Comedy Opera Company Ltd. 1878
(Under the management of Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte)

9th – 14th September: Bradford

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mr. C. Rice. – H.M.S. Pinafore was produced here on Monday evening last. We may venture to predict its Provincial success, for the enthusiasm with which it is nightly greeted is something to be remembered. Everything is perfection as regards the mounting and dresses. The chorus is a capital one, and the band under the control of Mr. Hamilton Clarke is most efficient. Miss Duglas Gordon is charming as Josephine, and renders the songs allotted to her with exquisite expression and sweetness. Miss Theresa Cummings has little to do as Hebe, but she makes the most of it. As Little Buttercup Miss Fanny Edwards uses her fine voice to advantage. Mr. Charles Campbell has a good tenor voice, and he gave much expression to the songs of Ralph Rackstraw, and shared the many encores with Miss Gordon. Mr. Ryley, as the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., is simply irresistible in the quaintness of his humour, and his clear and rapid enunciation procures frequent encores for his songs. Captain Corcoran is capitably played by Mr. M. Dwyer, and Mr. A. Rousbey exhibits a bit of fine character acting and burlesque as Dick Deadeye. Mr. R. Cummings has a capital voice, which he uses with effect in the part of Bill Bobstay. The bright and telling choruses are very effective, and the audience miss none of the points in the libretto. Altogether, the production in Bradford is a most decided success. Two Flats and a Sharp forms the afterpiece, in which Mr. G. Mudie, Miss F. Trevellyn, and Miss M. Lucette appear. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, September 15, 1878; Issue 2086.]

16th – 21st September: Southport

THE PAVILION AND WINTER GARDENS. – Secretary, Mr. E. Martin. – The attraction for the 16th, 17th, and 18th inst., was H.M.S. Pinafore, which was highly successful. For the remainder of the week The Sorcerer was produced. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, September 22, 1878; Issue 2087.]

23rd September – 5th October: Edinburgh

PRINCESS'S THEATRE. – Lessee, Mr. A. D. M'Neill. – Seldom has our pretty south-side Theatre presented a more brilliant appearance than it did on Monday evening, when, crowded in every part, the curtain rose and disclosed to view the quarter-deck of H.M.S. Pinafore – a scene which is certainly a marvel of elaborate stage mounting, and absolutely perfect in its realism. The celebrity of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's clever and successful work has already preceded it here, and the curiosity of the musical public so largely represented on Monday evening was rewarded with a performance that, as it proceeded, won their complete appreciation and approval. The characters are sustained by the members of the comedy opera company, who only recently scored a well-deserved success in The Sorcerer, but some new engagements have been made since their last visit. As it is, the cast is an admirable one, every character being satisfactorily filled. The band was fair, the chorus all that could be desired, and the reception of the opera of the most enthusiastic character. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, September 29, 1878; Issue 2088.]

PRINCESS'S THEATRE. – Lessee, Mr. A. D. M'Neill. – H.M.S. Pinafore, with its charming music, clever acting, and admirable chorus, continues to attract the largest
possible audiences to this favourite Theatre. On Thursday evening The Sorcerer was presented, and will run for the remained of the week, supplemented by Mr. Ryley's farce Congenial Souls. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, October 6, 1878; Issue 2089.]

7th – 19th October: Glasgow

Gaiety. – Proprietor and Manager, Mr. C. Bernard. – The London comedy opera company commenced their second engagement in Glasgow at this Theatre on Monday, when H.M.S. Pinafore was presented. As might have been expected, there was a large an most appreciative audience. The brilliant music of the piece was admirably rendered, and several of the principal numbers were warmly encored. We do not exaggerate in saying that a more complete scene than the quarter-deck of H.M.S. Pinafore has never been place on the Gaiety stage. The augmented orchestra, under the able baton of Mr. Hamilton Clarke, performed the work in a highly satisfactory manner; as did also the chorus, to whom a large measure of praise is undoubtedly due. An extremely amusing farce, entitled Congenial Souls, concluded, Mr. J. H. Ryley (the author) causing no end of laughter as Adolphus Fitzbrown, a retired pork butcher. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, October 13, 1878; Issue 2090.]

