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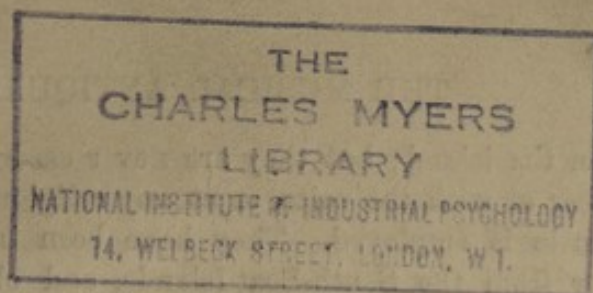
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THE STUDY OF PRIMITIVE MUSIC

IN this paper I propose to describe such features of the music of two primitive peoples that I have studied as are likely to add to our knowledge of musical history and development. The two peoples whose music will be here considered are the Murray Islanders of the Torres Straits and the Veddas of Ceylon. Their homes are of course widely distant from one another. The Murray Islands are a small group of islands, only one of which is now inhabited, situated to the north of Queensland, between Australia and New Guinea. The Veddas are the 'aboriginal' people of Ceylon; they probably crossed to the island in remote times from India. Both the Miriam (as the Murray Islanders call themselves) and the Vedda folk are relatively primitive. In the former we may doubtless recognize Australian and Papuan elements, while the latter perhaps represent the Dravidian stock.

There is one striking feature common to the Miriam and the Vedda peoples, namely, the very insignificant part which musical instruments have played in the development of their music. Those Veddas who have not been affected by contact with the Sinhalese have no musical instruments whatever. Other Veddas have adopted but one instrument—the drum—from the Sinhalese, or they borrow it for special ceremonies. In the two oldest Vedda ceremonies the songs are accompanied merely by a 'rhythmic slapping of the hands on the abdomen and thighs'.¹

The Murray Islanders are not much more advanced in this respect. True, they have a drum which is often beaten while they sing. But that is the only instrument which is ever used simultaneously with vocal music. Occasionally flutes, panpipes, and Jew's harps are to

¹ See the writer's chapter on Music in *The Veddas*, by C. G. and Brenda Seligmann, Cambridge, 1911, pp. 341-65, where fuller details than can be given in this paper will be found.

be seen on the island; but they are never used in combination with one another or with the voice, or at any religious or other ceremony where music is employed. They have been introduced from New Guinea or from the South-Sea Islands, and obviously have never played any important part in the development of Miriam music.¹

It was my good fortune to spend between four and five months of the year 1898 on Murray Island as a member of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits. The equipment of the Expedition included phonographs for recording native language and music.

At the outset I should like to lay emphasis on the value of the phonograph for the study of comparative music.² As every one knows, the phonograph does not satisfactorily reproduce the quality or timbre of the tones sung into it. But it does very accurately reproduce the rhythm of the tones and the intervals which they form with one another. Further, it can be made to reproduce the actual pitch and *tempo* of the notes sung if a tone of known pitch (e.g. a pitch-pipe or a tuning-fork) be sounded into the phonograph just before each record is taken in the field. For, when in reproducing the record the phonograph is made to rotate at such a rate as to emit this already standardized note, the instrument must then be rotating at the same speed as that of the instrument into which the tune had been sung. And since the absolute pitch and the *tempo* of the notes reproduced depend on the rate of rotation of the record, one may in this way contrive that they agree exactly with the pitch and *tempo* of the song as originally recorded.

Without the phonograph it is impossible even for the accomplished musician to transcribe with sufficient accuracy the exact pitch and *tempo* of the tunes heard in the field. The phonograph enables him to listen repeatedly to the song at his own convenience, and to gain such familiarity with it as is unobtainable by other means. It enables him—though with more difficulty and perhaps with greater chance of error—to analyse music which he has never heard in its native atmosphere. For example, the analysis of the Vedda songs which is given later in this article has only been possible by means of phonographic records, obtained by Dr. and Mrs. Seligmann in the course of their ethnological research in Ceylon, which they transferred to me upon their return to this country.

Even highly musical persons are prone to make mistakes if they

¹ See the writer's chapter on Music in the *Reports of the Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Straits*, Cambridge, 1912, vol. iv, pp. 238-69.

² Cf. the writer's contribution 'The Ethnological Study of Music' in *Anthropological Essays presented to [Sir] E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907, pp. 235-54.

trust only to transcriptions taken down at the moment the song is being sung by the natives. It must repeatedly happen that important features are overlooked. The most accomplished European musician is only human. We are only too apt to be guided by our previous experiences, and to interpret what we hear in the light of them. Just as with our ear to the telephone we 'read' what is really a false meaning into its sounds (inasmuch as this instrument actually transmits an exceedingly distorted and defective rendering of what is being spoken at the other end), and realize what ought to be there, thus unconsciously supplying the omissions and neglecting the errors of distortion; so in listening to primitive music, we are only too apt to hear an air as we think from past experience it ought to sound. Even with the assistance of a phonograph, it has repeatedly happened to me that my attention has been called to errors of transcription (due to the inevitable dangers of habituation to European music just mentioned) only after I have heard the air a considerable number of times.

Moreover by the help of the phonograph the pitch, at all events of the longer (and more important) notes, can be determined much more satisfactorily than by the observer in the field. A single tone can be prolonged on the phonograph by lifting the steel lever, the threaded surface of which usually rests on the spiral thread of the rotating shaft and is driven along it. When this lever is raised, the glass style of the diaphragm which records the marks previously impressed on the wax cylinder, remains stationary; it travels in a circular path instead of, as usually, along the spiral groove cut in the wax cylinder. That is to say, the note is prolonged, instead of being followed by the next note of the song. Its pitch can be accurately determined by comparing it with the tones from a box of numerous metal tongues, each carefully attuned, and differing from its neighbour in the pitch of the note it emits by two vibrations per second. This apparatus, or pitch-meter, is blown by bellows. It is generally known after the name given it by its first German constructor, as a *Tonmesser*.

Let us now return to our consideration of Miriam and Vedda music, taking the former first. The especial interest of Miriam music consists in the fact that three distinct styles of music may be distinguished, which are of very different ages. The first may for convenience be styled Malu music, the second *keber* music, the third 'secular' music. That is their order of age. The Malu tunes are extremely ancient, so ancient that at the present day many of the words which are sung to them have altogether lost their meaning. The Malu tunes are also extremely sacred. The Malu ceremonies

belonged to a secret cult introduced at a remote period, probably from the western islands of the Torres Straits, into Murray Island. Malu was supposed to have come from the west. His adventures have been handed down in Miriam legends, and in their immoral and miraculous character resemble those recorded in ancient 'classical' mythology. His name became so sacred that no one might utter it. The ceremonies which were connected with his cult were concerned especially with initiation and death. No woman or child might hear the Malu songs and live. Despite the fact that the Murray Islanders have been Christians for the past forty years, I had the greatest difficulty in persuading the old men (who alone knew the songs) to sing them. It needed all the persuasion and greater influence of the leader of our expedition, Dr. A. C. Haddon, to induce them to do so.

I.¹

♩ = 40. *♩* = 56.

