

OPENING OF THE PATTI THEATRE AT CRAIG-Y-NOS.

INAUGURAL SPEECH BY MR. W TERRIS.

AN OPERATIC TREAT.

THE DIVA IN "FAUST" AND "TRAVIATA."

[FROM OUR OWN REPORTER.]

CRAIG-Y-NOS, WEDNESDAY NIGHT. The day so long and anxiously looked forward to by the musical world of Swansea, by the aristocracy of Swansea and its valley by the guests assembled round Madame Patti-Nicolini's hospitable board at Craig-y-Nos' and lastly—for we all know with what fervent interest and delight she participates in all such occasions—by the diva herself, has come and gone with all its hopes and fears. Amongst these sections of the residents of this part of the county the interest in the formal opening of Patti's bijou theatre and opera-house was naturally intense. On the part of that musical section of Swansea's residents actively concerned in the matter the anxiety has been to arrive at that degree of perfection which would justify them in appearing—by the kindness and condescension of the lady in question—in opera with the Queen of Song; on the part of the public the care has been to obtain invitations; and on the part of those who conduct the manage of the castle the one thought has been to make things pass off without a hitch by satisfactorily accommodating the visitors and the "house party" who have assembled at the mansion. These things, I am glad to say, have all been satisfactorily done. The opera has passed off successfully. Everybody has been hospitably received at the Castle, and the 37 bedrooms set apart for guests will, before I have finished writing, be filled to overflowing. At the late hour at which the performance finished it was necessary in this remote region to provide accommodation for most of the more distinguished or more nearly connected guests, but the houses of nearly all the aristocrats in the neighbourhood of course received their complement, and so lightened the diva's responsibilities, whilst the Swansea artists and their friends will return presently to Swansea by a special train at midnight. The theatre, it will be remembered, was informally opened last August by Mr. W. F. Hulley's Amateur Opera Company, accompanied by his excellent orchestra, and it is no small matter of praise to Mr. Hulley's training to observe that the diva, after seeing and hearing these Swansea artists—not once, but several times—at Craig-y-Nos, decided to ask them to take part in opera with herself, the leading light of the operatic stage, on the great occasion of the formal opening in the following year. In fairness to Mr. Hulley, it should be said that he has had most of the care and management of the matter on his own shoulders. To Patti and her fellow-artists the musical preparation meant little; to the Swansea amateurs everything. The last rehearsal in Swansea took place at St. David's Schoolroom on the preceding evening, when Signor Arditì himself was present to conduct. The company acquitted themselves admirably under his baton. Madame Patti, to ensure the pitch of the orchestra, had supplied all the members with perfectly new instruments from Germany. Mr. Hulley had trained his chorus in the Italian in "La Traviata." Signor Arditì expressed his perfect satisfaction at the pitch of efficiency to which a provincial orchestra and corps of singers had attained in such a very difficult work as "La Traviata," and everything, therefore, boded well for to-night's performance. Through the kind attention of the diva, a special train left Swansea for the convenience of ticket-holders at 6.5 p.m., and returned at midnight. Mr. Hulley and his orchestra and company, however, left Swansea at eleven a.m., and got to Craig-y-Nos before one o'clock, conveyances meeting them at the station to take them over Patti's new road from Penwyll. Every preparation had been made for them, and they at once settled down to make their arrangements and get used to their surroundings. The six o'clock train from Swansea brought another large contingent of visitors, and carriages arrived at the mansion from all parts continually up to the time fixed for the performance. The scene on entering the theatre at eight o'clock was of a most brilliant character, and it is doubtful if such a small place ever bore a more distinguished aspect. During the summer the theatre has been entirely decorated. Its beautiful gold embellishments were well set off by the blaze of the electric light from the central electrolite and the many side brackets round the building. The curtains were supplied by Mr. D. C. Jones, of Swansea; the furniture by Messrs. B. Evans and Co. of Swansea; and the heating apparatus by Mr. Legg, of Swansea. In addition to the visitors who had arrived for the performance, the following, who formed the house party at the Castle, were observed in prominent seats:—Sir H. Hussey Vivian, Lady Vivian, Mons. Le Marquis de Casa Englesia, Baron and Baroness de Ruten, Comte Fontana de Lisle, Mr. and Mrs. and the Misses Baird, Mr. and Mrs. Klein, Mr. and Madame Arditì, Mr. A. Spalding, Mr. Alfred Baird, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Durward Lely, Madame Valda, Mr. and Mrs. Kingston, Mr. Novara, Mr. T. Johnson, and Mr. P. Harrison. The diva had all along desired and hoped for the presence of Mr. Henry Irving, but circumstances having finally prevented his attending, Mr. Wm. Terriss, the other leading English dramatic representative, took his place. The curtain went up shortly after eight o'clock, when Mr. Terriss stepped forward and delivered the following

