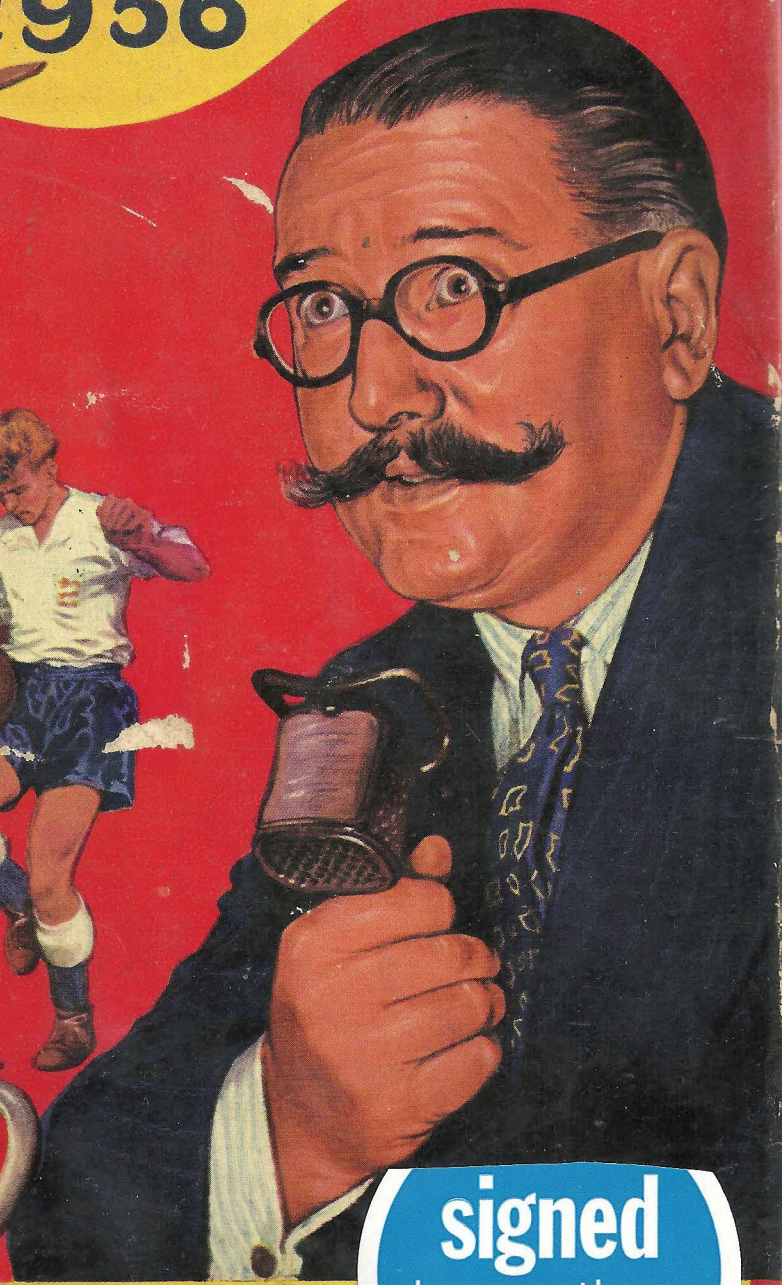
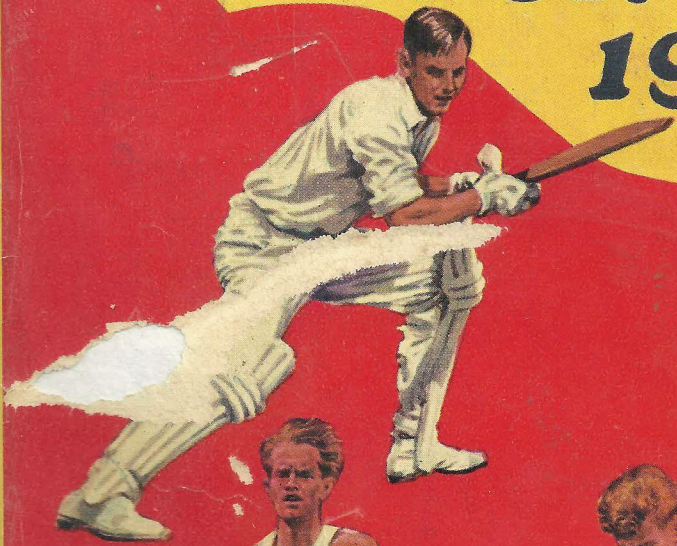


