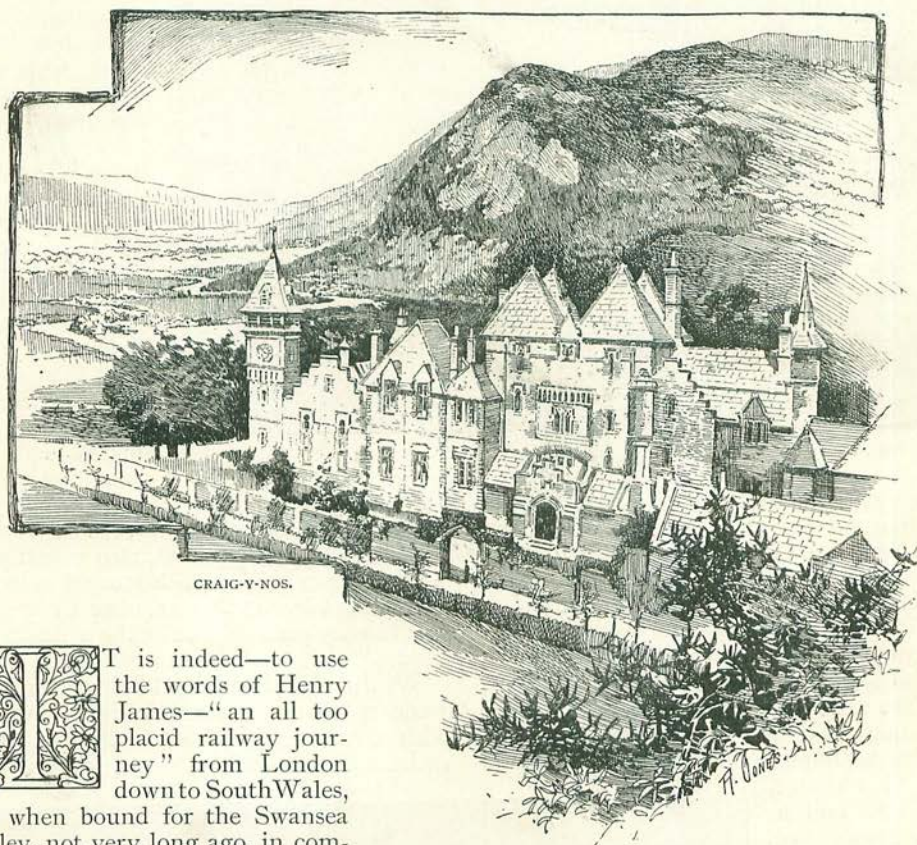


## Illustrated Interviews.

### XII.—MADAME ADELINA PATTI.

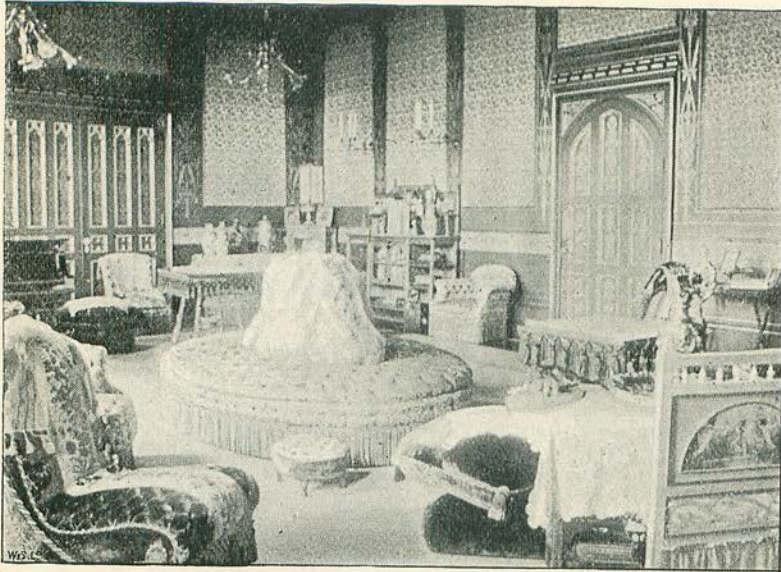


CRAIG-Y-NOS.

