

SIX DAYS OF RURAL FELICITY.

A SUMMER ID(LE)YL IN PROSE.

BY T. H. F.

CHAPTER V.

(Continued.)

I WAS about to give up in despair when I perceived, through a narrow opening among the trees upon my left, one of the loveliest little sheets of water imaginable. It was nearly circular in shape, and its banks were prettily fringed with the most delicate ferns and mosses; while numerous trees cast their cool, refreshing shadows far over its limpid bosom. It was just such a spot, I thought, which sportive fauns and coy dryads might choose for a retreat from the noonday heats, or where Diana, weary with the chase, would have delighted to lave her glowing brow and chaste hands. So charming a place certainly deserved some appropriate name; such as the nymphs' retreat, or Diana's bath. Doubtlessly that small piece of board nailed across the top of an upright post upon the further bank which I now perceived, contained the name which it had been thought appropriate to bestow upon it. The inscription ran thus:

Alevinière.

La pêche est défendu ici.

I could think of no word or appellation that at all corresponded with *alevinière*—some French term I suppose—so it was not to be expected I could decipher it, or the words underneath.

It was almost a sacrilege, I thought, that the glassy serenity of its waters should be disturbed by so much as a

ripple—but it would never do to return empty handed, and this was my last chance. And although I felt I was doing despite to the spirit of the place and offering an insult to its guardian deity, I put on a fresh bait and threw in.

Phew! How they *did* bite! The water seemed literally to swarm with fish; and one after another I drew them out, large and small. This was glorious sport indeed, and I thought with an exultant but most pardonable pride, of the rich feast I was preparing for Harry's guests. I hallooed to Monsieur Mallet until I was hoarse, for I felt it was selfish to have all this fun to myself. He had certainly redeemed his word, and it was only fair that he should enjoy some of the rare sport he had promised me. I doubted not I should be regarded as the champion angler, and that the glory of this achievement would efface the disgrace of my failure at billiards; for they would all surely have to admit that fishing was really my strong point.

When I had caught between forty and fifty my second box of bait became exhausted. This was especially aggravating; for no sooner had I landed one trout than there had been another splendid fellow tugging away at the end of my line, and to leave off under such circumstances was not to be thought of.

I laid down my rod, and was looking about me for a suitable place to dig for some more worms when I heard Monsieur Mallet's voice a short distance away. I hurried out just in