Raymond Glendenning's **BOOK OF SPORT FOR BOYS 1956**



signed

Contributors include Danny Blanchflower, Tom Graveney, Ronnie Moore, N. A. Labuschagne, W. Barrington Dalby, J. Wardle and many other leading sportsmen. Fiction by Frank Richards of Billy Bunter and Greyfriars fame

Edith E. Hood

DA

Raymond Glendenning's

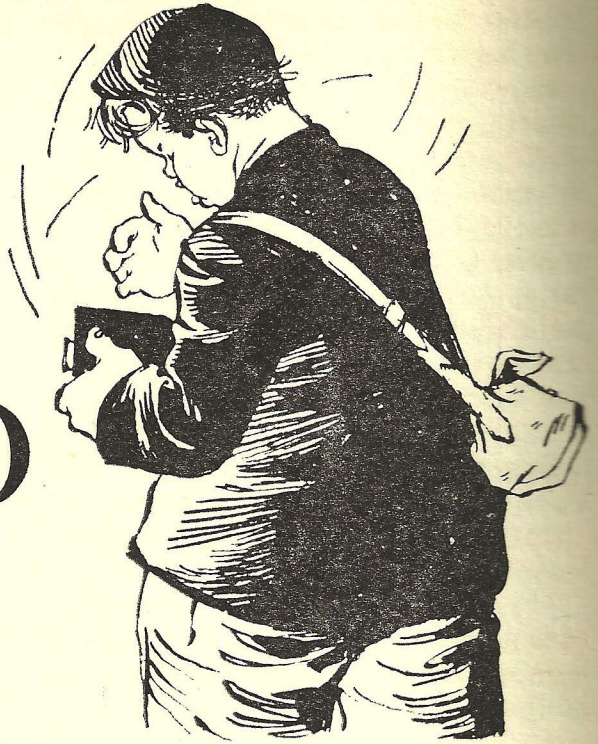
**BOOK OF
SPORT
FOR BOYS**



LONDON

ANDREW DAKERS

PHOTO FINISH



SKIP RUGGLES did not take part in the cycle race. He was not even interested. That was not because the plump Skip had so much weight to carry, or because he was short of wind, or because any fellow in the Felgate Fourth could have told him that he hadn't an earthly. Skip, like Brutus, would have passed such things by like the idle wind which he respected not.

It was because Skip, at the moment, was concentrated on his new camera. His Uncle Ruggles had presented him with that camera, and Skip had taken up amateur photography, with his accustomed keenness and his accustomed cack-handedness. So keen was Skip on his new pursuit that he even forgot to

press his claims on Tom King for a place in the junior eleven, considerably to Tom's relief, for he hated continually saying "No" to his fat chum. Skip was always taking that camera for a walk, expending his pocket-money on rolls of film for it, and taking snaps which seldom resembled anything in the earth or the heavens or the waters under the earth. Generally over-exposure or under-exposure marred Skip's efforts: and when a picture did come out, usually it was a surprise to Skip, not being a picture of the object at which he had aimed his camera, or fancied that he had aimed it, but of something quite other. There were other amateur photographers at Felgate: but Skip was the only one who could set out to take

a picture of the school chapel and produce one of the school porter sunning himself at the door of his lodge.

However, Skip was happy with his camera, which was really all that mattered: and cycle races were small beer in comparison. Both his chums, Tom King and Dick Warren, were in it, of course: and Skip wished them luck, so far as he thought about it at all: and certainly hoped that they would beat that swanking ass Reece, who fancied that he had the race in the bag before it was run.

Skip was in the window-seat in Study Four, his camera on his fat knees, his attention fixed on it, when Reece looked in, after dinner that Wednesday.

