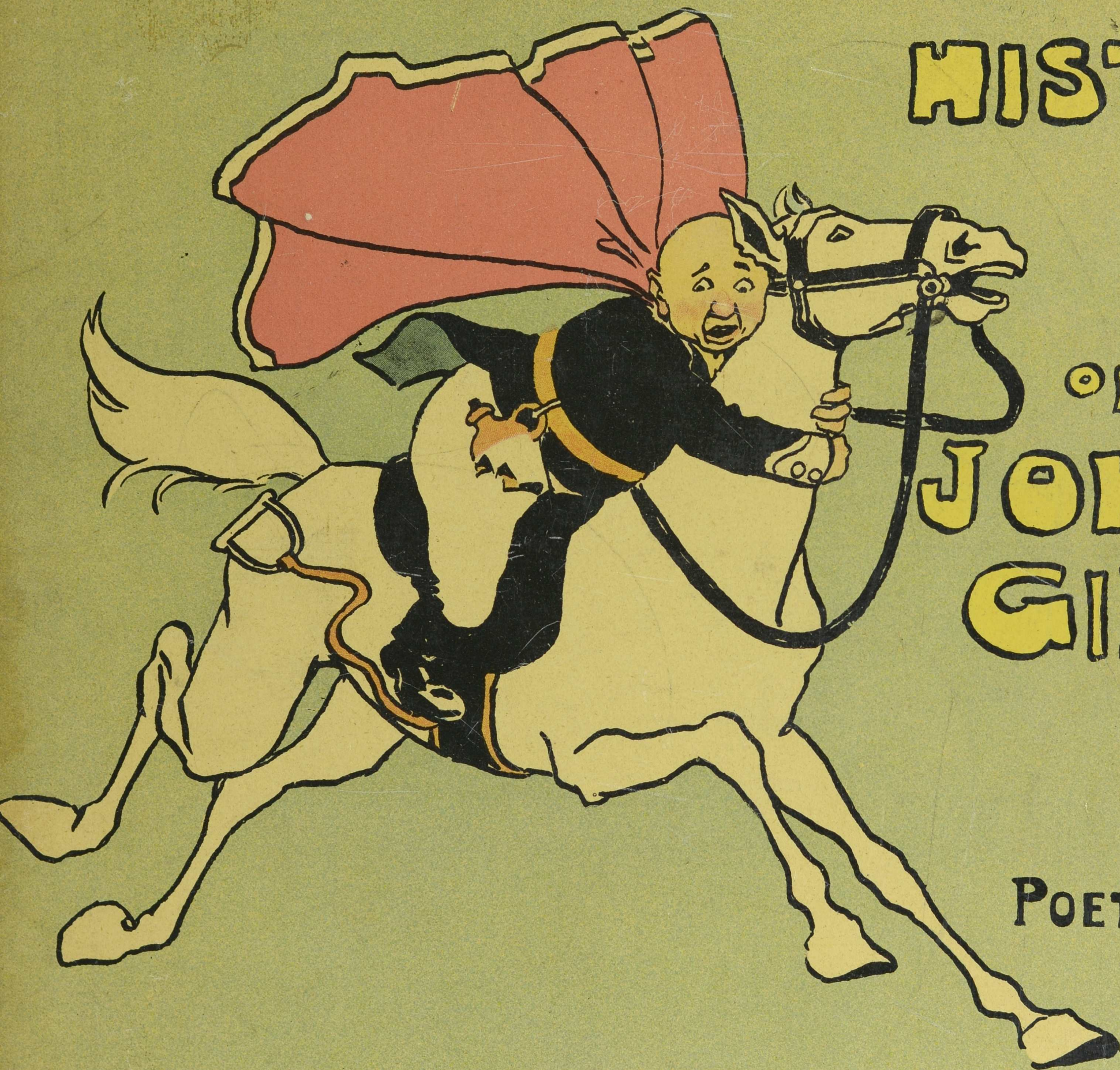


THE DIVERTING HISTORY



OF
JOHN
GILPIN

by the
POET COWPER

Pictures . . .
by
. . . A.S. Forrest



THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHNNY GILPIN.

BY WILLIAM COWPER.

(1)

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

(2)