Wau a - ka o a - de - et ma-lu-et e pa-de-te . . e - ma - rer

e - ma - rer e - ma - rer, &c.

II.

♩ = 60.

Wau o we-lu-ba o le-wer le-wer-a o me-ri-ba ta-me-ra o gu-la-bo-ra ta-me-ra

o weil weil weil &c.

III.

♩ = 108.

U - wau I-zib eir-iam au I - zi-bei eir-iam au

Variant.

U - wau I - zi - bei e-dir - ker e - wa-tur

¹ The signs + and - are placed above the notes when their pitch should be slightly raised or lowered. The sign v denotes a breath-pause. The sign \sim denotes a well-marked *glissando*. The songs are written an octave higher than their original pitch.

IV.

$\text{♩} = 120.$

E - au ib' a-ba-ra lew-er e . . . au ib' a-ba-ra lew-er

e - - - ke-rim a - ba - ra lew - er e

followed by sacred words.

IV A.

$\text{♩} = 60.$

Wau a-kaMa-lu-etau au au . . . aua-dud le-lu-tiwaua-kaMa-lu-etau . au . . au

a-dudle-lu-ti i . . a-dudte-re-get-i . i . . War-bir nau-ka-rik le-lu-ti i . .

War-bir de-reb-le i

bua, bua, bua . . .

Followed in whisper by sacred words : then shouts of

Now these Malu songs (Songs I-IV A), all of which, save the last, are funeral songs, seem to me to be of extraordinary interest. *Songs I, II, and IV are made up solely of intervals approximating to our whole tone.* Song I, for example, consists of a descent approximately through an octave by means of a succession of intervals, each of which (save the last) is slightly smaller than our tempered whole tone. The successive intervals, measured in cents (a cent being the hundredth part of our tempered semitone¹) have the following values:—

198 168 199 179 197 224

Probably the last interval is large in order to enable the singer to reach (approximately) the pitch of the original starting-point. Here, then, we have a succession of descending intervals, starting from a note which is distinctly recognized as the most important tone in the song. Each repeated verse starts from this tone, and in each

¹ Although a convenient, it can hardly be called a scientific, procedure to express the intervals employed by other peoples in terms of our own artificially tempered intervals. In the original papers, already quoted, the reader will find the intervals also determined as ratios of vibration-frequencies.

verse the descent is continued (with an octave rise when the pitch becomes uncomfortably low) until this initial tone is reached once again. The intervals are successively large and small, except in the case of the last, where a very large interval is sung in order to reach the starting note. But apparently there is no rule as to the precise number of steps into which the octave should be divided; nor have the singers a very exact memory of the absolute pitch of the initial tone. For in Song II the octave, averaging (from a determination of several verses) 1134 cents, is divided, not into six, but into five descending intervals which have the following cent values:—

207 208 240 227 252

Moreover, in one of several versions of this song which I obtained, the second verse was sung a semitone higher than the first, and the third verse roughly a semitone higher than the second. In another version the song began on d' and descended to B_0 without any octave rise, the second verse beginning again on d' and descending to d^0 . In a third version, the song began on c' , and descended (with an octave rise) to b' , the second verse descending past the octave interval to G_0 , the third verse beginning on d' and descending (with octave rise) so that the fourth verse began on e^0 .

The intervals in Song IV consist of a large tone of 219 and two smaller intervals averaging 167 cents.

Songs III and IV A differ from the other three Malu tunes in making use of a *glissando* descent. This occurs only at the end of each verse of Song III, whereas Song IV A is made up of repeated *glissando* ascents through fourths and descents through fifths.

The two intervals employed in Song III are c^0-B_0 , varying from 153 to 167 cents, and c^0-d^0 , averaging 190 cents. These, it will be observed, are closely identical with the larger and smaller intervals employed in Song I.

Song IV A, belonging to the Malu dances, is far livelier in character, and is of considerable musical interest. The succession of ascents through fourths and descents through fifths gives a series of approximately whole tones, which average 192 cents. The fourths average at least 534 cents, the fifths 761 cents, if the larger intervals be omitted towards the end of the song, where the pitch is so uncomfortably low that the singer's intonation becomes clearly difficult and unreliable.

It might be thought that in this song we can trace the origin of whole tones from consonant intervals, namely, in the form of a difference between successive ascents through fourths and descents through fifths. But such a conclusion I believe to be erroneous. In the

first place, this particular song is more advanced in form, and is probably less ancient than the other Malu songs which are made up solely of (approximately) whole-tones. It opens with a twice-repeated introductory phrase, which is unquestionably less primitive than what may be considered as introductory phrases to the main burdens of Songs I and II. Secondly, the fourths and fifths, sung in IV A, are very far from being accurate consonances. The fourths, as we have said, average at least 534 cents, or if the doubtful fourths, already mentioned, are included, they reach the still higher value of 581 cents, i. e. a slightly flattened tritone. Nor are the fifths more obedient to the dictates of consonance. Consequently, it is far more likely that the fourths and fifths have been derived from the synthesis of a succession of (approximately) whole-tone intervals, than that the latter have been derived secondarily from wider intervals determined by rudimentary feelings for consonance.

The sizes (in cents) of the intervals with which we have met in the Malu songs may be arranged as in the following table:—

Song	I.	173	196	? 224		
"	II.			? 227		
"	III.	167	190			
"	IV.	167		219		
"	IV A.		195		534	761

It will be observed that the fourth is regardable as composed of three intervals each of 178 cents, and the fifth as a fourth increased by 227 cents.

V.

$\text{♩} = 80.$

U wa ko-di-a - ba wa - - - ko-di-a-ba mo-i - a-ba da-ga-ta

la-gi-a - ba si-ga-pai a si-ga-si a-kai-mai-a . wai-er ba-ba-mu-la . . .

VI.

$\text{♩} = 92.$

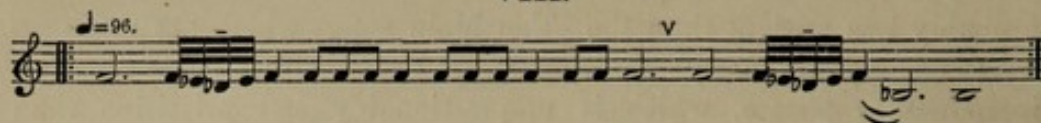
Wau ku-biu-ti sa . ei wau ku-bi u-ti sa . ei a . . ba-bai-ita . . .

VII.

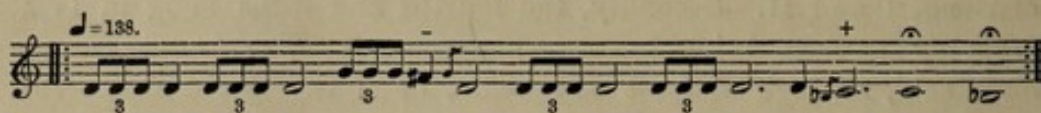
$\text{♩} = 72.$

Wau ku-biu-ti sa . ei wau ku-bi u-ti sa . ei a . . ba-bai-ita . . .