"Five!" murmured Skip, rather disconsolately. He was blinking at a number, which indicated that five out of the six films on his roll had been used. That left only one for the afternoon: and that afternoon, Skip was rolling down to Hodden to take a picture of the Old Church, at the corner of the market-place. Many spots of ill-luck had not diminished Skip's confidence in his photographic powers: still, he would have preferred to take a couple of shots, to make sure. But films were expensive, and pocket-money had run out: and Skip realised that he had to be very, very careful with the one shot that remained in the locker. He did not heed Reece, as that member of the Felgate Fourth cast an unpleasant glance into the study, receiving in return a cheery grin from King and Warren.

"You fancy this study is going to pull it off," said Reece. "You fancy yourselves too much in this study. You're not the Great Big Panjandruns you think you are. Like to bet on it?"

Reece, who had many ways that were

not quite up to Felgate standard, often laid bets on school events. He was ready, more than ready, to back himself to beat Study Four. But with that idea in his mind, he had come to the wrong study.

"Rats!" said Tom King.

"Rot!" said Dick Warren.

"Funk it?" jeered Reece.

"Oh, get out," said Tom King. "If you can beat this study you're welcome: but you can keep your putrid betting to yourself."

"I've bet Bullinger two to one that I pull it off," said Reece.

"Good thing for Bully if you don't, then!" said Tom.

"I'll give you the same odds, if you like."

"You won't," said Tom, "but I'll give you this cushion, right on the boko, if you don't take it away from that door."

Reece took it away rather hastily.

"Swank!" grunted Dick Warren.

"He can't beat this study."

"Well, Reece is a good man on a bike, with all his airs and graces," said Tom, "but a good many men will conk out on Hodden Hill: and I rather fancy that Reece will be one of the conkers. Too much dash and flash about him – sort of chap who'd start a mile race as if it were a hundred-yards sprint. He may beat us to Hodden – but we'll beat him on the hill. What do you think, Skip?"

"Eh?" Stanley St. Leger Ruggles looked up from the camera. "I think it will be all right, Tom. I'm pretty good at it, really."

Tom King stared at him.

"You're not riding," he said.

"Eh? I shall walk to Hodden – it's downhill all the way," said Skip. "I

shall get the bus back, up the hill. And I think it will be all right. I've only one film left, but I shall be awfully careful about it - ."

"You fat ass!"

"Eh?"

"I was speaking about the race——" hooted Tom.

"Eh? What race?" said Skip. "Oh! Yes! I know! It's the bike race this afternoon, isn't it? I forgot——"

"Fathead!" said Tom King.

"Ass!" said Dick Warren.

"What are you calling a fellow names for?" asked Skip. He rose from the window-seat. "I'd better push along - it's a long step to Hodden, even if it's downhill all the way. You'll develop my film for me when I get back, won't you, Warren?"

"Blitherer!" Dick Warren replied.

"Well, I'm not very good at that, so far, and you know how," said Skip. "If I get a good picture of the Old Church, we'll have it enlarged and hang it up in the study. Cheerio, you chaps - mind you beat that gas-bag Reece."

Skip rolled away with his camera. Other fellows might be thinking of pushing pedals: Skip forgot the bike race before he was out of gates. Skip rolled away contentedly down Hodden Hill, with his camera slung over a fat shoulder: stopping long and often for a rest by the way, downhill as it was.

2

Langdale, the captain of Felgate, started them. They looked a very fit and cheery crowd, more than twenty of them. They called it a bike race: but it was rather a test of endurance than a race. The run was from Felgate to Fell, then by the track over the lower slopes

