

BORN TO GOOD LUCK.

BY CHARLES READE.

I.

Patrick O'Rafferty was a small farmer in the County Leinster. He and his father before him had been yearly tenants to Squire Ormsby for fifty years on very easy terms.

Patrick—more uneasy than his sire—now and then pestered this Squire for a lease. Then the Squire used to say, "Well, if you make a point of it, I will have the land valued and a lease drawn accordingly." But this iniquitous proposal always shut O'Rafferty's mouth for a time. He was called in the village Paddy Luck; and certainly he had the luck to get into a good many fights and other scrapes, and to get out of them wonderfully. It was he set the name rolling; his neighbors did but accept it.

He professed certain powers akin to divination, and they were not generally ridiculed, for he was right one time in five, and that was enough, for credulity always forgets the usual and remembers the eccentric.

This worthy had a cow to sell, and drove her into the nearest fair. He put twelve pounds on her, and was laughed at. She was dry, and she was ugly. "Twelve pounds! Go along wid ye." "Never mind her," said Pat's reply. "I'm Paddy Luck, and it's meself that will sell the baste for twelve pounds, and divil a ha'penny less." This was his proclamation all the morning. In the afternoon he condescended to ten pounds, just to oblige the community. At sunset he managed to get eight pounds, and a by-stander told him he was a lucky fellow.

"That is no news, thin," said he. It was dark, and he was tired; his home was twelve Irish miles off; he resolved to sleep in the town. In the meantime he went to a tavern and regaled his purchaser, drank, danced, daffed, showed his money, got drunk, and was robbed by one of the light-fingered gentry who prowled about a fair.

The consequence was that the next time he ordered liquor on a liberal scale—for he was one who treated semicircularly in his cups—he could not find a shilling to pay, and the landlord put him out into the street. He coolly himself at a neighboring pump, and went in search of gratuitous lodgings. The hard-hearted town did not provide these, so he walked out of it into sweeter air. He was not sick nor sorry. Quite the reverse. He congratulated himself on his good luck. "Sure, now," said he, "if I had sold her for twelve pounds, it's four pounds I'd be losing by that same bargain."

Some little distance outside the town he found a deserted hovel; there was no door, window, nor floor; but the roof was free from holes in one or two places, and there was a dry corner, and a heap of straw in it. Paddy thanked the stars for providing him with so complete and gratuitous a shelter, and immediately burrowed into the straw, and was about to drop asleep when the glimmer of a lantern shot in through the doorway, and voices muttered outside.

Patrick nestled deeper in the straw; he was a trespasser, and it seemed too late and yet too early for the virtues, charity included, to be afoot.

Two men came in with a sack, a spade, and a lantern; one of them lifted the lantern up and took a cursory glance round the premises. Patrick, whom the spade had set a-shivering, held his breath. Then the man put the lantern down, and his companion went to work and dug, not a grave, as panting Pat expected, but a big round hole.

This done, they emptied the sack; out rolled and tinkled silver salvers of all sizes, coffee-pots, tea-pots, forks, spoons, brooches, necklaces, rings,—a mine of wealth that glowed and glittered in the light of the lantern.

Patrick began to perspire as well as tremble. The men filled in the hole, stamped the earth firmly down, and then lighted their pipes and held a consultation. The question was how to dispose of these valuables. After some differences of opinion they agreed that one Barney was the fence they would invite to the spot, and if he would not give one hundred pounds for the spoil they would take it to Dublin. It transpired that Barney lived at some distance, but not too far to come to-morrow evening and inspect the booty. Then, if he would spring to their price, they would go home with him and receive the coin.

"My luck!" thought Patrick. "What need had they to light their pipes and chatter like two old women about such a trifle, without searching the straw first, the omadhauns!" The thieves retired, and lucky Pat went quietly to sleep.

He awoke in broad daylight, and strolled back into the town. He walked jauntily, for, if he had no money he possessed a secret. He was too Irish and too sly to go to a police office at once; his little game was to try and find out who had been robbed, and what reward they would give.

Meantime he had to breakfast off a stale roll given him by a baker out of charity. About noon he passed through a principal street, and lo! in a silversmith's shop was a notice, written very large:

"THIRTY GUINEAS REWARD."