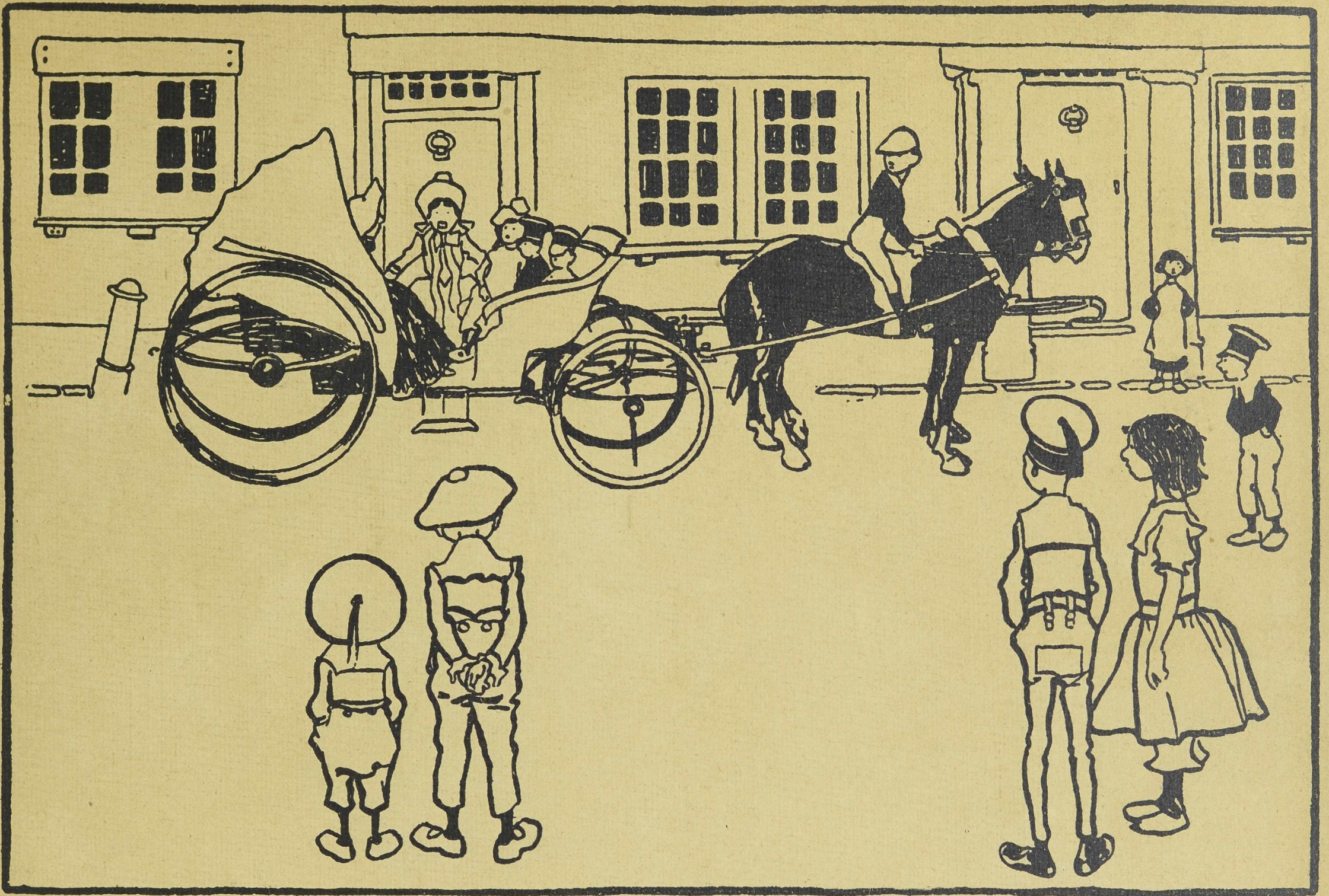
John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

(3)

"To-morrow is our wedding day,
And then we will repair
Unto the "Bell" at Edmonton,
All in a chaise and pair.

(4)

"My Sister and my sister's child,
Myself and children three,
Will fill the chaise, so you must ride
On horseback after we."



(5)

He soon replied, "I do admire,
Of womankind but one;
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

(7)

