exchange of data with foreign scientists. His move was discovered; he was at once "retired," but not liquidated; he was reinstated in 1949 as one regarded as essential to progress in the research on the H-bomb, which culminated in success in 1953.

### **ACKOWLEDGMENT**

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