Gaiety. – Proprietor and Manager, Mr. Charles. Bernard. – The comedy opera company continue their engagement this week with The Sorcerer. Several changes have been made in the cast since the opera was last performed in Glasgow. Mr. J. H. Ryley, however, is still the Wellington Wells, and meet with as much favour as formerly. His patter song in the first act goes immensely. Miss Duglas Gordon is again the Aline, and a more charming exponent of the part it would be difficult to find. The other characters are fairly sustained. We must not omit to say a word in favour of Mr. A. Rousbey and Miss Cummings, who appear in their old parts of Sir Marmaduke and Constance respectively. The piece is beautifully mounted, and the chorus and orchestra, under Mr. H. Clarke, perform their work most creditably. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, October 20, 1878; Issue 2091.]

21st – 26th October: Aberdeen

Her Majesty's Opera House.

H.M.S. Pinafore

Those who saw the "Sorcerer" last spring must have hailed with pleasure the announcement that the company which represented that charming little comic opera here with so much acceptance, was to pay us a return visit. In the interval, however, several changes have occurred; some of the old faces have disappeared, and new ones have taken their place; still, the standard of efficiency has been maintained, and though we may miss our former acquaintances, we cannot be blind to the merits of those who have stepped into their shoes. The week's programme was opened on Monday night with the production of a new piece by the authors of the Sorcerer, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, whose alliance has proved such a happy one. Mr. W. S. Gilbert's fanciful libretto, wedded to Arthur Sullivan's taking music, had achieved such a measure of success as to induce the authors to try another joint venture, the result of which we have now before us. H.M.S. Pinafore, which, as the name implies, is a naval sketch, contains various clever touches of humorous satire in its libretto; and some of the hits are not far wide of the mark, particularly those that take off the peculiarity in our naval arrangements which selects for responsible posts at the
admiralty men who have had the least possible means of acquiring the experience appropriate to the position. The dialogue is piquant enough, and in some passages it is really very clever; and it goes without saying that Mr. Sullivan's music is of a very pleasing cast all through. It has not, however, the same amount of originality that characterised the *Sorcerer* music. A considerable number of the most attractive airs suggest some reminiscences we have heard before, and both words and music at times forcibly recall the familiar *Trial by Jury*. Though this be the case, the present work, notwithstanding, has many claims to success on its own merits; if some of its plumes be borrowed, it arranges them to the best advantage, and the result is a very amusing production. We are made to laugh at the grotesque inversion of ranks and stations that takes place on board this particular member of "Her Majesty's Navee," the tender relations of the captain and the bumboat woman, of the captain's daughter and the foremost man, and the irresistibly funny picture of the First Lord, accompanied on all his tours of inspection by "his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts;" and the scenes and situations are managed with a skill worthy of the experience and stage-knowledge of the playwrights. Of course, novelty or intricacy of plot is not looked for in a comic opera, and the plot of *H.M.S. Pinafore* is slight enough. The captain's daughter falls in love with a common sailor and *vice versa*. She is sought in marriage by the First Lord of the Admiralty and, to escape her father's importunities, plans a runaway marriage with her sailor lover. This scheme, however, is betrayed by a shipmate of the enamoured tar, and things look bad for the lovers; in the end it turns out, luckily for them, that owing to an interchange of children in the hands of a baby farmer, the captain is the common sailor, and the common sailor is the captain. Naturally enough, when this discovery is made, the First Lord sheers off, and the lovers unite and live happily ever afterwards. There are few very taking solos, but some of the duets and concerted pieces are very good. Mr. J. H. Ryley, as Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., has not such a prominent part as he had in the *Sorcerer*, but it is not a bad one, and does not suffer in his hands. Mr. M. Dwyer as the captain is excellent and Mr. C. J. Campbell, as Ralph Rackstraw, the A.B. who falls in love with his captain's daughter, is very successful also. Both sing well, and act also with finish and ability. Miss Duglas Gordon is good as ever as Josephine, the captain's daughter; her singing is pleasing and her dress and acting charming. Miss Fanny Edwards, as Buttercup, the bumboat woman, makes one of the big hits of the piece; and Miss Theresa Cummings and Mr. Arthur Rousbey also deserve special mention, the duet between the latter and the captain being particularly good. The chorus and band are well proportioned and complete, and get along very harmoniously together; both are much beyond those of the companies that have lately attempted the department of regular opera in Aberdeen. *H.M.S. Pinafore* has the further advantage of being admirably put on the stage; only one scene is required, but that is pretty nearly perfect in all its appointments, and the dresses are very pretty and tasteful. The evening's entertainment concludes with a farce from the pen of Mr. J. H. Ryley entitled *Congenial Souls*. It is full of fun, and forms a very apposite wind-up to the programme. Mr. Ryley himself plays the leading part in it with great energy and comic power, and is well supported, especially by Miss Florence Trevellyan as Seraphina Miggs, the maiden lady in search of an eligible partner in life; a congenial soul, in fact. Altogether an evening may be very enjoyably spent at Her Majesty's with the present bill; and a change is promised for the latter part of the week, which will be no less attractive, the *Sorcerer* being then to be reproduced, when we doubt not those who have seen it before will be eager to renew their acquaintance with it, and those who have not cannot fail to desire to see a
H ER MAJESTY’S THEATRE. — The London comedy opera company commenced a week’s stay on Monday in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which was given on the first three evenings of the week. The laughable nautical musical skit gave immense enjoyment to good houses. *The Sorcerer* was billed for the last three nights. *Congenial Souls* affords plenty of amusement as the concluding item of the week's programme. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, October 27, 1878; Issue 2092.]