**I**T is indeed—to use the words of Henry James—“an all too placid railway journey” from London down to South Wales, and when bound for the Swansea Valley, not very long ago, in company with a party of cheery spirits, I must confess to feeling in despair, after leaving the old cathedral city of Hereford in the rear, of ever reaching the promised goal, as the train crept with an exasperating slowness past one deserted country station after another. Great was the general relief when at length the cry of “Penwyllt” was to be heard, and on descending from our railway carriage to find a cosy landau waiting to convey our party to Craig-y-nos Castle, the far-famed mountain home of Adelina Patti, a beautiful residence and estate situated on a cleft of the huge Night rock (from which it derives its name), standing high above the sparkling waters of the Tawe and surrounded by scenery of rare loveliness. Tired and travel-worn as we were, we could but congratulate ourselves, as the panorama now opened before us, on making acquaintance with a comparatively

unexplored country, a green vision of towering hills and fresh bright valleys musical with the chime of running streams, and as yet primitive and unpervaded by the omnipresent tourist.

On reaching the courtyard of the castle, the wide gates were thrown open to admit us into a flowery garden, and now the house itself, tall and stately, stood before us. The door was unlatched by a pleasant-looking German “intendant,” William Heck, Madame Patti’s right hand and domestic adviser, who, after conducting us through the warmly carpeted hall, led the way to the drawing-room to await the down-coming of the fair châtelaine herself. Needless to say that the welcome of Adelina Patti to her guests is always a hearty one. The diva puts her heart into all she does, whether it be singing, dancing, playing, or attending to the wants of the poor who throng at her gates.



From a Photo. by]

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

[Elliott &amp; Fry.

Queen of England, some long Roman earrings sent to me by Mario and Grisi, who used to be good friends of mine in the days that are no more; and many other treasures. The beautiful bust on the table by the window, bearing the inscription, 'Time is Money,' was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. de Young, of San Francisco, and the laurel wreath, studded with diamonds and engraved with all

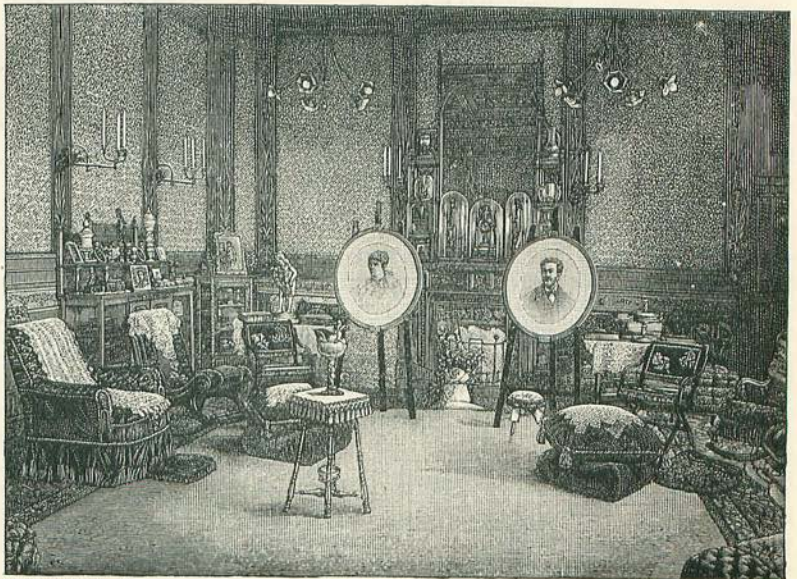
Whilst chatting merrily to us as we sipped the fragrant tea she had ordered for our refreshment, the prima donna was willing to answer the many questions we put to her on the subject of her household goods.

"There will be much for you to see to-morrow, after you have rested," she says, laughingly. "But meanwhile, I see your eyes are stealing their way to that marble bust in the corner. It is supposed to be me, but bears more resemblance to someone else, I think!

You will find a truer likeness of me in Mr. Sant's picture, which was presented to me by the committee of the Swansea Hospital a few years ago, and which I naturally prize very much, as so many kind friends contributed to the gift. That cabinet in the corner of the room contains all my most valuable souvenirs, and among others you will find a ruby bracelet given by the

the names of my favourite rôles, came from some other kind friends in that part of the world. This silver casket, also traced with a kindly inscription, was bestowed upon me by my *confrères* at Vienna, after I had sung in a charity performance at the great Opera House."