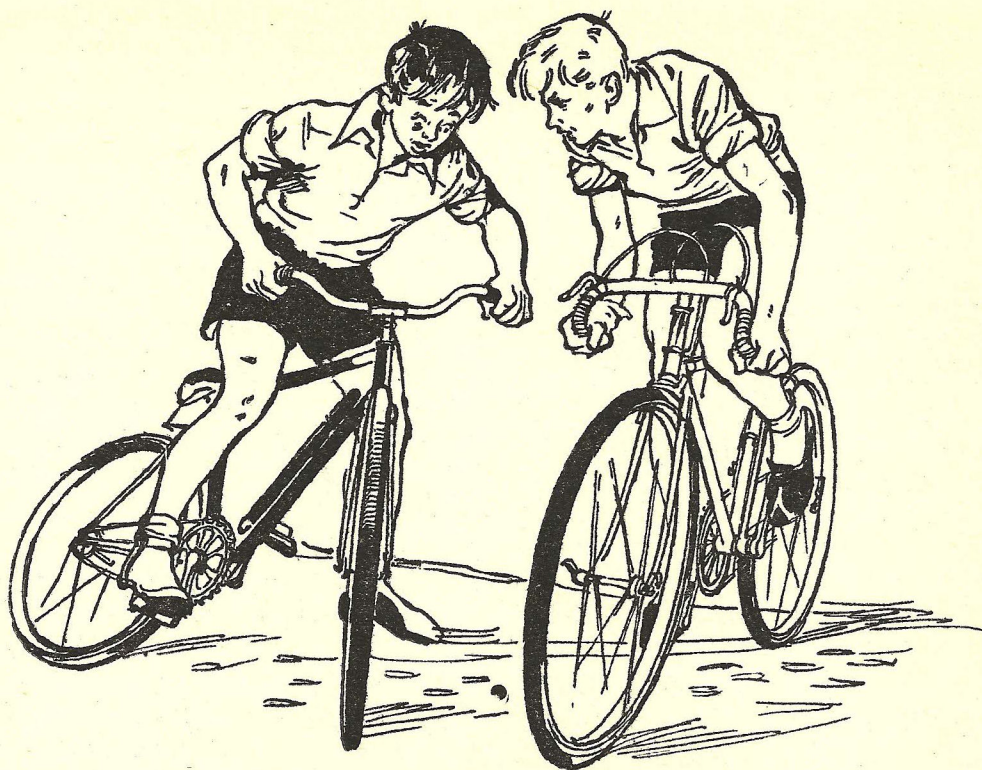
of High Fell to Hodden Heath, and on to Hodden. It was at Hodden that the pinch came: for from the market-town back to Felgate it was three miles uphill: and on that long, long pull, stout riders were wont to conk out. Many were called but few were chosen, as it were. However, they all started in cheery spirits: Reece, with a vaunting glance at Study Four, shooting ahead, just as Tom King had sagely predicted that he might. Reece was a good man on a bike, and a good man at games: but he never seemed able to keep himself in hand. Wiser riders, with ten miles in front of them, did not follow his example.

They began to thin out as early as Fell. Three or four fellows decided that the village tuck-shop, and ginger-pop, offered more seductive attractions than a saddle, on a sunny afternoon. On the slopes of High Fell, where a bumpy track wound away over pasture-land, the thinning-out process was more pronounced. Tom King and Dick Warren, riding level, looked back and saw Bullinger and Carton and Preece and Parrott in a bunch behind: Selwyn of the Shell further back: others mere spots in dusty distance. Ahead of them Reece was just in sight.

Another glance back, when they came round to Hodden Heath, revealed only Bullinger and Preece toiling on: the others had dropped out of vision. But Bullinger and Preece, though they stuck to it gamely, were practically nowhere: and they were dropped before long.

"Us or that gas-bag!" said Dick Warren, with a nod towards the cyclist barely within the range of vision ahead. "Easier going here, on the heath, Tom."

"Take it easy, though," answered



"Oh!" gasped Dick. He jumped down and Tom slacked in dismay

Tom. "Hodden Hill's to come. That's going to be the tug."

Pop!

"Oh!" gasped Dick Warren. He jumped down, and Tom slacked, in dismay. It was the most unfortunate moment for a tyre to go west.

"Bad?" called out Tom.

"Couldn't be worse!"

"We'll fix it up! I'll stop and help you——"

"Fathead! Get on and beat Reece!" yelled Warren.

"Oh, all right."