28th October – 2nd November: Dundee

COMIC OPERA AT THE THEATRE ROYAL

Last night a rare treat was afforded at the Theatre Royal to all those capable of enjoying excellent music, sparkling wit, and quaint and genuine humour. The audience, notwithstanding the tempestuous weather, was a large and brilliant one, as it behoved to be, seeing that the engagement, as we understand, is a more expensive one than even that of Mr. Irving. The piece performed was the comic opera of "H.M.S. Pinafore," the joint production of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan. The scene is laid on the deck of H.M.S. Pinafore, and in justice to all concerned may be fairly pronounced the most complete and effective ever witnessed in Dundee. The illusion that the spectator beholds the deck of a great warship afloat "on the rolling deep" is perfect. The piece has a purpose, being a satire on the ways and means by which dull, diligent, plodding, but somewhat incapable members of Parliament get hoisted, through their immense deference and loyalty to their political leaders, into offices of State, and the highest responsibility. One Sir Joseph Porter gets so hoisted into the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, all the appropriate ludicrous consequences following thereon. But Sir Joseph (Mr. Ryley) sings admirably, if he does not shine as the First Lord of the Admiralty, and can, on an occasion, when led off his feet in enthusiastic moments — moments of song and sentiment — trip it on the light fantastic toe, as if he were once more a youth on "a simple village green." The singing of Miss D. Gordon, as Josephine, the captain’s daughter, of Miss Cummings, as Hebe, of Mr. Dwyer as Captain Corcoran, of Mr. Campbell, as Ralph Rackstraw, and of Mr. Rousbey as Dick Deadeye, was all that could be wished. But it might be an injustice to some half-dozen well-equipped vocalists on board H.M.S. Pinafore were we to single out one for special commendation. The company, to an individual, is more efficient and powerful for its work than is almost ever seen in the provinces. Whether in solo singing or in chorus singing, its performances are highly artistic. The soloists have voices that would do credit to any opera company stirring it in the provinces, and indeed reach an exactitude and finish not so very often attained by the members, all round, of opera companies we have the privilege of listening to. They have voices of remarkably fine timbre and excellent compass, each member working conscientiously to produce the highest effect. The chorus is strong, and sings in close unison, giving out a compact volume of harmony, which, with the spectacular effect, is irresistible. The orchestra does its work in a quiet efficient way quite in keeping with the whole of the performances, which are worthy of the most generous support that the lovers of music and the drama in Dundee can bestow. The encores last evening were frequent and hearty, while the applause was continuous, spontaneous, and cordial. The enjoyable farce of "Congenial Souls" pleasantly concluded the entertainment. The same pieces will be performed this and tomorrow
evenings. [The Dundee Courier & Argus and Northern Warder (Dundee, Scotland), Tuesday, October 29, 1878; Issue 7886.]

