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**Synopsis**

A detailed description of the opening ceremony and the inaugural locomotive journey.

**Themes:**           Opening ceremony  
                          Passenger experience  
                          Reaction of onlookers

**Text:**                The eleventh of August in this present year  
                          The railway was opened twixt Glasgow and Ayr  
                          The people came flocking to Tradeston that day  
                          To see the steam carriages going away

Its twenty-one carriages were in one train  
It was in the hindmost my seat I had ta'en  
Of ladies and Gentlemen not less were there  
Than four-hundred on a pleasant trip to Ayr

In Tradeston before the like never was seen  
The carriages all decorated with green  
The flags they did fly and the music did play  
There was great rejoicing opening the railway

While gazing all around unto my great surprise  
The train it set off with a thundering noise  
From the station house they did fly like the wind  
And left both the coaches and horsemen behind

At Arkleston tunnel the train passed through  
The light of the sun it was hid from our view  
Thinks I Glasgow city I'll never more see  
For into some coal pit they have landed me.

But before I could Jack Robinson say  
Through Paisley like lightening they dashed away  
My head it got dizzy they ran so quick  
Some more in the train, like me, got seasick.

As Johnston and Lochwinnoch we passed through  
Some old wives cried out "Alas what shall we do"  
Tam O'Shanter's witches are come back again  
See how they spit fire and burn all our grain

Then straight off through Beith and the town of Dalry  
Twas like the Pegasus we did fly  
Some wives in Kilwinning they were heard to say  
Yonder's mount Vesuveus a coming this way

Through Irvine, Adrossen, Saltcoats, and the Troon  
We did fly far swifter than greens air balloon  
Yet when we arrived at the town of Ayr  
Great ringing of bells and rejoicing was there

On the Wallace tower a flag it did fly  
 From the front green they'd fired a fue do joie  
 The Kilwinning Band most delightful did play  
 The Glasgow and Ayr Railway is opened this day

A handsome pavilion was fitted out there  
 By Hight and Wilson of the town of Ayr  
 After a good dinner, sparkling glass  
 It's round in good friendship did merrily pass

When dinner was over we enter the train  
 And straight off for Glasgow we started again  
 The place did resound with tremendous echoes  
 While the Kilwinning band in style played "Off She Goes".

To the Engineers the greatest praise is due  
 Through rocks bogs and hills they cut their way through  
 May the proprietors be double paid  
 For on this great railway, great sums they've outlayed.

**Glossary:**

fue do joie	Feu de joie; a salute fired by rifles in rapid succession along a line of troops.
"before I could Jack Robinson say"	In a very short time; before the speaker realised what was happening
Tam o' Shanter's witches	In Robert Burn's poem <i>Tam O'Shanter</i> ; Tam, returning home in a state of drunkenness encounters a group of witches who chase him home.

**Source of Text:** Glasgow University; Murray Collection Manuscript no: Mu23-y3:033

**Music.** No tune given

**Source of Music:** No tune given

**Printer:** Carmichael.

**Place printed:** Glasgow

**Author :** Anonymous

**Date:** 1840.

**Notes of the Song and Its Historical Background**

The line opened in stages. The section from Ayr to Irvine opened on 5 August 1839. The extension to Kilwinning opened on 23 March 1840 and to Beith on 21 July 1840. The completed line between Ayr and Glasgow opened on 12 August 1840. The engineers were Grainger & Miller of Edinburgh.

Ref: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glasgow,\\_Paisley,\\_Kilmarnock\\_and\\_Ayr\\_Railway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glasgow,_Paisley,_Kilmarnock_and_Ayr_Railway)

The detail and style suggest that it was based on newspaper reports. It was probably written and printed with a few days of the events described.

There was a major eruption of Vesuvius in 1834 which may have prompted the simile used in the 8<sup>th</sup> verse. (ref: [http://www.vesuvioinrete.it/e\\_storia.htm](http://www.vesuvioinrete.it/e_storia.htm))

Although the song gives the opening date as 11<sup>th</sup> August; the text suggests that the song celebrates the opening of the completed line on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1840 and that it was written after the event.