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I stand here as the humble and inadequate representative of the first of living English actors. It had been the intention of Mr. Henry Irving to signalise his appreciation of Madame Adeline Patti's transcendent talent as singer and actress, and to mark his strong sense of the close alliance connecting the musical and dramatic arts, by speaking a few inaugural words on this occasion—one that is unique in operatic and theatrical annals alike. For we are met here to be present at an initial performance held in a theatre which, at the generous behest of the Queen of Song, has been erected and provided with every mechanical appliance perfected by modern science in the very heart of a wild Welsh valley, teeming with the beauties of Nature, but remote from the busy haunts of men. As far as Mr. Irving is concerned, circumstances have intervened rendering his personal participation in to-night's celebrations impracticable. He has, however, empowered me to act as his envoy, and I have been accepted in that character, for the performance of this agreeable and sympathetic duty, by our gracious and gifted hostess, the chateaux of Craig-y-Nos, the good fairy who haunts the 'Rock of the Night,' the true friend of the poor, whose benefactions have for a dozen years past brightened the homes throughout the length and breadth of this picturesque region. In it is beautiful theatre—dedicated to the allied arts, and adorned with the counterfeits of great musicians and dramatists—you will this evening be privileged to listen to that incomparable voice which ever binds to its hearers in a spell of wonder and delight. I will not retard your supreme enjoyment by further dilating on the attractions of that which you have eyes to see and ears to hear, but will conclude my grateful task by declaring the Patti Theatre open for the late summer season of 1891."

Act I of "La Traviata" was then proceeded with, the entrance of Madame Patti-Nicolini in her ever favourite character of Violetta Valery being the signal for a spontaneous outburst of applause. The cast was as follows:—

- Violetta Valery... Madame Adeline Patti-Nicolini. Alfredo Germont... Mr. Durward Lely. Flora Bervoiz... Miss Ellen Flynn. Gastone de Loredano... Mr. Reginald Brophy. Marchese d'Obigny... Mr. Edwin Bai. Barone Douphol... Mr. E. Jones

Those who are acquainted with the charming opera will understand the effect created by the diva and Mr. Durward Lely in the well-known Brindisi song and their subsequent duet, whilst it will not be hard to understand the enthusiasm created when Patti rendered her solo at the finale. As to the local artistes, it should be explained that Miss Ellen Flynn has repeatedly appeared before Madame Patti in the principal characters in Hulley's operas, and has been rewarded by exceptional marks of favour, and, as she had the dramatic instinct and a good voice to boot, she did well. Mr. Reginald Brophy is a new comer to the St. David's Amateur Operatic Society, and is possessed of a remarkably virile tenor voice. Mr. Edwin Bai and Mr. E. Jones also did justice to themselves. In the entr'acte a treat was afforded to the audience by the rendering by the orchestra of Arditì's Morceaux a la Gavotte "L'Ingenuie," under the conductorship of the composer. The chief event of the evening, however, was the third item, the garden scene from "Faust," the cast for which was as follows:—

- Faust... Signor Nicolini. Mefistofel... Signor Novara. Margherita... Mame. Patti Nicolini. Sibel... Madame Julia Valda. Maria... Madame Julia Valda.

