

= As I was going by Charing Cross =

" As I was going by Charing Cross " (sometimes referred to as " As I was going to Charing Cross ") , is an English language nursery rhyme . The rhyme was first recorded in the 1840s , but it may have older origins in street cries and verse of the seventeenth century . It refers to the equestrian statue of King Charles I in Charing Cross , London , and may allude to his death or be a puritan satire on royalist reactions to his execution . It was not recorded in its modern form until the mid @-@ nineteenth century . It has a Roud Folk Song Index number of 20564 .

= = Lyrics = =

Modern versions include :

The Roud Folk Song Index , which catalogues folk songs and their variations by number , classifies the song as 20564 .

= = Origin = =

The rhyme is thought to refer to the equestrian statue of Charles I (r . 1625 ? 49) , which was erected after the Restoration in 1660 and was moved in 1675 to the site of the old Charing Cross in central London . The tarnished bronze statue is largely dark in colour , but the " black " may refer to the king 's hair colour .

The last line may refer to the reaction of the crowd when he was beheaded , or it may be a puritan satire on royalist reactions to the event . The rhyme may also have been produced out of a combination of existing couplets . A traditional London street cry was :

or

A note of a ballad in a seventeenth @-@ century manuscript at Oxford contains the lines :

The first part was printed as a children 's rhyme in a variation of the more famous " Ride a Cock Horse " in Pretty Tales , published in 1808 , with the lyrics :

The modern version , which may combine elements of this rhyme with a reference to the execution of Charles I , was first collected and printed by James Orchard Halliwell in the 1840s .