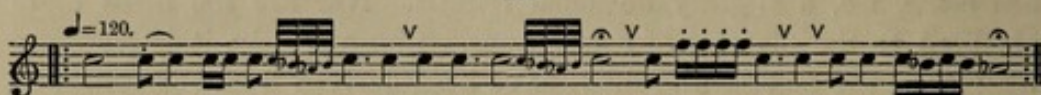
VIII.



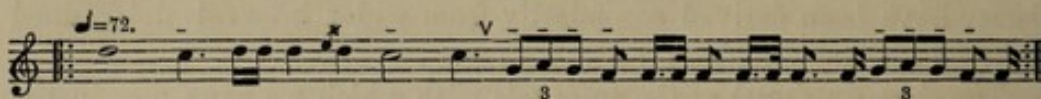
IX.



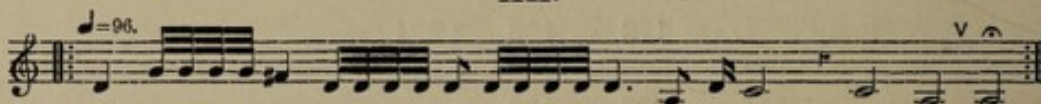
X.



XI.



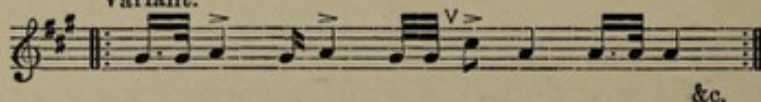
XII.



XIII.

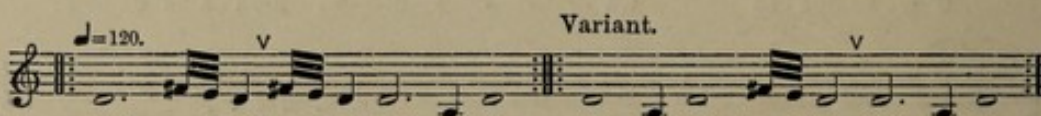


Variant.



&c.

XIII A.



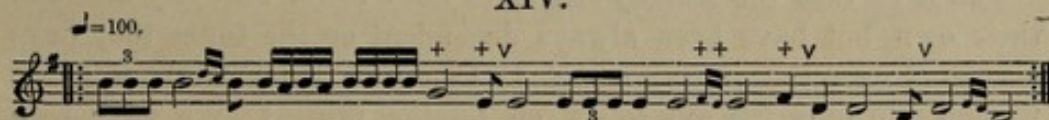
The *keber* group of songs (V-XIII A) also belonged to the ceremonies of a special cult, but this was of more recent growth than the Malu cult, and hence never attained its importance and sacredness. This group, likewise, is said to have been introduced from the western islands; in support of which I find that the words to which the *keber* songs are sung belong almost invariably to the language of the western islands of the Torres Straits, a tongue quite unintelligible to the Murray Islanders. But they never appear to attach much importance to the words of a song. I was often assured that "it is only the music that matters". We shall presently see that this neglect

of the meaning of words also persists among the modern 'secular' Miriam songs.

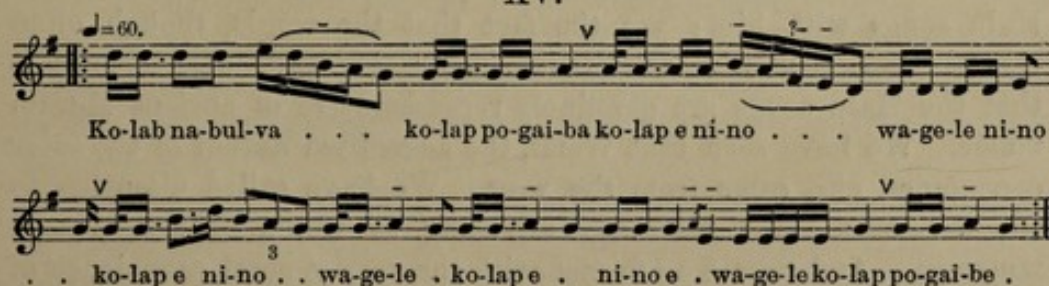
It will be observed that a certain (though never well-marked) regularity of rhythm exists in several of the Malu songs, at all events in Songs I and II, when the words *emarer*, &c., and *weii*, &c., are reached. But the *keber* songs show still less regularity of rhythm. It is quite impossible to divide any one of these transcribed songs into bars. They are either melodic or recitative in character, and are almost destitute of recognizable rhythm.

In the *keber* songs, a tonic, at least in the sense of a note which is accepted as the 'centre of gravity' of the melody, comes to be felt with increasing strength. Thirds and sixths, which do not occur in the Malu songs, now make their appearance. But the characteristic both of the *keber* and of the Malu groups of songs is a *descending* series of notes. Of the various intervals employed in the *keber* songs, only the fourths and octaves occur more often in ascent than in descent. It will be remembered that the one ascending interval in the Malu songs is the fourth, in Song IV A. It is interesting to note that the fourth when thus sung in ascent far more nearly approaches the consonant interval, 3:4. Thus, whereas in Songs IV A, XI, and XV, the descending fourths measure 534, 542, and 556 cents respectively, in Songs IX, X, XVIII, where the fourths are sung in ascent, they measure 504, 505, and 507 cents respectively, this being nearly identical with our own nearly consonant tempered fourth of five semitones.

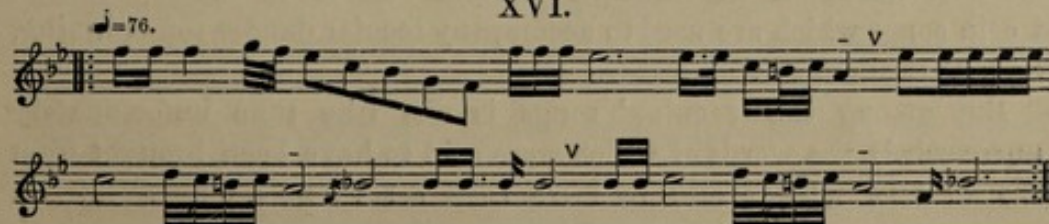
XIV.



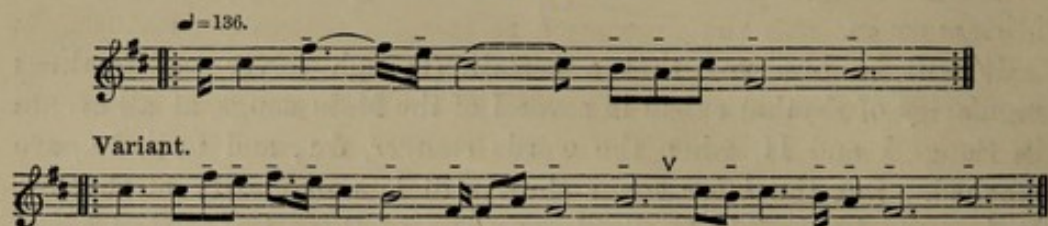
XV.