Special interest was, of course, attached to Madame Patti's appearance in this scene with her husband, especially when supported by such artistes as Signor Novara and Mame, Julia Valda. Of the effect created by the ever-famous jewel song, in which Patti's execution is so far above that of all others, more will be written hereafter. Nicolini gave his fine song, "Salve Dimora," with grand effect. Further details of the performance will be sent in due course.

LATER.

The conclusion of Mr. Terriss's address was the signal for an outburst of applause. The great actor retired behind the heavy folding curtain of electric blue plush, which almost immediately



CRAIG-Y-NOS CASTLE.

afterwards parted and disclosed the beautiful act drop with Mame, Patti as Semiramide driving a chariot. The overture was then well rendered by the band, Signor Arditì speedily getting perfect control over his orchestra. Then the curtain rose, disclosing a very tasteful drawing-room set scene leading out into a conservatory. The chairs were splendidly upholstered and ranged in various attitudes round the chamber. After the opening chorus, in which the amateurs gave a good taste of their quality, Madame Patti came on at once in her character of Violetta. The audience greeted her, upstanding, with loud cheers, and she advanced to the footlights and smilingly bowed her acknowledgments. She was dressed in a beautiful costume of pink silk and white lace and roses; but the most remarkable feature of her attire was the wealth of diamonds which glittered in her hair, on her neck, and round her breast. Mr. Durward Lely as Alfredo Germont scored a decided hit in his first song, and in the Brindisi song was greeted with rapturous applause. Madame Patti-Nicolini in this act displayed to great effect the opposite passion of joy and pain in the opening. Her greetings of the company in the wine-qualling and her coqueting with Alfredo were vivacious in the extreme, whilst later on she exhibited the deepest pathos as she so well knows how to do. The curtain fell amid repeated applause, and rose again to receive several choice bouquets which were handed on to the stage and taken by the prima donna. In the entr'acte Arditì's favorite was well rendered by the orchestra, and then there was a short interval. When the curtain rose on the first scene in "Faust," great admiration was evinced. It was a delightful rustic scene, representing an enclosed garden, Margherita's cottage on one hand, a group of trees and flowers in the centre, and on the other side a rustic seat and Margherita's spinning wheel. The entrance of Mame, Julia Valda in the character of Sibel produced a good impression, which was more than enhanced by her excellent rendering of the opening song. The costumes of Mefistofel and Faust as they entered together were favourably criticised. Signor Nicolini was an almost perfect disguise, and he presented an almost ideal appearance as a young and dashing cavalier. He gave his songs in his usual fine virile voice, and once received a hearty recall. It was towards the conclusion of the act that the talents of Madame Patti were called in to the full. In the jewel song she quite electrified the audience, and the "Figs" of the foreign visitors were vehement and repeated. Towards the end the duet between her and

sunshine with her to Penwyll, and brightened the lives of her homely neighbours. The pleasure withheld from most is readily granted to the latter. The school children rehearse their choruses at the Patti Theatre under the personal supervision of Madame Patti; the village Christy Minstrels—an organisation created by her advent to the valley—frequently give their performances in the same dainty building. In all these efforts to promote cheerfulness and enjoyment the fair

building but in the courtyard at the rear, a really good view of it is difficult to obtain. As Madame Patti-Nicolini's chief idea in building it was thought it should be for the entertainment of her own visitors at the castle, the chief attempts at ornamentation have been lavished in the interior rather than the exterior, which is comparatively a plain design, considering the nature of the building. The façade, however, is sufficiently distinctive to mark the purpose of the building, and on the pediment stands in gold letters the name of the building, "Patti Theatre." There is no grand entrance from the exterior, for the theatre being chiefly for guests, the principal entrance is from the Castle itself. A wide corridor leads from the French billiard-room and passes along the side of the theatre, long windows to the right giving views of the open country. The doors of the theatre are to the left on this corridor, which gives access both to the floor and the stage of the theatre.

