



GALA NIGHT AT THE OPERA—COVENT GARDEN DECORATED FOR A COMMAND PERFORMANCE.

The Royal Covent Garden Opera House is the home of Grand Opera in London. It is controlled by an influential syndicate, formed in 1896, the personnel of which is made up principally of leading members of the aristocracy. The conductor's seat, seen in the top photo, has been occupied by many famous musicians, amongst whom may be named Richter, Strauss, Campanini and Nikisch. It is usual in all big ceremonies of State to have a Royal command performance, and the Opera House is decorated for the occasions with thousands of flowers and electric lights, as shown. The Royal box is seen in the Grand Tier (second row of boxes), with the illuminated crown above it. Above the three tiers of boxes is the amphitheatre chairs, and beyond that again in the distance is the gallery—the rendezvous of all truly musical enthusiasts. Above the amphitheatre on either side, just under the ceiling, in the lower photo, are "the slips" (behind the railings), where there is standing room only.