"Whereas, these premises were broken into last night, and the following valuable property abstracted:

Then followed an inventory a foot long. "The above reward will be paid to any person who will give such information as may lead to the conviction of the thieves and the recovery of the stolen goods, or any considerable part thereof."

Patrick walked in and asked to see the proprietor. A little fussy man in a great state of agitation responded to that query.

"Are you in earnest now, sorr?" asked Pat.

"In earnest! Of course I am."

"What if a decent poor boy like me was to find you the silver and thieves and all?"

"I'd give you the thirty guineas, and my blessing into the bargain."

"Maybe ye wouldn't like to give me my dinner an' all, by reason I'm just famishing with hunger?"

This proposal raised suspicion, and the proprietor asked his name.

"Patrick O'Rafferty. I'm a tenant to Squire Ormsby."

"I know him. Well, Patrick, I suppose you can give me some information. I'll risk the dinner anyway."

"Ah, well, sorr," said Patrick, "they say 'fing a sprat to catch a whale.' A lump-steak and a quart of ale is a favorite repast of mine; when I have had 'em I'll am 'em, by the holy poker."

"Step into my back parlour, Mr. O'Rafferty," said the silversmith.

He then sent for the rump-steak very loud, and for a policeman in a whisper.

The steak came first, and was most welcome. When he had eaten it the modest O'Rafferty asked for a pipe and pot.

Whilst he smoked and sipped calmly the disguised policeman arrived, and was asked to examine him through a little window.

"Does he look like crime?" whispered the silversmith.

"No," said the policeman. "Calf-like innocence and impudence galore."

The jeweller asked O'Rafferty to step out. "Now, sir," said he, "you have had your dinner, and I don't grudge it you; but if this is a jest let it end here, for I am in sore trouble, and it would be a heartless thing to play on me."

"Och, hear to him!" cried Patrick, with a whine as doleful as sudden. "Did iver an O'Rafferty make a jest of an honest man's trouble, or ate a male off his losses? But what is a hungry man worth? I could not see how to do your work while I was famished, but now my belly is full, and my head fuller, glory be to God!"

"I don't know how it is," said the jeweller, aside to the detective, "he tells me nothing, and yet somehow he gives me confidence. But, Mr. O'Rafferty, do consider; time flies, and I'm no nearer my stolen goods. What is the first step we are to take?"

"The first step was to fill my belly; the next step is to find me—och, murder, it is a rarity!"

"Never miud," said the disgusted officer. "Find you what?"

"A policeman—that isn't a fool."

II.

This was a stinger, and so sudden; his hearers looked rather sheepish at him. It was the policeman who answered.

"If you will come to the station, I will undertake to find you that."

Patrick assented, and on the way they made friends; his companion revealed himself, and forgave the stinger, and Patrick, pleased with his good temper, let him into the plan he had matured while smoking his pipe and appearing to lose time. All Patrick stipulated was that he himself should be the person in command; and as he alone knew where the booty was, and was manifestly as crafty as a badger, this was cheerfully acceded to. So, an hour before dusk, four fellows that looked like countrymen drove a cart full of straw up to the hovel, and made a big heap by adding it to what was there already.

Then two drove the cart back to the edge of the town, and put the horse up, and rejoined their companions in ambush, all but one, and he hid in a dry ditch opposite. They were all armed, and the outside watcher had a novel weapon—a powerful blue-light in the shape of a fat squib.

It is a dreary business waiting at night for criminals who may never come at all, or, if they do, may be desperate, and fight like madmen or wild-cats.

Eight o'clock came—nine—ten—eleven—twelve; the watchers were chilled and stiff, and Pat sleepy.

One of the policemen whispered to him: "They won't come to-night. Are you sure they have not been and taken up the swag?"

"Not sure; but I think not." The policeman growled and muttered something about a mare's nest.

"Hush!" said another.

"What!" in an agitated whisper.

"Wheels!"

Silence.

They all remained as still as death. The faint wheels, that would have been inaudible by day, rattled nearer and nearer. It was late for a *bona fide* traveller to be on the road. Would the wheels pass the hovel?