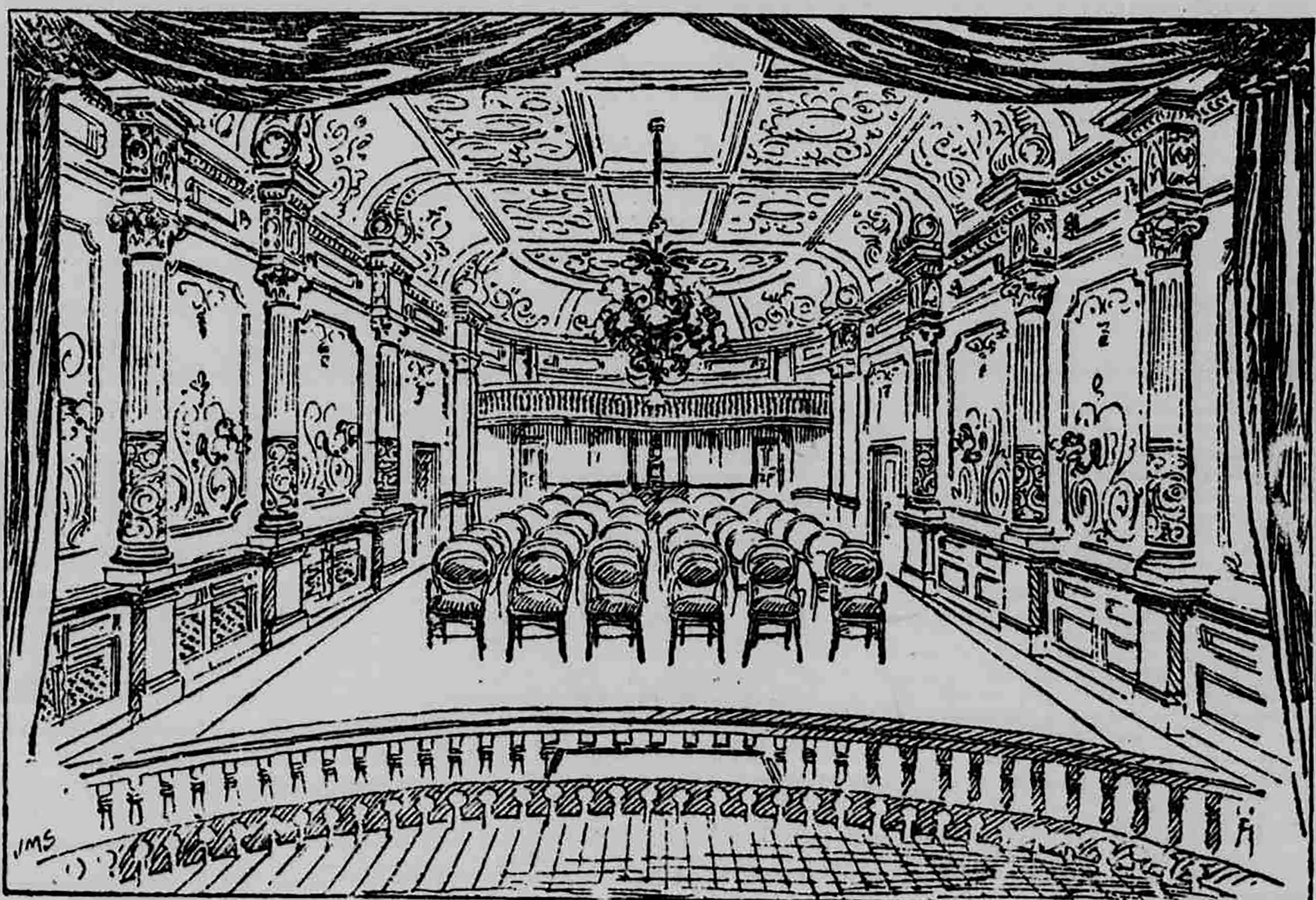
A GENERAL VIEW.

