

MS Nursery¹

Among the Charles Wesley family-related manuscript verse that has survived is a set of twelve quarto pages, on the first six of which are 7 items pertaining mainly to young Samuel Wesley and his early days at Bristol. The set was probably written in the early 1770s, perhaps with the assistance of young Samuel. Frank Baker designated the collection MS Nursery. See also the overlapping verse in MS Ludlow and some verse on young Samuel in MS Miscellaneous Poems, 7–8.

The pagination of this manuscript is problematic. The first three pages do not have page numbers; the last three pages are numbered “2”, “3”, “4”. Moreover, on the bottom of the fifth page (numbered “3”) is a full poem in shorthand, which it was necessary to provide its own distinct page (number “7” below). We have chosen to ignore the incomplete numbering scheme in the original manuscript, using simple consecutive numbering for the transcript.

This set of looseleaf pages is part of the collection in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/594/16 (Charles Wesley Notebooks Box 5). The transcription below is provided with permission of the Librarian and Director, The John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester.

¹This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: June 4, 2016.

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To Dr Boyce.²

- [1.] The humble³ Petition
Of a rhiming⁴ Musician,
(A Petition of Natural Right)
Undeniably shews,⁵
That, wherever he goes,
Church-Music is all his delight:
2. That he never can rest,
Till enrich'd with the best,
His Talent aright he employs,
And claims for his own,
As True Harmony's Son,
The Collection of good Doctor Boyce.⁶
3. Three Volumes of yours,
Which his Prayer procures,
Will afford him Examples enough,
And save Poet Sam
(Your Petitioner's Name)
From a Deluge of musical⁷ Stuff.
4. So, good Doctor, if now
His Suit you allow,
And make him as rich as a king,
Taken into your Choir,
To his Organ and Lyre,
Your Petitioner ever shall—Sing!

²Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:279. Dr. Boyce died in 1779.

³Ori., “Rhiming.”

⁴Ori., “an early” changed to “a growing” before Wesley decided on “a rhiming.”

⁵Ori., “~~With humility shows.~~”

⁶William Boyce (1711–79) was a well-known organist and composer, who gave lessons to both Charles Jr. and Samuel. Samuel is requesting a copy of Boyce's 3-volume *Cathedral Music* (1760–73). See also Wesley's *Ode to Dr Boyce* (1779). For more background, see Philip Olleson, *Samuel Wesley: The Man and His Music* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2003), 9–11.

⁷Ori., “ignorant.”

Glee.⁸

There are, by fond Mamma supplied,
Six reasons against Sammi's Ride:
Because a different Turn he takes,
Because his back, or finger aches;
Because tis wet; because tis dry;
Because it may be by and by,
Or any other reason why.

]

Another⁹
[Glee].

There are, as idle gossips talk,
Five Obstacles to Tommi's walk;
Because the wind may chance to blow;
Because it rain'd a week ago;
Because tis cold; because tis hot;
Because Mamma a fright has got;
Because he ails—she knows not what.

⁸Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 309; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:280.

⁹Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 309; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:280.

On a battle of Cats.¹⁰

- [1.] I sing Grimalkin brave and bold,
Who makes Intruders fly,
His claws and whiskers they behold,
And squawl and scamper by.
- [2.] The fiercest Cats before his power
Fly swifter than the wind,
Over the walls and houses scour,
But leave their Coat behind.
- [3.] Their Coat I shall preserve from harm
As a Victorious Trophy:
T'will keep Mamma so pure and warm
Or make a Muff for Sophy;
- [4.] A smile it will from Sister gain,
A Kiss from Hetty Farley¹¹
And rouse into a tuneful Strain
The jealousy of Charley.¹²

An Epistle to Dr Ludlow.¹³

- [1.] To You, dear Doctor, I appeal,
To all the Tuneful City.
Am I not used extremely ill
By Musical Committee?
- [2.] Why 'tis enough to make one wild—
They court, and then refuse me,

¹⁰Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:280–81.

¹¹Hetty Farley is presumably the daughter of Felix Farley, one of Wesley's Bristol printers.

¹²Charles Jr., the elder brother of Samuel.

¹³Two loose-leaf copies of this poem (with minor variants, noted below) are also present in MARC: DDCW 6/86a and DDWes 1/56). A loose-leaf copy in another hand is present at Pitts Library (Emory), Charles Wesley Family Papers (MSS 159), 5/15 (variants shown in *Representative Verse*). Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 325; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:281–82.

Dr. Abraham Ludlow was a surgeon at the Bristol Infirmary. This poem probably refers to an advertised recital on March 31, 1774, for the benefit of the infirmary. Ludlow had originally arranged for Charles Wesley Jr. (the older son) to play at this recital. When a conflict arose for Charles Jr., it was advertised that Samuel would take his place. But then Charles Jr. was freed to play and Samuel was set aside—hence the complaint. Charles Wesley wrote "S.W." in the margin beside the title of the poem, to indicate that the poem is cast in the voice of his son Samuel.

They Advertize, and call me Child,
And as a Child they use me.

3. Excusing their contempt, they say
(Which more inflames my passion)
I am not grave enough to play
Before the Corporation.
4. To the sweet City-waifs altho'
I may not hold a candle,
I question if their Worships know
The Odds t'wixt me and Handel.
5. "A Child of 8 years old" I grant,¹⁴
Must be both light and giddy,
The Solidness of Burgum¹⁵ want
The Steadiness of Liddy:¹⁶
6. Yet quick perhaps as other folks
I can assign a reason,
And keep my time as well as Stokes¹⁷
And come as much in season.
7. With Bristol-Organists not yet
I come in competition:
But let them know I wou'd be great,
I do not want ambition;
8. Spirit I do not want, or will
Upon a just occasion,
To make the rash Despisers feel
My weight of indignation.

