THE VOTIN' QUESTION

'The idea of you wimmen wantin' to vote,"
said old farmer Jones, a clearing his throat.
"It's my opinion the next thing ye'd do
would be wantin' to wear my pantaloons, too
And smoke and drink, play cards and cuss.
To my mind there couldn't be anything wuss
Happen this country. Now Mary, I swow'
If you're going to vote, you can follow the plow.
Then I'll take your place for a little spell
till this votin' fever you can quell.
My place ain't a very easy one to fill
'specially on a cold day goin' to the mill
Or goin' to the timber to chop the wood.
And a haulin' it in - d'ye think ye could?
Then there's butcherin' time--I'll bet my old hat
You'll soon get mighty sick o' that.
Then there's seedin' time, harvestin' and what not,
'nough to discourage a feller, the weather so hot,
It wouldn't be a year till you'd be gone
and I left a widderer all forlorn."

"Now listen, John, to me. Wipe away your tears.
Don't be distressin' yourself with senseless fears,
For I'll not take your place or let you in mine.
Maybe if you was, you wouldn't think it so fine.
So "pantaloons" and vices are the "scarecrows" then
that you've set up to frighten us from the rights of men,
And threaten us with labor 'twas intended for you.
It's a clear case of browbeatin' all the way through.
I want to know why on earth you'd suppose
that we had any notion of donnin' men's clothes,
Or copyin' their actions that fill us with disgust
or usin' their choice (?) language. No, I trust
We'll set an example that'll inspire them to try
to be a more decent set of voters ere they die.
You men seem to have queer ideas in your head
about women's sphere--Now, Shakespeare said:
'A man with a little brief authority dressed
is most ignorant on what he thinks he knows best.'
Or words to that effect. Now I want to say
that our sphere won't miss us a part of a day
While we cast our vote, then to our home return
to put on the household yoke that we've always borne
Without complaint. All of our interests center there.
But for the happiness of home we'd well nigh despair.

While this political machine (You're one of its cranks)
is run for the benefit of saloons, trusts and banks.
All by unprincipled men. When, say I, will it end
if women don't come forward and their "breeches" mend?
Well, I declare, John's made a sneak to bed!
Hope the dear man ain't offended at what I said."

Ada Wescott
Hampton, Iowa
1918?