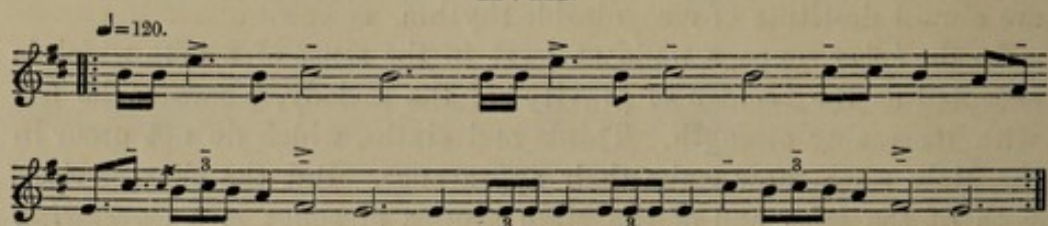
XVI.



XVII.



XVIII.



Let us turn now to the 'secular' songs (XIV-XVIII). Most of these, like the *keber* songs, are sung to words of the language of the western islands. The Murray Islanders are consequently ignorant of the meaning of the words of their secular songs. They state that these songs have been brought by them from the western islands of the Torres Straits during a visit usually made while they are serving on the luggers engaged in the pearl-shell industry. I collected the words of at least seven other 'secular' songs, the music of which I was unable to secure. All of these came from the western islands, and are in the language of those islands.

Can it be that the Murray Islanders have never had any music of their own, but have been always dependent on the tunes they have borrowed from the western islands? Can it be that they 'live', as we English are only too apt to do, on foreign music? We have seen that Malu came from the west. Perhaps he brought the tunes of the Malu songs with him; yet the fact that the words, though often obsolete, are clearly in the Miriam language, leads one to suspect that the Malu songs are genuinely representative of ancient Miriam music. We have seen that Waïet, the accredited author of the *keber* ceremonies, also came from the west. We have called attention to the fact that the *keber* songs are sung to words of the western language. And now we are met with the very general prevalence of western words in the modern 'secular' music of Murray Island, i. e. in songs which are used to accompany secular dances, top-spinning, and other similar amusements.

But among the 'secular' songs is one (the tune unfortunately unrecorded), the words of which were said to have been brought from the western islands and to have been set to music by a Miriam

woman. I was told that she "set new music to those words". Evidently she had the reputation of being a composer of music, for she was said to dream new songs while asleep. This woman claimed to be the author also of Song XVI, the words of which are in the Miriam language; another Murray Islander appeared to have composed Song XVII, one or two of the words of which are certainly in the Miriam language.

For these reasons we cannot accept the view that modern Miriam music is *entirely* of exotic origin. Nor can we be sure that the music of those 'secular' songs which, according to the Murray Islanders' statements, were borrowed from other islands, really had this origin. The Murray Islanders may have brought back only the words. It may well be that the introduction of the *keber* ceremonies from abroad created a fashion of singing tunes to the words of foreign languages. The music even of some of the *keber* songs may be really of Miriam origin. Moreover, even though some of the songs were actually borrowed, they probably underwent certain changes during a process of 'acclimatization'. At all events, in comparing the native songs, directly obtained from the western islands by our Expedition, with the Miriam songs, I find that whereas some of the older and more ceremonial of the 'western' songs bear a resemblance to the Malu songs, others are in some respects similar to the 'secular', in others to the *keber* songs of Murray Island, while the 'secular' songs of one of the western islands are marked by much more unrest and diffuseness than characterize the Miriam 'secular' songs. There is also a strange reluctance throughout many of these 'western' songs to rest upon the tonic.

The 'secular' songs of Murray Islands show a distinct advance upon the *keber* songs. They are far more lively and tuneful; they show much greater complexity of structure and a more obvious attempt at contrast and alternation of figures. A given phrase is repeated at the same or at another level of pitch. A tonic comes to be felt far more obviously as a natural resting note for the conclusion of the melody.

In the 'secular' as in the *keber* songs of Murray Island, the number of descending intervals per song is distinctly smaller than that of ascending intervals. But in the 'secular' songs the total number of intervals per song is very considerably greater, averaging fifteen per song as compared with an average of six per song in the *keber* songs. Moreover, the 'secular' music wholly eschews the semitones and fifths which occur in the *keber* songs, and favours the use of thirds and sixths.

Let us now construct and compare the scales of these songs by

arranging the notes of which each song is composed in their order of pitch, assuming that the most important (usually the lowest or fundamental) note may be regarded as the tonic of the scale. Let us also, to facilitate comparison, transpose these various scales into our scale of C. We may leave the Malu songs out of consideration, since as a rule they have no sufficiently well-defined tonic, and in one or two of the songs the number of notes in the song is limited only by the compass of the singer's voice.

The *keber* and 'secular' songs may be grouped as follows:—

Scale.		Songs.
I _A	<i>c d e g a</i>	IX, X, XI, XIII _A , XV, XVII ¹
I _B	<i>c d f g a</i>	XVIII
I	<i>c d e f g a b</i>	XVI
II	<i>c d♭ e♭ f g a♭ b♭</i>	V, VI, VII, VIII, XIII, XIV ¹
III	<i>c e♭ f a b♭</i>	XII

I have reason to suspect that Song XIV was formerly a *keber* song, which is now employed on non-ceremonial occasions. With the exception of this song, all those which belong to the 'minor' scales II and III are *keber* songs, while (with this exception) all the 'secular' songs give the 'major' scales I_A, I_B, or I, three of them furnishing the familiar pentatonic scale *c, d, e, g, a*.

Of these various notes (*c, d♭, d, e♭, e, f, &c.*) from the 'tonic' upwards, which occur in these fifteen songs, we meet with—

<i>c</i>	in	15	scales
<i>g</i>	"	12	"
<i>a</i>	"	8	"
<i>e</i>	"	7	"
<i>f</i>	"	6	"
<i>e♭</i>	"	5	"
<i>b♭</i>	"	4	"
<i>a♭, d♭</i>	"	3	"

The note *b*, a major seventh above the tonic, does not occur in any of the fifteen songs. The octave *c'* occurs in three of the songs. Of the

¹ The following is a more precise analysis of the scales of these songs:—

Song.	Scale.	Song.	Scale.
XIII _A	<i>c e g</i>	VI	<i>c e♭ g</i>
XI	<i>c d g a</i>	VIII	<i>c e♭ f g</i>
X	<i>c d e a</i>	XIII	<i>c g a♭ b♭</i>
IX	<i>c d e g a</i>	VII	<i>c d♭ e♭ g b♭</i>
XV	<i>c d e g a</i>	V	<i>c d♭ e♭ a♭ b♭</i>
XVII	<i>c d e g a</i>	XIV	<i>c e♭ f g a♭ b♭</i>

notes lying *below* the tonic we find—

<i>a</i>	in	3 scales
<i>g</i>	„	3 „
<i>b</i> and <i>b♭</i>	„	1 „

It is of special interest to observe how with the development of the tonic a note which is a fifth above it came to play a more frequent part than that which is a fourth above it; whereas, apart from such relations, the actual interval of a fourth is employed more frequently and appears, as we have already seen, to have arisen earlier than the fifth.

