

## CHAPTER II

### HOW TO GET INTO PARLIAMENT

THIS seems simple enough to some people. It is a case of "open sesame," and they walk in, perhaps unopposed. Now this seems cheap, attractive, and free from worrying complications; but I am sure it is a mistake for the first time of asking. A good tough contest gives confidence in yourself, as well as of your supporters to you, it stimulates their loyalty, stiffens their backs, brings out your powers, educates you in your business, and keeps the organisation in good working order. But very few people are let off so easy as that, unless your local influence is overwhelmingly strong, your purse fairly deep, and your abilities above the average. The most trying of all things is to be sent, as the authorities will often send you, to fight a hopeless battle to sharpen your wits, and see what is in you. And even worse is the still more disheartening process of having to nurse a constituency held by a rich man. A friend of mine, happily well endowed, told me it cost him over £3000 a year to do this, and in the end he did not win the seat, but got in elsewhere after a big expenditure of brains and money. If you are just an ordinary person of no special importance, you usually have to impress your claims on the judgment of the 20, or 40, or 200 who are selected to select you, and