

THE FREE LANCE.

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SPRINGTIME VERSES.

Men may sing of that distant land
Where all life is gay and free;
Whose shores are of sparkling sand
Wave-kissed by the shining sea;
Whose beauties bards have told,—
Fair, far-off Italy.

But dearer far to the loyal breast
Is our own fair land, so richly dressed
When the springtime buds unfold.

They in that bright land may wreath
The brows of their maidens fair
With crowns of flowers that breathe
Of perfumes most rich and rare,
All to while away the hours
Which pass so idly there.

Yet weave not wreaths of laurel bands,
But let me be crowned by the fairest hands
With a garland of springtime flowers.

HER CONFESSION.

One early morning during the golden days of Florence a young girl walked down the broad avenue toward the cathedral. In her hand she carried a bouquet of roses, fragrant and beautiful as the tinted dawn, for the sun was just announcing his approach.

The maiden was deep in thought, but her thought was a dream. The slight morning breeze blew back her glossy hair, disclosing a face which would have made an artist glad; for in her sparkling eyes, her soft cheeks, her bewitchingly curved lips, upon which played a smile, tale-telling of the secret in her heart, were revealed the features of Nature's masterpiece in sunny Italy.

Soon she reached the cathedral, and, turning on the topmost step of the entrance, she breathed deeply of the atmosphere borne