The chief features of the theatre are, perhaps its lighting and its peculiarly arranged floor. The lighting combines all the most recent inventions for electrical effects and changes. The electric lights are gracefully arranged throughout the building, and take all sorts of charming forms. The central electric light in the ceiling has sixteen lights, and, in addition, brackets of three lights each are employed round the building. On the stage the lighting is grand, and the instantaneous changes of hue which can be produced by switches throw the limelight effects of local theatres greatly into the background. The floor has been arranged with a view to utilising the theatre as a ball-room when desirable. For this purpose the floor, which slants away towards the stage end, for the purpose of giving a good view, can be raised without any difficulty to a perfect level with the stage. A ballroom 62ft. long can thus be provided at any moment, and the fact of cosy drawing-room effects being obtainable at the stage end certainly does not diminish the pleasures of the billroom. Upon entering the house the visitor is struck by the beauty of detail shown everywhere in this miniature opera-house. Before him rises the act drop, which is an elegant picture, by White, of London, of the prima donna in the character of Semiramide driving a chariot and pair of horses. The beautiful cove ceiling, which has been decorated within the past few months, and since the informal opening, presents a very attractive appearance, whilst all round the auditorium rise Corinthian columns with decorated surfaces, dividing the walls into panels. Behind the auditorium the building is curved, and a small gallery or tribune, which can accommodate a very few extra visitors, is here provided. The building is seated for 180 persons, though



MADAME PATTI-NICOLINI.

diva never spares herself or her gifts. If it should befall that Madame Patti ever forsakes Craig-y-Nos, the effect will be as if the very light had departed from the valley. Quite an industry has grown around the castle. Alterations or additions are continually being made, and what with the haulage—which provides full employment for two or three small farmers—and the various other occupations connected therewith, Craig-y-Nos is the one busy spot in this Welsh Sleepy Hollow.



THE INTERIOR FROM THE STAGE.

"Faust was done in an extremely powerful way, and when the last superb bit of acting arrived, in which Faust rushes to his beloved at the window, the enthusiasm of the audience knew no bounds. The act drop descended amidst a hurricane of applause, and the diva amidst a hearty recall. The orchestra was composed as follows:—

- First violins, Mr. W. F. Hulley (leader) and Mr. John Squire; second violins, Mr. W. H. Hoare and Mr. F. S. C. Moss; violas, Mr. Fred Tunbridge and Mr. J. Squire; violoncellos, Mr. W. H. Squire and Miss Mary Squire; bass, Mr. Arthur Smith; flute, Mr. Bernard Hulley; oboe, Mr. R. Purse; clarionets, Mr. J. Samuel and Mr. W. Clay; bassoon, Mr. A. Edwin; horns, Mr. T. Reynolds and Mr. J. Sullivan; cornet, Mr. T. Hawkes; bass trombone, Mr. T. Rees; trumpet, Mr. W. Walker; harp, Miss and M. Fricker; organ, Mr. Louis Atkins; conductor, Signor Arditì.

The following is the programme for Saturday's matinee at two o'clock:—

- Overture, by the Orchestra. "MARTELLA" Madama Adeline Patti-Nicolini, Nany, Madame Julia Valda. L'Amant... Mr. Durward Lely. Plunket... Signor Novara. Valse... "Rocubus" (Arditi). The Orchestra. "ROMKO AND GUILIETTA" (Act 3.—Balcony Scene.) Guilietta... Madame Adeline Patti-Nicolini. Romco... Signor Nicolini.

DESCRIPTION OF CRAIG-Y-NOS AND THE PATTI THEATRE.

Madame Patti-Nicolini is probably one of the most persistently paragraphed ladies in the world. Her name has an abiding place in the newspapers

It is the conventional thing to describe Craig-y-Nos as the imposing centre-piece of a scene of exquisite loveliness. Lovely Penwyll is not exerts there be beauty in the wide sweep of the bleak, barren hills whose rocky ribs protrude through the scanty herbage; unless there be beauty in the sudden dip of the valley and in the jagged edges of the bluffs which lean over it, it is beautiful in the imagination only. Looking down from the plateau whereon the station stands, the eye catches a view of what seems a winding gorge intersected by a stream—ever in shadow, apparently—with the land on either side shooting up to the clouds—frowning and desolate. So steep is the gradient that the road—made by the rails and at the expense of Madame Patti—for fully a mile bears away from Craig-y-Nos to the westward, where the valley distends, recalling scattered hamlets and isolated homesteads, and it is only when the bottom is nearly reached that the track bends backward and the castle is faced. The latter is the one agreeable object presented to the view. Pretty it certainly looked, as seen by me, a castellated mansion, gothic in design, nestling in the shadow of the gaunt hills, whose summits showed resplendent in the glories of the setting sun. Upon closer inspection I found that outside the narrow belt of ornamental ground enclosing the Castle the surrounding land had been left untouched in its primitive wildness. The furze and fern stored for mastery, and the tiny river—well strewn with trout—goes purring over a broken bed where huge boulders, which have gathered