Whilst the diva was talking, our eyes wandered round the tasteful room crowded with so many pretty *bibelots* and hung with delicate blue and silver brocade, to an open



From a Photo. by]

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

[Water.

door giving a glimpse of a cosy little boudoir, which contains, among other interesting objects, a number of water-colour drawings from the gifted hand of the fair lady herself. Here, too, are displayed a collection of photographs of royal and eminent personages, among others, the late Emperor William and his unfortunate son, and the Empress Eugénie of the French. No portrait is more charming than that of the Princess of Wales, standing with her arm round the

waist of the Empress of Russia in the most sisterly fashion imaginable, whilst on a scroll below a few words of gracious compliment are written in her own charming hand. Another picture, much valued by the recipient, is that of the late King and Queen of Spain, with their baby-boy between them, and the inscription, "Mille félicitations sincères, and many happy returns of the day, surtout parmi nous." A likeness, the last taken before his death, of the Duke of Albany, England's youngest princely son, is framed, together

with a letter craving for "the counterfeit presentment" of Madame Patti in return. In the boudoir, as in the drawing-room, there is scarcely an object amongst her surroundings which is not connected in some manner with the record of her professional achievements, but in the billiard-rooms and splendid new dining-hall, where next our kind hostess conducted us, all remembrances of her celebrity seem banished for the time being. Craig-y-nos

Castle is perhaps the only house existing where two billiard rooms are to be found, a second, "The French Room," as it is called, having been built to take in the magnificent table which Madame Patti purchased at the Chicago Exhibition. A huge orchestra, brought over from Geneva, and which plays every conceivable air, from Clairette's song in "La Fille de Madame Angot" to the Pilgrims' March in "Tannhäuser," is always wound up when a game of billiards is commenced, and whilst the diva handles her cue, or watches her opponent's game, she sings half-unconsciously the while to the tunes given by her favourite instrument. On very rare occasions the gifted lady will produce the castagnettes she once used in "Carmen," and will dance as well as sing in the most delightful manner. The far-famed "Patti Theatre," of which so much has already been said and written, leads out of the dining and billiard rooms, and here, in the presence of her friends and neighbours, the diva has

proved that she can shine with brilliant lustre as a *comédienne* when the fancy takes her to show her powers in that line. Patti's pride in this theatre knows no bounds—a pride scarcely to be wondered at, for a prettier little playhouse it would be impossible to imagine. At first only designed for the use of her guests, the plan grew in dimensions, and the "Patti Theatre" is now a pleasant rendezvous for all the town and country folks within twenty miles



From a Photo. by

PATTI AND MARIO IN "FAUST."  
(Her first appearance as *Marguerite*.)

[J. Caldesi & Co.,  
Pall Mall.



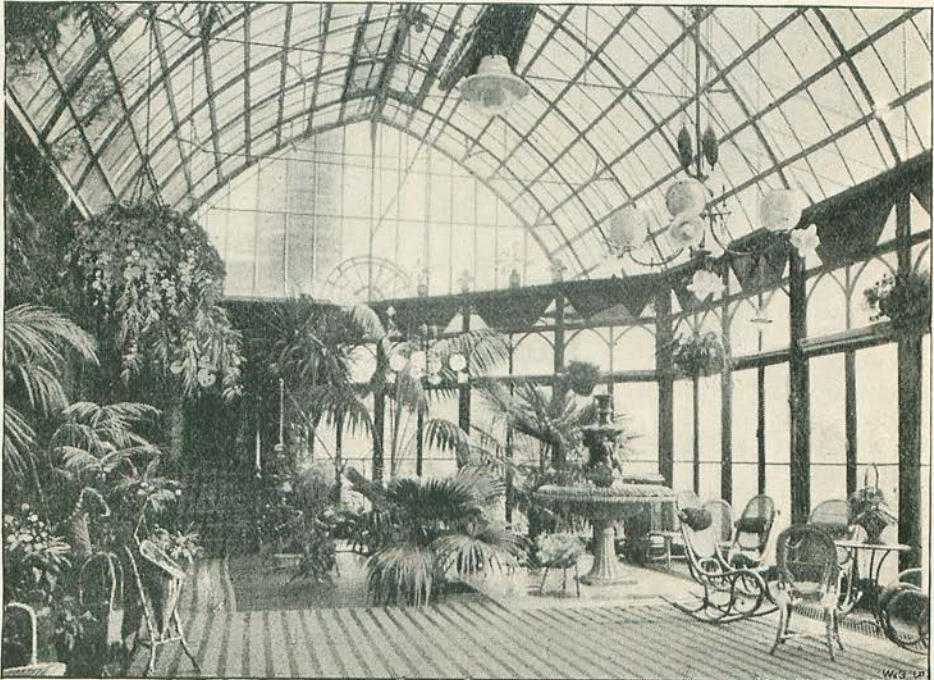
From a Photo. by]

THE MORNING-ROOM.