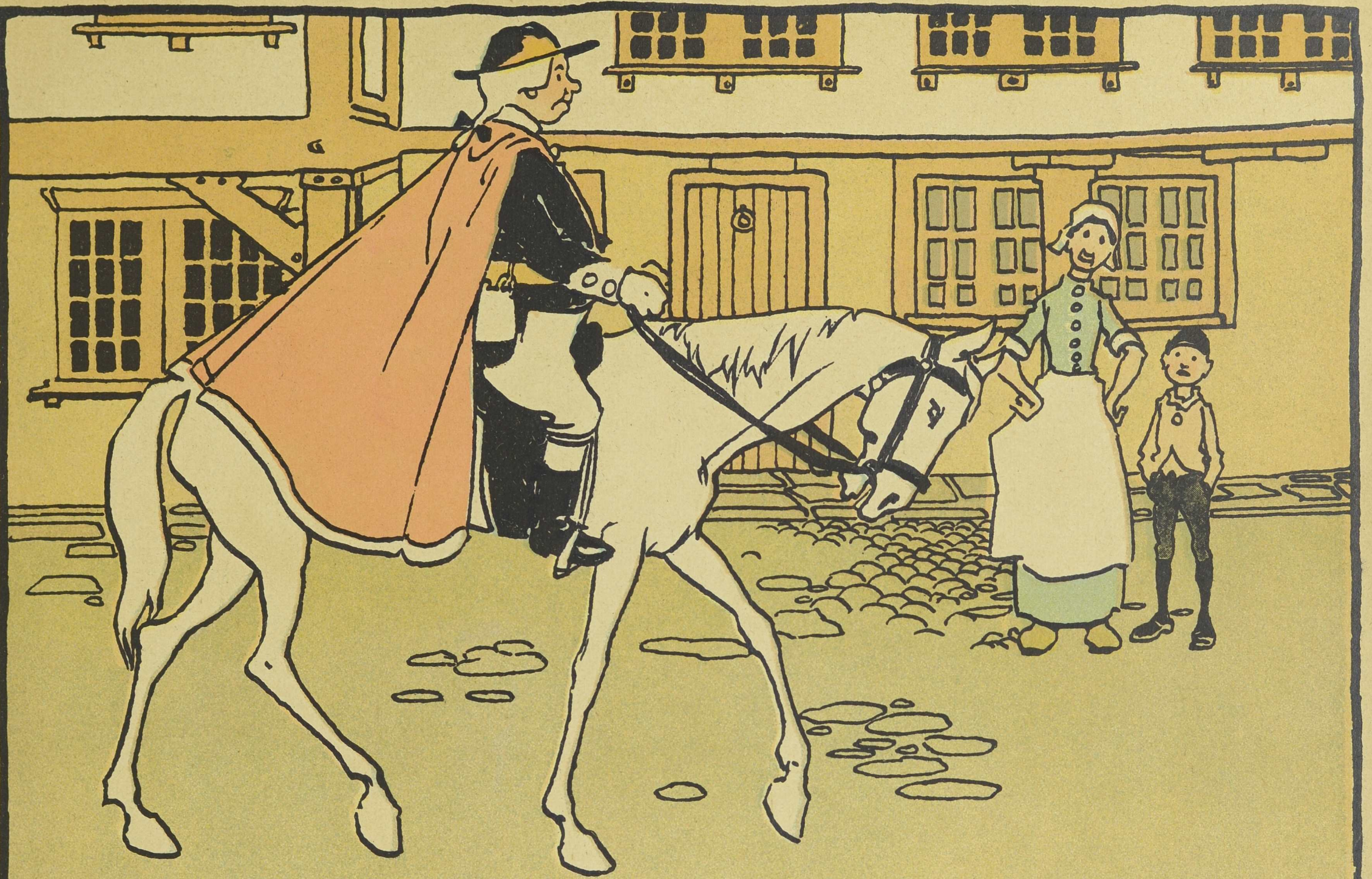
Quoth Mrs. Gilpin: "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

(6)

"I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the Calender,
Will lend his horse to go."

(8)

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'er joyed was he to find
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.



(13)

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When turning round his head, he saw
Three customers go in.

(14)

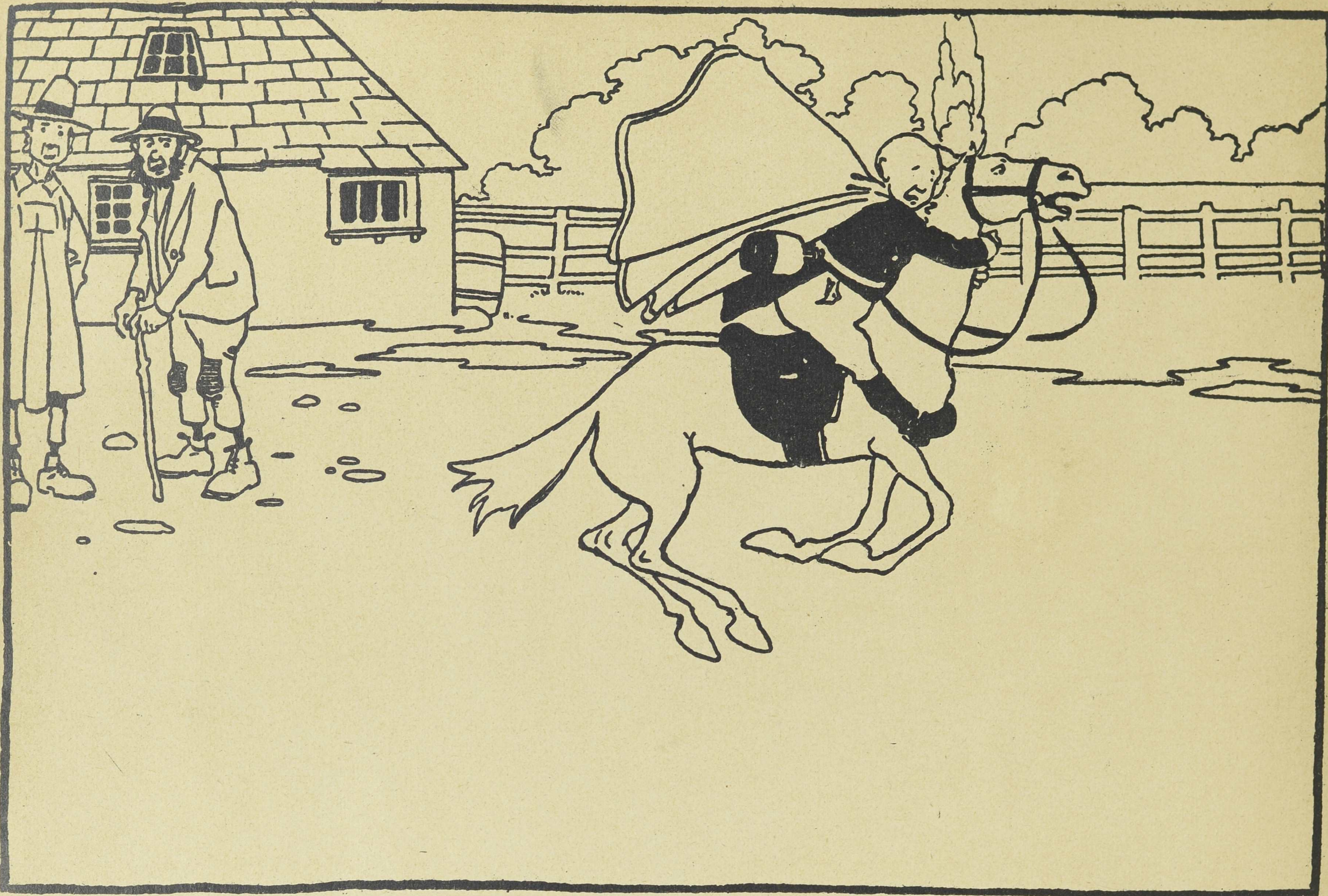
So down he came; for loss of time
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

