Coal Owner and Pitman's Wife

Coal Owner and Pitman's Wife
by William Hornsby

A dialog I'll tell you as true as my life
Between a coal owner and a poor pitman's wife
As she was a traveling all on the highway
She met a coal owner and this she did say

Derry down, down, down derry down

Good morning Lord Firedamp, this woman she said
I'll do you no harm, Sir, so don't be afraid
If you'd been where I'd been the most of my life
You wouldn't turn pale at a poor pitman's wife

Then where do you come from, the owner he cries
I come from Hell, the woman replies
If you come from hell, then tell me right plain
How you contrived to get out again

Aye the way I got out, the truth I will tell
They're turning the poor folk all out of Hell
This to make room for the rich wicked race
For there is a great number of them in that place

And the coal owners' selves is the next on command
To arrive into Hell, as I understand
For I heard the old Devil say as I came out
The coal-owners all had received their rout

Then how does the old Devil behave in that place
Oh Sir, he is cruel to the rich wicked race
He is far more uncrueller than you can suppose
Even like a mad bull with a ring through his nose

Good woman, says he, I must bid you farewell

You give me a dismal account about Hell
If this be all true that you say unto me
I'll be home like a whippet and with my poor men agree

If you be a coal owner, Sir, take my advice
Agree with your men and give them a good price
For and if you do not, I know very well
You'll be in great danger of going to Hell

relates to a strike in Lancaster in 1844. Collected by A. L. Lloyd.

SOF

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