

THE FREE LANCE.

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FICKLE JUNE.

Low, distant thunder in the west;
Swift-flying clouds in sombre drest;
A faint, vague feeling of unrest—
And then the rain.

A rift across the murky sky,
Which shows the eager, watching eye,
The blue of heaven's canopy—
Sunshine again.

THE LAST CHAPTER.

Jacques Roulet was very poor, for he was a young and struggling author, and such are not often blessed with untold wealth. But he was earnest and ambitious, and had splendid talents—talents which had already begun to show a bright future in prospect for their owner. Yet just now Jacques was exceedingly despondent. His worldly possessions amounted to but ten francs, and that, he knew, would keep him but a short time—a week at the most. After that he knew not what might be his fortune. Of course, he had always a last resort, for the deep Seine ran close by. Even now, as he sat at the single window in his attic chamber, he could hear its soft murmuring, and the temptation was strong upon him to yield to its enticing song, to throw himself into its ever ready arms, and thus to end all his troubles. But a stronger spirit within held him back. Why should he give up the battle of life? To do so would be to show cowardice, and if there was any one thing which Jacques Roulet thoroughly despised it was a coward. No, he would not do it. On the other hand he would persevere, he would rise, he would make for himself fame and a name.