Now let us turn to a study of Vedda music. Here, too, we find songs of different age. But the oldest (the most purely Vedda, as judged by the accompanying words and by the ceremonial to which they belong) are composed, not as in Murray Island (often) of five or six notes, but only of two. In most Vedda songs of this group, which we may call Group A, the tune runs from the higher to the lower of these notes. The single interval thus formed appears to be one of three different sizes, averaging respectively 125, 168, and 205 cents, as shown by the following table:—

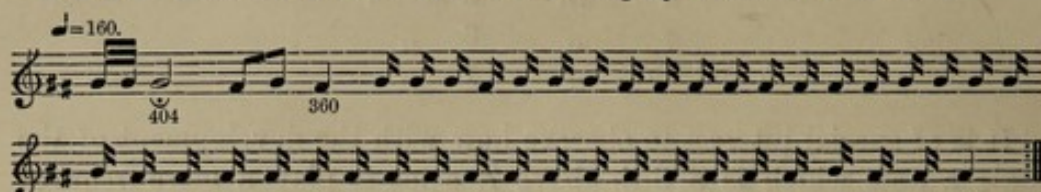
Song No.	Cents. ¹
42	125
43	125
88	164
52	168
21	171
11 (2)	171
1 (2)	198
40	200
22 A	205
18 (2)	208
1 (1)	216

Of these the latter two agree closely with the two smallest intervals of the Malu songs (p. 127). The first, a rather large semitone, does not occur in the Malu songs; both of the songs in which it occurs belong to the Dambani group of Veddas, but were sung by different persons.

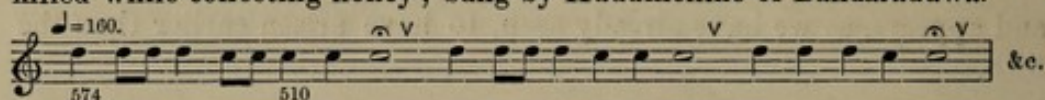
¹ See footnote, p. 125.

GROUP A.

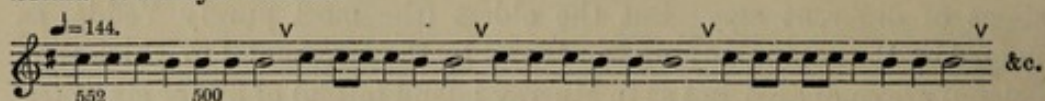
No. 40. Invocation to the *Nae Yaku* sung by Kuma of Dambani.



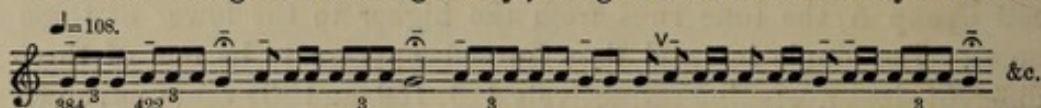
No. 22 A. Commemorating women whose husbands were treacherously killed while collecting honey; sung by Hudumenike of Bandaraduwa.



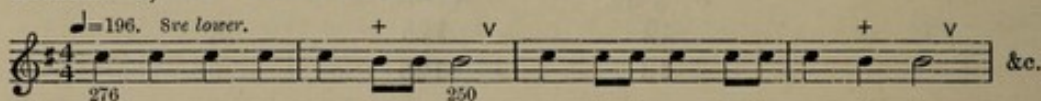
No. 21. Sung by women to men returning without honey; song of Sitala Wanniya Veddas.



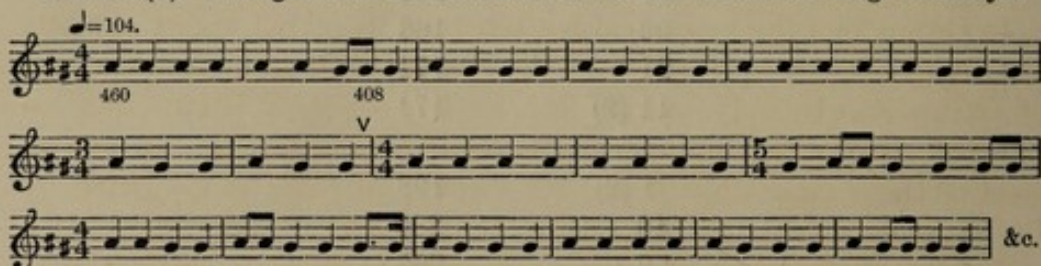
No. 38. Sung while taking honey; song of the Sitala Wanniya Veddas.



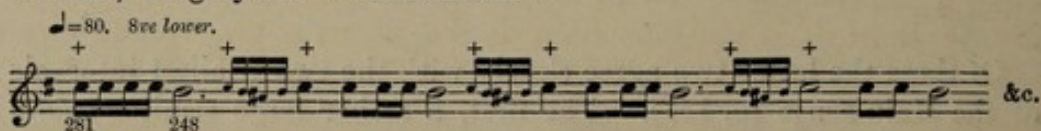
No. 11 (2). Amusement Song of the Veddas of Bandaraduwa; sung by Tissahami, the 'Vedda Arachi'.



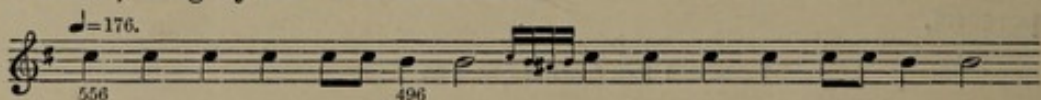
No. 18 (2). Song of the Bandaraduwa Veddas when driving monkeys.

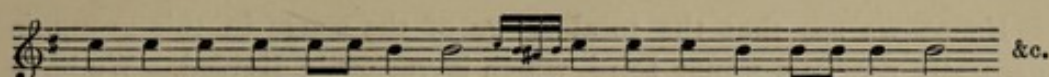


No. 1 (1). Invocation at the *kirikoraha* ceremony of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas; sung by the 'Vedda Arachi'.

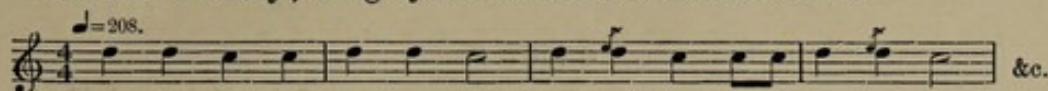
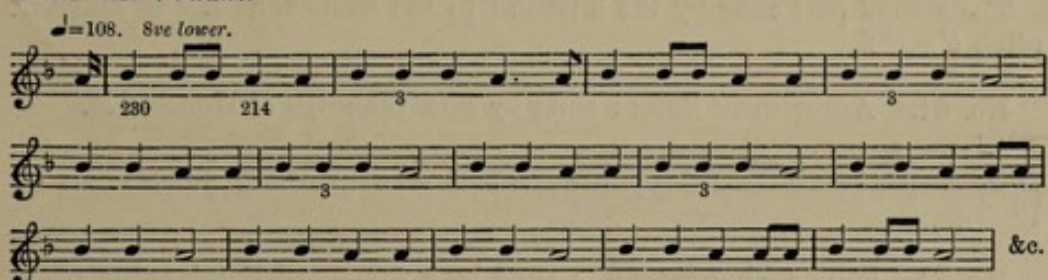


No. 1 (2). Invocation at the *kirikoraha* ceremony of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas; sung by the 'Vedda Arachi'.