Tom King went grinding on, leaving his chum busy with a puncture outfit, and hopelessly out of the race. Far ahead, on the level track over the heath, Reece was putting on speed. He vanished far from Tom's sight: not in the

least to Tom's discomfort. Hodden Hill was to come: and if Reece chose to pump himself out before they came to the hill, there was no doubt that Tom King, with plenty in hand, would overtake and pass him on the climb. Tom rode on at a good speed, but with a reserve in hand for the hill: and was content to see Reece disappear over the horizon.

3

Reece could have kicked himself.

He had done it again! Often and often, in a race or a game, he had gone all out too soon. He came into the old market-place of Hodden on the free wheel, breathing hard, his legs in a dither. He was far out of sight of his

nearest follower, for what that was worth. But what was it worth, with three miles of a steep ascent in front of him, when he had practically ridden himself out already? Only too probably, when he toiled up Hodden Hill, fellows who had held something in reserve would be coming up and passing him: King and Warren for a cert: very likely Bullinger, who had two half-crowns to collect from him if he failed to get in first of the flock. Here he was, with dithering legs, perspiring, angry with himself: angrier with Study Four, who were going to beat him on the hill. And then he saw the furniture van.

It was one of those long pantech-nichons, standing outside the "Peal of Bells", at the corner of the market square. Evidently it had delivered its contents there, for the doors were open at the back, and Reece could see that the interior was empty. The driver had come out of the inn, and was about to close those doors when Reece spotted him. Reece knew the van: it came from Dilford, on the other side of Fell. Was it going back? No doubt it was, and if it was——! If it was, it would pass Felgate School, as it rolled on to Fell.

Reece flushed red, at the thought that had come into his mind. He cast a hasty glance back: there was no sign of any cyclist coming into Hodden from the heath. He set his lips. Study Four were not going to beat him — fair or foul, he was going to beat Study Four. He slipped out of the saddle and wheeled his machine to the van, where the driver, having closed one of the double doors, was about to close the other.

"Going back to Dilford?" asked Reece.

The man looked round at him.

"Jest going back," he answered.

"Will you give me a lift up the hill for a shilling?"

"Aye!"

No more was said. Reece and the man, between them, lifted the bike into the van. Reece followed it in. It did not take a minute. The man closed the other half of the door, went to the driving seat in front, and started up. He brought the long vehicle round, in the square, and started up the hill. Reece sat on a pile of sacks beside his machine, inside, wiped his clotted brow, and grinned sourly. He was not exactly proud of what he was doing: and he rather shivered at the idea of what Felgate men would say if they knew: but how was anyone going to know? He was going to beat Study Four, anyhow.

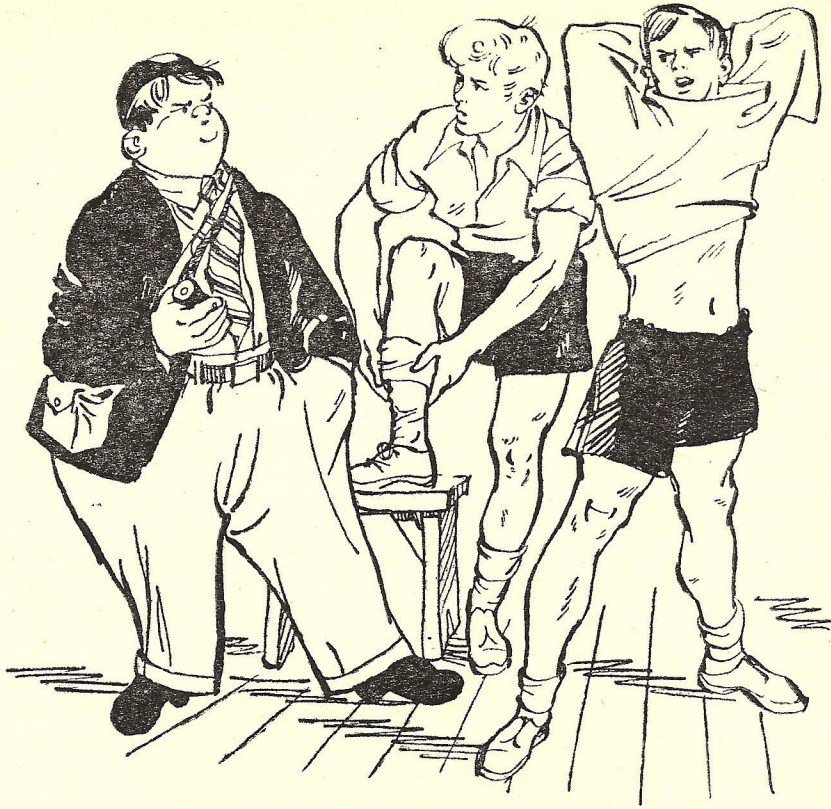
Petrol did what legs could not do. In a very brief space of time, Reece peered out, a quarter of a mile short of Felgate: it was safer to go no nearer in the van. He called to the driver: the van halted: Reece, as the doors opened, scanned the landscape with an anxious, searching eye, but there was not a soul in sight. The furniture-van rolled on its way, leaving Reece to ride into Felgate on his bike: a very easy winner.

