

William Bell Scott (1811-90)

5 *Woodstock Maze*

‘O never shall anyone find you then!’
Said he, merrily pinching her cheek;
‘But why?’ she asked, — he only laughed, —
‘Why shall it be thus, now speak!’

‘Because so like a bird art thou, 5
Thou must live within green trees,
With nightingales and thrushes and wrens,
And the humming of wild bees.’
Oh, the shower and the sunshine every day
Pass and pass, be ye sad, be ye gay. 10

‘Nay, nay, you jest, no wren am I,
Nor thrush nor nightingale,
And rather would keep this arras and wall
’Tween me and the wind’s assail.
I like to hear little Minnie’s gay laugh, 15
And the whistle of Japes the page,
Or to watch old Madge when her spindle twirls,
And she tends it like a sage.’
Oh, the leaves, brown, yellow, and red, still fall,
Fall and fall over churchyard or hall. 20

‘Yea, yea, but thou art the world’s best Rose,
And about thee flowers I’ll twine,
And wall thee round with holly and beech,
Sweet-briar and jessamine.’
‘Nay, nay, sweet master, I’m no Rose, 25
But a woman indeed, indeed,
And love many things both great and small,
And of many things more take heed.’
Oh, the shower and the sunshine every day
Pass and pass, be ye sad, be ye gay. 30

‘Aye, sweetheart, sure thou sayest sooth,

I think thou art even so!
But yet needs must I dibble the hedge,
Close serried as hedge can grow.
Then Minnie and Japes and Madge shall be 35
Thy merry-mates all day long,
And thou shalt hear my bugle-call
For matin or even-song.
*Oh, the leaves, brown, yellow, and red, still fall,
Fall and fall over churchyard or hall.* 40

Look yonder now, my blue-eyed bird,
See'st thou aught by yon far stream?
There shalt thou find a more curious nest
Than ever thou sawest in dream.'
She followed his finger, she looked in vain, 45
She saw neither cottage nor hall,
But at his beck came a litter on wheels,
Screened by a red silk caul;
He lifted her in by her lily-white hand,
So left they the blythe sunny wall. 50
*Oh, the shower and the sunshine every day
Pass and pass, be ye sad, be ye gay.*

The gorse and ling are netted and strong,
The conies leap everywhere,
The wild briar-roses by runnels grow thick; 55
Seems never a pathway there.
Then come the dwarf oaks knotted and wrung
Breeding apples and mistletoe,
And now tall elms from the wet mossed ground
Straight up to the white clouds go. 60
*Oh, the leaves, brown, yellow, and red, still fall,
Fall and fall over churchyard or hall.*

'O weary hedge, O thorny hedge!
Quoth she in her lonesome bower,
'Round and round it is all the same; 65
Days, weeks, have all one hour;
I hear the cushat far overhead,
From the dark heart of that plane;
Sudden rushes of wings I hear,

And silence as sudden again. 70
Oh, the shower and the sunshine every day
Pass and pass, be ye sad, be ye gay.

'Maiden Minnie she mopes by the fire,
Even now in the warmth of June;
I like not Madge to look in my face, 75
Japes now hath never a tune.
But, oh, he is so kingly strong,
And, oh, he is kind and true;
Shall not my babe, if God cares for me,
Be his pride and his joy too? 80
Oh, the leaves, brown, yellow, and red, still fall,
Fall and fall over churchyard or hall.

I lean my faint heart against this tree
Whereon he hath carved my name,
I hold me up by this fair bent bough, 85
For he held once by the same;
But everything here is dank and cold,
The daisies have sickly eyes,
The clouds like ghosts down into my prison
Look from the barred-out skies. 90
Oh, the shower and the sunshine every day
Pass and pass, be ye sad, be ye gay.

'I tune my lute and I straight forget
What I minded to play, woe's me!
Till it feebly moans to the sharp short gusts 95
Aye rushing from tree to tree.
Often that single redbreast comes
To the sill where my Jesu stands;
I speak to him as to a child; he flies,
Afraid of these poor thin hands! 100
Oh, the leaves, brown, yellow, and red, still fall,
Fall and fall over churchyard or hall.

'The golden evening burns right through
My dark chamber windows twain:
I listen, all round me is only a grave, 105

Yet listen I ever again.
Will he come? I pluck the flower-leaves off,
And at each, cry, yes, no, yes!
I blow the down from the dry hawkweed,
Once, twice, ah! it flyeth amiss! 110
Oh, the shower and the sunshine every day
Pass and pass, be ye sad, be ye gay.

‘Hark! he comes! yet his footstep sounds
As it sounded never before!
Perhaps he thinks to steal on me, 115
But I’ll hide behind the door.’
She ran, she stopped, stood still as stone —
It was Queen Eleänore;
And at once she felt that it was death
The hungering she-wolf bore! 120
Oh, the leaves, brown, yellow, and red, still fall,
Fall and fall over churchyard or hall.

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