No. 19. Lullaby; sung by Hudumenike of Bandaraduwa.

No. 52. Invocation sung during ceremony to exorcise *Yaku* from the sick.No. 42. Song (*Tandina*, &c.), sung by the Vidane (headman) of the Dambani Veddass.No. 43. Song (*Talapita Sindu*), sung by Kuma of Dambani. The tune is that of No. 42, but the tones are *e* and *f*, corresponding to 160 and 172 vibrations per sec.

In Group B of the Vedda songs a third note is added, higher in pitch, usually by about a semitone, than the two notes occurring in the songs of Group A. In only four of the twelve tunes of Group B is an interval sung which appreciably exceeds a whole tone. In one at least of these four songs (Song 20) foreign influence is suspected by Dr. Seligmann. In the other three the interval is approximately a minor third. Song 14 (2) may be omitted from consideration here; Dr. Seligmann writes me that this song is 'almost certainly foreign. . . . I find it was sung by a Sinhalese. I should neglect it.' Song 37 may also be omitted, as the intonation of the singer is clearly not very reliable. The intervals of the remaining songs may be grouped as follows:—

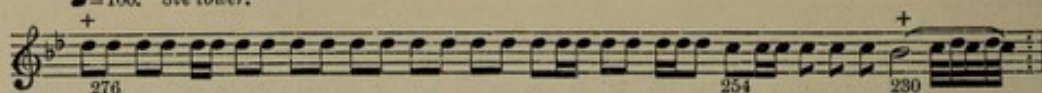
Songs.	Intervals in Cents.		Total Range in Cents.
2, 27, 29, 36 (2)	92	213	305
31 A, 39	98	184	282
30, 31, 34 (2)	142	175	317

Hence we see that the total range of the songs in this group is generally nearly a minor third, which is variously divided. We have also a new interval of about 95 cents to add to the three previously noted.

GROUP B.

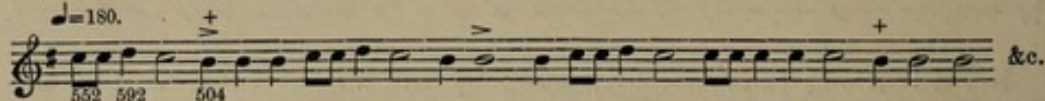
No. 30 (1). Invocation at the *Ruwala* ceremony of the *Yaka* and *Yakini* of Walimbagala.

$\text{♩} = 100$. See lower.



No. 37. Song ; the first part sung by Tandi, wife of Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.

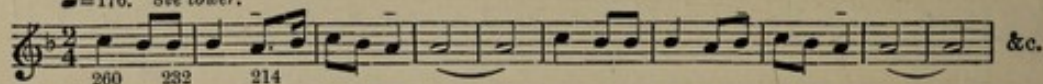
$\text{♩} = 180$.



The second part sung by the husband to the same tune but in different pitch $b' = f^\#$.

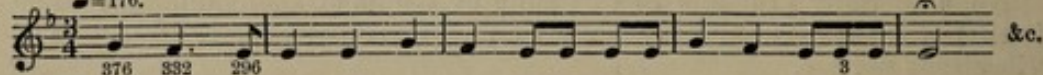
No. 31. Amusement Song ; sung by Sita Wanniya of Henebedda.

$\text{♩} = 176$. See lower.



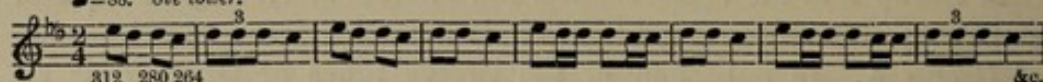
No. 20. Song asking for gifts ; sung by a woman of Bandaraduwa.

$\text{♩} = 176$.



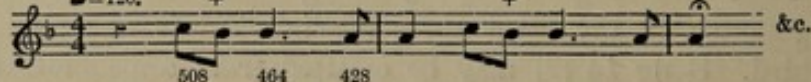
No. 31 A. Dance Song ; sung by Sita Wanniya of Henebedda.

$\text{♩} = 88$. See lower.



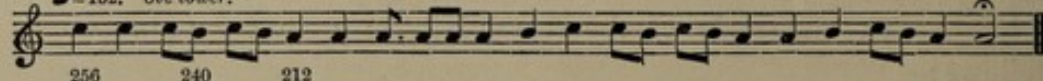
No. 34 (2). Lullaby ; sung by Tandi, wife of Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.

$\text{♩} = 120$.



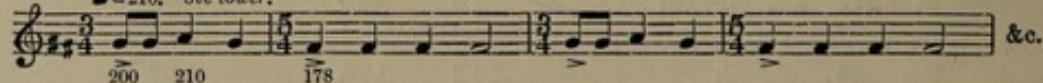
No. 27. Invocation of the Mahayakino at the *kolamaduwa* ceremony ; sung by Handuna of Henebedda.

$\text{♩} = 132$. See lower.

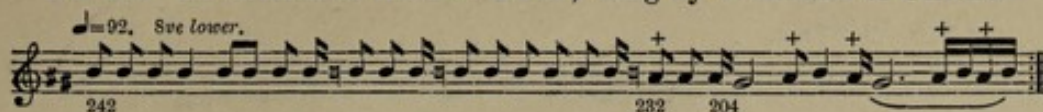


No. 36 (2). Amusement Song ; sung by Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.

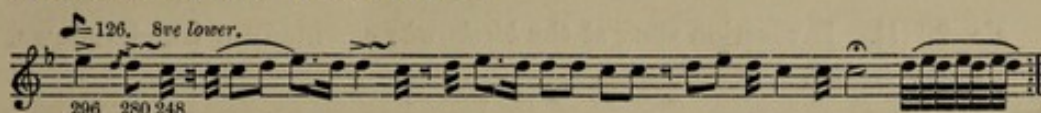
$\text{♩} = 210$. See lower.



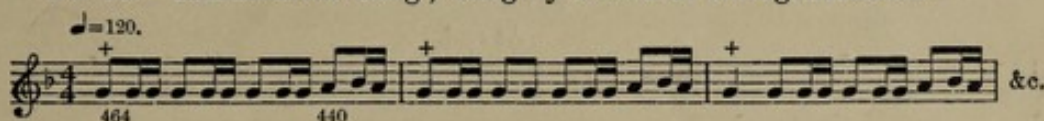
No. 29. Invocation to the *Nae Yaku* ; sung by Wannaku of Uniche.



No. 2. *Maligi*, a honey-collecting song of the Henebedda Veddas ; sung by Tissahami, the 'Vedda Arachi'.



No. 39. Amusement Song ; sung by Kuma of Bulugahaladena.



