

"Verney?"

The name rang out crisply.

"Here, *sir*," said John.

The Head of the House eyed him sharply.

"Kinloch?"

No answer.

"Kinloch?"

Scaife answered dryly: "Kinloch's portman-teau has come." Then Dumbleton said in his smooth, bland voice, "His lordship is in the drawing-room with Mr. Rutford."

The boys exchanged knowing glances. Scaife looked contemptuous. The next moment the last name had been called, and the boys scurried into the passages. Lawrence was the first to leave the hall. Impulsively, John rushed up to him.

"I didn't mean to be funny, I didn't really," he panted.

"Quite right. It doesn't pay," Lawrence smiled grimly, "for new boys to be funny. I saw you didn't mean it."

Lawrence spoke in a loud voice. John realized that he had so spoken purposely, trying to wipe out a new boy's first blunder.

"Thanks awfully," said John.

He reached his room to find three other boys busily engaged in abusing their house-master. They took no notice of John, who leaned against the wall.

"His lordship is in the drawing-room with Mr. Rutford."

A freckle-faced, red-headed youth, with a big elastic mouth had imitated Dumbleton admirably.