They came up fast; then they stopped suddenly. To the watchers everything was audible, and every sound magnified. When the drag stopped it was like a railway train pulling up. Men leaped out, and seemed to shake the ground. When three figures bustled into the hovel it sounded like a rush of men. Then came a thrilling question. Would the thieves examine the premises before they looked for the booty? The chances were they would.

Well, they did not. They were in great anxiety too, but it took the form of hurry. They dug furiously, displayed the booty to Barney all in a hurry, and demanded their price.

"Now, then, one hundred pounds, or take your last look at 'em."

"One hundred pounds!" whined Barney. "Can't be done."

"Very well; there's no time to bargain."

"I'll give eighty pounds. But I shall lose money by 'em."

"Barney! They are worth a thousand. Here, Jem, put 'em up; we can do better in Dublin."

Barney whined and remonstrated, but ended by consenting to give the price.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the hovel glared with a lurid fire, so vivid and penetrating that every crevice of it and the very cobwebs came out distinct.

The thieves yelled with dismay, and one ran away from the light, slap into the danger, and was dazed again with opening bull's-eyes, and captured like a lamb. The other rushed blindfolded at the entrance, and his temple encountered a cold pistol, and a policeman immovable as a statue. He recoiled, and was at that moment of hesitation pinned from behind and handcuffed—click! As for Barney, from whom no fight was expected, he was allowed to clamber up the walls like a mouse in a trap, then tumble down, until the four-wheeler they had come in was brought up by Paddy O'Rafferty. Then the thieves were bundled in and sat each of them between two honest men, and the fence was attached by the wrist to a policeman, who walked him to the same destination; but, like friend Virgil's bull, *multa reluctans*, hanging back in vain,

and in vain bribing the silent, impenetrable Bobby.

Pat slept at the station, and next morning the jeweller gave him thirty guineas with a good heart, but omitted the blessing; Patrick whined dimly at this very serious omission, and the worthy little fellow gave it him with glistering eyes. "For," said he, "I'll own now the loss would have ruined me. I find by my books that they cost me thirteen hundred pounds." So then he blessed him solemnly, and Pat went home rejoicing.

"I'll have more luck than ever now," said he. "I'll have all sorts of luck—good, bad and indifferent."

When he got home he told the story inaccurately, and like a monomaniac; that is to say, he suppressed all the fortitude and sagacity he had shown. These were qualities he possessed, so he thought nothing of them.

Luck and divination were what he prided himself on. His version ran thus: he had the luck not to sell his cow till night-fall, the still better luck to be robbed of his money, and compelled to sleep in the neighborhood. Then, thanks to his superlative luck, the Queen's jeweller had been robbed of silver salvers the size of the harvest-moon, two gallon tea-pots, pearls like hazelnuts, and diamonds as big as broad beans; and seeing no other way to recover them, and hearing that the wise man of Gannachee was in the town, had given him a good dinner and his pipe, and begged him to use all his powers as a seer; of all which the upshot was that he had put the police on the right track, and recovered the booty, and caged the thieves, and marched home with the reward.

In telling this romance he was careful to take out the thirty sovereigns and jingle them, and this musical appeal to the senses so overpowered the understandings of his neighbors that they swallowed the wondrous tale like spring water.

After this few were bold enough to resist his pretensions to luck and divination. He was often consulted, especially about missing property, and as he now and then guessed right, and sometimes had taken the precaution to hide the property himself, which materially increased his chances of finding it, he passed for a seer.

One fine day Squire Ormsby learned to his dismay that his pantry had been broken into and a mass of valuable plate taken. Mr. Ormsby was much distressed, not only on account of the value, but the length of time certain pieces had been in the family. He distrusted the police and publicity in these cases, and his wife prevailed on him to send for Patrick O'Rafferty.

That worthy came and heard the story. He looked at the lady and gentleman, and his self-deception began to ooze out of him. To humbug his humble neighbors was not difficult nor dangerous, but to deceive and then undecieve and disappoint his landlord was quite another matter.

He put on humility, and said this was a matter beyond him entirely. Then the Squire was angry, and said, bitterly, "No doubt he would rather oblige his neighbors, or a shopkeeper who was a stranger to him, than the man whose land had fed him and his for fifty years." He was proceeding in the same strain when poor Pat, with that dismal whine the merry soul was subject to occasionally, implored him not to murder him entirely with hard words; he would do his best.