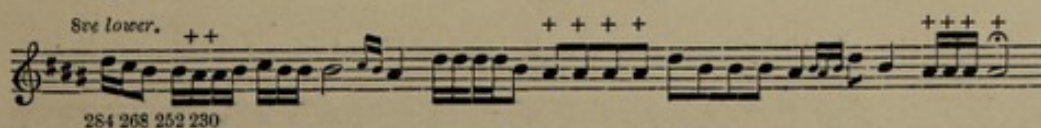
No. 14 (2). Invocation used by the Bandaraduwa Veddas ; sung by a Sinhalese.¹



The songs of Group C, which is apparently the most 'modern' group, contain four tones, a new note being introduced which is generally a whole tone below the tonic. In five of the songs in this group, Nos. 26 (1), 34 (1), 28 A, 44, and 51, the range is 496 cents (almost exactly equal to a just fourth) which is subdivided into 101, 168, and 227 cents. In another song (No. 53 (1)) nearly the same interval is divided into three almost equal intervals each of 165 cents. In two other songs, Nos. 5 (2) and 41, which are probably foreign or very late, the range is 637 cents (an acute diminished fifth), and the intervals sung comprise a pure fourth, a slightly large major third, and other intervals already met with in the songs of this group. There are only two songs (Nos. 32 and 33) in this group the range of which is but a flattened major third ; this interval is divided into two of 101 and one of 165 cents.

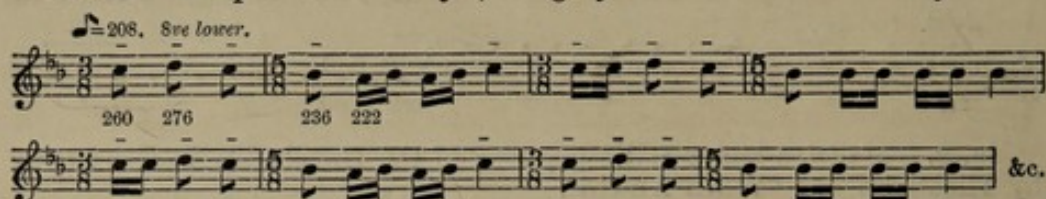
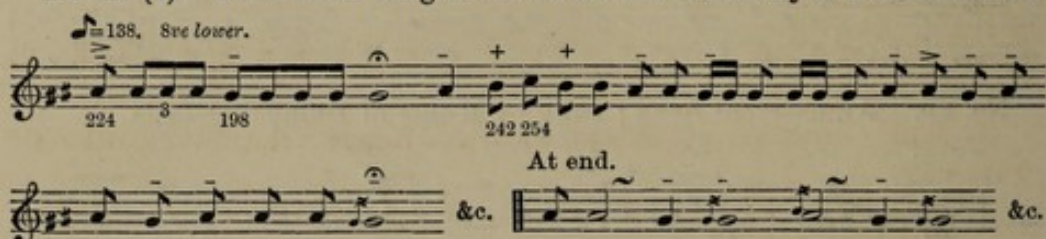
GROUP C.

No. 32. Invocation of Bambura Yaka ; sung by Handuna of Sitala Wanniya. No. 46 is sung to the same tune.

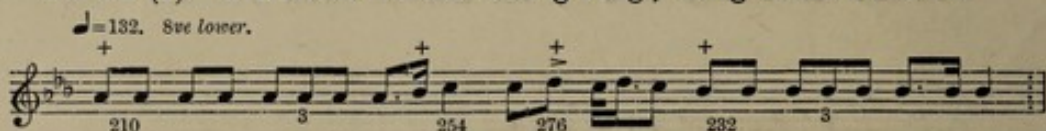


¹ Dr. Seligmann is uncertain when this invocation is used ; it is probably foreign.

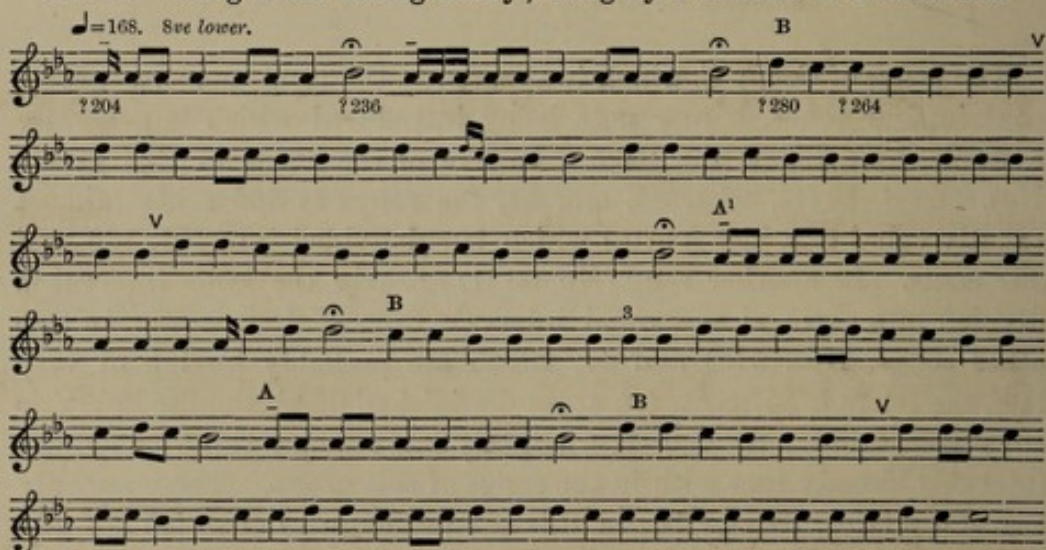
No. 33. Mulpola Itia Waniya ; sung by Kaira of Sitala Wanniya.

No. 26 (1). Invocation sung at the *kirikoraha* ceremony at Bandaraduwa.

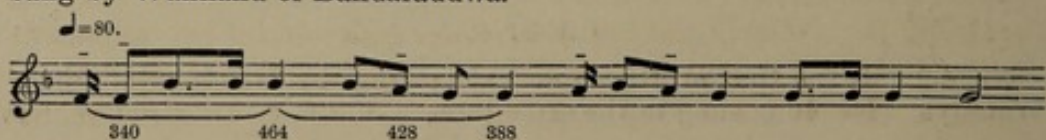
No. 53 (1). Sinhalese rice-harvesting song ; sung at Hemberewa.



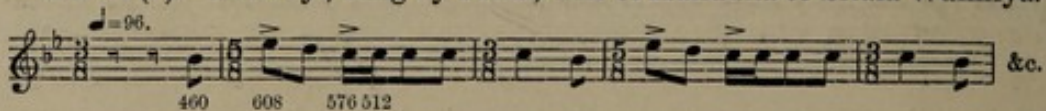
No. 44. Sung when taking honey ; sung by Poromala of Henebedda.



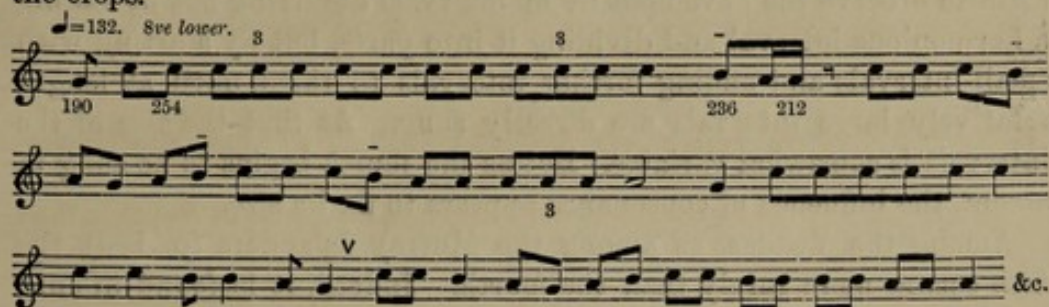
No. 28 A. Song commemorating two women who committed suicide ; sung by Wannaku of Bandaraduwa.