(15)

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind."

(16)

"Good lack!" quoth he — "yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."



(17)

Now Mistress Gilpin, careful soul!
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

(18)

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew;
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make the balance true.

(19)

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly trotting o'er the stones
With caution and good heed.

(20)

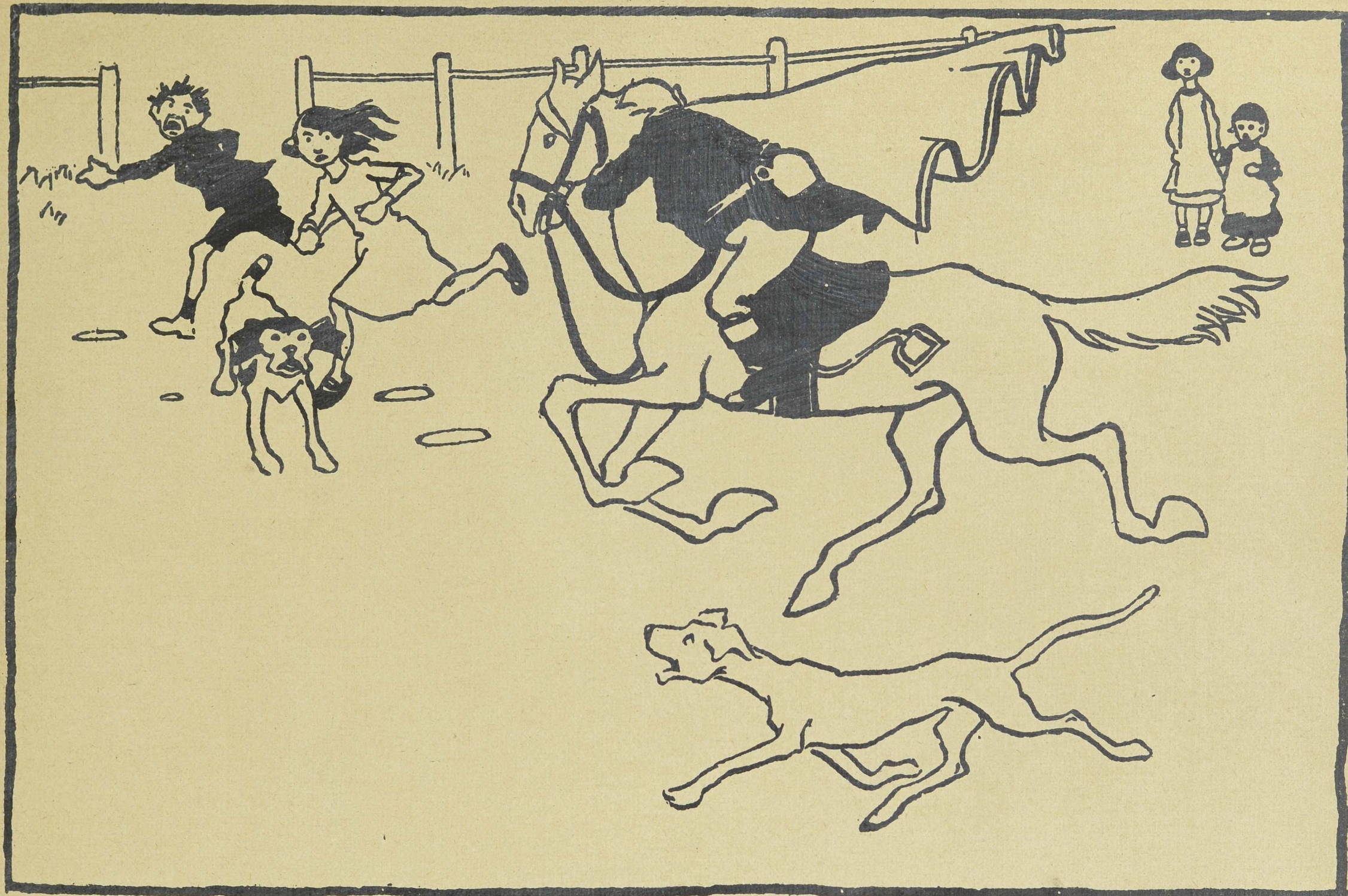
“So, fair and softly,” John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