THE COMEDY-OPERA COMPANY AT THE THEATRE ROYAL. – Last night before another large audience "H.M.S. Pinafore" was again performed, and again with every demonstration of satisfaction on the part of those present. It will be noted that to-night is the last opportunity which will be afforded at the present time of witnessing this very clever comic opera. We have already spoken at length respecting the merits of the piece, and need not do more than advise the patrons of music and the drama to do themselves the justice of mustering largely at the Theatre Royal this evening. [The Dundee Courier & Argus (Dundee, Scotland), Wednesday, October 30, 1878; Issue 7887.]

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mr. W. M'Farland. – On the 24th and 25th ult., Mr. Irving and the Lyceum company played to the most crowded and enthusiastic houses ever assembled in Dundee. The plays were Louis the Eleventh, The Bells, and Jingle. Last week the Theatre was also occupied by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's comic opera company. Splendid success attended the representations of H.M.S. Pinafore and The Sorcerer. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, November 3, 1878; Issue 2093.]

4th – 9th November: Manchester

PRINCE'S THEATRE. – Manager, Mr. Alfred Thompson. – H.M.S. Pinafore sailed into this port on Monday last, to the great delight of all lovers of sparkling music and witty libretto. On Monday night the piece was listened to with the most amused attention by a very full house, and the chief fault found with it was that it was too short. It is capitally sung and acted. Altogether the performance was most enjoyable, and under the able stage management of Mr. H. S. Austin, who is the guiding spirit of the concern, not a hitch was to be detected from first to last. The Sorcerer was to be given on Friday. The performances conclude with an exceedingly humorous farce from the pen of Mr. J. H. Ryley. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, November 10, 1878; Issue 2094.]

11th – 23rd November: Dublin

GAIETY THEATRE.

Last evening was produced at the Gaiety Theatre the new comic opera by Messrs. Sullivan and Gilbert, entitled "H.M.S. Pinafore; or, the Lass that Loved a Sailor." It has only been within very recent years that works of this peculiar character have been attempted with any success. Indeed, as in the case of "The Sorcerer" and "Trial by Jury," it may be said that it is of a newly-invented school, in which the joint authors have the field all to themselves. It is, therefore undoubtedly an original school in this, that there has been nothing quite like it before. No doubt, there have been burlesques with comic songs of all sorts, there have been musical extravaganzas of the opera bouffe class, and many sketches in which music and words are contributed simply with a view to fun; but in the three pieces mentioned, and perhaps more especially in the one under notice, the plot and text reach the climax of eccentricity and humorous absurdity of that peculiar, almost indescribable kind in which Mr. Gilbert seems to revel, whilst Mr. Sullivan has caught up the notion marvellously, and made music that illustrates his subject with all befitting appropriateness. Before going further it may be well to mention here that the house was well filled, and that the audience seemed highly pleased with the opera – to give it its most dignified name.
The truth is, it is an irresistibly entertaining production. If we mistake not, the author of the libretto has already treated the subject, or something very like it, in a Bab Ballad where a certain “Captain Reece of the Mantelpiece," in order to please and gratify his crew," married his lovely daughter to them, and wound up by marrying the widowed mother of the boatswain. In "H.M.S. Pinafore" the vessel is supposed to be lying off Portsmouth, and Josephine (Miss Duglas Gordon), the daughter of the noble-minded and polite Captain Corcoran (Mr. Michael Dwyer), "who never swears a big, big D," has fallen in love with Ralph Rackstraw (Mr. C. Campbell). The noble-minded captain becomes indignant at this, and orders his daughter to renounce her lover. Josephine finds out that her lover is prepared to commit suicide for her sake; she avows her lover, and an elopement is arranged. The scheme, however, is frustrated by one Dick Deadeye, who tells the proud but courteous parent, and the latter, overcome by the excitement of the moment forgets his habitual caution and employs language so strong that he is ordered to a dungeon on board by his superior officer, Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B. (Mr. J. H. Ryley), who from the humble position of attorney's errand boy has risen to be First Lord of the Admiralty. This K.C.B. is a most comical character, who expresses very peculiar views as to discipline, self-respect, and independence of thought and action in the lower branches of the service, and sings a song illustrating his peculiar theories, of which the sailors learn the sentiment. Just at this point a bumboat woman (Miss Fanny Edwards), whose looks and accents are very deeply mysterious, comes on the scene and announces that she has gipsy blood in her veins, that she can read destinies, and is altogether a very remarkable person. She foretells a change in store for the captain; states, or rather sings, that in times gone by she was a baby-farmer, and that she changed certain children left in her care, “mixed those children up," that they grew up, and one became Captain Corcoran and the other Ralph Rackstraw. Thereupon, without further reasoning or delaying for any legal proof or other formality, the two change positions, dress; and dignities. Ralph marries Josephine; the captain weds the bumboat woman, his old nurse; and the First Lord of the Admiralty takes his cousin Hebe (Miss Cummings). The music is remarkably clever. It is not, generally speaking, quite so catching as that of the "Sorcerer," nor is there the same approach to originality. The overture is extremely well written. In the first act there is a very pretty ballad for Ralph — "A maiden fair to see," very carefully and effectively sung by Mr. Charles J. Campbell, who possesses a good tenor voice, and has the merit of always singing in tune. There is also a good song for the Captain — "I am the captain of the Pinafore." But perhaps the best thing in the piece is the song for Sir Joseph — "When I was a lad." It is modelled upon the judge's song in "Trial by Jury" and explains, among other matters, how, when an office boy in an attorney's office, he polished up the handle of the big front door and

