

# Red and Black

TYG 122

Words and music  
by George Hill

Fire is red and coal is black; they'll burn your flesh or break your back. For  
coal is black and fire is red, and dust and sweat will taint your bread. Wheth- er dug from  
dar- kest mine, hewn from rock as deep as time, Or forged in furn- ace, fire and flame, the  
coal and steel gave men their fame. Have these men now a bet- ter deal, than cut- ting coal or  
forg- ing steel? Are they now bet- ter on the dole, than forg- ing steel or cut- ting coal?

1. Fire is red and coal is black; they'll burn your flesh or break your back.  
For coal is black and fire is red, and dust and sweat will taint your bread.  
Whether dug from darkest mine, hewn from rock as deep as time,  
Or forged in furnace, fire and flame, the coal and steel gave men their fame.

Chorus:-

*Have these men now a better deal, than cutting coal or forging steel?  
Are they now better on the dole, than forging steel or cutting coal?*

2. By Dearne, by Rother and by Don, men rose to work before the sun.  
To crimson flame, to sunless shaft, they sold their strength, they pledged their craft.  
The furnace flares with crimson light; the colliery cage drops into night.  
The raging fuel, the pithead wheel, the heat of coal, the strength of steel.
3. From Don, from Rother and from Dearne, came fire and filth and a wage to earn,  
And, ever hopeful, in their midst, death beckoned with his bony fist.  
Blood is red and death is black. Remember those who came not back.  
Red is blood and black is death. The flames, the dust took their last breath.
4. The roaring steelworks by the Don, the scores of mines are dead and gone.  
Now plastic shops on bulldozed ground and theme parks rise where pits were drowned.  
'Market forces rule,' they said. Credit's black and debt is red.  
Privation bends the broadest back; shame's face is red, despair is black.