Housewife's Lament

(G) C - F C / G - G7 C / C - F C / G - G7 C

One day I was walking, I heard a complaining
And 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

C C7 E E7 / F D7 G G7 / C - F C / G - G7 C

Life is a trial 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 worriment goes to a bonnet
There's too much of ironing goes to a shirt
There's nothing that pays for the time you waste on it
There's nothing that last us but trouble and dirt.

CHORUS

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 wall paper rots and the candlesticks rust

CHORUS

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

CHORUS

It's sweeping at six and it's dusting at seven
It's victuals at eight and it's dishes at nine
It's potting and panning form ten to eleven
We scarce break our fast till we plan how to dine

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

CHORUS

Last night in my dreams I was stationed forever
On a far distant isle in the midst of the sea
My one chance of life was a ceaseless endeavor
To sweep off the waves as they swept over me

Alas! Twas no dream; ahead I behold it
I see 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.

CHORUS

Traditional

extra verse by Marion Wade

We're still chasing dirt but we're not just complaining
We stand up for our rights and we ask men to share
We fight with them sometimes, sometimes we're "explaining"
If we'd all stop to listen, someday we might dare
To make life worth its toil and love worth its troubles
Though beauty and riches may stay or may flee
And pleasures they'll triple or certainly double
When things will be as we would wish them to be

alternate last verse and chorus from Hilda Thomas of Vancouver:

"Alas, 'twas no dream - ahead I behold it,
But I am not helpless my fate to avert."
She laid down her broom, her apron she folded -
"If this doesn't stop, someone's gonna get hurt!"

"Oh, life is a toil and love is a trouble,
Beauty will fade and riches will flee,
But I'm damned if I'll live with oppression that's double,
I'm damned if I'll wait any more to be free!"

recorded by Peggy Seeger on Penelope's Not Waiting
and Frankie Armstrong Female Frolic

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