4

Skip did not need to ask what luck his friends had had, when he rolled into Study Four, merry and bright with his camera. Skip was feeling good: he was sure that he had a good picture of the Old Church at Hodden on his last film. Tom King and Dick Warren did not look particularly good.

"Rotten!" Warren was saying, as Skip came in.

"Putrid!" Tom King was agreeing.



Bother your picture and bother you!

“How did he do it?” said Warren. He scratched his nose. “I’d have bet a dollar to a dough-nut that he would conk out on the hill, winded.

“I never even saw him again,” said Tom. “Not till I got in – and there he was, at the gate, grinning at a fellow. Beats me!”

Tom shook his head, puzzled. His judgment seemed to be quite out. Reece seemed to have finished as he had started. He had been in long enough to get a bath and a change when Tom arrived: and his grin had been rather irritating. Study Four were good losers, if it came to that: but Reece was not the kind of fellow they liked to beat them: and they were puzzled, and a little disgruntled.

“You didn’t pull it off?” asked Skip. Even Skip could guess that one.

“No!”

“Who did?”

“Reece!”

“Rotten!” said Skip. “Wish I’d entered, now. I wanted this study to beat him.”

“Ass!”

“Fathead!”

“I’ve taken a jolly good picture at Hodden, I think –” Skip dropped the subject, coming to one that was nearer his fat heart.

“Bother your picture, and bother you!” grunted Warren.

“Well, you’re going to develop the film for me, aren’t you?” said Skip. “Lots of sun to print it out, if you

develop and fix it for me, old chap. Bring it up here and I'll print it out at the window."

Dick Warren drew a deep breath.

"Blow!" he said.

"I say, I took the Old Church, at the corner of the market-place, you know," said Skip. "I fancy it will come out fine. Here you are, old fellow."

"Oh, all right!" sighed Warren, resigning himself to his fate. And he took Skip's camera, and went down to the dark-room with it.

Dick Warren was not in the least interested in that film. As there were six snaps on the roll, he expected to develop half a dozen blotches, or five at least. But when the picture came out in the dish, he laughed. There were, as he had anticipated as the lowest probable number, five blotches, which might have been anything. But the sixth picture had come out quite clear: evidently Skip had been unusually careful in the exposure of his last, last spot of film. Only - which was Skip all over! - he hadn't taken the Old Church. With a gooseberry-eye on the viewfinder, he must have swayed that camera considerably: for, clear as the picture was, it was a picture, not of the Old Church, at one corner of the market-square, but of the "Peal of Bells", at another corner.

Warren chuckled.

Then he suddenly ceased to chuckle, and his eyes became fixed, staring. He gave a gasp. What he saw in that picture, in front of the "Peal of Bells", made him jump, and nearly knock over the red lamp.

"Great pip!" gasped Warren.

Darks were lights, and lights were darks, in the negative, but he was sure - sure - but sure as he was, he was

anxious to get that picture printed out, to make assurance doubly sure. And then——!

"What - ?" began Tom King and Skip Ruggles together, as Dick Warren fairly bounded into No. 4, his face ablaze with excitement.

"Where's the printing frame, Skip?" panted Warren.

"Here," said Skip. "What——?"