[Elliott &amp; Fry.

round of Craig-y-nos. The principal entrance is from a courtyard at the back of the house, and although outwardly the building possesses no particular attraction, the interior is charming and tasteful to a degree. The decorations are in ivory white and electric blue, and the curtain shows a

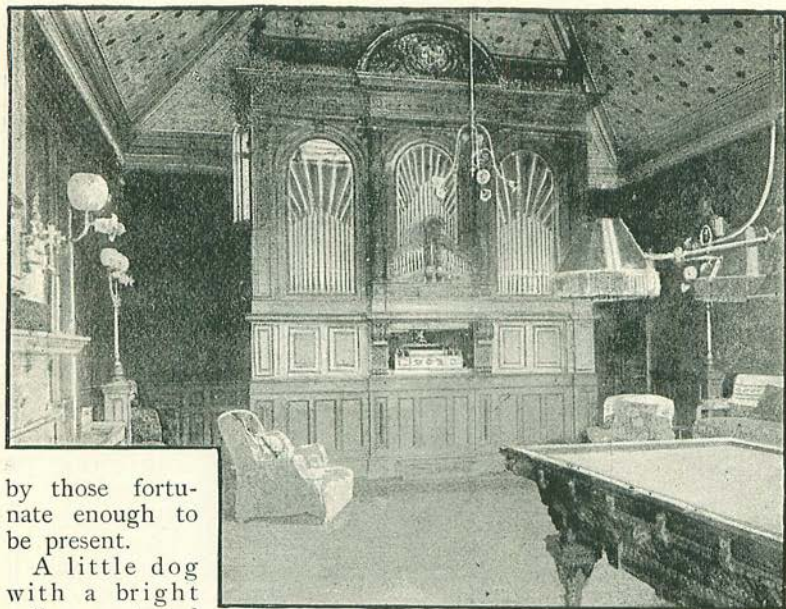
tableau, wherein Patti herself, as *Semiramide*, drives a triumphal car in the face of all beholders. Three hundred electroliers, cunningly arranged, throw a radiance over the general proceedings, and a floor inclining towards the stage when theatricals are undertaken, by a clever device can be brought to a level with the boards if a ball-room were desired. Very frequently Patti is induced to take part with her friends in a dumb charade or pantomime, and exhibits, as everybody can believe, a very telling talent for comedy. Her ten minutes' impromptu duologue with Mr. Terris on the occasion of the festivities at Craig-y-nos last summer will not readily be forgotten



From a Photo by]

THE CONSERVATORY.

[Walery.



From a Photo, by]

THE BILLIARD-ROOM.

[Walery.

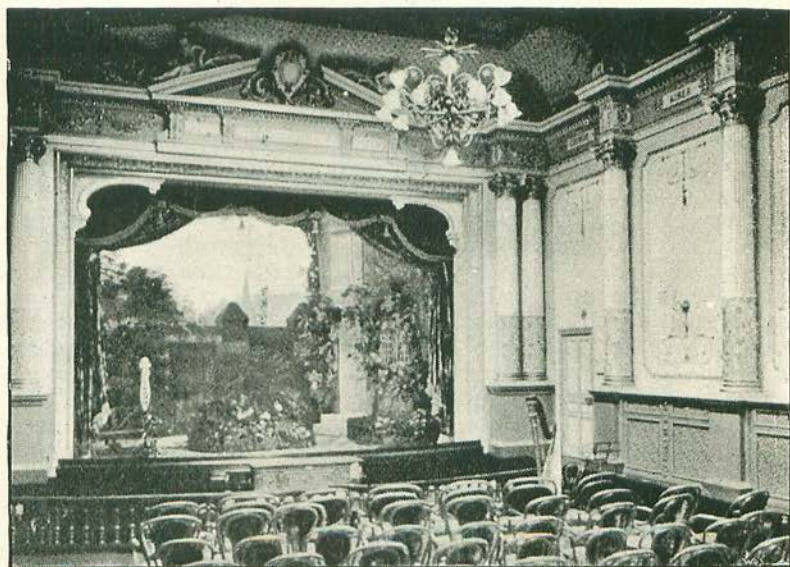
by those fortunate enough to be present.

A little dog with a bright yellow coat and mischievous dark eyes, given by a Mexican friend, is the prima donna's constant companion, and appears to watch her every movement with profound admiration. Nor must I forget her other pets. The parrots she brought with her from New York some seasons ago, the smaller of which, named "Cookie," accompanies her songs and imitates her roulades, further embellished with quite remarkable *fioriture* of his own. Then there is a "Jumbo," a strange bird; who refused to utter a single word until one day when a doctor appeared on the scene to attend to a sore throat of his mistress, he exclaimed: "Oh! doctor, I'm so sick!"