(21)

So, stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

(22)

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.



(23)

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,
 Away went hat and wig;
 He little dreamt when he set out
 Of running such a rig.

(24)

The wind did blow, his cloak did fly,
 Like streamer long and gay,
 Till loop and button failing both,
 At last it flew away.

(25)

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
 Up flew the windows all:
 And every soul cried out "Well done!"
 As loud as he could bawl.

(26)

Away went Gilpin — who but he!
 His fame soon spread around —
 He carries weight! he rides a race!
 'Tis for a thousand pound.

(27)

And still as fast as he drew near,
 'Twas wonderful to view
 How in a trice the turnpike men
 Their gates wide open threw.



(28)

And now as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

(29)

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen;
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

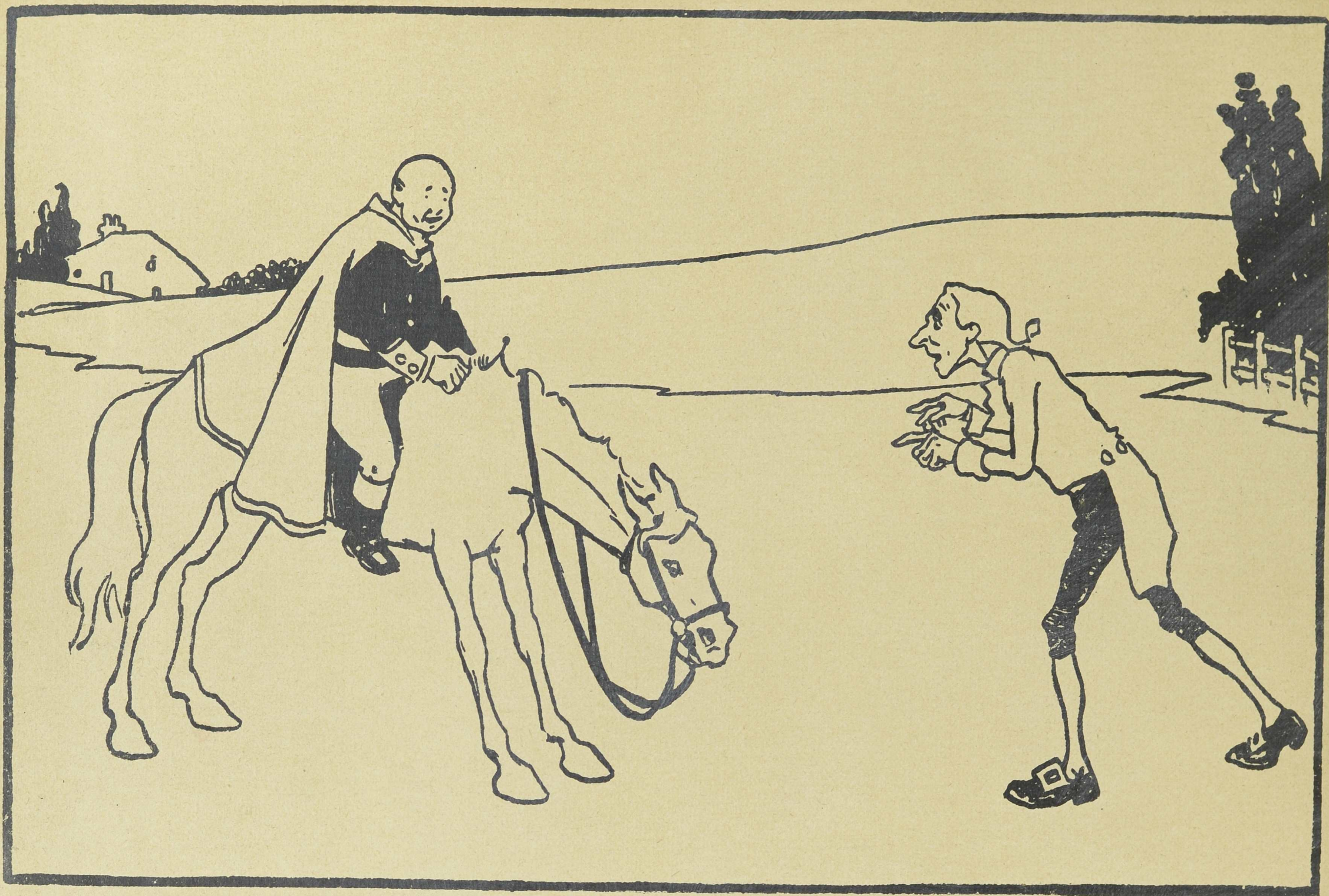


(30)

