

"I heard you were coming," he said, keenly examining John's face. "We can't have too many Verneys. If I can do anything for you, let me know."

He nodded, and strode on. John saw that several boys were staring with a new interest. None, however, spoke to him: and he returned to his room with a blushing face. Scaife had unpacked his clothes and put them away; he was now surveying the bare walls with undisguised contempt.

"Isn't this a beastly hole?" he remarked.

John, always interested in people rather than things, examined the room carefully. Passing down the passage he had caught glimpses of other rooms: some charmingly furnished, gay with chintz, embellished with pictures, Japanese fans, silver cups, and other trophies. Comparing these with his own apartment, John said shyly—

"It's not very beefy."

"Beefy? You smell of a private school, Verney. Now, is it worth doing up? You see, I shall be in a two-room next term. If we all chip in——" he paused.

"I've brought back two quid," said John.

Scaife's smile indicated neither approval nor the reverse. John's ingenuous confidence provoked none in return.

"We'll talk about it when Kinloch arrives. I wonder why his people sent him here."

John had studied some books, but not the Peerage. The great name of Kinloch was new to him, not new to Scaife, who, for a boy, knew his "Burke" too odiously well.