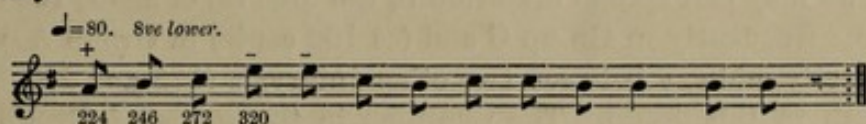
No. 34 (1). Lullaby ; sung by Tandi, wife of Handuna of Sitala Wanniya.



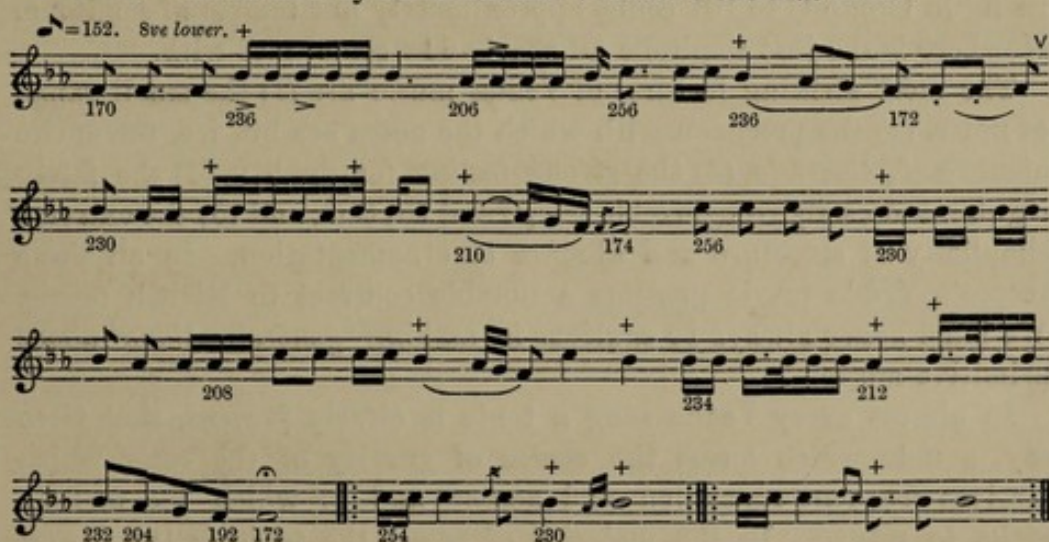
No. 51. Sinhalese song; sung at Alutnuwara at night while watching the crops.



No. 5 (2). Invocation to Bilindi Yaka and Kande Yaka at the Kirikoraha ceremony.



No. 41. Invocation by the Dambani Veddass of the *Nae Yaku*.



Of the ten Vedda songs which are presumably the most ancient, four belong to Group A, four to Group B, and only two to Group C. Of the most modern Vedda songs and of those in which outside influence may be suspected, five belong to Group C, five to Group B, and only one to Group A. None of the Sinhalese songs collected by Dr. Seligmann belong to Group A, and only two of the songs recorded of the natives of Gujar, Malabar, and Tanjore in Southern India at all resemble the Vedda songs in simplicity of material and construction.

It is interesting to observe that the fourth when actually sung in the songs of Group C is almost invariably pure. This was found to be the case also in the modern Murray Island songs, when the fourth is sung as an ascent. In all the songs of Group C, when the fourth is sung,

the interval is likewise an ascending one. Among both peoples we seem to observe the development of intervals occurring not by taking a harmonious interval and dividing it into parts, but by starting with small intervals and adding further intervals to them, until at length relatively large intervals are directly sung. At first the size of the intervals is somewhat variable. But as the fourth begins to be sung in ascent, the influence of consonance appears to fix its size.

Among the Veddas, as among the Murray Islanders (p. 133), the fifth occurs more rarely than the fourth. Indeed, it is found in only one Vedda song and there almost a quarter-tone flat.

Of the smaller intervals which appear to be important in Vedda music we may call special attention to the interval of about 165 cents. It occurs frequently in Group C and (as 168 cents) in Group A, where it is exactly midway between two other intervals (125 and 205 cents) met with in this group. The semitone in the songs of Group A is large, measuring 125 cents, in Group B it is reduced to 95 cents, rising in Group C to 101 cents, approximately our tempered semitone. Nowhere is the just semitone (of nearly 112 cents) met with.

The most striking features of Vedda music are (1) the small range of notes, (2) the precision with which the notes are hit, i. e. the entire absence of *glissando*, (3) the strong feeling for finality, (4) the fairly regular and easily recognizable *tempo* and rhythm, and (5) the extreme simplicity of structure and absence of ornamentation. In all these respects Vedda music presents a notable contrast to Miriam music. We must hence always be cautious in making 'generalizations' about primitive music.

In almost every Vedda song a tonic is clearly present, that is to say, a note which forms the centre of gravity of the tune, which receives frequent repetition and accent, and to which the melody seeks to return. In the majority of songs the tonic is the lowest tone.

The tempo and rhythm of the Vedda songs present features very characteristic of many forms of primitive music generally.¹ It is frequent to find a 3- or 5-beat measure introduced in Indian music otherwise of common time. Indeed, the Indian delight in change of rhythm may result in so continued a modification of measure that it may be difficult to detect any primary rhythm at all.² Among the Veddas (cf. Songs 18(2) and 14(2)) we find five-beat bars introduced in the course of the song. In Songs 33, 34(1), 36(2), there are

¹ Cf. the writer's 'Study of Rhythm in Primitive Music', *Brit. J. of Psychol.*, 1905, vol. i, pp. 397-406.

² O. Abraham u. E. von Hornbostel, 'Phonographirte indische Melodien,' *Sammelb. d. internat. Musikgesellschaft*, 1903-4, Bd. V, S. 398.

alternate groups of these beats throughout the song. Song 20 is the only song in triple time, and this song, as we have already said, is almost certainly modern. Dr. Seligmann observes, "the words of this song are very late."

The Vedda songs contrast with several Sinhalese songs in my collection, not only in their narrower range, but also in their freedom from embellishments, which are perhaps of Arabic origin. Consisting as they do of a very few notes, they are necessarily extremely simple in construction. Nevertheless, in Songs 26 (1), 38, and 44, there are opening phrases distinct from the main body of the song; and Song 44 opens with a phrase (marked A in the transcript), which is repeated in its original form, or as at A¹ in a modified form, in the course of the song. The two songs 26 (1) and 41, which have short terminal phrases, are believed by Dr. Seligmann to be of modern date.

Probably the Vedda and the Miriam songs represent (in two very different forms!) the simplest primitive music that has hitherto been recorded. It will be interesting, perhaps, in a future communication in this Journal, to present specimens of more complex primitive music and to trace their relation to the very simple music dealt with in this paper.

CHARLES S. MYERS.