Polished up the handle so carefulee
That now he is the ruler of the Queen's navee.

Mr. Ryley suits it capitally, and received a very warm encore. An indescribably comical effect was produced by a party of marines stationed on board presenting arms and going through other military manoeuvres, keeping time with the air. There are several well-constructed passages throughout the work, and many of the concerted passages are most effectively scored. The trio for "the First Lord," the Captain, and Josephine, "Never mind the why and wherefore," for instance, is very skilful, and was right well sung. Mr. Michael Dwyer made a very good captain, and sang all his music tastefully, especially the air, "Fair moon, to thee I sing.” Miss Duglas Gordon and Miss Fanny Edwards, as Josephine and the bumboat woman respectively, were very
good. The choruses were all well sung, notably the finale of the first act, which closely resembles the chorus beginning, "Now for the tea of our host," in the "Sorcerer." In conclusion, it may be, confidently predicted that the new comic opera will be one of the greatest successes of the season. It is splendidly put on the stage. The scene, the quarterdeck of H.M.S. Pinafore is complete in every detail; the dresses are most appropriate and effective, and the orchestra, under the direction of M. Van Biene, extremely good. [Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser (Dublin, Ireland), Tuesday, November 12, 1878; Issue N/A.]

GAIETY THEATRE. – Proprietor, Mr. M. R. Gunn. – The pleasurable impression occasioned by The Sorcerer on its production here doubtless explains the very large audience which on Monday evening assembled to witness the initial performance in the city of H.M.S. Pinafore; or, the Lass that Loved a Sailor, from the same source. The anticipations raised were fully realised, and Mr. W. S. Gilbert's amusing elaboration of his grotesque conception Captain Reece, supplemented as it is by Mr. A. Sullivan's charming music, promises to become one of the most successful features of the Dublin season. The piece has been staged with admirable attention to detail, and the representation receives every justice at the hands of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's clever comic opera company. Mr. J. H. Ryley, who made such a "hit" on the former occasion as Mr. J. Wellington Wells, now assumes the role of Sir Joseph Porter with decided success, his singing of the air "When I was a Lad" being indescribably droll. Mr. Michael Dwyer is a good representative of the absurdly benevolent Captain Corcoran; and Mr. C. Campbell efficiently fills the part of Ralph Rackstraw. Miss Duglas Gordon sings with taste and effect as Josephine; Miss Cummings is a charming Hebe; and Miss Fanny Edwards makes an exceedingly competent exponent of the part of the bumboat woman. The orchestra, under the direction of M. Van Biene, is extremely good. An amusing farce, by Mr. J. H. Ryley, entitled Congenial Souls, has been the afterpiece. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, November 17, 1878; Issue 2095.]

