

In one man of you, might I ask  
What on earth this is all about?"

'Hold your tongue!' said the sergeant  
gruff.

'Mind your words—they may cost you  
your life.

Murderer! See the poor old man  
We have saved from your brutal knife!"

'A murd'rer—my knife—you're mad!'  
Said the man, with a sudden cry.  
First he stared, then he gave a laugh  
Could be heard both far and nigh.

And he laughed, and laughed, and  
laughed—

We thought he'd gone mad with the  
shock—

Till he gasped out, 'Good gracious me!  
I was going to kill the cock!'

In one moment I felt and saw  
What a terrible fool I'd been;  
In one moment we each one knew  
The meaning of all we'd seen.

The 'old thing' they'd spoken of  
Was—not a man, but a bird!  
What an utter fool I'd been!  
It was really too absurd!

And the man still laughed and laughed,  
And he shook till we thought he'd drop:  
The policemen began to laugh  
As if they could never stop.

But one person didn't laugh,  
And that was poor foolish me;  
And I crept away in the dusk,  
And waited no more to see.

I wished—oh, how much I wished!—  
That the neighbors were far away,  
For I knew I should never hear  
The last of that dreadful day.

And I haven't. I heard next day  
The whole that I hadn't known  
The neighbors had not wanted us  
To see how poor they had grown.

So they'd kept the house door closed,  
For they'd wanted fire and food  
And their clothes were so worn and old—  
If I'd only understood!

I had stopped his chances of work  
By the gossip I'd set around;  
He had tried on day after day,  
But not one job had he found.

And the old man grew sick and frail,  
So they'd brought the doctor to see,  
And the doctor had ordered him  
To be fed on chicken tea.

It was then that I'd heard them talk,  
For the cock was the wife's great pet  
And the thought that he must be  
killed,  
It couldn't but make her fret.

Well, we saved his life at the least,  
For when mother heard all, instead  
She sent them two fine fat chickens—  
She couldn't do less, she said.

And she spoke for him everywhere,  
So that soon after that work came;  
But she never once said to me  
One word of reproof or blame.

But I was ashamed of myself,  
And if ever police went by,  
There wasn't a poacher about  
Would run half so fast as I!

I told my neighbor one day  
I was worried out of my mind

To think of the harm I'd done;  
She was very, very kind.

We're as great as can be these days,  
And he's bought a good piece of land,  
And the cock still comes round to eat  
The grains of corn from my hand.

But if ever I seem inclined,  
To be 'Meddlesome Matty' anew,  
Mother knows she need only say  
One word—'Cock-a-doodle-do!'

### The Conscript's Substitute.

While the fierce war of 1848 was covering the beautiful hills and valleys of Italy with the dead and wounded, a young man was, by the law of conscription, called to leave his comfortable home for the perils of the battle field. The tender affection of his father led him to try every means to procure a substitute. He put advertisements in the papers,

stead. I am an orphan; thou art not. If I should die, only remember that I have loved thee.'

The conscript at first refused; he could scarcely believe that his cousin was in earnest; and if so, how could he accept the generous offer. But as the brave fellow persisted in his determination, and pleaded earnestly with him, he succeeded at last in persuading Cesare Manati to accept this great proof of his friendship, and they went together to the War Office in order to settle the substitution. One undressed himself and the other put on the military attire.

Who can tell the admiration of the parents of the redeemed conscript for the generous substitution, and their joy in seeing their beloved son for ever relieved from the danger of perishing on the field of battle. In the excess of his gratitude the conscript's father offered the cousin £100; but he refused it, and said, 'I go as a friend, not as a hireling. It is love, not money, which leads me to take



made applications to the recruiting officers, and offered a bounty of £80, but all in vain.

The day of departure came, and the young soldier, in silent despair, set off with his knapsack on his back, his gun on his shoulder, and filled with grief at being separated from his beloved parents. One of his cousins, whose noble and generous heart was touched at the sight of his deep grief, followed him to the barracks, and having arrived at the conscript's office, he took his hand and said, 'Dear Cesare, thy sorrow is worse than death to me. Come in; give me thy uniform; it will fit me as well as it does thee. I will go to the battle-field in thy

Cesare's place.' He went—he fought—he died! A grateful heart raised a monument to his memory, with this epitaph, 'The redeemed conscript Cesare Manati, to his voluntary substitute, Carlo Donaldi.' That memorial of love, however, was destroyed at Solferino during the Italian war.

This beautiful incident is but a faint shadow of the unbounded love of Jesus, who was the Son of God. Sin had entered into the world, and death by sin. But God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—'Friendly Visitor.'