

Trees, Woods and Literature – 22

The Birks¹ of Endermay

*The smiling morn, the breathing spring,
Invite the tuneful birds to sing:
And while they warble from each spray,
Love melts the universal lay.
Let us, Amanda, timely wise,
Like them improve the hour that flies;
And in soft raptures waste the day,
Among the birks of Endermay.*

*For soon the winter of the year,
And age, life's winter, will appear:
At this, thy living bloom will fade,
As that will strip the verdant shade.
Our taste of pleasure then is o'er;
The featured songsters love no more:
And when they droop, and we decay,
Adieu the birks of Endermay.*

¹birches

David Mallet
(1705?-1765) 1733

Born in Scotland as David Malloch, he anglicised his name to Mallet, much to the disapproval of that other Scot, James Boswell, who, in his youthful *London Journal*, called him an “arrant puppy”. Boswell later, though, admitted Mallet’s *Life of Francis Bacon* to be “acute and elegant”.

His change of *persona* was so thorough that Dr Johnson “never caught Mallet in a Scotch accent”, even though he was over 25 years of age when he moved to London.

Johnson in his Dictionary defined ‘alias’ as “a Latin word signifying otherwise; as Mallet *alias* Malloch; that is, otherwise Malloch.”

Mallet accepted a large sum of money from the Duchess of Marlborough to write a life of the Duke, but never got around to it.

Selection and note by Wood Kerne

(Editor’s note: With the foregoing selection and note, Wood Kerne takes his final departure from ‘Trees, Woods and Literature’. With him go all our thanks for his wonderful contributions under the series since its first appearance in 1969. Future contributions under ‘Trees, Woods and Literature’ are encouraged.)