

Ballad: The Folly Of Brown - By A General Agent

In "The Folly of Brown - By A General Agent," the narrator recounts his experiences with a man named Brown, a simple farmer who unexpectedly came into a fortune of two hundred thousand. Despite this windfall, Brown's demeanor and lifestyle remain unchanged, embodying the essence of a clown – not in the theatrical sense but reflecting a lack of sophistication and education. The newfound wealth leaves Brown unfazed, his ignorance evident as he continues to live a simple life, uninterested in the luxuries or societal changes money could offer.

The narrator, a self-proclaimed general agent, sees an opportunity in Brown's naiveté and attempts to persuade him to invest his money into various companies the narrator has formed. These companies, purportedly created with the intention of aiding Brown in making sound investments, appear to serve the interests of their promoter more than their investors. Brown, however, remains steadfastly attached to his money, politely refusing the offers made by the narrator despite the latter's insistent propositions which are masked under a guise of helping Brown manage his wealth effectively.

In a display of stubborn simplicity, Brown rejects the agent's offer to take him under his wing, showing no interest in learning how to spend his fortune "wisely." The agent mockingly admires Brown's refusal, interpreting it as a lack of trust and wisdom, unable to comprehend why Brown would decline his advice and offers. Brown's rejections are consistent, portrayed with a grin that suggests a mix of contentment with his current state and skepticism towards the agent's motives.

This ballad humorously explores themes of innocence, skepticism, and the perceived relationship between wealth and wisdom. Brown's character, while ridiculed by the narrator for his unsophisticated outlook and mistrust of "philanthropy," arguably showcases a prudent wariness towards those who seek to exploit his fortune under the guise of assistance. The irony lies in the narrator's inability to recognize the wisdom in Brown's simplicity and cautious approach to his newfound wealth.