"No man can do more," said Mr. Ormsby. "Now how will you proceed? Can we render you any assistance?"

Patrick said, humbly, and in a downcast way, he would like to see the place where the thieves got in.

He was taken to the pantry window, and examined it inside and out, and all the servants peeped at him.

"What next?" asked the Squire.

Then Patrick inwardly resolved to get a good dinner out of this business, however humiliating the end of it might be. "Sorr," said he, "ye'll have to give me a room all to myself, and a rump-steak and onions; and after that your servants must bring me three pipes and three pints of home-brewed ale. Brewers' ale hasn't the same spiritual effect on a seer's mind."

The order was given, and set the kitchen on fire with curiosity. Some disbelieved his powers, but more believed them, and cited the jeweller's business and other examples.

When the first pipe and pint were to go to him a discussion took place between the magnates of the kitchen who should take it up. At last the butler and the housekeeper insisted on the footman taking it. Accordingly he did so.

Meantime Patrick sat in state digesting the good food. He began to feel a physical complacency, and to defp the future; he only regretted that he had confined his demand to one dinner and three pots. To him in this frame of mind entered the footman with pipe and pint of ale as clear as Madeira.

Says Patrick, looking at the pipe, "This is the first of 'em."

The footman put the things down rather hurriedly and vanished.

"Humph," said Pat to himself, "you don't seem to care for my company."

He sipped and smoked, and his mind worked.

The footman went to the butler with a scared face, and said, "I won't go near him again; he said I was one."

"Nonsense!" said the butler; "I'll take up the next."

He did so. Patrick gazed in his face took the pipe, and said, *sotte voce*, "This is the second;" then, very regretfully, "Only one more to come."

The butler went away much discomposed, and told the housekeeper.

"I can't believe it," said she. "Anyway, I'll know the worst."

So in due course she took up the third pipe and pint, and wore propitiatory smiles.

"This is the last of 'em," said Patrick, solemnly, and looked at the glass.

The housekeeper went down all in a flutter. "We are found out, we are ruined," said she. "There is nothing to be done now but—Yes there is; we must buy him or put the comether on him before he sees the master."

Patrick was half dosing over his last pipe when he heard a rustle and a commotion, and lo! three culprits on their gaities which was his one real gift—so he underrated it—he said, with a twinkling eye:

"Och, thin, you've come to make a clane brist of it, the three Chrishin varnes and haythen graces that ye are. Ye may save yourselves the trouble. Sure I know all about it."

"We see you do. Ye are wiser than Solomon," said the housekeeper. "But sure ye wouldn't abuse your wisdom to ruin three poor bodies like us?"

"Poor!" cried Patrick. "Is it poor ye call yourselves? Ye ate and drink like fighting cocks; ye are clothed in silk and plush and broadcloth, and your wages is all pocket-money and pin-money. Yet ye must rob the man that feeds and clothes ye."

"It is true! it is true!" cried the butler. "He spakes like a priest," said the woman. "Oh, alanna! don't be hard on us; it is all the devil's doings; he tempted us. Oh! oh! oh!"

"Whist, now, and spake sinse," said Patrick, roughly. "Is it melted?"

"It is not."

"Can you lay your hands on it?"

"We can, every stiver of it. We intended to put it back."

"That's a lie," said Patrick firmly, but not in the least reproachfully. "Now look at me, the whole clan of ye, male and faymale. Which would you rather do—help me find the gimcracks, every article of 'em, or be lagged and scragged and stretched on a gibbet and such like iligant divisions?"

They snatched eagerly at the plank of safety held out to them, and from that minute acted under Mr. O'Rafferty's orders.

"Fetch me another pint," was the first request.

"Ay, a dozen, if ye'll do us the honor to drink it."

"To the devil wid your blarney! Now tell the master I'm at his service."

"Oh, murder! what will become of us? Would you tell him, after all?"

"Ye omadhauns, can't ye listen at the dure and hear what I tell him?"

With this understanding Squire Ormsby was ushered in, all expectation.

"Ye honor," said Patrick, "I think the power is laying me. I am only able to see the half of it. Now, if you please, would you like to catch the thieves and lose the silver, or to find the silver and not find the thieves?"

