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JOSEPHINE BURGES.

BY JONATHAN SLICK, ESQ.

Miss Josephine Burges was a purty gal, but she was awfully stuck up, and got into all kinds of fined notions, arter her par, the old shoemaker, died and left her arnings. She was an awful smart critter though, and had a notion which side her bread was buttered on, as well as any body you can set your eyes on. Instead of spending the seven hundred dollars which the stingy old cut left behind him, all in hard chink, she sot up a milliner's and dress-maker's store in the Bowery,—and it raly would have done the old chap's ghost good to have seen how she contrived to turn the sixpences and half dollars that he'd kept hoarded up so long in an old pepper and salt stocking, for fear of losing. A snug business Miss Josephine Burges was a doing, I can tell you. If she didn't know how to make things gibe, there wasn't a gal in the Bowery that did, you may be sartin. She raly had a talent for the business—a sort of genius in the bonnet way. With her own handsome leetle fingers she cut and snipped, and twisted, and pinned on the shiney stuff and ribands, to all the caps and bonnets turned off by the ten, peaked-looking, slim young gals, that recreated twelve hours out of every twenty-four in a leetle garret bed-room, in the back of the house, where Miss Josephine Burges kept her store. How them peaked-looking young gals might have enjoyed themselves, if they'd only had a mind to! There was such a prospect to look out on, when they got tired. If they jist turned their bright eyes up to get a peep at the sky, there was a hull regiment of chimnies, all a sending out smoke like a company of Florida sogers; and if they looked down, there were ever so many back yards cut up into sort of pig-pens, with lots of bleech boxes a pouring out the brinstun smoke, and old straw-bonnets strung out to dry, that made every think look comfortable and like live. Miss Josephine Burges was a purty good boss, considering. She let her gals have half an hour to eat their dinners in; and if any on 'em didn't happen to git to the shop at seven o'clock in the morning, she never docked off more than half their day's wages. She was rather apt to git out of temper once in a while—but then, instead of blowing the galls up, as some cross-grained critters will, she only blew up their work, and made them do it over agin,—which was a nice, easy way of spitting out spite, and putting a few coppers into her own pocket; for when it took a half of a day to do the work, and another half to alter it, she only made the poor gals lose a hull day's wages; and if they didn't like that she'd always give them leave to git a better place,—which, considering that one quarter of the sewing gals in York are always out of work, was raly very considerate in her. Besides this, she had many other ginerous leetle ways of turning a copper. When the peaked, haggard, young critters, came down from the work room, at twelve o'clock, Saturday nights, as she paid them their wages, Miss Josephine always found out that some mistake had been made in the work—a piece of silk cut into or a bit of Leghorn burnt brown in the bleeching, which melted down the twenty shillings which they ought to have had a piece, to eighteen, or meebby, two dollars—all of which must sartainly have been to the satisfaction and amusement of the pale troop of gals who had two dollars to pay for board, besides clothes and washing to git along with, out of the twenty-five cents that was left. Sometimes the tears would come into their eyes; and some on 'em that hadn't no hum to go to, except the leetle garret bed-rooms, which they were over head and ears in debt for, would bust out and sob as if they hadn't got a friend on arth; but crying is a good deal like drinking—it hurts those that take to it more than it does any body else. Miss Josephine Burges didn't care a copper for tears and sobs; she'd got used to 'em.

Miss Burges raly had a talent for her business; nobody ever learned so many prudent ways for laying up money; she used to dress up like a queen, and her Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes were the genuine things, and genteel all over. Eenamost every Sabber day she would go to meeting in a fine bran new bonnet; and if some of her good-natured customers that staid to hum because theirs wasn't finished, had one jist like it come to the door on Monday morning, the little gal that waited for the band-box only had to say, that she sarched and sarched a Saturday night but couldn't find the house. It don't hurt a dashing bonnet to wear it once; and Miss Josephine never kept her customers a waiting over more than one Sunday, only when they were nation easy and paid beforehand. Folks that are always a minding other people's business, used to talk about Miss Josephine and call her extravagant and stuck up, but the varmints didn't know what they were a talking about more than nothing. If she had her silks and satins

made up every mouth, the making cost eenamost nothing. The working gals always expected to sit up till twelve o'clock Saturday nights in hurrying times; and when it wasn't hurrying times, Miss Josephine always had a frock to finish off for herself, or something of that sort. The frocks answered jist as well to make bonnets out on arter she'd dashed out in 'em once or twice, and the sleeves and waist cut up for ruffles and furbelows.

