

Oi7 There was a Munkye clumbe up a tree

Notes. The sting in this strange poem lies in the closing couplet. The poem appears to have been considered extendable, since extant versions differ in length (though to no considerable poetic effect). In the version transcribed by John Holles, 2nd Earl of Clare (BL MS Harley 6383), he titles it "A libell of Cales vyage 162" (having, perhaps, forgotten the exact date of the voyage to Cadiz in October 1625).

There was a Munkye clumbe up a tree
When he fell downe then downe fell hee

There was a crow sat on a stone
When he was gone, then was there none

There was an old wyfe, did eate an apple
When she had eat two, she had eat a cupple

5

There was a mayde that they cald Cisse
When she made water, she did pisse

There was a horse, going to the mill
When he went on he stood not still.

10

There was a butcher cut his thombe
When it did bleed, then blood did come

There was a lackye, runne a race
When he ran fast, he ran a pace

There was a Cobler clowting shoone¹
When they were mended, they were done

15

There was a Chandler making candle
When he them shipte, he did them handle

There was a Navye went into Spayne
When it returnd it came againe.²

20

Source. BL MS Sloane 1489, fol. 19v

Other known sources. *Court and Times of Charles I* 1.118; BL MS Harley 6383, fol. 63v; CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 41v

Oi7

¹ *clowting shoone*: patching shoes.

² *There was a Navye...it came againe*: although this couplet is slightly opaque, it depends on a calculated sense of anti-climax as it refers to the return of Wimbledon's fleet from Spain. The phrase "it came again" may refer to the fact that the fleet returned in groups.