"Why, the silver, to be sure."

"Then you and my lady must go to mass to-morrow morning, and when you come back we will look for the silver, and maybe, if we find it, your honor will give me that little bit of a lease."

"One thing at a time, Pat; you haven't found the silver yet."

At nine o'clock next morning Mr. and Mrs. Ormsby returned, from mass, and found O'Rafferty waiting for them at their door. He had a long walking-stick with a shining knob, and informed them, very solemnly, that the priest had sprinkled it for him with holy water.

Thus armed, he commenced the search. He penetrated into the out-houses and applied his stick to chimneys and fagots and cold ovens, and all possible places. No luck.

Then he proceeded to the stable-yard, and searched every corner; then into the shrubbery; then into the tool-house. No luck. Then on the lawn. By this time there were about thirty at his heels.

Disgusted at this fruitless search, Patrick apostrophized his stick: "Bad cess to you, ye are only good to burn. Ye keep turning away from every place; but ye don't turn to anything whatever. Stop a bit! Oh, holy Moses! what is this?"

As he spoke, the stick seemed to rise and point like a gun. Patrick marched in the direction indicated, and after a while seemed to be forced by the stick into a run. He began to shout excitedly and they all ran after him. He ran full tilt against a dismantled water-barrel, and the end of the stick struck it with such impetus that it knocked the barrel over, then flew out of Patrick's hand to the right, who himself made a spring the other way, and stood glaring with all the rest at the glittering objects that strewed the lawn, neither more nor less than the missing plate.

Shouts and screams of delight. Everybody shaking hands with Patrick, who, being a consummate actor, seemed dazzled and mystified, as one who had succeeded far beyond his expectations.

To make a long story short, they all settled it in their minds that the thieves had been alarmed and hidden the plate for a time, intending to return and fetch it away.

Mr. Ormsby took the seer into his study, and gave him a piece of paper stating that for a great service rendered to him by Patrick O'Rafferty he had, in the name of him and his, promised him undisturbed possession of the farm so long as he or his should farm it themselves, and pay the present rent.

Pat's modesty vanished at the Squire's gate; he bragged up and down the village, and henceforth nobody disputed his seership in those parts.

But one day the Sassenach came down with his cold incredulity.

A neighbor's estate, mortgaged up to the eyes, was sold under the hammer, and Sir Henry Steele bought it, and laid some of it down in grass. He was a breeder of stock. He marked out a park wall, and did not include a certain little orchard and a triangular plot. The seer observed, and applied for them. Sir Henry, who did his own business, received the application, noted it down, and asked him for a reference. He gave Squire Ormsby.

"I will make inquiries," said Sir Henry, "Good morning."

He knew Ormsby in London, and when he became his neighbor the Irish gentleman was all hospitality. One day Sir Henry told him of O'Rafferty's application, and asked about him.

"Oh," said Ormsby, "that is our seer."

"Your what?"

"Our wise man, our diviner of secrets; and some wonderful things he has done."

He then related the loss of his plate, and its supernatural recovery.

The Sassenach listened with a cold incredulous eye and a sardonic grin.

Then the Irishman got hot and accumulated examples.

Then the Sassenach, with the obstinacy of his race, said he would put these pretensions to the test. He had picked out of the various narratives that this seer was very fond of a good dinner, and pretended it tended to

enlighten his mind; so he laid his

cordingly.

At his request Patrick was informed next Tuesday at one o'clock, if he would submit to a fair test of his driving power, the parcel of land he had asked for would be let him on easy terms.

Patrick assented jauntily. But he counter the Sassenach's assurance, he was the fortunate possessor of what was pleased to call "a nasty glittering eye."

Draw! wool as he had done over the orbs.

However, he came up to the scratch man. After all, he had nothing to lose this time, and he vowed to submit to what that was not preceded by a good dinner, and was ushered into Sir Henry Steele's study, and there he found that gentleman and

Ormsby. One comfort, there was a table laid, and certain silver dishes on the and in the fender.

"Well, Mr. O'Rafferty," said his host, believe you like a good dinner?"

"Thru for you, sorr," said Pat.

"Well, then, we can combine business with pleasure; you shall have a good dinner."

"Long life to your honor!"

"I cooked it for you myself."