Besides tending her shop, and cutting and trimming, and all that, Miss Josephine Burges found time to do a leetle courting, overwork, with a fined sort of a 'pothecary, that sold doctor stuff over the way agin her store. But she didn't let this take up much of her time, nor no such thing; she warn't a gal to let her heart run away with her head. While the fined stuck up leetle 'pothecary shut up his shop over the way, and sot mor'ea half the time a twisting up the threads and leetle bits of riband that Miss Josephine snipped off with a pair of sharp-pinted scissors, hitched to her side by a black watch-guard, and kept a puckering up his mouth and a talking fined nonsense, as sweet as the jujube paste and the peppermint drops that he brought in his pockets, she sot as independent as a cork-screw, with one foot stuck up on a bonnet block, a twisting up bows and a sticking pins and feathers into a heap of silk and millinery stuff. Once in a while she found time to stick a peppermint drop into her leetle mouth, and to turn her eyes to the 'pothecary with sich a look. So soft and killing, it went right straight through his heart.

He sometimes overhauled the milliner's books, not because he wanted to know any thing about them, but because women folks are so apt to be imposed on; he writ out her leetle bills, and kept a sort of a running notion of her cash accounts, for she wasn't much of a judge of money, and so always sent her bank bills over to his shop to know whether they were genuine or not. She did all these leetle trifles in a delicate and natral sort of a way, that was sartinly very gratifying and pleasant to the 'pothecary; and he raly begun to fat up and grow pussy on the strength on't; it wouldn't a been human natur if he hadn't.

Miss Josephine Burges was a setting in her back shop, a thinking over the 'pothecary chap and the dollars and cents that she'd skinned out of the gals' wages that week, a making them work at half price because the times were so bad, when the 'pothecary come a tiptoeing through the store a looking as tickled as if he'd found a sixpence. He took two ball tickets out of his vest pocket, and held one on 'em out to the milliner, and stood a bowing and a grinning like a baboon till she read the writing on it.

"I raly don't know what to say," sez she. "I never have been to the Tammany balls, and I—I"

"It'll be the top of the notch, this one," sez the chap. "They're going to be awful particular who they invite—nothing but the raly genteel will git tickets, I promise 'em."

Miss Josephine Burges puckered up her mouth and said she didn't know.

"Don't say no—it'll break my heart, it will sartainly," sez the loveyer. "Don't drive me to taking pison on your account—oh don't."

Miss Josephine kinder started up, give a sort of a scream, and said she wouldn't drive the 'pothecary to take pison, and that she would go to the ball. The minit she said that, the leetle chap went right off into a fit of the dreadful suz; he slumped right down on his marrow bones, and begun to nibble away at the four dear little fingers that stuck out of Miss Josephine Burges' right hand mitt.

"Oh, say ony jist one thing more, and I shall be so happy, shall want ter jump out of my skin," sez he, all in a twitteration.

"Oh, dear me, what do you mean! I swanny I'm all in a fluster," sez she.

"Here down on my knees I ask, I entreat, I implore, I conjure, most beautiful of wimmen folks," sez he, "that you be my partner, not only at the ball, but through this ere mortal life. Don't blush my angel, but speak."

"One word of hope," sez the chap, a giving his bosom another dig. "Say that you will be mine."

"I'll think about it," sez Miss Josephine Burges, a sighing through her fingers.

"Say that you will be mine, or I will die on this 'ere very spot, and be sent down to posterity a living monument of wimmen's hard-heartedness," sez the 'pothecary, a running his fingers through his hair till it stuck up sort of wild, every which way over his head. "Do you want to make this ere body a mortar, and pound my loving heart to pieces with the pestle of delay? If not, speak, and say that my love is returned."

