

## Pairing Time Anticipated.

It chanced, upon a winter's day,  
But warm, and bright and calm as May,  
The birds, conceiving a design  
To forestall sweet St. Valentine,  
On many an orchard, copse and grove,  
Assembled on affairs of love,  
And with much twitter and much chatter,  
Began to agitate the matter.

At length, a bulfinch, who could boast  
More years and wisdom than the most,  
Entreated, opening wide his beak,  
At moments liberty to speak;  
And, silence publicly enjoined,  
Delivered briefly thus his mind:—  
"My friends, be cautious how ye treat  
The subject upon which we meet;  
I fear we shall have a winter yet."

At finch, whose tongue knew no control,  
With golden wing and satin poll,  
A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried  
What marriage means, thus pert replied:—  
"Methinks the gentleman," quoth she,  
"Opposite in the apple-tree,  
By his good will, would keep us single  
Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,  
Or (which is likelier to befall)  
Till death exterminate us all.  
I marry without more ado:—  
My dear Dick Redcap, what say you?"

Dick heard, and twaddling, ogling, bridling,

Turning short round, strutting and sidling,  
Attested, glad, his approbation  
Of an immediate conjugation.  
Their sentiments, so well expressed,  
Influenced mightily the rest:  
All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But, though the birds were thus in haste,  
The leaves came on not quite so fast;  
And destiny, that sometimes bears  
An aspect stern on man's affairs,  
Not altogether smiled on theirs.  
The wind—of late breathed gently forth—  
Now shifted east, and east by north;  
Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,  
Could shelter them from rain or snow;  
Stepping into their nests, they paddled;  
Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled:  
Soon, every father bird and mother  
Grew quarrelsome, and pecked each other,  
Parted without the least regret,  
Except that they had ever met,  
And learned in future to be wiser  
Than to neglect a good adviser.

### Moral.

Misses the tale that I relate  
This lesson seems to carry;—  
Choose not alone a proper mate,  
But proper time to marry.