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Selected Miscellany.

BEN SADI'S QUEST.

(AFTER GUTTENBERG.)

BEN SADI wandered many a weary year,
From youth to age, in search of Happiness,
In the King's house dwelt Pride, and Show, and
Pomp,
And in the poor man's lowly guest distress,
And turning from the love and the throne,
He sought the wandering Jew, in that distant zone
The sacred Grotto's floor, the mystic
Of disappointment, sorrow, Ben Sadi's mind,
Filled with the world's temptations and its pain,
And unbelief in what he could not find.

It chanced, one day, he wandered through a
wood,
Dark and forbidding, like his own ill-mood,
When suddenly, between the tangled boughs,
He saw a heavy temple, ages old,
Where earth's first children went to pay their
prayer.

"Think ye I cling, in many a sorrow fold,
From the cold earth, and its silent floor,
Through which the winds have passed for cen-
turies,
Ben in the damp, unhealing floor,
And, fearing wizard-work, was ill at ease;
But, looking round, a little door he spied,
Standing half open, and the light he
And just above the door these words were writ:
"Here fall ye prone; here all are blest;
"O blessed hour!" he cried, "that ends my
pain!"

"I was weary, wandering years, not spent in vain!"
He pushed the door, and in he came,
And, peering in, and seeing by degrees,
He saw—
"The temple still its secret keeps,
And there, in perfect peace, Ben Sadi sleeps,
"Consign'd to Harper's Magazine for Au-
gust."

A FRIEND IN NEED.

BY ALBERT F. WEISBERG.

THE following story was told me by a
woman well known in the city of B—
as a dealer in diamonds and as a money-
lender. She is gifted with great percep-
tive faculties, and she has gained by her
long experience in a nice and perilous
business, a deep insight into human na-
ture and also a gracious tact that enables
her to accomplish her will in spite of all
ordinary obstacles.

I was sitting behind my counter in my
shop at four o'clock on a very dark and
stormy day of January last, when a boy
entered and handed me a note. He did
not ask a question of either me or my
brother, who stood near by, but he ran
off at once.

The note was very prettily written up-
on fashionable note paper. It read thus:
"Will Madame R— kindly oblige one who
is in great distress by giving, without hesita-
tion or delay, to the corner of Bayard place and
Eugene street, where she will find a couple with
a trunkman who is already instructed whether to
bring her the money, and if Madame R— will
bring \$3000 with her she will greatly facilitate
the negotiation of an annuity not necessary
transaction."

There was a certain directness and
confidence about the letter, said Madame
R—, that at once put me on my guard.
It seemed to me to be the work either of
a designing man or of an unusually clear-
minded woman, and, as the latter is some-
what rare, to judge at least from the
note, I was inclined to believe that it was
to be particularly careful in this case was
my best method.

I confess that at first I was not inclined
to respond to the letter at all, but my de-
sire to do a good stroke of business, if
possible, together with my curiosity, per-
haps, made me yield eventually, and I
accordingly dressed for the expedi-
tion.

I called in a boy to remain in the shop
with my brother, who took my place be-
hind the counter. I then left the place
and proceeded at once to the spot indi-
cated in the note, accompanied by the
policeman whom I employ regularly as
my body-guard. I found the couple,
who had been the cause first, and then
anything wicked in the matter. I felt re-
sured. Longworth street is in the best
and richest part of the city, and, though
its neighborhood is secluded and quiet, it
is well protected and well lighted.

We performed the journey in fifteen
minutes.

We drew up in an alley-way which led
in the rear of the dwellings and I descend-
ed into the snow and hail and saw ran
for me a high, thin, and very pale man,
on either hand, and I saw a woman
reach. I had no sooner stepped upon
the walk than a small door in front of me
opened, and a young maid, with a cloak
over her head and shoulders, looked out
and bade me enter.

I did so and crossed a wide-flagged
court-yard and entered at a door in the
basement of a handsome and lofty house.
The entries were almost dark and all
the doors were closed; and, I thought,
purposely. I then left the place and
servants' stairs to the first floor, and there
upon another flight to the second floor.
Here we stepped out of the staircase into
the hallway.

It was among the most beautiful that I
had ever seen. The carpets were rich
and very thick; the walls were wain-
scoted and hung above with Spanish
leather. The air was warm and per-
fumed, and a soft light was shed down-
ward from a huge chandelier, whose
part-colored and jangling pendants
swung to and fro, throwing moving
shadows over the walls.

