

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Empires of Plenty

Empires of Plenty  
(Sam Richards)

This is the land where my grandfather's grandfather  
Ploughed with his horses, turned the red soil  
Daylight till twilight, through seed time and harvest  
Life had its reasons, life had its seasons  
All things in place and a place there for all  
But the old world was fading in an empire of plenty  
In his last years he knelt by the side of the road  
Cracking up stones till he lay down his bones in the workhouse

Grandfather's father was born on a Saturday  
Six in the evening came into the world  
When he was seven knew all about farm work  
Lending a hand to the men on the land  
Brought up the old fashioned way by hard toil  
But the old world was fading in an empire of plenty  
Eight million soldiers trooped off to the war  
Each year there's a wreath for the ones who met death for their country

Here in the stone quarry grandfather's hammer rang  
Hard on the drill in the sunshine or cold  
Drilling and blasting and ripping the rocks away  
Daily he'd go though his wages were low  
Better, he said, than a life on the dole  
But the old world was fading in a land of depression  
If you don't like it, there's others who will  
War killed the pain; then millions again got their papers

Father said he felt the pull of the land again  
Just as before in his grandfather's time  
But with tractors and balers and spreaders and harvesters  
Different winds blow; the land tells him, go  
Into the towns now and leave me behind  
For the old world has faded and the empire of plenty  
Drives us like cattle away from the land  
The old hands pass on; they die like the sun in the evening

Farewell to the fields and goodbye to the village  
To farmland and factory farm I'll say goodbye  
Though you did mold me, you'll no longer hold me  
With wages so low, up country I'll go  
Live near a city and work on the line

For the old world has faded and now in a factory  
I'll work there to earn enough money to buy  
The food that my ancestors grew on the land that I'm leaving

From the New City Songster, from 1980.

JN

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