

"Now, Ben, all right, you may unwrap your pretty head," said Dick, laughing, as he whistled a Band of Mercy tune. "See, Ben, how glad they are to have the use of their heads. Now hand over that blanket, please—the one groom Nettle covers up his precious body with, and I'll throw it over the two of them; it will be better than nothing. Our horse Nobby has a fine blanket mother made out of samples of cloth patched together. And now, Ben, for a race to the corner, then home; but first, I must drop my card into the sleigh."

"Your card!" said Ben, in good-humored fun. "I guess what's on it is, 'Dick Niven, as works at odd jobs arter school,' eh?"

"Yes, Ben, you've hit the bull's-eye this time. The card is about the best job I've got—the Band of Mercy job; and my card shows the check-rein on and off the horses. Come now, let us hustle. Mother told me to bring you home to dinner; we have raisin pudding to-day, so hustle up. One, two, three and away!"

"You bet I'll skute," said Ben, grinning. "It isn't every day I gets raisin puddin'. Your mother is a brick, Dick."

"No, she aint," said Dick, out of breath with the run. "A brick is too hard for mother; she is more like a soft pillow."

#### SLIDE 6.—DICK AND BEN.

"Hello! hello, Ben!" loudly called a boy running after them, firing a snow-ball at Ben's back. He was a very well-dressed boy, his boots and pants bespattered with mud. "Hello, Ben. Hold up, I say."

Ben halted in the run, because the three boys attended the same school, but Dick did so very reluctantly, for he did not like the boy, and did not wish to keep his mother and little sister waiting for their dinner. He was hungry, too, for raisin pudding, so he said breathlessly:

"Don't stop, Ben. Bobbie Flint is not a good sort, and mother doesn't wish me to chum up with him."

"Oh, pshaw, Dick; Bobbie's got lots of tin anyhow, so I'll halt," said Ben, a little crossly, and making a step backward to meet Bobbie Flint, who ran up out of breath.

#### SLIDE 7.—DICK, BEN AND BOBBIE.

"Well, Bobbie, what's the row?" shouted Ben.

"Only this, kid," replied Bobbie Flint, twirling his chewing-gum from one cheek to another; "I want a shine."

"You bet!" responded Ben, the boot-black, scanning him critically. "But where under the sun did you get mud to-day? Your church is just round the corner from your house, and the snow hasn't melted worth a cent about there!"