"Come this way," said the maid, and
she led me with some haste into a pas-
sage which led to the left, and upon
which there opened two tall, dark doors.
At one of these she knocked softly,
and then entered, directing me by a nod
to follow her.

I found myself in a well-lighted and
luxurious apartment, and surrounded by
articles and furniture of great beauty
and elegance.

Standing beside a small and delicate
table was a young lady.

She was tall and slender, and her car-
riage was striking for its graceful ease.
Her face was regular, and it was ex-
tremely handsome. She at once ap-
proached me with great haste, and, seiz-
ing my hand, she cried:

"Oh, madam, how glad I am that you
have come! I was afraid that you would
be offended because I was so peremptory,
but I did not mean it—indeed, I am
ask that I have not the courage to—
ask my bird to sing to me."

She fixed her eyes upon mine, and I
saw that they were red with weeping.

"I am in great trouble," she pursued,
"and only you can assist me. I must
sell you something. I must persuade
you to take some of my dresses and

jewels. Look! See them! I have made
quite a collection for you to choose
from."

She turned her head and gazed in an
indescribable way upon a heap of rich
garments which lay upon the floor.

I felt a singular compassion for my
customer, and I indulged myself in some
little speculation upon the probable
causes of her misfortunes.

Perhaps I displayed this interest in
my face in some way. At any rate she
suddenly altered her manner toward me,
and treated me as a confidant.

"I have a brother," she whispered,
"who has done wrong. He likes pleasure,
and he has made us much trouble, but
yet we love him. He is the under-treas-
urer of the Trust and Deposit Company
of B— You know of it, for I learned
that you have a safe in their vaults.
Well, the President came here yesterday,
and I saw him. He told me that it had
been discovered that Allan had convert-
ed \$18,000 to his own use, and that, as a
regular examination of the books and
funds of the institution was to be made
to-morrow afternoon, it would be nec-
essary that the money be returned at once
if the disgrace which would accompany
his exposure was to be avoided. He said
that he had known my father from child-
hood, and that he felt it incumbent upon
him to save him from such a flood of
shame as would pour upon him should
the disclosure be made. He had white
hair, and he wept, and he kissed me when
he went away."

"I, whose duty it is to know everything,
know that the President of the Trust
Company was a man of iron probity—one
who would cut his best friend to the
heart to punish an evil-doer."

"Are you positive that it was the Presi-
dent?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, naively—"yes,
for I remember that he told me that he
was."

"And did he come in the daytime?"

"No; he came in the evening, and he
wore a long coat and a wide-rimmed cloth
hat; he had white hair and a broad fore-
head."

"And you must provide \$18,000 to
save your brother? That is a very great
sum."

"Yes, I know it; but my brother is very
dear."

"Her gentle face became convulsed with
a spasm of grief."

"Then Allan will be secretly informed
that his wickedness has been detected,
and he will then be permitted to leave
the country. The matter can then be
hushed—just as if it had never been."
"But \$18,000! that is a fortune."

"Yes; but you forget that I am fortun-
ate." She made a gesture indicating
her rich surroundings, and she smiled
for a moment.

"Can you get it in money?"

"No; but I can convert some stocks
and some bonds that I have, and I can
draw \$5,000 from each of my two bank
accounts."

"What! you, yourself—can you do it
without the aid of an attorney or
lawyer?"

"Yes, I am independent, and I am
of age."

"That is very lucky. I am to under-
stand, then, that you have already se-
cured the sum of the amount?"

"Yes; I want only \$2,000 more."

I turned and looked at the dresses.
The young lady at once drew me toward
the table, and she managed well, I
thought, to keep the sum and she hast-
ily put it down upon an ivory tablet and
threw the cloak one side. She then took
up a white ball-dress and praised that,
pointing at the length of its train and
the richness of its trim, and she offered
her a good sum for that also.

She then proceeded with great rapid-
ity, forgetting all her sorrow for the mo-
ment in the pleasures of bargaining.

Some of the dresses brought \$70 and
some for \$100. I was not slow to see the
value of the best material and the
traces of superior workmanship.

When the pile was finally separated
into the sold and unsold there yet re-
mained \$500 to be gained from some
quarter.

