

4-2-1867

# The Iron Horse

G. Benfield

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## Recommended Citation

Benfield, G., "The Iron Horse" (1867). *Broadside Ballads: England*. 68.  
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# THE IRON HORSE.

BY G. BENFIELD, ENGINE DRIVER, DERBY.

Printed to commemorate the satisfactory arrangement arrived at between the Directors of the Midland Railway Company and the Engine Drivers and Firemen in their employ, April 2nd, 1867.

The squire may boast of his prancing steed,  
As docile, swift, and free,  
Easy to ride, gentle to guide,  
But the "Iron Horse" for me.

The lord may praise his racing pet,  
As graceful and swift as the fawn;  
Her feet so neat, her coat so sleek,  
The most spirited ever born.

The farmer tells of the feats of strength  
That his steed in the shaft can do,  
With limbs so round and health so sound,  
With joy his toil pursue.

But my song I'll raise to the "Iron Horse,"  
Whose back it's my lot to ride;  
For strength and speed, she's a bonny steed,  
Surpassing all beside.

She seems to rejoice to make her escape  
From her stables so dark with smoke,  
And the grooms they stand, a happy band,  
Cracking the merry joke.

She screams, and hisses, and pants,  
And longs to be set to her task,  
With a tender of coal, on the rail she doth roll,  
And the bridges like spectres fly past.

O'er hill and dale my steed I ride,  
Through gored rock and mountain,  
Where the lamb is seen by the rippling stream,  
Or at the bubbling fountain.

Her feet are swift and shod with steel,  
And seldom known to fail;  
Right happy are we our steed to see  
Glide o'er the smooth-faced rail.

Her heart is set in a copper case,  
And is made of glowing coals,  
And through her veins flies the rushing flames,  
As on the rail she rolls.

She's like a giant in her strength,  
With muscles made of brass,  
Her sinews of steel that will not yield,  
And a coat as smooth as glass.

And though my steed is a ponderous weight,  
In a moment my will she'll obey;  
And off she will rush with a gentle touch,  
And as quickly brought to stay.

Howe'er begrimed with grease and smoke,  
He who in the saddle rides,  
The physical mind of the huge Steam Horse,  
In this faithful man abides.

My footman rides in a break behind  
And a faithful guard is he,  
Should danger he spy with his watchful eye,  
A signal he'll give to me.

'Tis true I am highly honored  
In my journeys far and wide,  
For at junction and at station, *livery* servants in  
rotation,  
Stand my "Iron Horse" to guide.

'Tis true, the risk to life and limb  
Of my calling's very great,  
For some she hath touched with her iron clutch,  
And death has been their fate.

And many a strong and hearty youth,  
By wet and sad exposure,  
In a few short years, with bitter tears,  
Has filled a dark enclosure.

Exposed am I when the frowning sky  
Is drenching the earth with rain,  
When the howling blast, with the thunder's crash,  
And the red-winged light'ning's flame.

And when the frost-king comes, with garment  
white,  
And covers all nature o'er,  
And the frozen stream in the sun doth gleam,  
And the rill is set to the core.

'Tis then I feel convinced, by *cold*,  
Ten hours a day is plenty,  
As much as He would have me do  
Who to this world hath sent me.

When the sun is high in the vaulted sky,  
And the balmy breeze is asleep,  
And along the glade to the silent shade,  
The bleating cattle creep.

'Tis then I feel convinced, by *heat*,  
Ten hours a day is plenty,  
As much as He would have me do  
Who to this world hath sent me.

Then while we at our dangerous craft  
Toil for our daily bread,  
Oh, let us seek that God my keep  
His watch-guard o'er our head.

Then should misfortune on our path,  
Cast her shades of gloom,  
May grace to help from that land be sent  
Where flowers eternal bloom.

With heads as clear as water bright,  
Hearts free from ostentation,  
Oh, let us live prepared to die  
With Christ for our salvation.