

**MOTHERS AND  
DAUGHTERS: A  
COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS**

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Mothers and Daughters: A Comedy in Five Acts by Robert Bell

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**ROBERT BELL**

**MOTHERS AND  
DAUGHTERS: A  
COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS**



# MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS:

A Comedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED

O N C E

(THOUGH "ANNOUNCED FOR REPETITION AMIDST CONSIDERABLE  
APPLAUSE"—*Times*.)

AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN,

ON THE 24TH JANUARY, 1843.

BY ROBERT BELL, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "MARRIAGE," &c.

SECOND EDITION;

WITH AN EXPLANATORY PREFACE.

LONDON:

JOHN MORTIMER, ADELAIDE STREET,  
TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

MDCCLIV.

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

C. WRITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

CHARACTERS IN THE COMEDY.

LADY MANIFOLD.		MABEL TREVOR.
EMILY MANIFOLD.		ROSE.
LORD MERLIN.		SIR GREGORY PLUMP.
MR. SANDFORD.		CAPT. SWINFORD HASTINGS,
LOOP.		MONTAGUE.
CUSHION.		BLUNT.            TOM.

Represented at Covent Garden Theatre on the 24th January, 1843,  
by the following ladies and gentlemen :

MRS. ORGER.		MISS VANDENHOFF.
MRS. WALTER LACY.		MRS. HUMBY.
MR. VANDENHOFF.		MR. BARTLEY.
MR. COOPER.		MR. HARLEY.
MR. WIGAN.		MR. MEADOWS.
MR. GRANBY.		MR. J. RIDGWAY.

