

MUSIC IN MADAGASCAR.

THE recent events in Madagascar suggest the possibility that a few details concerning the custom of the natives may be of interest.

The Madagascan loves to talk and to sing. For his song he utilizes the first theme that occurs to him; he takes some saying, some phrase or a single word and repeats this until he is weary, with a chorus which he improvises as is the habit with all uncivilized races. Conversation is his delight; he loves, he adores eloquence, as he does a melody; he will chatter on indefinitely on some trivial matter caring nothing

Women.
Andante.



Men. *Fine.*





whether his words have sense or not; and an orator of even slight talent is always sure of an audience of charmed listeners.

When the talk begins to languish they try to improvise after the manner of the sophists some enigma, or charade (*rahams hatra*) word after word, sentences which form a line. Here is an example:

Three men, one of whom carried blanched rice, the second fagots, the third, an iron pot, approaching from three different directions met near a spring in a desert place, far distant from any human habitation. It is midday, and each of them, having as yet had nothing to eat, is very anxious to prepare

a meal but knows not how to set about it, for the owner of the rice is not the owner of the wood and neither of them has a right to dispose of the pot. However, each one contributes what he has and the rice is soon cooked; but at the

WARRIORS' SONG.



moment the repast is ready each one wishes to claim for himself the entire meal. Who is the owner of the cooked rice?

The Madagascan auditors are undecided; each one of the three men appears to have an equal right with the other two

LALO FATRA.



to the food. Here then is an excellent theme for discussion.

Like all indolent and sensuous people the Madagascans are passionately fond of poetry and music. At evening, in the villages one may see them assembled to listen to songs which one of their number improvises upon a familiar theme. They repeat the refrain in chorus, accompanying it by clapping their hands to mark the rhythm. The words of their songs consist in general of short phrases without much connection. They sometimes have a moral or satirical significance—more frequently they contain some simple image. The melodies are as a rule monotonous. They have never-

theless, a certain charm which proceeds as in most primitive songs, from their strange and languid tonality.

The musical instruments are very imperfect; they are the *érahou*, the *bobre*, the *Marouvané*, and the *azonlahé*. The most common is the *marouvané* or *vallya*, the favorite in-

Women. (*Singing in Chorus.*)
Andante.

The musical notation consists of two systems. The first system has a treble clef staff for 'Women' and a bass clef staff for 'Men'. The second system has a treble clef staff for 'Women' and a bass clef staff for 'Men'. The music is in 2/4 time and marked 'Andante'. The women's part is a melodic line with dotted rhythms, while the men's part consists of a simple accompaniment of horizontal lines with occasional notes.

strument of the Madagascan. The *marouvané* is made from a bamboo, as large as one's arm. By means of a knife they detach from the fibrous bark of this reed filaments which, being supported by little bridges, form cords. Upon this species of harp-guitar the Hovas execute all their national airs, the Queen's Air, the Warrior's Song, and even waltzes. The *vallya* is sustained by a small flute, and three assistants accompany it by clapping their hands.

We give here, as curiosities, written specimens of the four principal airs, of which the first two are the Hova's National Airs. The third, the *Lalo Fatra* and the second, the *Warrior's song*, are played by the *faufares* upon official occasions. The last, like the first, is thoroughly characteristic and is sung in chorus at the homes of the *Betimsaroes*.

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