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**Synopsis**

Description of the changes brought about on the Tyne by the introduction of steam ships and locomotives.

**Themes:**           Impact of the railway upon cities  
                          Steamboats  
                          Impact of the railway upon road traffic  
                          reaction of onlookers

**Text**

Well many droll sights have I seen in my time,  
In many a ship, in many a clime:  
But old Shields metamorphosed, as shell been today,  
Why, my old wig from brown, Jack, you see has turned grey.

Chorus:           Derry down down, Down derry down

Why, when I was a lad, Jack, and old mother you know  
As women will do, Jack, a-gadding would go,  
We talked only a month, and then WALK'D up to town,  
And JEM JOHNSON'S WHERRY convoyed us all down.

When our skipper to custom house hurried, d'ye see,  
Outside of a horse, like John Gilpin, got he:  
And when waery of spurring and playing the thong  
Took a tow of a coal cart to help him along.

Then coaches and steamboats and gigs came in play,  
And the hacks and the wherries were all done away;  
But the sand-banks by water, up high banks by land,  
Brought our steamboats "up-standing" and gigs to a stand.

Howsomever, you see, Jack, some Captain they tell  
Sticking fast on a sand-bank as often befell,  
RAIL'D so hard at the river, as I have heard say  
That they got up a RAILROAD – it was opened today.

And like the ship's ways, Jack, it stretches among  
The hills and the valleys, old Tyneside along;  
And the ships lay in line, with a thing at their bow  
Like a fiend from the pit, Jack, that took then in tow.

For it snorted and roared, and struggled and screamed,  
Like the horrible shapes that mayhap we have dreamed;  
Then another wild scream, Jack, another deep groan,  
And like underground-thunder, the phantoms were gone!

They say it's all science - say it's all bam -  
For it either is witchcraft or else it's a sham,  
To rush like a thundercloud up to the town;  
I'm afeard it will end in their all rushing DOWN

**Glossary:**

Gadding	Gad: To go from one place to another, to wander; <i>esp.</i> to wander about with no serious object, stopping here and there, to rove idly
Wherry	A light rowing-boat used chiefly on rivers to carry passengers and goods
John Gilpin	Hero of "The Diverting History of John Gilpin" a poem by William Cowper in which Gilpin's horse runs away with him.
Playing the thong	Using a riding whip.
Gig	A light two-wheeled one-horse carriage
Bam	A story intended to impose upon the credulous; a hoax or imposition

**Source of Text:** Victoria's Inferno, Raven Jon, ISBN 0 950 3722 3 4  
Raven cites a broadside in the University of Newcastle upon Tyne hand dated June 1839.

**Music.** No tune given. Raven suggest that it might have been sung to the tune of La Pique.

**Source of Music:** No tune given

**Printer:** Port of Tyne Journal, a weekly publication.

**Where Printed:** Tynemouth and South Shields

**Author :** Ben Mainmast, Pilot, South Shields (probably a pen name)

**Date:** 1839

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

The song describes the transformatin of the Tyne that followed the intorduction of steam power. "*And the ships lay in line, with a thing at their bow / Like a fiend from the pit, Jack, that took then in tow*" is a reference to steam tugs which appeared on the Tyne in 1818. Tugs dramatically increased the volume of coal that could be moved through the port. [ref. Lewenhak, *Steamships and Shipbuilders of the Industrial Revolution*]. Railway companies responded by building lines from the collieries to the coal wharves.

The Newcastle and Shields Railway opened in 1839.

The success of the Stockton to Darlington Railway (1825) led to proposals for a rail link between North Shields and Newcastle. Twice a Bill was placed before Parliament and turned down. But finally in June 1836 a modified proposal was accepted. There was considerable opposition to the railway. "The rivermen have called the building of the new railway a 'poverty producing measure', and the owners of gigs, coaches and steam

packets have been extremely angry about the project. Shopkeepers in North Shields fear that their customers will forsake them for the Newcastle shops - tempted by the single fare of 2d, first class for the seven miles and intended time for the journey of 20 minutes. ... Large numbers of Newcastle tradesmen have already placed adverts in the local newspaper to attract customers"

<http://susram.weebly.com/newcastle-and-north-shields-railway.html>

The broadside states that the song was written for the Port of Tyne Journal.