Thus all through merry Islington
 These gambols he did play,
 And till he came unto the Wash
 Of Edmonton so gay.

(31)

And there he threw the wash about
 On both sides of the way,
 Just like unto a trundling mop,
 Or a wild goose at play.



(32)

At Edmonton his loving wife,
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

(33)

“Stop, stop, John Gilpin! — Here’s
the house,”
They all at once did cry;
“The dinner waits, and we are tir’d:”
Cried Gilpin — “So am I”.

(34)

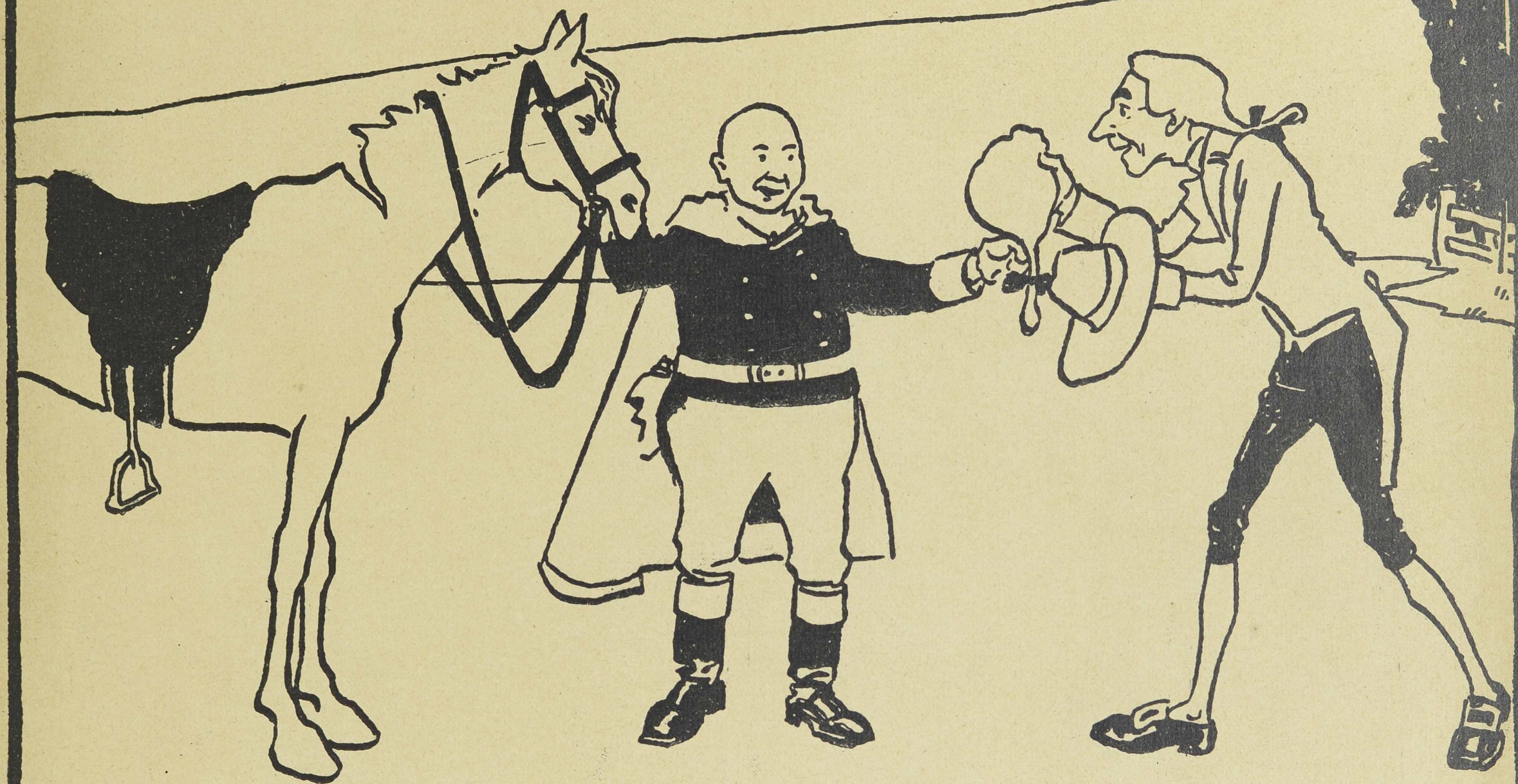
But yet the horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

(35)

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the Calender’s
His horse at last stood still.

