Patriot, The.

By Browning, Robert .

An Old Story

I

It was roses, roses, all the way,

With myrtle mixed in my path like mad.

The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,

The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,

A year ago on this very day!

II

The air broke into a mist with bells,

The old walls rocked with the crowds and cries.

Had I said, "Good folks, mere noise repels -

But give me your sun from yonder skies!"

They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

III

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun,

To give it my loving friends to keep.

Nought man could do have I left undone,

And you see my harvest, what I reap

This very day, now a year is run.

IV

There's nobody on the house-tops now -

Just a palsied few at the windows set -

For the best of the sight is, all allow,

At the Shambles' Gate -or, better yet,

By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

V

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,

A rope cuts both my wrists behind,

And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,

For they fling, whoever has a mind,

Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

VI

Thus I entered Brescia, and thus I go!

In such triumphs, people have dropped down dead.

"Thou, paid by the World, -what dost thou owe

Me?" God might have questioned; but now instead

'Tis God shall requite! I am safer so.