

## HOUSEWIFE'S LAMENT

Words adapted from the diary of Mrs Price of Ottawa, IL.

Tune anon. mid 19th century

One day I was walking, I heard a complaining.  
I saw an old woman, the picture of gloom.  
She gazed at the mud on her doorstep, 'twas raining,  
And this was her song as she wielded her broom

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,  
Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double  
And nothing is as I would wish it to be.*

There's too much of worryment goes to a bonnet  
Too much of ironing goes to a shirt  
There's nothing that's worth all the time we spend on it  
And nothing is left us but trouble and dirt.

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,  
Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double  
And nothing is as I would wish it to be.*

In March it is mud, it is slush in December.  
The midsummer breezes are loaded with dust.  
In Fall the leaves litter. In muddy September  
The wallpaper rots and the candlesticks rust.

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,  
Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double  
And nothing is as I would wish it to be.*

There are worms on the cherries and slugs on the roses,  
Ants in the sugar, and mice in the pies.  
The rubbish of spiders no mortal supposes,  
And ravaging roaches, and damaging flies.

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,  
Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double  
And nothing is as I would wish it to be.*

It's sweeping at six, and it's dusting at seven,  
Vittles at eight, and dishes at nine,  
Then potting and panning from ten to eleven.  
We scarce break our fast ere we plan how to dine.

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,*

*Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double  
And nothing is as I would wish it to be.*

With grease and with grime from corner to center  
Forever at war, forever alert.  
No rest for a day lest the enemy enter.  
I spend my whole life in a struggle with dirt.

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,  
Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double  
And nothing is as I would wish it to be.*

Last night in my dreams, I was stationed forever  
On a far little rock in the midst of the sea.  
My one chance at life was a ceaseless endeavor  
To sweep off the waves ere they swept over me.

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,  
Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double  
And nothing is as I would wish it to be.*

Alas, 'twas no dream. Ahead I behold it.  
I find I am helpless my fate to avert.  
She lay down her broom. Her apron she folded.  
She lay down and died...and was buried in dirt!

*Life is a toil, and love is a trouble,  
Beauty will fade and riches will flee.  
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double*

*And nothing is as I would wish it to be*

***As Sung on Judy Cook's CD "Lincoln's America"***

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