"I have already sold or pawned my
jewelry," said the poor girl, with a fal-
tering voice, "and I have nothing left but
a diamond cross. I must not sell that, but
I can pledge it."

"Permit me to see it," I replied.
She produced it.
It was very handsome. The stones
were of good size and were well set.
"I will loan you the necessary sum for
this," I said.

"Ah, madam," she cried, in a trem-
bling voice, "how kind you are to me! I
was afraid of you. I thought this would
be one of the hardest moments of my
life, but you have been so frank and so
generous that I feel as if I ever
dreamed that I was undertaking a sacri-
fice. Allan is safe. My father will be
left in peace. Madam, may I kiss you?"
She threw her arms about my neck and
pressed her soft lips several times to
mine, and the tears upon her cheeks left
a moisture upon my face which seems to
be there even now.

I produced my wallet, and, conscious
that my beautiful girl was blushing red,
I counted out upon the little table the
exact amount that she required, and she
said: "When and where are you to deliver
this money?" I inquired.

"At noon to-morrow," in one of the
parlors of the Albion" (a private hotel).

"Yes, to the President."

"And he, then, is to assure you that
proceedings against your brother will
not be taken, and to warn you that his
immediate flight to Canada will be nec-
essary?"

"Yes, madam."

"And have you any property left?"

"Very little—really very little; that is,
none that I can convert."

"If you have given, then, all that it is
possible for you to give."

"I—yes. That is, I—"

"I understand," said I; "you have
stripped your wardrobe, your purse, your
bank, your jewel-cases, your boxes of
precious heirlooms, and you have given
your brother out of the quarry in which
he has placed himself. He is igno-
rant of it. You do it under no pres-
sure but that of love for him and for
yourself. Am I right?"

She hung her head, and in a nervous
manner tried to turn the rings which had
been upon her fingers. But there were
now no rings there.

"At this moment there came a knock at
the door. The maid went to it and re-
turned with a message from some one
who wished to borrow the diamond cross
for the night, as hers (the would-be bor-
rower) was being repaired.

"My young lady caught her breath and
turned pale. Then she glanced toward
me.

"It is my brother's affianced," she said;
"she has worn the cross before."

"Without the slightest hesitation I
drew it from my bosom, whither I had
placed it for safe-keeping, and put it
into her hands.

"You can bring it to me early in the
morning. That will do equally as well."
The act was very unbusiness-like, and
I never did a similar one. I was com-
pensated for the departure from my recti-
tude, however, by watching the divine
expression of gratitude which trans-
formed the young girl's face as she re-
ceived the jewel with a bow and a
"Thank you, madam, with a kind
message."

I prepared to go away. With a delicacy
that was as pleasant as it was rare for
me to experience, I was relieved of the
necessity of handling up the clothing I
had purchased; the maid was directed to
make a parcel of it, and to carry it down
to the carriage which was waiting for me.

I took leave of my fair one with much
difficulty. She embraced me again and
again, and she, too, generously forgot the
advantages I had obtained in the advan-
tage she felt that I had afforded her.

I left her standing in the center of the
floor of the apartment, with her face
buried in her white hands, and with the
wild lights of the fire playing strange
gambols on and about her delicate figure.

Upon reaching the sidewalk again, I
found that the coupe had been replaced
by a hired carriage; the discretion of the
coachman was apparent.

During the night which succeeded these
transactions I reflected upon what had
been told me, and made up my mind
that all was not quite as my young lady
supposed.

I had discovered, by the way, that her
name was Kingsford, also that her
parents were extremely wealthy, and
that she and her brother were only chil-
dren.

Early on the succeeding morning a
gentleman entered my shop and asked
me to purchase a diamond cross, which
he thought old-fashioned and out of date.
He unrolled it from some bits of paper,
and I glanced at it. I recognized it at
a glance as the one I had held on the
previous night.

The mirrors are arranged in my show-
case in a way that enables me, by look-
ing downward, apparently at what I hold
in my hand, to watch the features and
behavior of my customers.

While pretending, therefore, to examine
the cross, I quietly and thoroughly scruti-
nized his features to convince me
that he was the brother of Miss Kings-
ford.

With my foot I touched two springs,
one of which instantly caused a bolt to
fasten the door, while the other rang a
bell which summoned my brother from a
rear room.

I then put the cross upon the shelf be-
hind me, and asked the young man to
step to the end of the counter where
there were two chairs.

