

CHAPTER. XV.

ALTHOUGH Parodi and Piccolomini had taken wing, there were a vast number of Italian, German, and American feminine stars in the New York operatic firmament about this time, comprising such names as Cortesi, Colson, Gazzaniga, Strakosch (and her sister, Adelina Patti)—Fabri (who came with an immense flourish of trumpets from the Brazils, or somewhere), &c. The first-named is a fine actress, and, (though like all of them, worn to death in voice), would, I think, take a high position anywhere, having a consummate command of good and *bad* notes; Patti is very young—I am told, not seventeen; but the labour of “getting-up” in a score of operas, and singing them nightly for months at a spell, has worn herself and her voice to threads. The adulation of the Americans, who claim her for their own, though I believe she was born and bred in Europe, was immense, and I suppose even Piccolomini scarcely outdid her in newspaper puff and Platonic presents. Speaking of presents, I cannot here help mentioning a little incident.

We were one spare night listening to Patti, in *Martha*, and drawing “oderous” comparisons, of course, when my attention was drawn by Lucille to a party of young men who were intently gazing at our box, and on finding that I noticed them, made unmistakeable signs of wishing me to come to them. It was such a common occurrence at this time for us to be stared at, that at first I set down the present instance to nothing more than a little more than ordinary rudeness, and took no further notice until the fall of the curtain upon the second act. One of the gentlemen alluded to then stood up, and elevated a bouquet of considerable dimensions towards Lucille, which, of course, drew the all now unoccupied eyes of the audience upon us, and, considerably annoyed, I beckoned the *gardener* to come to the box, which he speedily did, accompanied by some five or six others. He introduced himself and his friends as Southerners, and we soon recognised in them an enthusiastic