(36)

The Calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:



(37)

“What news! what news! your tidings tell,
Tell me you must and shall —
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?”

(38)

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke:
And thus unto the Calender
In merry guise he spoke:

(39)

“I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forbode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road.”

(40)

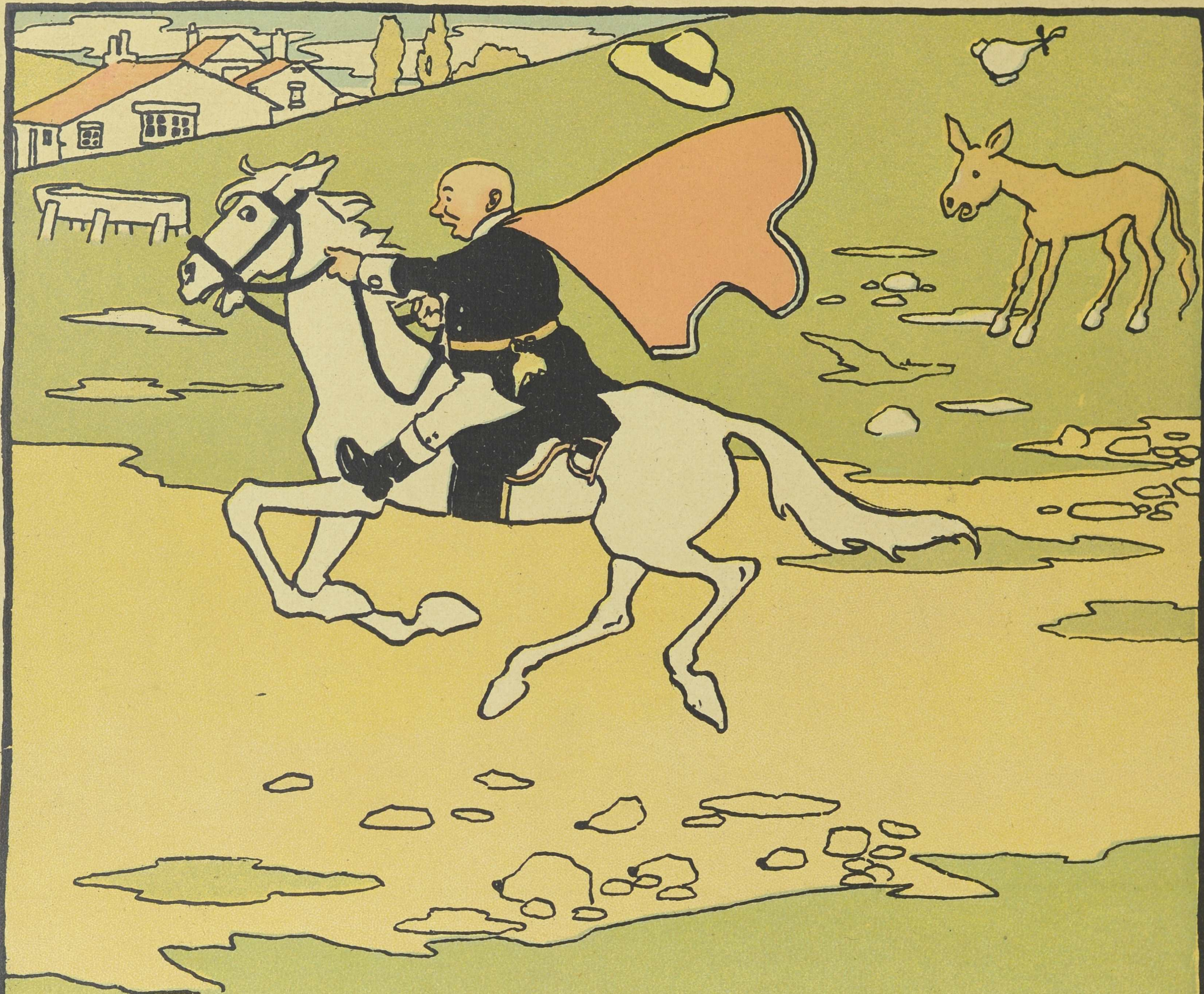
The Calender right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word,
But to his house went in;

(41)

From whence he came with
hat and wig,
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

(42)

He held them up and in his turn,
Thus show'd his ready wit—
“My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.



(43)

“But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case.”

(44)

Said John: “It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare
If wife should dine at Edmonton
And I should dine at Ware.”

(45)

So turning to his horse, he said, —
“I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine.”

(46)

Ah luckless speech and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear.



(47)

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
 Had heard a lion roar,
 And gallop'd off with all his might,
 As he had done before.

(49)

Now, Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
 Her husband posting down
 Into the Country far away,
 She pull'd out half-a-crown;

(48)

Away went Gilpin, and away
 Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
 He lost them sooner than at first, —
 For why? they were too big.

