

COURTING BY PROXY.

YOUNG Mr. Alonzo Romeo Rush was dreadfully in love—yes, indeed, which of us is not? Everybody has a passion, though, fortunately, the objects are infinitely various. Mr. Alonzo was in love with himself for a year or two after he took leave of childhood and milk-and-water; but after that his grandmamma told him he ought to marry, and he forthwith fell violently in love with his future wife, and vowed to allow himself no rest till he had found her. This may be termed "love in the abstract," which, as we shall see, is not without its perplexities.

Mr. Alonzo was a darling boy, an orphan, and the heir of a good Knickerbocker fortune. His grandmamma was his guardian, in a sense beyond the cold, legal meaning of the term. She picked the bones out of his fish, and reminded him of his pocket-handkerchief, during all the years of his tender boyhood; and, until he was full fourteen years old, he slept in her room, and had his face washed by her own hands, in warm water, every morning. Even after he called himself a man, she buttered his muffins and tucked up his bed-clothes, with a solicitude above all praise. Thanks to her care and attention, he reached the age of twenty-one in safety, excepting that he was very subject to colds, which alarmed his venerable relative extremely; and excepting also that he showed an unaccountable liking for the society of a little tailoress, who had always made his clothes during his minority.

But now, as we have said, he was dreadfully in love; and what made his situation the more puzzling was, that his grandmamma, in her various charges, had entirely omitted to specify the lady to whom his devotions ought to be paid. She even urged him to choose for himself. What a responsibility!

"Only remember, Alonzo," said the good lady, "that you will never be happy with a girl that does not like muffins, and that it is as easy to love a rich girl as a poor one."

"Yes," responded Mr. Alonzo, with rather an absent air; "yes, and as to muffins—" here he sunk into a reverie. "Grandma!" exclaimed the darling, after some pause, "couldn't you ask Parthenia Blinks here to tea?"

"Certainly, my dear," said the good lady, and she rang the bell at once, preparatory to the making of several kinds of cake, and various other good things.

This invitation was duly sent, and as duly accepted by Miss Parthenia Blinks, who found it politic always to accept an invitation, that she might do as she pleased when the time came—a practice fully adopted by many fashionables.

The time did come, and there was the tea-table, set out with four kinds of preserves, arranged with the most exact quadrangularity; in the centre a large basket heaped with cake, and at the sides two mountains of toast and muffins; tea, coffee, and various accessories completed the prospect. The fine old Knickerbocker parlour was in its primest order, every chair standing exactly parallel with its brother; the tea-kettle singing on its chafing-dish; the cat purring on the hearth-rug. Two sofas, covered with needle-work, were drawn up to the fire, and the man-

darins on the chimney-piece nodded at each other, and at the pink and azure shepherds and shepherdesses which ornamented the space between them. Mr. Alonzo Romeo Rush stood before the glass, giving the last twirl to an obstinate side-lock, which, in spite of persuasion and pomatum, *would* obey that fate called a cow-lick. An impetuous ring at the door. The little tailoress, who had been giving a parting glance at her own handiwork, slipped out of the room, sighing softly; and Alonzo and his grandmamma seated themselves on the opposite sofas, for symmetry's sake. A billet in a gilded envelope. Miss Parthenia Blinks' regrets.

"What an impudent thing!" said the old lady, with a toss of her cap. (We do not know whether she meant the act or the young lady.) "But come, my dear, you shall eat the muffins, and never mind her. The next time I ask Miss Blinks it will do her good, I know."

Mr. Alonzo, nothing daunted by this mortifying slight, turned his thoughts next to Miss Justina Cuypers, a young lady who resided with two maiden aunts in a house which had suffered but little change since the revolution. The first step which suggested itself to the darling, was to ask Miss Cuypers to ride; but to reach this golden apple the aunts must be propitiated, and therefore it was judged best that grandmamma should make one of the party, in order that none of the proprieties might be violated. Alonzo was charioteer, but, as he was not much accustomed to driving, his grandmamma felt it her duty to take the reins out of his hands very frequently, besides giving him many directions as to which rein he ought to pull, in meeting the numerous vehicles which they encountered on the Harlem road. Whether from the excess of his passion for Miss Cuypers, who never spoke once the whole way, or whether from the confusion incident to reiterated instructions, poor Mr. Alonzo did finish the drive by an overturn, which did not kill anybody, but spoiled the young lady's new bonnet, and covered her admirer with mud and mortification.

The failure of these kindly attempts of his grandmamma to save him the trouble of getting a wife, taught Mr. Alonzo a lesson. He drew the astute inference that old ladies were not good proxies in all cases. He even thought of taking the matter into his own hands; and with this view it was not long before he set out, like a prince in a fairy tale, to seek his fortune.

The first house he came to—that is to say, the one to which his footsteps turned most naturally—was one belonging to a distant connection of his grandmamma, a lady whose ancestor came over with Hendrik Hudson, or, as the family chroniclers insisted, a little before. Miss Alida Van Der Benschoten, the daughter of this lady—a fresh sprout from the time-honoured tree—might have been known to Alonzo, but that he had always hidden himself when her mamma brought her to pay her annual visit to his grandmamma. She resided with her mother, one ancient sister, and two great rude brothers, on the borders of the city, in one of those tempting ruralities called cottages, built of brick, three stories high, and furnished with balconies and verandahs of cast-iron, all very agricultural in-