

RIP VAN WINKLE at GREYFRIARS by BOB CHERRY



A modern Rip Van Winkle visits Greyfriars—and criticises in no uncertain terms the present day school and its scholars!

HE came hobbling across the quad from the direction of the gates—a weird old johnny if ever there was one!

Wharton and Inky and I were sunning ourselves at the top of the steps. We simply blinked at him. He was bent nearly double with age and had two stout sticks to help him to walk. He wore tight-fitting trousers of a very ancient pattern, a bottle-green frock-coat and a venerable chimney-pot hat.

Wharton "capped" him when he came to a stop.

"Can we help you, sir?" he asked.

"Maybe you can," replied the old chap in a piping, quavering voice. "I want to see Doctor Dickinson."

Wharton shook his head.

"Sorry, sir, but there's no Doctor Dickinson here. Who is he?"

"Why, the headmaster, to be sure!" piped the old sport. "Show me to Doctor Dickinson at once, young fellow!"

We all registered puzzlement.

"Sure you've come to the right place, sir?" I asked. "This is Greyfriars School."

"Exactly; and the headmaster of Greyfriars School is Doctor Dickinson! Where is he?"

"The wherefulness is terrific, esteemed and ludicrous sir!" remarked Inky gravely—and then it was the visitor's turn to stare! He gaped at our dusky nabob as though he were a museum specimen.

"Bless me soul! A boy from the Indies!" he piped. "How could a boy from the Indies be expected to know Doctor Dickinson's whereabouts?"

Bolsy had had enough. When he got up again, he donned his coat, which seemed quite in order to us.

But it didn't meet the old boy's ideas in any way. Oh, no, thank you! He shook one of his sticks at Bolsy and fairly glared at him.

"Coward! Poltroon!" he shrieked. "How many rounds have you fought?"

Brownly looked over and answered: "Three, sir!" for Bolsy, and the old warrior simply danced.

"Three!" he gasped. "A Greyfriars boy giving in after three paltry rounds? Why, when I fought Slogger Sampson on this spot, I lasted fifty-eight rounds before I yielded!"

"Great pip!"

"Let me fight the winner of this wretched so-called fight!" raged our ancient guest. "I'll show him!"

And, believe it or not, the old warhorse dropped his sticks and actually began to peel off his bottle-green frock-coat!

Then a newcomer butted in. He was a somewhat decrepit-looking coachman who had ambled across from an ancient carriage that had pulled up in the drive.

"Now, now, sir! Time to be goin', sir!" he barked. "I promised 'em I'd 'ave you safe an' sound back in the nursin'-home by four, an' it's 'arf-past three already. This way, sir!"

"But I haven't seen Doctor Dickinson!" shrieked the old 'un.

"Can't 'elp it, sir! Time's time!"

And the coachman had his way, and the old boy hobbled back to his coach without having seen Doctor Dickinson.



"Let me fight the winner of this wretched so-called fight!" raged our ancient guest. "I'll show him!" And, believe it or not, the old warhorse dropped his sticks and began to peel off his bottle-green frock-coat.

We had a word with that coachman before he went.

"Who is he?" we asked.

"Ol' gent from the Redclyffe Nursin' Ome," was the reply. "Used to belong to this 'ere school when he was a boy, 'e did, an' he's allus wanted to visit it. Nice ol' chap. Only one weakness—sometimes suffers from delusions that 'e's back in 'is young days agin!"

"How old is he?" Wharton asked.

The coachman grinned.

"Now you're askin'! I don't believe it meself, but they do say as 'e's a hundred and fifteen year old."

"My hat!"

Mr. Lascelles came up while we were still standing staring after our vanished Rip van Winkle. We decided to ask his opinion.

Larry listened with interest. When Wharton had finished, he smiled and nodded.

"It's all quite genuine," he told us. "The old gentleman is known to us here by repute. He is certainly the oldest living Greyfriars Old Boy. And there certainly was a headmaster named Dickinson. If you'll look up the school records, you'll find out how long ago it was."

"But it couldn't have been as long ago as that, sir!"

"You can soon check it up."

Thereupon we made prompt tracks for the school library.

There we found a musty tome containing the school records of the early nineteenth century.

Doctor Dickinson was there as large as life. He came to the school in 1826 and left in 1838.

So the only conclusion left was that we really had been talking to a johnny who had attended Greyfriars over one hundred years ago.

Can you beat it?

The Referee's Decisions

(See "Greyfriars v. St. Jim's," page 67.)

HERE are the decisions you should have made at each stoppage—provided you are a good referee.

1. Wharton was charged heavily by Noble, but this could not be regarded as an offence, as Wharton had already broken Law 2 by attempting to dribble through on his own from the kick-off without another player touching the ball.
2. Nugent, receiving a forward pass from Hurree Singh with only Wynn to beat, was clearly offside. The goal should have been disallowed.
3. Though Hazeldene struck Blake in the penalty area, it was obviously accidental. The ball should be dropped to re-start the game.
4. As Tom Merry scored, Johnny Bull almost touched the ball—but not quite! No "penalty." Merry scores. St. Jim's 1, Greyfriars 0.
5. Cherry infringed Law 9 ("hands") by touching the ball, even by accident, and his goal should have been disallowed. Wharton's accidental trip over Noble's foot had no bearing on the matter. Free kick given against Greyfriars for handling.
6. Wharton had scored; the intrusion of Towser did not affect the play. Referee should see that Towser is removed from the field as quickly as possible. St. Jim's 1, Greyfriars 1.
7. Bull charged Merry legitimately, so no "penalty" could be claimed. Merry merely staggered slightly. The injury to Hazeldene called for a stoppage, the ref. signalling the Greyfriars trainer to come to his aid. The last 15 seconds are played out with no further score.