it is possible to find room for 200. The chairs in the first few rows have arms, and are covered with blue silk plush. The decorations are in quiet tints of blue and ivory white, with a plentiful use of gilding. The orchestra is divided from the auditorium by a low balustrade, and is sunk 6ft. below the stage level; it has room for a band of sixteen. The proscenium is very striking; it is 20ft. wide and 19ft. high. Surrounding it is a handsome border, with a pediment and descriptive and decorative ornaments at the top. The frieze of the proscenium is paneled, and this paneling is continued round the auditorium, bearing the names of great composers. Rossini, Patti's favourite composer, occupies the central position on the proscenium, and is faced by Shakespeare above the gallery. The tablau curtains are very handsome; they are richly festooned, and are of electric blue silk plush. The stage is 24ft. deep and 40ft. wide, with ample height to allow the whole of the scenes to be raised into the flies without rolling. Every modern appliance necessary for opera and pantomime has been provided. There are electric footlights, rows of batten lights in the wings, and ground lights with coloured lamps for giving coloured effects. The number of lights in the entire theatre is 281, and all these are under the control of the prompter by means of a handsome switchboard which has each department labelled. A cellar under the stage accommodates the machinery for working the scenes and traps; while alongside the auditorium on the opposite side of the corridor is a large scene dock, 32ft. long and of full height, to accommodate scenes



THE DROP SCENE.

of all countries. And yet, in spite of the searching light in which the fair cantatrice ever moves, the character of her life at Craig-y-Nos is really unknown even to the people of Wales, proud as they are of possessing the world's sweetest singer. The scantiness of the information respecting Madame Patti-Nicolini in this regard is the best possible testimony to the wisdom which prompted the selection of a home intended to serve as a retreat from the whirl and rush of life in populous towns and cities. To know the diva as she presents herself at Craig-y-Nos, it is only necessary to talk to the inhabitants of the valley around Penwyll. They will readily tell the visitor what a true Lady Beautiful is Madame Patti, with what pleasant face and kind heart she moves among the poor, ever ready to succour the suffering and relieve the troubled. She has brought the

the moss and the lichen in summer, form miniature cascades and produce innumerable cascades. Not the slightest attempt has been made to tamper with Nature's rough handiwork. The castle, erected on an elevated platform, overlooks a broad and deeply-indentated terrace of earth, the deep green of its fine turf set off by the brilliantly-tinted flowers which run along the edges. The soughing of engines and the whirr of machinery which come from a structure—half hidden by the shrubbery—to the left of the castle serve to remind the visitor that the electric lighting of mansions has its disadvantages.

THE THEATRE

Is situated to the extreme right, and adjoining the French billiard-room and clock tower, but as its façade is not situate in the general front of the

when not in use. Behind the stage are five dressing-rooms on the first and second floors, with a loft over for properties. The architects were Messrs. Bucknall and Jennings, of Swansea and London. The builder was Mr. H. Smith, of Kidderminster; the scenery was painted by Mr. W. Hann, of London; and the decorations done by Messrs. Jackson and Sons, of London. The electric lighting has been carried out by the Wenham Light Company.

LADIES FROM HOME OR ON TOUR can obtain Southall's Sanitary Towels, the new patented articles of Underclothing—Independent of Ladies Travellers; retail of Charles and Glover, 11, Salisbury road, and Mrs. Motcock, 10, Queen-street, Cardiff. Sold in packets of one dozen as follows:—Size 1. Is.; Size 2 (the new towel), Is. 6d.; Size 3, 2s.; and Size 4, 2s. 9d.; by all Ladies Outfitters, Chemists, &c. throughout the world. Mention this paper.