

From Faringdon Hill by Henry James Pye

First to the north direct your roving eyes,
Where fair Oxonia's verdant hills arise,
There Burford's downs invite the healthful chace,
Or urge the emulous coursers to the race;
While as with agile limbs th' ascent they scale,
Rush down the steep, or sweep across the vale,
Exulting Hope, by turns, and chilling Fear
In the pale cheek and eager eye appear;
Each generous fire in every heart is lost,
By fortune favor'd, or by fortune cross'd;
Flies every Virtue, withers every Grace,
And all the selfish Passions take their place.

Emerging from the thicket's bosom, there
See Bampton's pointed steeple rise in air:
To farther distance now the prospect drawn,
Lo Witney's spire diversifies the lawn!
Whose busy loom to balmy sleep supplies
A guard from wintry cold and freezing skies:
There Whichwood's oaks thick-waving o'er the glade,
Yield to the savage tribe an ample shade:
And in the horizon faintly ting'd with blue,
Thy woods, imperial Blenheim! Close the view.
Nature between one verdant carpet spreads,
Of fruitful pastures and enamel'd meads;
Whose bending reeds, and osier'd banks among,
Fair Isis rolls her virgin waves along;
Her horn while plenty pours on every side,
And pales revels where her waters glide.

(lots of verses omitted)

Contract the prospect now, and mark more near,
Fair Faringdon her humble turret rear,
Where once the tapering spire conspicuous grew,
Till civil strife the sacred pile o'erthrew:
For as on hapless Stuart's ruin bent,
Against yon walls their lord his thunder sent,
And led with ruthless rage the hostile train,
While his own weeping Lares plead in vain;
The balls invade, with erring fury driven,
The hallow'd structure consecrate to heaven.
Such is alas the baleful fruit that springs,
From facetious subjects and oppressive kings.

Penelope Betjeman, North Wiltshire Herald, 1937

We came upon it, you and I,
Set on a hill near Faringdon Town,
We came upon it suddenly.
Clouds were drifting across the sky,
Just before the sun went down,
The trees were rustling lazily