At our request Patti was quite willing to produce the famous book of autographs of which we had heard so much, and with mingled thoughts, indeed, did we turn the pages of this

precious volume, on which so many valued lines had been traced by friends who have now passed away. Meyerbeer, Bellini, Rossini, Auber, Berlioz, Mario, Tietjens, have all left their record, and among those who are fortunately still in our midst, to cheer and delight us, and who, at their friend's request, have inscribed their names in her treasured book, are Hans Richter, Capoul, Albani, Trebelli, Scalchi,

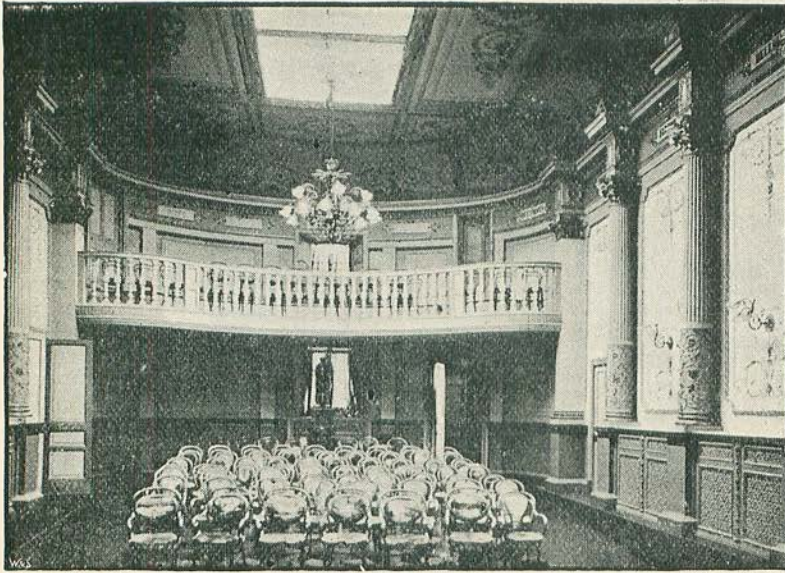
Ravelli, and many others. Niemann, the great German tenor, whose never-to-be-forgotten performances of "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser" made all Europe ring with his praise, in an eloquent little poem incites Patti to appear in one of Wagner's operas, and concludes his lines with "Elsa-Patti! Ich liebe Dich!" Hans Richter, too, calls her his "Meister Sängerin," and Christine Nilsson, in a burst of friendship,



From a Photo, by]

THE THEATRE—I, THE STAGE.

[Elliott &amp; Fry.



From a Photo. by]

THE THEATRE—II. THE AUDITORIUM.

[Elliott &amp; Fry.

declares her unchanging regard. Verdi, who, when asked whom he considered the greatest singer in the world, wrote: "La première Patti; la seconde Patti; la troisième Patti;" and furthermore, on hearing her in his favourite opera, "Rigoletto," sent her a card bearing the words, "A mia unica e vera Gilda."

Besides the many trophies of which I have written, Patti possesses others which she prizes even more highly, and first and foremost of these is the doll Henriette, all decked out in ribbons and laces, which was given to her when, as a prima donna of seven summers, she first warbled an *aria* in public. Well does she remember how, on the occasion of her singing before a great crowd in Niblo's Gardens, she chanced to spy a little schoolfellow among her hearers, and forgetful of her final cadenza, exclaimed, in her shrill childish tones: "Oh, Nelly, do just come right away; I've got a new doll I want to show you!" A red fan which Sonntag had loosed from her girdle and placed in the hands of her baby-rival, is lost beyond hope of recovery, to Adelina's infinite regret, but she still hoards a number of other toys and trinkets with which her parents and teachers delighted to reward the efforts of their "Wunderkind."

Another of Patti's early recollections is the first visit of Mario and Grisi to New York, where they had been feverishly awaited for many months long before their

*début* was actually announced on the *affiches*. The child had saved all her pocket-money to buy a bunch of camellias as a gift to the queen of song, of whom her mother had told her such wonderful accounts, and when at length the day came, and Mario and Grisi, after having sung and conquered, were surrounded by friends and admirers in the green-room, Adelina, trem-

bling with joy and apprehension, advanced with her posy, and laid it in the hands of the imposing lady, whilst whispering a few words of congratulation, which she had hoped would win her a smile of approbation. Grisi, weary with over-excitement, waved away her diminutive admirer, murmuring, "Not now, little girl, not now!" With quivering lip the child turned and fled, but Mario, who had been a witness of the scene, with infinite tact managed to soothe her wounded feelings, and promised to keep the pretty camellias for ever, as a souvenir of "little Lina."