I told him briefly that I knew him, and
that I knew of his defalcation.

The effect of these announcements upon
him was unexpectedly severe and sud-
den. His blood flowed back upon his
heart, and for a moment he was para-
lyzed. He tried to rise from his chair, and
would have slipped upon the floor had I
not caught him. He slowly aroused him-
self, but, by the time he regained his
power of speech, he seemed to have
grown ten years older. His eyes were
large and watery, his lips appeared in-
firm, and his head settled down be-
tween his shoulders. I did not think he
was cowardly, but that he was not so
callous and wicked as I had supposed.

"Yes, he was really an angel," he trem-
bled from his head to his feet, and his knees
shook as if he were shuddering with the
cold.

"I asked him the name of his confid-
ant. He replied that it was Marshall.

"Please excuse me," he said.

"He is pretty tall, and he has white
hair and beard and a broad forehead."

"Is he not pleasing in his manners?"

"Yes, he is a fine address?"

"Yes, he is a fine address?"

"What were you about to do with the
money that you hoped to get for that
cross?"

"I was about to leave town. The af-
fair will be known and over the city this
evening. But you will return the cross to
me?"

This inquiry was excited and start-
lingly earnest.

"I shook my head. He burst into a
torrent of prayer, and entreaties, which
I checked as soon as possible. I advised
him to return to my office."

"Return to my office?"

"Yes. But leave it just before noon
and go to the Albion, and sit in the par-
lor until I send for you."

"Until you send for me?"

"Yes. And be sure you do not at-
tempt to run away meantime. You have
stolen \$18,000, have you not?"

"I suppose you have converted the
company's bonds. Are the bonds to be
had at a moment's notice?"

He gazed at me for an instant, and
then cried in a loud voice that seemed to
come from the very middle of his heart:
"They are to be had at a moment's no-
tice. But who can want them?"

If eyes can extort secrets, then a less
obdurate person than I would have
told him all she knew, for his gaze
seemed to penetrate my breast, so intense
was it.

But I was dumb. I had nothing more
to ask. He was subdued by my (sup-
posed) knowledge and he called me a
strange woman. He begged for the cross
a second time. "For," he said, "it be-
longs to my sister."

"Then you stole it from her," I said.

He turned away his head and then mut-
tered, half to himself:

"One becomes capable of a great many
things."

He departed a moment after, but I
managed to impress him with the idea
that he must not attempt flight. He
promised me humbly that he would obey
me and that he would be found at the
Albion at the hour I mentioned. He
went away terror-stricken and in great
fear of me.

He had not been gone ten minutes
when a lady, heavily-veiled, entered and
approached me.

She hastily uncovered her face. It was
Miss Kingsford. She was pale and weary-
looking.

"The cross that you brought me, I re-
quest that you not brought the cross," she
stammered.

"Do not feel troubled about it," I re-
plied, in a manner which banished her
agitation at once. "Perhaps we shall
not need it. I will give you with you as
a matter of form to the Albion."

"That is, you will make me into cus-
tody," she replied, with a sort of half-
laugh.

"No, not that exactly, but I will go to
see if something cannot be done to pre-
pare you for a sacrifice on your part.
Where is your brother?"

"Poor Allan! I do not know. I—
I have not seen him to-day. Ah, if he
knew what a storm was hanging over
him!"

I begged her to go into my private of-
fice, in the rear, and to rest there until
the time should come to visit the "Presi-
dent."

She did as I wished, and she lay her
tired head upon a heap of cushions that
I arranged beside her upon a lounge.

At half-past eleven we entered her
coupe, which we found two blocks away,
and drove to the place of meeting.

The Albion was a small hotel built of
stone, and it was very old. Most of its
windows were narrow and its rooms dark
and contracted. It was finely furnished,
however, and it was much liked by fash-
ionable people.

We were shown to a parlor. Its win-
dows looked upon a broad park whose
tall trees were moaning in the wind, and
over whose scattered paths a few walk-
ers were picking their way.

There was a bright fire in the grate.
Miss Kingsford was exceedingly anx-
ious. She showed me her wallet. It con-
tained bank-notes of large denomination in
the sum of \$18,000.

"I want to inquire if any one were
awaiting my arrival."

