The Farmer's Curst Wife (Child 278A)

1 THERE was an old farmer in Sussex did dwell,
(*Chorus of whistlers*)
There was an old farmer in Sussex did dwell,
And he had a bad wife, as many knew well.
(*Chorus of whistlers*)

2 Then Satan came to the old man at the plough:
'One of your family I must have now.

3 'It is not your eldest son that I crave,
But it is your old wife, and she I will have.'

4 'O welcome, good Satan, with all my heart!
I hope you and she will never more part.'

5 Now Satan has got the old wife on his back,
And he lugged her along, like a pedlar's pack.

6 He trudged away till they came to his hall-gate;
Says he, Here, take in an old Sussex chap's mate.

7 O then she did kick the young imps about;
Says one to the other, Let 's try turn her out.

8 She spied thirteen imps all dancing in chains,
She up with her pattens and beat out their brains.

9 She knocked the old Satan against the wall:
'Let 's turn her out, or she 'll murder us all.'

10 Now he 's bundled her up on his back amain,
And to her old husband he took her again.

11 'I have been a tormentor the whole of my life,
But I neer was tormented so as with your wife.'