

tions, observed in their answers the same peculiarity. I found that they, and others whom they pointed out to each other, as we crossed the common together, had been the scholars of the "governess," who lived at the cottage I had seen from the distance, and that they were all going to pay her a visit. She usually had a party once a-year, but now it would be larger than usual, as there had been rejoicing in honour of the christening of Mr. Vernon's eldest son (the woods I had before noticed were pointed out as belonging to his house); and in consequence many young people from service had returned to the neighbourhood, and almost all must go and see Mrs. Rae. I was soon interested in the few particulars I received, and resolved on a personal introduction to the old lady; I therefore continued to walk with my new acquaintances (who, by the way, assured me of a welcome) till we arrived at the place of destination. It was the *beau idéal* of a situation for a village school; standing alone, at the verge of a wide common, where the children might play without danger, not more than fifty yards from the church, sufficiently near to other dwellings not to appear lonesome, but too far to derive any ill from a bad neighbour, if any such appeared to be the inmate. The neatness of the garden would have attracted the notice of any passer by; and now this appearance was remarkable from the evident preparation for a meal *à fresco*. A clean white table was placed under the shade of a large elm tree, close outside the garden gate; benches were on each side; several women and girls were going to and from the cottage, arranging cups, saucers, plates, knives and tea-spoons; two cakes, and piles of evenly cut bread and butter, were on the board; now a rosy-faced maiden brought a dish of well-made buttered toast, while another carried the bright copper teakettle, to give the teapot the preliminary warming.

Mrs. Rae was soon distinguished by her greater age than the rest of the company, and by the greeting to each newly arrived guest. She came to carry the teapot into the house in order to make the tea near the fire, and welcomed me in a frank and res-

pectful manner, inquiring if I would not step in to rest. Having wished for the invitation, I was glad to accept, and entered the roomy dwelling. A strong, carved oak chair was evidently the throne of state for the "governess;" it was now devoted to my use, and I found it as comfortable as it looked. Its owner was almost too small and too animated looking for a position of so much dignity. She had attained the allotted seventy years of the age of man, but she looked considerably younger. Her face had scarcely a wrinkle, her back was still unbent, her eyes not at all dim, her step was elastic and active, and all her movements indicated cheerfulness; her complexion was healthy, but without the bronzed look which exposure to the open air produces; and her hands were more delicate than is usual. A small book-case filled with neatly-covered volumes adorned one side of the cottage; another of the walls was almost tapestried with samplers of various forms and sizes, worked with all degrees of skill, and almost every imaginable device. There were lions and yew trees in pots; crosses of divers shapes, and hearts of varying proportions; flowers such as botanists never knew, and forms of labyrinthine outline. They appeared mementos of many sets of little fingers that had moved by the direction of that presiding genius of the place. In one respect all were alike. The motto, "Put everything in its right place," was wrought on each; and over the mantelpiece it was again seen, framed and glazed, and worked in brilliantly-coloured letters. I was on the point of remarking on the appropriateness of the precept for a school, when tea was declared to be ready, and I was invited to partake of it. Curious to know more of the party, who seemed all so completely at home, I took my place at the table. We were ten in number, and all chatted merrily about their business and prospects. Some of them were servants in place, were now enjoying a holiday; one or two wives of labourers, one a farmer's wife. All seemed interested in hearing of the welfare of the others. I heard more than once the repetition of the favorite maxim, as, when one of the servants spoke of quitting her place