

# THE FREE LANCE.

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## A CUBAN EPISODE.

"Like will to like, each creature loves his kind," may be true as far as poetry goes, but when it comes to fact I am seriously inclined to doubt the truth of that statement. For Philip Chartley was certainly as different from me as it is possible for two to differ, and yet, at the same time, closer friends than he and I would be hard to find. We were both reporters on the local staff of the New York *Scooper*, and with a view to the promotion of our common interest we had taken rooms on a quiet street in a secluded portion of the city.

It was near the close of a hot June day, and we had just come in from supper at an up-town restaurant. I had drawn an easy chair to one of the two windows over-looking the street, preparatory to settling down to enjoy my usual evening cigar, while Phil, with his characteristic laziness, had thrown himself on a couch at the other side of the room and was gazing blankly at the ceiling with that vacant stare which denotes absolute peace of mind.

The stillness was growing oppressive, so I determined to break it.

"I wish something new would turn up," I said. "This running along in the same old rut is getting dreadfully monotonous."

"I don't think so," came in measured accents from the couch.

"I'm perfectly content with my lot."

"Yes, but you always were a lazy dog," I said, laughing.

And truly, a more indolent creature than Phil Chartley would be a rarity. He was one of those happy-go-lucky fellows who always take things as they come and let them go as they may. In fact, he was what one would call a veritable philosopher.

Now, my nature was directly the opposite. I was of a wild, roving disposition, and my spirit craved continually for new scenes