TO WHOM,

AS A MARK OF HIS GRATEFUL SENSE OF THEIR  
EXERTIONS ON THAT OCCASION,

AND

OF HIS REGRET THAT THEIR EXERTIONS SHOULD HAVE  
BEEN MADE IN VAIN,

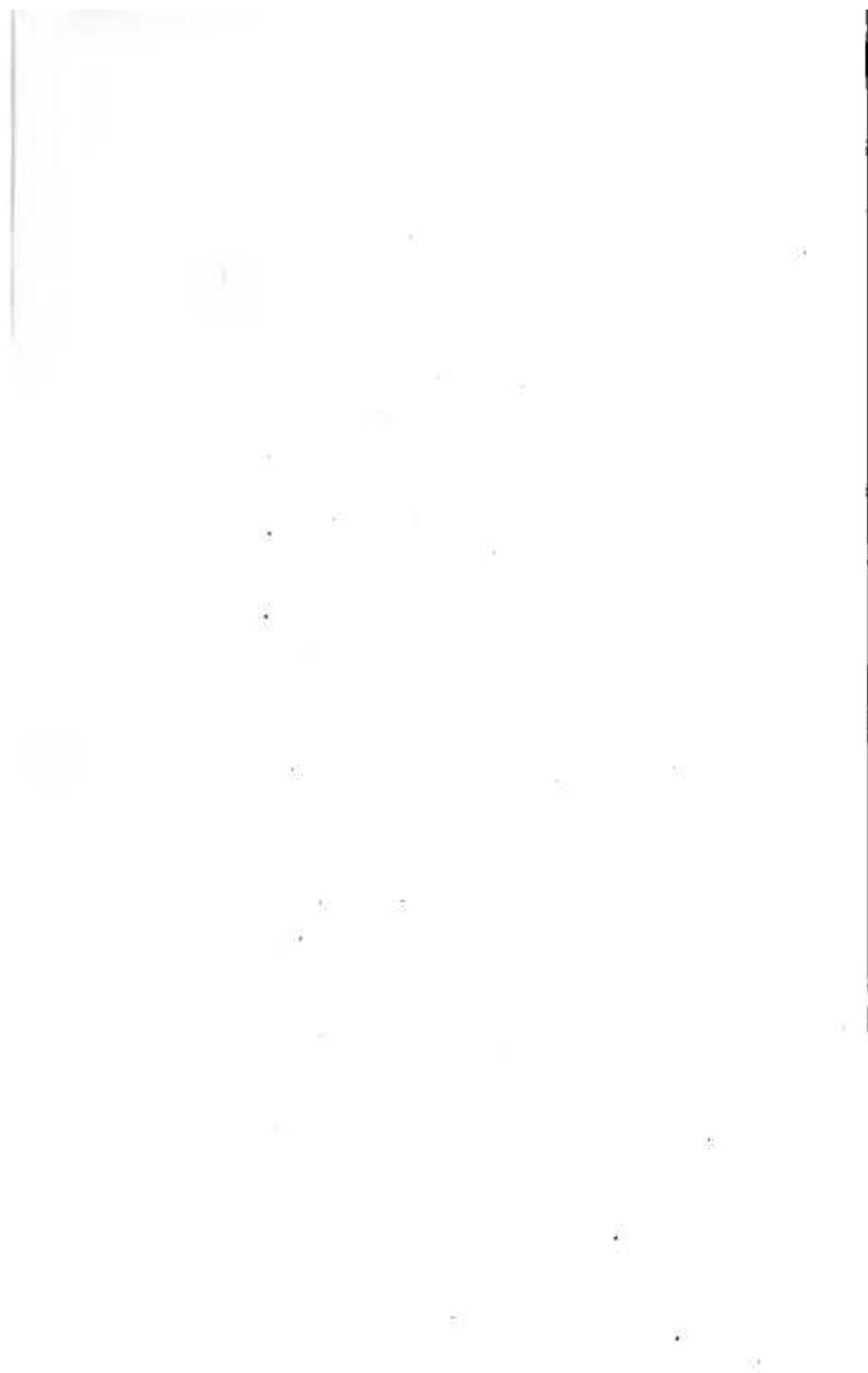
THE AUTHOR

BEGS TO INSCRIBE

THIS COMEDY.

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## PREFACE.

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“ So study evermore is overshot ;  
While it doth study to have what it would,  
It doth forget to do the things it should ;  
And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,  
'Tis won, as towns with fire ; so won, so lost.”

*Love's Labour Lost.*

THE drama is a lottery, in which the blanks have a woful preponderance. Worse still—one may gain a prize in this lottery at a heavy loss.

The fortunes of plays are as various as their plots, with this additional perplexity, peculiarly their own—that tragedies occasionally end in laughter, and comedies sometimes come to a tragical close. “ The Rivals” was hissed off the stage. “ The Iron Chest,” failing through the opium of Kemble, was carried triumphantly by the mercury of Elliston. The Duke of Buckingham crushed a play of Dryden's by a witticism ; and the most finished of Congreve's comedies was hardly endured on the first night. But these are vulgar vicissitudes. All such disasters fall within the compass of ordinary probabilities. The fate of “ Mothers and Daughters” is unique. It is a case *per se*. Nothing like it ever happened before, and I hope nothing like it may ever

happen again. And it is solely in the desire to prevent it from passing into a precedent, that the adventures of this comedy are herein about to be narrated.

Some plays have been enthusiastically received by managers, and then turned out of doors by audiences. But here is a play which was enthusiastically received by the audience, and then turned out of doors by the manager. Some plays have unfortunately failed; but here is a play which succeeded unfortunately. Managers are generally glad to cultivate the prospect of profit held out by a successful novelty; but here is a case in which the manager took considerable pains to prevent the successful novelty from becoming profitable to himself or any body else. This last statement, in a commercial country like England, (and, of course, it is only in a commercial point of view I have any right to suppose it can affect the manager's credit) will be entirely unintelligible. But I beg the courteous reader to bear in mind that I do not expect him to understand it. I do not understand it myself, and am never likely to be able to understand it, though I have left no means or methods of investigation untried—no avenues of enquiry unexplored—no oracles unquestioned—to obtain a satisfactory explanation of the reason why Mr. Bunn treated, not me so ill, but himself. There are some things, however, not the less true, merely because they are incredible.

When this piece was written, it was sent to Mr. Webster, to whom the fugitive Comic Muse of these latter times has always appealed with confidence; and I have never heard of an instance in which she appealed in vain. His reception of the play was frank and cordial; and his opinion of

it more flattering than it would become me to repeat. But even managers themselves cannot always control the adverse destinies of plays. Mr. Webster thought the principal character peculiarly adapted for Mr. Farren. I thought so too. He is a wise man who does not occasionally reckon without his host. Mr. Farren thought differently. He might have been right—although there is a proverb which hints that people are not always the best judges in their own cases. But, right or wrong, his opinion on the point was final. There was nobody else who *could* play the character—at least, while Mr. Farren was in the theatre. It was *aut Cæsar aut nihil*. I did not put Mr. Webster to the pain of deciding the question for me; for I felt that it would be a pain to him, and that it would be ungracious in me to inflict it upon him. I withdrew the comedy from the Haymarket.

But I cannot change the scene to St. James's Place, where the comedy shortly afterwards found itself, one bright sunny morning, in the hands of Mr. Bunn, without taking this opportunity of expressing my earnest sense of the courtesy and kindness I have received from Mr. Webster. I am the more anxious to do this, because I believe the charge against managers is generally well-founded, of a want of candour and sympathy and *bien-séance*;—(a want, by the way, for which some very extenuating circumstances might be reasonably pleaded in the difficulties and responsibilities of a position, often harassing and invidious, and for which dramatists do not always make sufficient allowance)—and because I believe no manager, at any period, has ever been less obnoxious to imputations of that sort than Mr. Webster. At least so much is due from me personally; and I gladly