Warren snatched it. His chums gazed at him in wonder, as he carefully packed in the negative and exposed it to bright sunshine on the study window-sill. Skip felt flattered. Never before had Warren displayed such keen interest in his amateur photography: never had he got excited about it. But he was excited now - quite breathless.

"Good picture, what?" asked Skip.

"Jolly good," answered Warren.

"Does the Old Church come out all right?"

"Might have, if you'd turned the camera on it," said Warren. "What you've got is a picture of the 'Peal of Bells', at the other corner."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom King.

"Oh, I say!" gasped Skip. "Why, I wasn't anywhere near the 'Peal of Bells' - I'm sure I had the Old Church all right. Sure it isn't the Old Church?"

"Not unless they've hung a sign with 'Peal of Bells' on it," said Warren. "But never mind, old ditherer, it's a jolly good picture, and every man in the Fourth will want to see it." He grabbed up the printing frame. "Wait till I get it fixed - come down to the day-room - I want all the fellows to see it."

"But what - ?" asked Tom.

"I say - !" bleated Skip.

Warren did not answer. They went down to the day-room, where most of the Fourth were discussing the bike race

of the afternoon, and Warren rejoined them there with a finished photograph.

5

Reece grinned at Study Four, in the junior day-room. He was elated. Only Reece knew how he had been an easy winner that afternoon: so far as he was aware yet, at all events. He had beaten Study Four – in a manner, certainly, that he would not have cared to mention – and he bore his blushing honours thick upon him, with even more than his usual self-assurance. He hadn't collected a half-crown from Bullinger: young rascal as he was, he jibbed at that, and he had told Bully to wash it out. But he rejoiced in putting Study Four down a peg, and in having made his boasting good: and he was feeling rather on top of the world, when Tom King and Co. came into the day-room.

"Skip's taken a snap at Hodden this afternoon," said Dick Warren.

Nobody was interested. Reece shrugged his shoulders.

"He meant to take the Old Church, and got the 'Peal of Bells'," went on Warren.

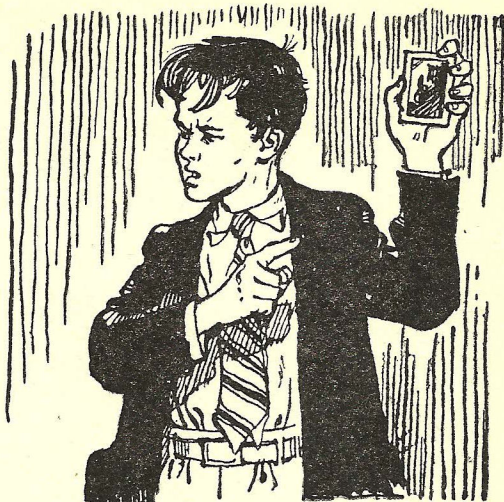
There was a laugh.

"There was a furniture van standing in front of the inn, and Skip got it a treat!" went on Warren.

Reece gave a start.

"And there was a fellow shoving his bike into the van," said Warren. "He comes out beautifully clear. Anybody know the face?"

Warren held up the photograph. Every fellow in the day-room stared at it. One glance was enough for Reece. He felt quite sick. From other fellows came a hubbub. For that picture showed Reece and the van-driver lifting



Warren held up the photograph

Reece's bike into the furniture van. Nothing could have been clearer. If Skip had been a skilled photographer, concentrated on the job, he could not have got Reece better.

"Reece——!"

"Getting a lift——"

"A lift with his bike——"

"Reece, you spoofer——"

"Reece, you rotter——"

"Reece, you tricky cad——"

"Boot him!"

"So that's how you got up the hill, Reece!" said Tom King. "I couldn't make it out! That's how!"

"That's how!" said Dick Warren.

"And I never knew," gasped Skip. "I thought I was taking the Old Church – I never even saw Reece——"

"Reece, you worm——"

"Boot him!"

Reece bolted for the door. How many kicks he collected before he escaped from the day-room he could not have computed. It was a despised, dismal, and disconsolate Reece, for a long time afterwards: owing to that unusual and unexpected Photo Finish!