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**Synopsis**

A description of the opening of the railway and of the people who went to watch the ceremony.

**Themes:**                Railway Opening ceremony,  
                                  Reaction of onlookers,  
                                  Association of steam power with sexuality

**Text**

Now folks I will tell you although I'm no clown  
By steam you may ride with speed up and down  
Now that's all the go, and I'll tell you for why  
The people are eager for to learn to fly

Chorus :            You may travel by steam, so the folks say  
                          All over the world, upon the Railway

The day that it opened I recollect well  
What bustle there was in the morning I'll tell  
With lads and young lasses so bucksome (sic) and gay  
Delighted and talking about the railway

To view the railroad away they did go  
Tis a great undertaking as you very well know  
It surpasses all others believe me its true  
There's tunnels for miles that you have to go through

There are coaches and carts to accommodate all  
The lame and the lazy, the great and the small  
If you wish to ride, to be sure you must pay  
To see all the fun that's upon the railway

How pleasant it is to see them indeed  
The long train of carriages go with such speed  
O dear Mrs Bustlerump, here is your daughter  
She will be ruu (sic) over with the boiling hot water

The cobbler left the old shoes in the shop  
Old women on crutches were seen for to hop  
The tailor his customers would not obey  
But rode on his goose to see the railway.

What a treat for young lovers to see Gretna Green  
The blacksmith will tie the not for them by steam  
With his hammer and anvil he will make them obey  
And pack them off snugly upon the railway.

There was dumpling bet with Jack the Moonraker  
And buxom young Kate with the Butcher and Baker  
And Black Sal from Sandgate with two wooden legs  
To see the railroad how she trudged on her pegs

In London I've heard there is a machine  
 Invented for making young children by steam  
 Such dear little creatures full thirty a day  
 For young engineers to supply the railway

Talk of ships on the sea why it is all stuff  
 By water or land you may ride safe enough  
 If you've got money your passage to pay  
 You may ride to the devil upon the railway

So now my good fellows let us be free  
 Again fill the glasses now merry we'll be  
 Success to all trades in the reign of our queen  
 And boiling hot water that raises the steam.

**Glossary:**

- bucksome - Buxom - Full of health, vigour, and good temper; well-favoured, plump and comely, 'jolly', comfortable-looking (in person). (Chiefly of women.)
- goose - A tailor's smoothing-iron. (So called from the resemblance of the handle to the shape of a goose's neck.)
- moonraker - A simpleton
- Gretna Green - A village on the Scottish side of the border with England famous as a destination for elopements. English law stated that if both parties to a marriage were not at least 21 years old, then parental consent was required. Under Scottish Law, it was possible for boys to marry at 14 and girls at 12 years old without parental consent. The village blacksmith was empowered to officiate at weddings.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gretna\\_Green](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gretna_Green)
- Stuff - Worthless ideas, discourse, or writing; nonsense

**Source of Text:** Bodleian Library, *allegro* Catalogue of Ballads; [Harding B 11\(1026\)](#)

**Music.** No tune given

**Source of Music:** No tune given

**Date:** 1838 onwards

**Printer:** Unknown

**Where Printed:** Probably in or near Newcastle

**Author :** Anonymous

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

This song was much reprinted and can be found in variants from Birmingham, London, and Sunderland; see also Bar030, Bar269, and Bar301.

The text suggests that this is a copy of either Bar269 (printed in Sunderland) or Bar301 (printed in London). Those two songs feature a character called "Black Sal from Walsall" who in this song is re-located to become "Black Sal from Sandgate". This song is almost certainly later than Bar301 but it is impossible to say whether it earlier or later than Bar 269.

There was a great deal of railway building around Newcastle between 1838 (the probable earliest date for this song) and 1850. The song Changes on the Tyne (Bar054) says that "*New rail-roads now spring up like mushrooms*".

Mrs Bustlerump :- In a private communication with the author, Daniel Milford-Cottam, Assistant Curator, Furniture, Textiles & Fashion Department, Victoria & Albert Museum wrote that "the bustle (as we know it) came into fashion in the late 1860s...

In the early 19th century there was a form of the bustle/false rump - the Gallery of Costume in Manchester have a three-ruffled example in heavy cotton that is dated 1833 and was part of a collection of underwear from the same source. It is not quite like the later bustle, which was more substantial and structural, being basically three ruffles of heavy cotton tied around the waist. See: <http://www.manchestergalleries.org/the-collections/search-the-collection/display.php?EMUSESSID=967ef7145ee3362424fcaaf29189fbe7&irn=13470>"

The history of railway construction around Newcastle [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newcastle\\_railway\\_station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newcastle_railway_station) suggests that there were no railway openenings in the late 1860s or early 1870s worthy of the description given in this song and that the bustle referred to is the of the type worn in the 1830s.