"God bless your honor for your cension."

"You are to eat the dinner first, and just tell me what the meat is, and the of land is yours on easy terms."

Patrick's confidence rose. "Sure, it is a fair bargain," said he.

The dishes were uncovered. There were vegetables cooked most deliciously; the meat was a chef-d'œuvre; a sort of rice and one done to a turn, and so fragrant that very odor made the mouth water.

Patrick seated himself, helped himself, and took a mouthful; that mouthful had double effect. He realized in one second the same moment that this was a more ornate compound than he had ever expected to see upon earth, and that he could not and should divine what bird or beast he was eating. He looked for the bones; there were none. He yielded himself to enjoyment. When he had nearly cleared his plate he said that even the best-cooked wash it down.

Sir Henry Steele rang a bell and ordered a quart of ale.

Patrick enjoyed this too, and did not cry; he felt it was his last dinner in the house, as well as his first.

The gentlemen watched him and gave time. But at last Ormsby said, "Well, Patrick—"

Now Patrick, whilst he sipped, had been asking himself what line he had better take, and he had come to a conclusion creditable to that sagacity and knowledge of human nature he really possessed and understood accordingly. He would compliment the gentlemen on their superior wisdom, and say he could not throw dust in such a way as theirs; then he would beg them not to let his humble neighbors as wise as they were, but let him still pass for a wise man in the parish, whilst they laughed in their sleeves.

To carry out this he impregnated his brazen features with a world of courtesy and humility.

"And," said he, in cajoling accents, "in your honors, the old fox made many a trick, but the dogs were too many for him at last."

What more of self-depreciation and capery he would have added is not known; Sir Henry Steele broke in loudly, "God heavens! Well, he is an extraordinary man. It was an old dog-fox I cooked for him."

"Didn't I tell you?" cried Ormsby, lighted at the success of his countryman.

"Well, sir," said Sir Henry, whose opinions seldom lasted long, "a bargain's a bargain. I let you the orchard and field; let me see—you must bring me a sack of wheat, and a polecat every year. I mean to get up the game."

Mr. O'Rafferty first stared stupidly, then winked cunningly, then blandly absorbed laudation and land; then retired invoking solemn blessings; then, being outside, cut a fandango, and went home on wings from that hour the village could not find him. His speech was of accumulating acres at peppercorn rents, till a slice of the country should be his. To hear him, he could hear, he could see through a deal board, and luck was his monopoly. He began to be envied, and was on the way to be hated, when, confiding in his star, he married Norah Blake, a beautiful girl, but a more notorious vixen.

Then the unlucky one forgave him a great deal; for sure wouldn't Norah revenge them? Alas! the mistress fell in love with her husband after marriage, and let him mould her into a sort of acquiescent duck.

This was the climax. So Paddy Luck's now numbered amongst the lasting institutions of old Ireland (if any).

May he live till the skirts of his coat knock his brains out, and him dancing to Irish fiddling to "the wind that shakes the barley!"—*Harper's Magazine.*

They asked Mme. X. how old she was. "Thirty-two." "Why, last year you were 33!" "Yes, but I am now like an army which finds it difficult to hold its position so I retreat."

The coronation dress of the Empress Marie Feodorovna was of drap d'argent, and cost \$5,000. Her crown, however, which was originally made for Catherine II., was valued at one and a quarter million of pounds. In the Emperor's sceptre is the famous Orloff diamond. Its history is strange. It and the Koh-i-noor once formed the eyes of a Hindoo idol. It then passed into the possession of the Great Mogul, and, after many vicissitudes, eventually came into the hands of an astute Armenian, who sold it to Count Alexis Orloff, who, in his turn, disposed of it to the Emperor Paul I. for £90,000 in cash, an annuity of £4,000, and a patent of nobility. The Orloff diamond weighs 193 carats; the Koh-i-noor, in its present state, only 153. The famous Regent's diamond, 'terward known as the Regent's diamond, was sold by Gov. Pitt, grandfather of the Earl of Chatham, to the Regent of Orleans for £130,000. It was in the crown of Napoleon, and formed a portion of the Prussian loot of Waterloo. The present crown has it still.

HOUSEHOLD REC.

Some Reasonable D.

AND CANDIED FRUITS