

Oi12 Fower Cheyffe Justices late wee had

Notes. This is the most widely circulated of three extant verses penned on the promotion of Buckingham's client Sir Nicholas Hyde to Lord Chief Justice in February 1627. Some versions of this poem (e.g. the copies in the newsdiaries of Rous and Yonge) consist only of the last four lines, and different versions have different adjectives for the four justices. The final four lines of this version also form part of "Justice of late hath lost her witts". Bellany (Politics 103) comments on evidence about the oral transmission of this poem, while McRae (Literature 38) discusses it in relation to news culture.

"Uppon the Cheyff Justices of the Kings Bench"

Fower Cheyffe Justices late wee had
Two were good, and two weare badd
Learned Coocke,¹ Rich Mountague²
Grave Sir Lee³ and honest Crew⁴
two perferd, two sett a syde⁵
upp-starte Sir Nicholas Hyde.

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Source. Bodleian MS Ashmole 38, p. 87

Other known sources. D'Ewes 2.48; Rous 8; Yonge 100; Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 120; BL Add. MS 22959, fol. 8r; Folger MS V.a.262, p. 38; Folger MS V.a.275, p. 134

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¹ *Learned Coocke*: Sir Edward Coke, dismissed as Lord Chief Justice in 1616.

² *Rich Mountague*: Sir Henry Montagu, who succeeded Coke as Lord Chief Justice in 1616 and held the office until his promotion to Lord Treasurer in 1620. Montagu was created Viscount Mandeville around the time of the promotion and became Earl of Manchester and Lord President of the Privy Council under Charles I.

³ *Grave Sir Lee*: Sir James Ley, Earl of Marlborough, who succeeded Montagu, and left after he became Lord Treasurer in 1624.

⁴ *honest Crew*: Sir Randall (or Ranulph) Crew (or Crewe) was sworn in as Lord Chief Justice early in

1625 and held the office until late 1626 when his challenge to the legality of the forced loan led to his dismissal. The adjective “honest” thus has an extra political bite here.

⁵ *two perferd, two sett a syde*: Montagu and Ley were “preferred”, promoted from Lord Chief Justice; Coke and Crew were “set aside”.