This evening Miss Duglas Gordon takes her benefit at the Gaiety. The programme will be altered, and will certainly be improved on the occasion. The performance will begin as usual with the new operetta, Dorothy, but it will conclude with The Sorcerer. It is no disparagement to H.M.S. Pinafore to say that it is not as good as The Sorcerer. It is undoubtedly a most ingenious and sparkling burlesque, but it lacks the variety of humour and of character the other possesses. In both the pieces Miss Gordon has always been and will, doubtless, be one of the principal attractions, and the attendance on the night of her benefit will be the most satisfactory criterion of the public appreciation of her vivacious acting and charming vocalism. On to-morrow (Saturday) there will be a grand morning performance.

"H.M.S. Pinafore" has had a most successful run at this theatre, and the pleasant music of the piece and its great humour have caused it to become one of the most popular of Arthur Sullivan' works. The engagement of the present company concludes on Saturday evening, and at 2.30 on Saturday "The Sorcerer" will be produced. These day performances at the cosy little South King-street theatre have so far proved successful, and playgoers who reside at a distance will find them in every way equal to the night presentations. On Monday Miss Eloise Juno and her dramatic company will commence a brief engagement. [Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser (Dublin, Ireland), Friday, November 22, 1878; Issue N/A.]
25th November – 30th November: Birmingham

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. – Mr. James Rogers, Proprietor. – H.M.S. Pinafore was produced at this house, for the first time in Birmingham, on Monday. The irresistibly amusing comic opera drew together a well filled and highly delighted audience, the eccentricities and humorous absurdities provoking repeated outburst of laughter and applause. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, November 24, 1878; Issue 2096.]

2nd – 7th December: Brighton

THEATRE ROYAL. – Proprietress, Mrs. H. N. Chart. – H.M.S. Pinafore, with the clever crew in the service of Mr. D'Oyly Carte, anchored successfully on the 2nd in the haven of public favour, and during the first four evenings of this week the stage of the Royal has presented a scene of animation and splendour that will not readily be forgotten. The mounting reflects the greatest credit on the management, the main and quarter decks of the ship being shown with wonderful effect and completeness. Mr. J. H. Ryley, a very old Brighton favourite, has obtained the principal share of the applause, and his comic rendition of "How he became the ruler of the Queen's Na-v-e-y" was thrice encored. Mr. W. Dwyer made an amusing Captain Corcoran. Mr. C. J. Campbell sang and acted well as the impulsive seaman Rackstraw. Mr. Arthur Rousbey made up well as the deformed and demurring Dick Deadeye. Mr. Cummings invested the Boatswain's Mate with genial humour. Mr. E. Frith was realistic as the Carpenter's Mate. And little Teddy Pickering evinced considerable precocity as the Midshipmite Tom Tucker. Mr. Ryley was First Lord of the Admiralty. Miss Duglas Gordon sang and played with navieté as Josephine, the Captain's pretty daughter. Miss Teresa Cummings was to the life the insinuating Hebe, Sir Joseph's cousin; and Mrs Harry Clifton (Miss Fanny Edwards) gave reality to the part of Little Buttercup. The solos, duets, trios, and concerted pieces were admirably backed up by the strong and efficient chorus, and the orchestra was conducted by Mr. Van Biene very skilfully. Preceding the comic opera Mr. Julian Edwards's operetta Dorothy has been given, with Miss Duglas Gordon as the charming Phebe; Miss Fanny Edwards, the coquettish Dorothy; Mr. George Mudie, Old Cherrytree; Mr. A. Rousbey, Sidney Darrell; and Mr. Henry Moreton, the nervous Lubin. The song "Canst thou know my heart?" and the merry concluding quintette were, as well as other portions of the concerted pieces, warmly eulogised. [The Era (London, England), Sunday, December 8, 1878; Issue 2098.]