In a moment the "President" was
ushered in. He was the man already de-
scribed to me both by Miss Kingsford
and her brother. His face wore an ex-
pression of great sympathy. He was
dressed in a simple, but elegant, man-
ner. He looked annoyed, if not alarmed.

Miss Kingsford following my instruc-
tions, told him that it was her maid.

He bowed and then asked, with an
eagerness which he could not conceal
(from me at least), if she "had come
prepared."

She replied in the affirmative. His
delight gleamed out of his eyes and his
mouth, as if fire gleamed from between
the fingers of a king.

He offered her many consolations, and
then approached the main subject once
more.

Miss Kingsford asked for a specifica-
tion of the character of the property
which had been abstracted from the
vaults of the company.

The man replied in substance that it
consisted of ten \$1,000 Government
bonds of the issue of '65, numbered
from 1 and 2 to 10, and five \$1,000
bonds of the issue of '67, and three of
the issue of '68. I committed this state-
ment to memory.

The "President" then went on and
made a moderate statement, filled
with all due expressions of sorrow and
regret—of Kingsford's conduct, and
ended by saying that time was pressing,
and that if Miss Kingsford would trust
him he would see that her family and
her brother were not molested, and
which implied their peace and integ-
rity.

"Wait a minute, please," I said. "In-
stead of being President of the Trust
Company, are you not a clerk? Is not
your name Marshall?"

The man turned livid.

I arose and went to a door which led
to an adjoining apartment. Kingsford
was there, pacing up and down, uncon-
scious of my presence, and those who
were interested in him.

I beckoned to him.

He stepped into the room.

Each of the three people recoiled with
expressions of profound consternation.
They contemplated one another for a few
seconds in dismayed silence.

I must say that I felt very much like
laughing.

I finally addressed Marshall:

"Your attempt to sell the secret of
your brother's crime, and your effort to
repurchase the bonds he took has
been raised, but the money to replace
those you have taken has not been
raised." I did not feel that I was ventur-
ing on a dangerous ground, for it was
likely that Marshall, being a party to a
felony, had also profited by it. "You
thought to make a good stroke by per-
sonating to his unwary sister a grieved
but kind-hearted superior, while you
were really nothing more than a
wretch who sought not only to grow rich
on the wrongs committed by him, but to
cover him with so much shame—which
the flight advised that you would have
secured down—that his name would
have been a perpetual accusation and
reproach. You are a thousand times
the criminal that he is, and I think
Heaven that you have been thrown in my
way. I shall see that you are punished."

"I fixed my eyes upon him, and then ad-
ded, quietly:

"You will be arrested to-morrow morn-
ing."

He turned about and hastened to the
door. I followed him. My private officer
was in waiting. Marshall was seized the
instant he passed into the hall, and was
taken, as I had previously directed he
should be, to another and a more seclud-
ed part of the house, and was there kept
under surveillance for an hour and a
half.

Having seen that he was secured and
incapacitated from making any interrup-
tion, I returned to the brother and sis-
ter.

Miss Kingsford was standing with her
face hidden in her hands beside the fire.
Her brother, almost as breathless as
a statue, stood near an opposite cor-
ner, with his face averted.

CURRENT ITEMS.

HOME RULE—Birch.
The softest water is caught when it
rains hard.

POWDERED MEERSCHAUM is now used
by ladies as a cosmetic.

A SPEAKER is no longer in sympathy
with his audience, but he is a rapport
with it.

UNCLE JIP is a Detroit negro who lets
the boys crack coconuts on his head for
fifty cents apiece.

ONE of the religious papers affirms
that practical Christianity is the great
need of the times.

AS Ohio housewife suicided the other
day because her kettle of soft soap
wouldn't "make."

ALTHOUGH doubtful things are un-
certain, it cannot be denied that certain
things are doubtful.

THE Agassiz memorial fund is getting
into the second series of its teens. It
now exceeds \$112,000.

AN Arizona company has a monopoly
of the ice business in Boston this year.
That's a nice business.

A MAN with a scolding wife, on being
asked what he did for a living, replied
that he kept a hot-house.

A WORKMAN found in the Allegheny
River, the other day, a gold ring, in-
scribed "J. H. Smith, 1824."

THE King of the Sandwich Islands ad-
justs the negotiation of a reciprocity
treaty with the United States.

THEY keep selling the Smith sisters
cow for taxes in Connecticut, and all
New England is in an excitement about it.