The Man He Killed

'Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

'But ranged as infantry
And staring face to face,
I shot him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

'I shot him dead because –
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

'He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like – just as I –
Was out of work – had sold his traps –
No other reason why.

'Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.

Thomas Hardy (1840 -1928)

GLOSSARY

1. half-a-crown (l.20)   an old British coin
2. 'list short form for to enlist (l.13)   to join the armed force
3. nipperkin (l.4)   a small cup
4. traps   possessions
5. to treat (L.19)   to pay for sth. that sb. will enjoy

ANALYSING THE POEM

1. Identify the speaker with close reference to the diction and vocabulary used in the poem.

   (8 marks)

2. Comment on the stark opposition between the first two stanzas. How is this contrast expressed? (12 marks)

3. Examine the punctuation, rhythm and diction of stanzas three and four. What do these stylistic elements reveal about the speaker's state of mind? (12 marks)

4. Examine the link between stanza one and the closing stanza. Has the speaker achieved a sense of understanding or relief? (8 marks)

5. Explore some parallels or differences between Hardy's poem and the war poetry of Wilfred Owen. (8 marks)

   What do you think? (12 marks)

6. *'One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing; that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one.' – Agatha Christie*

   What do you think of Agatha Christie's claim?

   Your answer of about 200 words should be clearly structured. Indicate the number of words used.