

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!

half-pint cup

But ranged as infantry,

And staring face to face,

I shot at 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)