¹⁴Ori., "own."

¹⁵Henry Burgum, Bristol pewterer and patron of the arts, was one of the organizers, and treasurer, of the Cathedral recital.

¹⁶I.e., T. Lediard, another organizer, and possibly a local merchant.

¹⁷This may be Thomas Stokes, an attorney in Bristol. The copy at Emory reads "Holks," adding a note "remarkable for bad time."

9. Tread on a worm,¹⁸ t'will¹⁹ turn again:
And shall not I resent it?
Who gave the sore affront, in vain
They wou'd with tears repent it.
10. Nothing shall sir²⁰ appease my Rage²¹
At their uncouth demeanor,
Unless they prudently assuage
Mine anger with—A Steyner.²²

Derdham Downs.²³

- [1.] Alack and alack!
The Clouds are so black
And my Coat is so flimsy and thin,
If we farther ride on,
The rain will come down
And wet little Sam to the skin.
2. But to clear up the doubt
The Sun is broke out,
And says, We may do as we will:
So before the next shower
Or'e the Downs let us scour,
Or gallop away to the Hill.
3. Gallop on, my grey Nag,
As fleet as a Stag,
Or a Ship with her rudder²⁴ and sails;
Or (Mamma to afright)
As skittish²⁵ and light
As a Goat—on the mountains of Wales.²⁶

¹⁸DDCW 6/86a reads "The trodden worm"

¹⁹Ori., "he²H." DDWes 1/56 reads: "he'll."

²⁰DDCW 6/86a substitutes "e'er" for "sir."

²¹Ori., "Nothing ~~mine anger shall assuage.~~"

²²Steyner: a violin made by Stainers, famous Tyrolese makers.

²³Appears also in MS Ludlow, 2. Published posthumously in *Representative Verse*, 309–10; and *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:283–18. Derdham Downs is in Bristol. Young Samuel Wesley wrote a miniature cantata setting for this verse, which is now found in the British Library, in a volume entitled "Pasticcio Book, 1774–75."

²⁴Ori., "streamers."

²⁵Ori., "nimble."

²⁶The mountains of Wales: a reference to the fact that Charles's wife came from Wales.

4. How rapid the course
 Of my swift-flying Horse!
I have got the Poetical Beast,
 And on Pegasus I
 Leap over the sky—
Or leap over the Severn at least!

The Lover's Complaint.²⁷

- [1.] Ah! what shall I say!
 That a Virgin so gay,
Without either malice²⁸ or art
 (Tho' no evil she means
 Hardly yet in her Teens)
She has robb'd Poet²⁹ Sam of his heart!
2. Harrietta³⁰ is She!
 And what harm could there be
To gaze on a Maiden so young?
 But how great my³¹ Surprise!
 When escap'd³² from her eyes,
I was caught by her mischievous tongue.
3. Stop the innocent Thief,
 For a Lover's relief!
Or if proud of her victory won,
 She refuses to part
 With my musical heart,
Let her give me a share of her own.
4. A share did I say?
 Nay, I honestly may
Her whole heart and affections demand:
 And if Justice He loves,
 And if Truth he approves,
The good Doctor *will* give me her hand.

²⁷Appears also in MS Ludlow, 1; titled "To Miss Ludlow." Published posthumously in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:284–85.

²⁸Ori., "~~So without affectation~~" changed to "Without either malice."

²⁹Ori., "~~little~~."

³⁰Ori., "~~H—y L—w~~." Meaning "H[arr]y L[udlo]w"; for Harriet Ludlow, daughter of Dr. Ludlow. Wesley is teasing his young son about his childhood affection.

³¹Ori., "~~sweet the~~" changed to "great my."

³²Ori., "When I escap'd."

For Miss {Krli}³³

Let me wander not unseen
O'er dirty streets and babels {l—n},³⁴
Where the men of busy face
Bustle through the carts and drays;
Where the Hecates sing so sweet,
Where the saunt'ring lovers meet,
And every cit³⁵ delights to range
Under the walls of Bristol Change.³⁶

Epigram³⁷

A lover's hands to what shall we compare?
Call them the circle of a conjuror.
Easy the way to enter in and plain,
But you can never more get out again.

³³This poem appears in shorthand at the bottom of page 5. The expansion here is by Dr. Timothy Underhill; compare that published in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:284. It is uncertain for whom it was written. The last word in the title could be read as Crowley, Crawley, Carley, etc; or, it could be "Curly," a possible endearing reference by Wesley to his daughter Sally. In any case, the poem is a parody on a portion an adaptation of Milton's *L'Allegro*, in a libretto by James Harris and Charles Jennens that was set to music by Handel in an oratorio:

Let me wander, not unseen
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green.
There the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles over the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

³⁴The final two words are uncertain; in particular, the shorthand for the last word could be read instead as "w—n" or sh—n."

³⁵Short for "citizen"; usually applied, more or less contemptuously, to a townsman or "cockney" as distinguished from a countryman, or to a tradesman or shopkeeper as distinguished from a gentleman (see *Oxford English Dictionary*).

³⁶I.e., the Bristol Exchange, built in 1743.

³⁷This epigram also appears in shorthand at the bottom of page 5. It is expanded here by Dr. Timothy Underhill. It was included as part of the preceding poem in the version in *Unpublished Poetry*, 1:284; however, the separate heading "Epi[gram]" is written in shorthand in the left-hand margin.