

sense of importance to fussy folk, who are flattered and courted for their vote and influence. And when the candidate has been on the books for some sixteen years, his fate is a matter of no little consequence to him. His zealous partisans act as amateur whips, sending three-lined appeals to distant friends to come up to town specially for the ballot. It is ungracious to refuse—especially if you have been indebted to them yourself—however troublesome to comply. Then, on the afternoon of the ballot, the club is turned topsy-turvy, being a veritable bear-garden. There is no assurance of fair play, for an epidemic of black-balling may have set in, and the vendettas are running their ruthless course. The more conspicuous the candidate, the more precarious are his chances, and he may be “pilled” on political grounds or from personal animosity. I remember a case where there was a rush from a Cabinet meeting with no care for concealment, to exclude a writer who had given offence by anonymous articles, of which he was assumed to be the author. It was acknowledged that he had delivered his mind honestly, but that did not conciliate hostility. On the other hand, obscure men will slip in, who have no claim except their colourless insignificance, while eligible candidates dance attendance indefinitely.

No post demands more temper and tact than that of chairman at the general meeting. No assembly—and half the gathering is standing on its legs—is more intolerant of long-winded speeches. When business men, who speak briefly and to the point, are put up to move the resolutions, everything goes tolerably smoothly. When the committee is so ill-advised as to select an orator who rolls out rhapsodical periods and revels in poetical metaphor, then the chairman has to throw oil on troubled waters. And there is often some ill-conditioned member who fancies himself in the rôle of Objector-General—the sobriquet of a prominent member of the Geographical Society in the last generation. Then a happy interjection by the chairman is worth untold time, and I recollect how a famous judge silenced a can-