

**A FOOL FOR LUCK: A  
COMEDY IN TWO  
ACTS; RED OR WHITE?:  
A DECISION IN ONE ACT**

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A Fool for Luck: A Comedy in Two Acts; Red or White?: A decision in one act by William Maynadier Browne

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**WILLIAM MAYNADIER BROWNE**

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# FOOL FOR LUCK

*A Comedy in Two Acts*

BY

W. M. BROWNE

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BOSTON

*Walter H. Baker & Co.*

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### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*As originally performed by amateurs at Associates' Hall, Milton, Mass.  
April 23, 1889, for the benefit of the Free Reading Room,  
at Mattapan, under the title of*

"B. B. & P."

MR. WILLIAM BETTERBY, a young married man in straitened circumstances as a result of speculation . . . . .	MR. RIVERS
MR. ROBERT BIDDER, his intimate friend, a New-York stock- broker . . . . .	MR. HUNT
MR. ARTHUR BABBURTON, a young Englishman . . . . .	MR. BROWNE
WATTS, valet to Babburton . . . . .	MR. JACQUES
MRS. BETTERBY, Betterby's wife . . . . .	MRS. RIVERS
MISS POLLARD, her younger sister . . . . .	MISS JACQUES
MISS PATTERN, Betterby's aunt . . . . .	MISS SHERWOOD

**Note.**—The personage known as Babburton is distinguished by a slight impediment in his speech, distinctly not a stammer, but merely a difficulty in pronouncing the letters "b" and "p."



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# A FOOL FOR LUCK.

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## ACT I.

SCENE. — *Breakfast-room in MISS PATTERN'S house, prettily furnished; doors, C., R., and L.; table and chairs, R. C.; various other articles of furniture arranged about the room. MR. and MRS. BETTERBY seated at table, R. C., reading mail.*

BETTERBY (*opening and reading letter*). "Sir: we hope you will excuse our writing to you, but as we have large payments to make," etc., etc. Certainly, you're excused. (*Opens another letter; reads.*) "In accordance with Rule XI., Section 8, of the Liberty Club, your name has been posted for non-payment of your May bill." Hear that, Dolly? Name's up at the club.

MRS. B. I'm sorry, dear. It's very annoying, I know. But is there no letter from Bob Bidder? Oh, dear! If B. B. & P. only does go up, as he says it will, we'll be out of our misery and back in our own house again.

BET. Yes, here is a letter from Bob. (*Opens letter.*) Let's see. (*Reads.*) "Dear Billy, meant to drop you a line yesterday, but was too busy. Wish you could have been here last night. Burroughs and Reed and all the rest of our crowd met at"—h-m-m (*mumbling*)—"my ante"—h-m-m—"full house." This part doesn't interest you, Dolly.

MRS. B. Why, Willie! I didn't know his aunt entertained at all!

BET. Hem! Neither did I. But here's what you want to hear about. (*Reading.*) "B. B. & P.'s June earnings will be published in a few days now, and they say they will make a much better showing than they did last month. I can't find out anything definite, however. The stock gained a point to-day, as you will see by the papers. Can you persuade



your aunt to invite me down over the 4th, and bring a friend — an Englishman named Babburton? His sister married Blake, the president of the B. B. & P., and I thought we might get a few points out of him about the road. Knowing your aunt's aversion to the Stock Exchange, I am a little afraid to have you ask her to invite me, but if your wife will use a little of her irresistible persuasion, I think you can manage it. If I don't hear from you by wire to-morrow morning, I shall take it for granted that it's all right and come down on the 10.30." (*Looks at watch.*) Great Heavens! Dolly! it's past that now! What can we do?

MRS. B. Go on.

BET. Go on what? where?

MRS. B. Go on with the letter.

BET. Oh! (*Reads.*) "Down on the 10.30. By the way, I forgot to say that Babburton will bring his valet along. I suppose he won't make any difference." Ph-e-w! Bob's cheek is perfectly magnificent. Well, Dolly! you'd better speak to the old lady at once. The sooner we get over these unpleasant little duties the better, you know.

MRS. B. Why don't you speak to her, Willie?

BET. I? Well! you see — in fact — the truth is — I'm very busy —

MRS. B. Ha! ha! Never mind; I'll do it. But, to tell you the truth, I don't enjoy the prospect.

BET. There's nothing to be afraid of. All you have to do is just tell her — just tell her.

MRS. B. Just tell her what?

