We Dear Labouring Men

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O, some do say the farmer's best, but I do need say no;
If it weren't for we poor labouring men, what would the farmers do?
They would beat up all their old odd stuff until some new come in
There's never a trade in old England like we poor labouring men.

O, some do say the baker's best, but I've got need say no;
If it weren't for we poor hard-working men, what would the bakers do?
Thcy would beat up all their old hard stuff until some new come in
There's never a trade in old England like we dear labouring men.

O, some do say that the butcher's best but I've got needs say no.
If it weren't for we poor hard-working men, what would the butchers do?
They would beat up all their old hard stuff until some new come in,
There's never a trade in old England likc we dear labouring men.

Let every true-born Englishman lift up a flowing glass,
And drink a toast to the labouring man, likewise his bonnie lass,
And when these cruel times are gone, good days will come again,
There's never a trade in old England like we poor labouring men.

From Travellers' Songs, MacCoill & Seeger
Collected from Caroline Hughes
note: Between 1790 and 1816, the English peasant was turned into a wage-labourer, by intensification of land-closure, stiffer poor-law legislation, tighter game laws and economic inflation. RG
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