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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letter from William Wilkins to Charles Wilkins

**Date:** December 26, 1834

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My dear son Charles -

I thank you for your letter dated Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> which I recd. yesterday, Christmas day - I hope you and all the family had a more happy one than I spent. Yesterday, altho' the 25<sup>th</sup>, was not celebrated here as Christmas day, because this government of this country - alone in Europe - still use the old style, by which they are 12 days behind us - for instance, this day, the 26<sup>th</sup> - they call the 14<sup>th</sup> - and we, who use the new style in writing here, give both dates - thus - Dec-  
-ember  $\frac{14^{th}}{26}$  1834 - The government

are unwilling to change their  
calendar, and make it like  
ours and like the rest of Eu-  
-rope, because the change would  
throw into confusion their  
religious festivals, holy days,  
fasts and saints days, of  
which they have a vast num-  
-ber indeed.

I wrote to you, my son,  
not long since, and now write  
again in consequence of an ex-  
-pression contained in your  
mother's letter. I wish you to  
keep this little letter until  
my return home, and read  
it over every now and then,

that you may not forget my  
great & continual anxiety  
about you, above all the other  
dear children - Your brother  
Biddle is much younger than  
you are, and his age is not  
so interesting & critical as  
yours is - and he is not so  
much exposed as you are -  
And your dear sisters I am  
not uneasy about - Sophy &  
Hett are very little & very  
young & are always close  
to their mother - Maria is as  
good as gold, and my belov-  
-ed Pet, who has just written  
me such a pretty letter, I

know will always be one of the  
best girls in the world - But,  
you, my dear son, are more  
out, and sometimes more in  
the way of temptation - You  
go to a school, too, where there  
may be some bad boys - Take  
care of them, & avoid them,  
and prefer to amuse your-  
self at home where your  
mother & sisters are -

I have often told you,  
that you are my eldest son -  
and that, therefore, I am the  
more anxious & uneasy about  
you - You must, at some  
future time, take my place,

and be the protector and take  
care of your mother & sisters -  
I am therefore the more anxi-  
-ous to wish to see you a fine  
fellow - a gentleman - and a  
man liked by every body -

Do you not wish yourself  
to be such? Would you not  
like, when you grow up, to  
be elected to Congress? These  
things, my son, you cannot  
be - nobody will love you -  
nobody respect you - unless  
you are good now, learn  
your book, & above all, unless  
you love & are obedient to  
your mother - This, in sub-

- stance is all I ask of you -  
be obedient to your mother.

I know you love her, but  
you must also mind all  
she says to you - never  
tell her that you are tired,  
or busy, or have not time.  
Give up every thing to attend  
to her - I hope not to be away  
from you very long, and all  
I ask is - in my absence, be  
good & obey your mother;  
and then, when I return, I  
will do every thing in the  
world for you - get you any  
thing - take you any where  
you please - you must be -  
- have so well that when I

shall return you will not be  
ashamed to meet me and to  
see me - but, conscious of having  
been a good boy, you will  
run and jump into my arms  
and kiss me - Suppose you  
take this plan, Charley - Al-  
ways when you are going to  
do any thing which may not  
be right, ask yourself these  
questions - "What would my  
father say if he was here?"  
"How would my father like  
this if he knew it?" I  
shall always find out what  
you have been doing - But,  
do you remember, that if I



am absent, God is always  
present, and sees & knows what  
you do - And he marks it  
down for, or against you -

But, why should I be uneasy  
about you? You always  
have been a good boy & I am  
sure always will be a good  
boy - I wish you and your  
mother to have this bargain  
& fair understanding - that  
whenever she writes to me, or  
any of the children, she must  
put in one distinct line  
about you - saying how  
good & obedient to her you  
have been, and she must al-

- ways let you see what she  
says about you - You will  
then know yourself whether  
I have in St' Petersburg given  
you a bad mark. And I  
promise you - that for every  
good mark I will insidi-  
-ately go out & buy you  
some present & lay it by for  
you -

You ask me to guess how  
you found <sup>out</sup> that I had been  
at Doncaster - I don't know,  
my son, - Probably you saw  
it in the papers - I went there  
because they happened at the  
time of my journey, and were

not much out of my way from  
Liverpool to London - because  
I found I had the time to spare,  
because the two gentlemen who  
so kindly volunteered to conduct  
me to London & remained with  
me to keep me company until  
I took the steam boat for Ham-  
burg, wished to see the country  
well as myself - I wished to  
see that great English "turn  
out" & the opportunity occurred.  
It was beautiful - splendid!  
The weather uncommonly fine  
& my curiosity was well gratifi-  
ed - But, mark, my dear  
son, I remember - I neither  
bet - nor gambled - nor pro-

- looked - nor became intoxicated,  
or drunk wine, brandy, whis-  
-key or any thing else - I saw  
a great national show of  
assemblies rare & splendid -  
The high nobility down through  
all the various grades of the  
country - I was astonished &  
gratified & will tell you  
more about it when I shall  
see you -

The weather has not yet been  
cold here - the Russians say too  
mild - as usual to day I walked  
by myself for two hours - By  
Barometer it is now  $10\frac{1}{2}$  degrees  
of frost - & by Fahrenheit  $9\frac{1}{2}$  de-  
-grees above zero -  
Good bless you all  
Wm Wilkins

Master Ch<sup>s</sup> P. Wilkins -

Pittsburgh.