

**Synopsis**

Welcomes the arrival of the railway and the benefits it will bring; and bids good riddance to the stage coaches.

**Themes:**

Impact of the Railways on Rural life  
Anticipated economic benefits of railways  
Impact of the railway upon road traffic  
Unemployment and poverty caused by introduction of steam power  
Railway mania and its consequences

**Text:**

Oh! Here's a pretty row I ween  
All thought the wonders done by steam  
You'll now not want to drag along  
As I'll relate all in my song  
For by this wondrous mode you see  
You'll go four hundred miles per day  
Aye faster than an eagle flies  
For steam all other things outvies  
You need not grieve from friends to part  
From Falmouth you can take a start  
And be in London like a dart  
Along the Western Railroad

Chorus:       Smoke'em poke'em feed 'em fum  
                  Hot water coaches now will run  
                  And strike the people nearly dumb  
                  Along the Western Railroad

Now if to town you wish to go  
No matter whether high or low  
Your pocket it will not sink low  
If on the western railroad  
No guards you will now have to pay  
Nor coachmen say, "Please sir, to-day"  
But then be hooked, young old and grey  
To please your fancy on the way  
Although the game is very hot  
To go by the steam from a pot  
I would sooner buy a little cot  
Than a share in the Western Railway

How different things are changed you know  
To what they were some time ago  
For now you'll not have time to blow  
Along the western railroad  
You may transport your ?cows? and hogs  
Your parrots monkeys or your dogs  
By steam as dense as any fog  
To market you'll convey them soon  
Without the light of any moon  
Start at eleven – in town by noon  
Along the western railroad

If to travel you have a mind  
You need not fear the rain or wind  
So fast you'll go that none you'll find  
Along the western railroad  
Great coats then you need not wear  
Though it may be in winter drear  
For oh! Much swifter than the air  
You'll pass along I do declare  
The publicans must shut up shop  
The waiters all will go to pot  
And coachmen will be wanted not  
Along the western railroad

**Glossary:**

Hooked	Cheated, Stolen from
Great coat	A large heavy overcoat

**Source of Text:** Bodleian Library, *allegro* Catalogue of Ballads ; Harding B 11(3060)

**Music.** Not tune given

**Source of Music:** Not tune given

**Printer:** Unknown

**Where Printed:** There is a copy in the British Library (Shelfmark HS.74/1570/59) which that library suggests was probably printed in Exeter.

**Author :** Anonymous

**Date:** 1863 or soon after

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

The Great Western railway reached Falmouth in 1863 and led to the immediate closure of the stage coach to Exeter and London. Ref <http://www.lyonessefalmouth.co.uk/falmouth/falmouth.html>

The song celebrates the downfall of the stage coach business. Stage coaches were unpopular with ordinary folk who resented their bullying attitude to other road users.

The lines "*I would sooner buy a little cot / Than a share in the Western Railway*" are probably a reference to the crash in the value of railway shares brought by the Railway Mania of the late 1830s and early 1840s .