BET. Well — just tell her —

MRS. B. You know how she feels about you and your friends since you lost so much in stocks last winter.

BET. Well, I should say I did. Why, she told me yesterday she was sure I'd lose every cent of her money if she should leave it to me, and said something about five thousand a year in trust for us, and all the rest to a Home for Aged and Indigent Orphans, or Neglected Widows, or —

MRS. B. What nonsense! Who ever heard of an aged and indigent orphan?

BET. I'm an indigent orphan now myself, and I suppose I shall become aged as I grow older.

MRS. B. Perhaps so, dear. But your aunt can't mean it. Five thousand a year! Why, that wouldn't do us any good at all.

BET. Not a bit. But perhaps she may see some good in me some day, and change her mind. Where's Carrie?

MRS. B. She's helping your aunt with her eggs.

BET. Has the incubator declared a dividend—I mean, hatched a chicken yet?

MRS. B. No, I believe not. But why don't you try to interest yourself in it, dear? It might please your aunt to have you.

BET. I did try to. In fact, I suggested lots of things. But she only got mad about it.

MRS. B. What did you suggest?

BET. I asked her if she'd tried boiling the eggs before she put them in, and then I asked her if she hadn't forgotten to put the hens in, and she told me I was something—I've forgotten what—blithering idiot, I think it was. Carrie seems to understand how to get along with her.

MRS. B. Well, perhaps Carrie has more tact than you have, dear. Dear me, I'm afraid the poor child is falling in love with Bob Bidder, and, although he is a very good fellow, and I like him very much, I don't think his income is very reliable.

BET. Oh, Bob's all right.

MRS. B. Yes, I know; but I want Carrie to marry a man with plenty of money. Now, if this Englishman turns out to be a nice man, Carrie can marry *him*.

BET. You seem to feel sure he'll be willing.

MRS. B. Of course he will. (*Enter CARRIE, L.*) But here she comes. Well, dear?

CARRIE. Brother William, your aunt is in a terrible frame of mind.

BET. What's the matter now?

CAR. Not one of the last lot of eggs has hatched, and they are a week late. So she has taken them all out of the incubator, and intends to try again with a new lot. And she says she'll make them hatch, if she has to live in the incubator and have her meals sent in.

BET. I have it! Happy thought! Put the Englishman's valet in there.

CAR. Englishman! What Englishman?

MRS. B. Why, Willie has had a letter from Bob Bidder, and he's coming here with an English friend of his and his valet, and expects me to see that Aunt Pattern is glad to see them, and will want them to stay two or three days.

CAR. If Mr. Bidder is coming, you needn't worry, Dolly. He's sure to smooth Miss Pattern the right way. I really believe she likes him very much.

MRS. B. Yes, of course you do. But hush! here she comes.

(Enter MISS PATTERN, L., carrying a large basket of eggs, which she places on a table, L. C.)

MISS P. There! If that incubator doesn't hatch this time, there'll be trouble.

BET. It must be a very queer sensation to be born by machinery. Don't you think so, auntie?

MISS P. How should I know! I'm no chicken.

CAR. Oh, Miss Pattern!

BET. Right you are, auntie. Ha! ha! ha!

MISS P. William, hold your tongue. You know perfectly well what I mean. Besides, sir, if I'm not a chicken, no more am I a silly lamb at the mercy of bulls and bears. Carrie, tell Thomas to take those eggs far away from the house and bury them.

BET. But, auntie! why do you bury them? They haven't come to life yet.

MISS P. William, when I am so reduced that I need any advice from you, I'll ask for it. Besides, for all you know, they'll come up and grow.

BET. That's so. Egg-plant, by Jove! Never thought of that. (Aside.) She knows a good deal, after all.

MRS. B. (hesitating). Aunt Pattern — I want — to tell you — something.

(BETTERBY starts to leave the room unobserved.)

MISS P. William, where are you going? (BETTERBY stops short and remains.) Well, Dolly, what is it you want to tell me?

MRS. B. (hesitating). You see, Aunt Pattern — we couldn't possibly help it — but —

BET. That's it, auntie — we tried our best, but —

MISS P. William, keep quiet. Go on, Dolly.

MRS. B. This morning a letter came from Mr. Bidder, and —

BET. That's it, auntie. We couldn't help it. It just came.

MISS P. William, will you be quiet? (To DOLLY.) Well?

MRS. B. And he says he would like very much to pass the 4th with us, if —