"It is," sez Miss Josephine Burges, kinder faint from behind her hand.

"Angelic critter!" sez the loveyer.

"Now leave me," sez Miss Josephine Burges.

"Hansomest of wimmen, I will," sez the 'pothecary.

"O how my heart beats!" sez Miss Josephine Burges.

"And mine," sez the 'pothecary, a gitin up and a spreading his hand out on his yaller vest.

"Leave me now," sez Miss Josephine Burges.

"My dear critter, I will," sez the 'pothecary.

With that he made tracks across the street, opened his empty money drawer with a sort of a chuckle, as much as to say, if you're starved out in this way much longer I will lose my guess, and then he drank off a glass of cold water with a leetle brandy in it.

Miss Josephine Burges sat still as a mouse till the 'pothecary chap made himself scarce, then she let down her hand and took a squint in the glass, to see how her face stood it. Arter that she went to a big drawer where she kept her slickest dry goods, and cut off a lot of shiney red velvet, which she took up stairs, and told the gal that had charge of her work room, to have it made up into a ball dress afore the hands went home. The ten poor, tired young critters were jist a beginning to think about going home to supper, but they sot down agin, and looked in each other's faces as melancholy as could be, but said nothing. The young gal that had charge of the work room happened to say, that in the course of a week or two they would have a prime lot of red velvet bonnets to sell. At this Miss Josephine Burges looked as cross as if she'd swallowed a paper of darning needles, and told the young gal that had charge of the work room to hold her tongue and mind her own business. At this the young gal drew up and was a going to give the milliner her change back agin; but jist that minit she happened to think that sarse from a stuck up critter was bad enough, but that starving was a good deal wuss, and so she choked in and went to work at the dress, with her heart a swelling in her barnsome bosom, like a bird when it's first caught.

"Don't let them gals get to sleep over their work," sez Miss Josephine Burges as she was a going down stairs.

The young gal who had charge of the work room said something of low, about people's having no feeling.

"What's that you say?" sez Miss Josephine Burges, a coming back as spiteful as could be.

"Nothing," sez the young gal who took charge of the work room.

"It's well you didn't," sez the milliner. With that she went down stairs, and the poor tuckered out young critters didn't get hum to supper till ten o'clock at night, because they had to stay and finish off Miss Josephine Burges' ball finery.

Miss Josephine Burges was a sitting in the leetle room up over her store, ready dressed for the ball, when the leetle apprentice gal cum up and told her that the gentleman from over the way was a waiting down stairs. The milliner jumped up and begun to wriggle about afore the looking glass to be sartin that the red velvet frock, the golden chain and the heap of posies that she twisted in her hair were all according to Gunter.—Arter she'd took a purty general survey she went down stairs, about the most stuck up critter that you ever sot eyes on.

The 'pothecary stood afore the looking glass a trying to coax his hair to curl jist a leetle, and a pulling up fust one side of his white satin stock and then tother, to make it set up perpendicular. He'd got a little speck of dirt on his silk stockings and his shiny dancing pumps a coming over the street, so he took his white handkerchief out of his pocket and begun to dust them off; but the minit Miss Josephine Burges cum in, he stopped short, stepped back agin the wall, and held up both hands as if he raly didn't know what to do with himself, and sez he—

"I never did! talk about the Venus de Medishe, or the New York beauty. Did ever any thing come up to that are."

I rather guess the people stared a few when the little 'pothecary walked along the Tammany ball room with Miss Josephine Burges, in her red velvet and gold chains, a hanging on his arm. Siedasbers didn't show themselves at every ball, by a great sight. There was a genuine touch of the aristocracy in the way the leetle 'pothecary turned up his nose, and flourished his white gloves; and when they stood up to dance, Miss Josephine held out her red velvet, and stuck out her foot, and curcheyed away as slick as any of the Broadway gals could a done it. But jist as she was a going to dance, who should stand afore her in the same reel but the very young gal that took charge of her work room. The milliner had jist took a fold of the red velvet between her thumb and finger, and was flourishing out her foot to balance up as genteel as could be,