Of her phenomenal success when she appeared as a prima donna of seven summers at Niblo's Gardens in New York, so many accounts have been written that it would be idle to repeat an oft-told tale. The scales, trills, and staccati which Patti now executes with such triumphant ease, were given by her even in those days with a brilliancy and effect which fairly electrified her hearers. In 1859, at the age of sixteen, she made her veritable opera *début* at the Academy of Music in New York. Two seasons later, "la petite fée sortant d'un œuf enchanté" came to steal the hearts of all London with her charming rendering of *Amina* in "La Sonnambula." The *habitués* of Covent Garden had but a cold welcome to offer the unknown "Patti" when she came on to the stage; but at the close of the first act, "it seemed," declares an eye-witness, "as if the house were made

of straw, and had caught fire, the applause was so deafening, and the excitement so universal." Her singing had all the charm of the spontaneity of a bird, whilst her acting was imbued with such girlish innocent coquetry that many a wise head among her hearers was fairly turned with delight.

Adelina Patti's initial triumph was followed by many another, and after

a day's visit to Swansea, the principal town of South Wales, proudly named by its inhabitants "the miniature Bay of Naples," and which before it became so essentially a commercial centre, and darkened with the fumes of copper and chemical works in the neighbourhood, must have been a place of much beauty. It was fortunately a

market day, and we could not but be amused, as we wandered about, at the sight of the Welsh women in their quaint market dress, selling their butter, poultry, and cheese,

PATTI AS "LINDA." [Elliott & Fry.



PATTI AS "AIDA."  
[London Stereo. Co.

appearing in "la ville Cerveau," where the chorus of London approbation was fully confirmed, she sang in every European capital in succession to win an extraordinary and unheard of popularity.

One character after another was added to her *répertoire*, and every fresh appearance was a fresh revelation of the young singer's charm and vivacious talent.

As time has crept on one *prima donna* after another has appealed for our admiration and applause, but Adelina Patti still maintains her supremacy, and warbles to this day before audiences as crowded and enthusiastic as in the days of yore.

After having passed some pleasant days at Craig-y-nos Castle, Madame Patti proposed



PATTI AS "JULIET."  
[London Stereo. Co.

at what seemed to us merely nominal prices, whilst they chattered among them-



PATTI AS "VALENTINA."  
[London Stereo. Co.

selves in a language of which no word was familiar to our ears. The town itself is pleasant enough with its long streets of cream-washed houses, but nothing could be more dreary than the aspect of the peasants and miners whom we met on the way to the market, and who sulkily vouchsafed a few words of greeting as we passed.

Without, as well as within doors, nothing could be more agreeable than the life led at Craig-y-Nos. Madame Patti expects her guests to do exactly what they please, and only enforces a rule that they should come down punctually to meals, which are always served in a fine conservatory leading from the Italian winter gardens. Dinner at 7 o'clock is the event of the day, and then La Diva appears in her highest spirits, full of wit and anecdote. Like many celebrated people, she lives much in the past, and is never weary of talking of the father and



PATTI AS "LUCIA."  
[Reutlinger, Paris.]



PATTI AS "DESDEMONA."  
[Bergamasco, St. Petersburg.]



PATTI AS "ROSINA."  
[Bergamasco, St. Petersburg.]

mother to whom she was so dutifully attached, and who were taken from her long years ago. Of her childhood's days, as I have already shown, she has much to tell. "I was always merry, yet earnest

at the same time, and took pains with everything I undertook — the real secret of my success in life."

The afternoon at Craig-y-nos is always occupied in driving in the beautiful neighbourhood surrounding the Castle. Madame Patti is naturally a warm favourite with all the squires and squireses of the country round, no less than with the poor on her estate; and when the wheels of her carriage are heard

in the distance, children, big and small, leave their work and run into the lanes to wave their handkerchiefs, and lustily cheer the Queen of Song as she passes on her way.

Notwithstanding her great talents, Adeline Patti is the most modest and unaffected of women, and of a singularly generous and sympathetic nature. Nowhere is she seen to greater advantage than when entertaining her friends, whose names are legion, beneath the hospitable roof of Craig-y-nos Castle,