(50)

And thus unto the youth she said,
 That drove them to the "Bell",—
 "This shall be yours when you bring back
 My husband safe and well."



(51)

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain,
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
By catching at his rein.

(53)

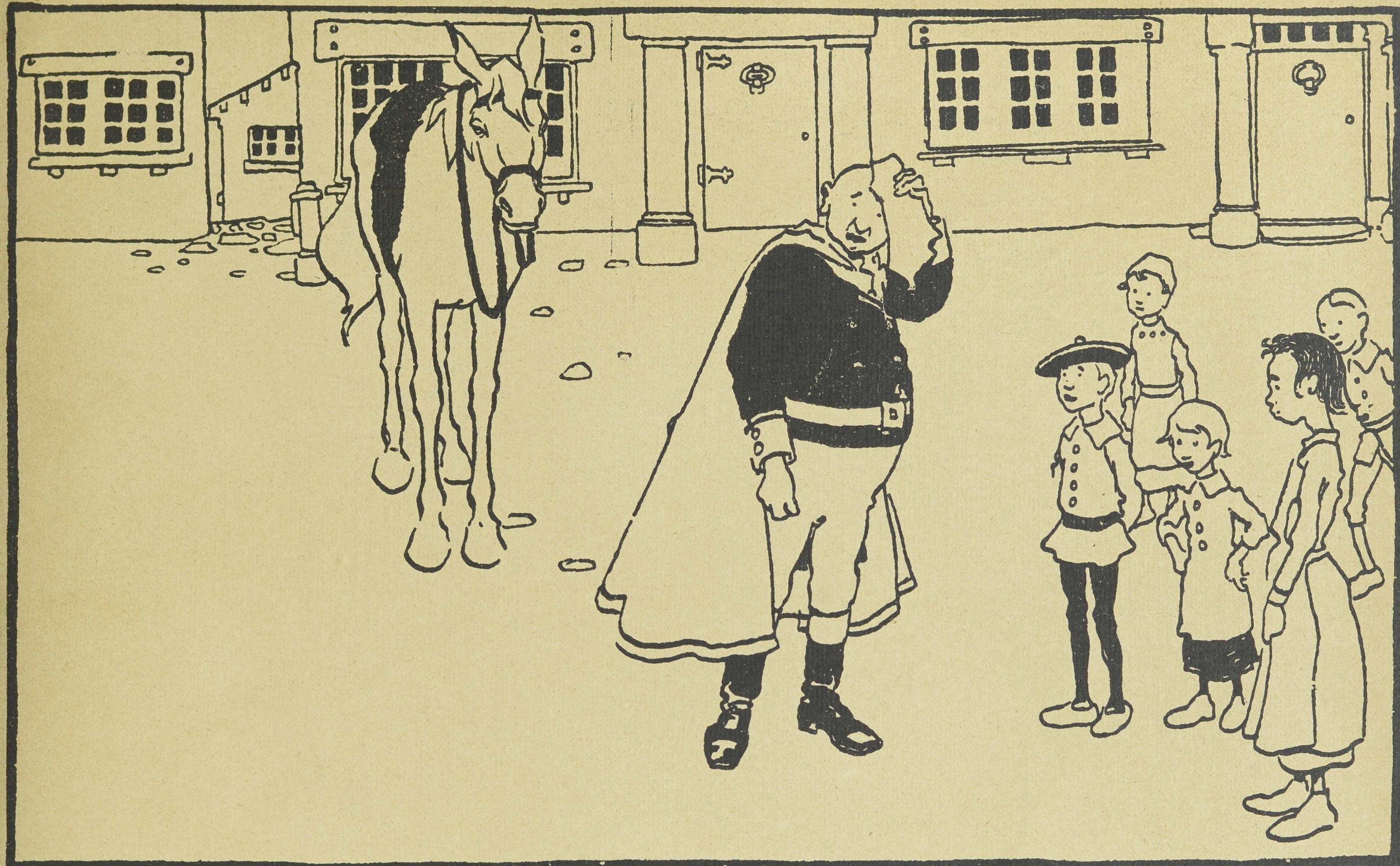
Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels,
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumb'ring of the wheels.

(52)

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done
The frightened steed he frightened more
And made him faster run.

(54)

Six gentlemen upon the road
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scamp'ring in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:—



(55)

“Stop thief! stop thief! a highwayman!”
Not one of them was mute:
And all and each that pass’d that way
Did join in the pursuit.

(57)

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town,
Nor stopp’d till where he had got up
He did again get down.

(56)

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space,
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

(58)

Now let us sing, “Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see.”

Adieu



LONDON: DEAN & SON, LIMITED
160 A, FLEET STREET
• E.C.

Printed in Holland.

THE ONLY RECIPIENTS OF A GOLD MEDAL FOR CHILDREN'S PUBLICATIONS.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

All Rights Reserved.

