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stock of Mediterranean-Atlantic antecedents, reimposed by **problematical** contingents from North Scandinavia.' Their vitality is demonstrated by the survival of the elements of the Skara Brae culture in the so-called 'black houses' in Scotland and the bee-hive shellings in the Orkneys, both of which were lived in during the last century.

The cemetery of Skara Brae has not yet been discovered; the skeletons found under one of the walls were probably buried ritually that their ghosts might sustain that structure. In his chapter on the Skara Brae skeletons, Professor Thomas Brice considers them to be similar to those of the present day inhabitants of Orkney. In another chapter, Professor Watson writes an exhaustive account of the animal bones. Sheep are abundant, but pigs are rare; there are no remains of horses, dogs or reindeer.

E.G.T.

RENDER UNTO CAESAR. By Margot Robert Adamson. (Dent; 7/6.)

There is an old Welsh countrywoman who having, from sheer loyalty, read steadily through the book of a former nursling, summed up her impressions in the single comment: 'Weren't you clever to **spell all** those foreign names!' I hope I shall not seem to make frivolous approach to a noble and beautiful book, if I confess that Margot Adamson's *Render Unto Caesar* brought her **words** to mind. The first chapter indeed **is** as accommodating as a handful of hedgehogs to one whose topographical knowledge of mediaeval Germany has a mediaeval vagueness. 'Here are lions . . .' Precisely, **at** the very head of the way. But face them boldly and, as in the tales, you will find treasure.

It is still a way to be trodden with girded loins. It **is** a book that cannot be skimmed, but that demands to be re-read, and, above all, to be read aloud. For it is essentially a poet's book, with the depths and swiftness that are the privilege of poets, and with a chiselled beauty that reminds one of goldsmith's work, or the clear colours of old Missals, or, again, of the works of the Rhineland painters the author loves, in which bright Rowers grow amid the torment of the Cross.

The **age** it treats is the end of the Middle Ages, of Maximilian, the last of the knights, **and** 'the breaking world'; the age of the Dance of Death **and** Matthias Grünewald's terrible Crucifixion, here potently described—Matthias himself obsessed with the idea of death, hungering, like so many, for a miracle to save. 'Maybe,' says Friar Liutgard, a charming Dominican who sounds the key-note of the book, 'the hours are **run** nigh

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an end. For verily it seems as though God were grown weary of the world for the cause of men's injustice.'

It was indeed the same age of which Savonarola wrote in one of the poems of his youth :

Now happy one who lives by robbery,
And who grows drunken on another's blood,
Stealing from infancy and widowhood,
And trampling over helpless poverty.
And he's a pattern of nobility
Who wins the greatest wealth by force or fraud,
Despises Heaven and God—
By whom his neighbour to the depths is hurled,
Him honoreth the world.

It is against this background that young Count Hermann and Clerk Daniel, their consciences suddenly awakened, set out to learn how the things that are Caesar's may be rendered unto Caesar and the things that are God's to God. The things that are Caesar's : all that appertains to the temporal governance of the world, justice, and the relations of a man to his fellows; at a time when the social structure has broken, and Caesar is Caesar Maximilian, 'a flying shadow,' great only in his dreams, and everywhere cruelty and injustice reign, and no one cares. That uncaring is a motif, recurrently sounded, to be contrasted at last with the everlasting compassion of God, and the realization that it is with the compassionate salvation comes. For in all that chaos, it is the things that are of God that abide; in them the things that are of Caesar are subsumed, for on man himself there is an 'image and superscription'—as Albrecht Dürer shows when—in pendent contrast to Matthias Grünewald's despairing cry that he can never paint the Face of Christ, that it is 'terrible to worship a God without a face'—he paints that Face as his own likeness.

When all is breaking, Countess Elizabeth, Friar Liutgard, Hermann himself, the gentle, the holy, the pitiful, the just, preserve the heritage of hope. And to Daniel, gazing with Hermann on the knightly figures of legend that stand about Maximilian's tomb at Innsbruck to this day, that enshrine his dream, his hunger for something not of this world, which was his reality, comes the realization how into the Kingdom not of this world 'this world fell like a drop of water, lived by that hope, transmuted, changed, turned from water into wine.' And so he will sing his life through, in spite of all, *Benedictus qui venit in Nomine Domini.*

Such, as I read it, is the theme, branching through the story like a vein of gold—a theme which, as the author hints in her preface, is urgent to-day, in 'another epoch of chaos, disillu-

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tion, reconstruction, and debate.' The archaic language (sometimes a little mannered), the chronicle form in the first person, should not obscure the fact that here are perennial problems, deeply and passionately felt, and a solution.

B.B.C.

GRAMOPHON

H.M.V. Official life was stuffy, but Paris had recovered from the Allied occupation, the first Zouaves were cutting a dash, Romanticism had not yet arrived at the August of the Second Empire or the murkiness of Bayreuth, but was still fresh and young, and Auber was writing his music, so gay and delicate and technically accomplished. We no longer confuse the serious with the earnest, and quite the record of the month is the Overture to *Fra Diavolo*, played by the London Philharmonic, conducted by John Barbirolli (C 2644, 4/-). In a similar easy lyrical spirit is the Overture to the *Merry Wives of Windsor*; B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Adrian Boult (DB 2195, 6/-). Worcestershire, the word hints at the quality of the *Woodland Interlude* from *Caractacus*, on the other side of the record is Elgar's simple and delicate fancy, *Dream Children* (DB 2147, 6/-). Two other records worth noting are Simon Barer's playing of Liszt's *Etude in F Minor* and Chopin's *Waltz in A Flat Major Op. 42* (DB 2166, 6/-), and Derek Oldham's singing of Rachmaninov's song, *O cease thy singing*, with remarkably effective electronic accompaniment (B 8180, 2/6).

DECCA POLYDOR. Records of *Schwanda the Bagpiper*—a musical selection (LY 6048, 3/6), and Theodor Scheidl singing *I am Schwanda* and *How could I ever forget my beloved?* (CA 8104, 4/-)—will hold memories of the 1934 Covent Garden season. Also duets from the first and second acts of *Arabella* (DE 7024, 2/6) and the finale (DE 7025, 2/6); the singers are Margit Bokor, Viorica Ursuleac, and Alfred Jerger; the orchestra, the Berlin State Opera under Clemens Kraus. The second movement of Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for String Orchestra, Op. 48*, is the famous valse: but all the movements are appropriate music for a summer evening on the river between Reading and Kew (YO 5096-98, 2/6 each).

T.L.