

### *Who took care of the children?*

Men and women who worked sixty hours a week had little time to care for their children. Youngsters were left by themselves or with a relative — sometimes a sister or brother only a little older. Many poor children had to work.

### *Where did children work?*

Rich and middle-class children didn't have to work. But poor children worked alongside adults in factories. Sweatshops were workplaces squeezed into tenements. Sweatshops were hot and without fresh air so people working there really did sweat. Sweatshop labor was working six, sometimes seven days a week, up to twelve hours a day.

Many children and adults worked at home making clothing, artificial flowers, and cigars. They made twine and paper collars and boxes. They made envelopes and got



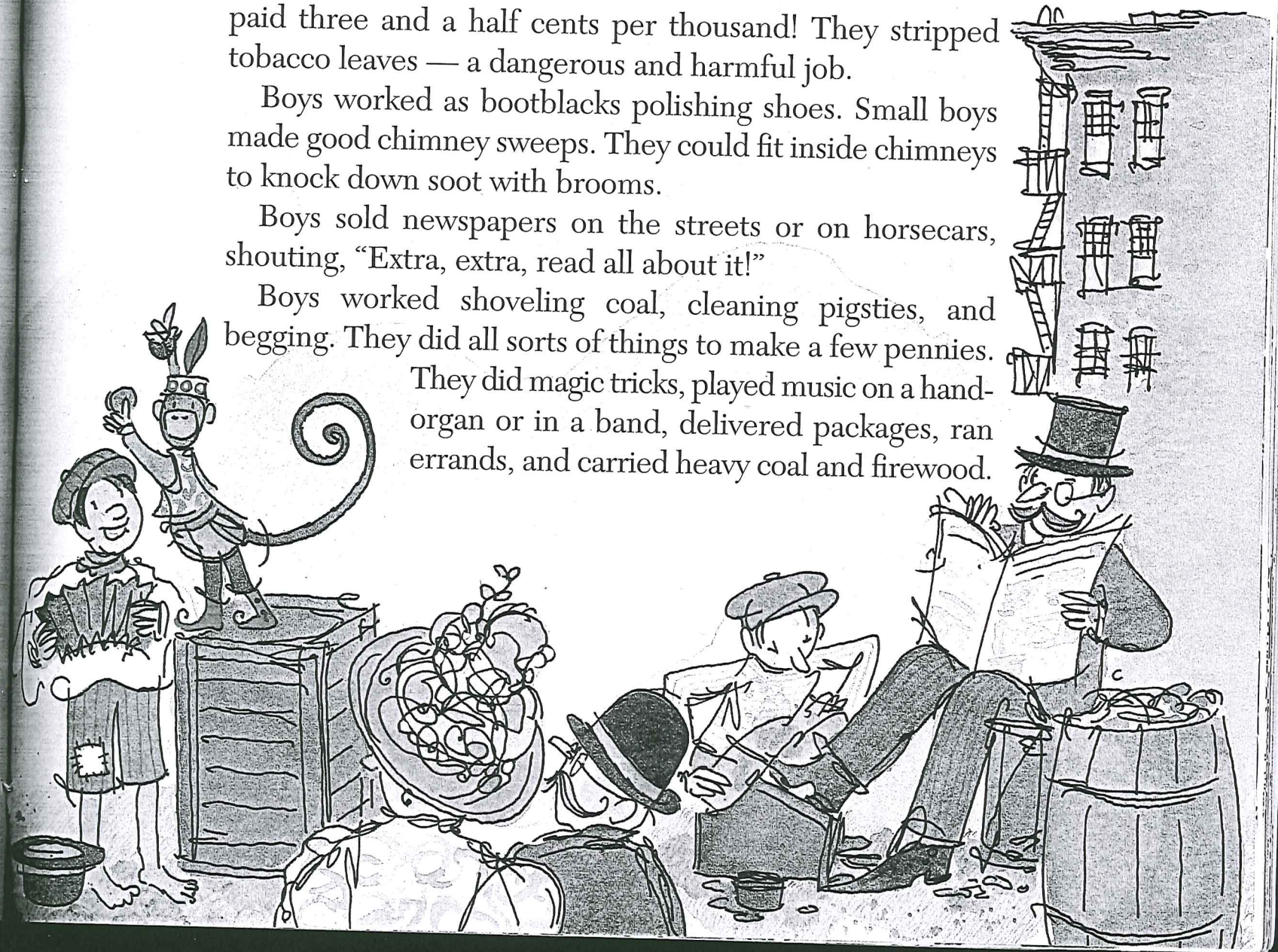
paid three and a half cents per thousand! They stripped tobacco leaves — a dangerous and harmful job.

Boys worked as bootblacks polishing shoes. Small boys made good chimney sweeps. They could fit inside chimneys to knock down soot with brooms.

Boys sold newspapers on the streets or on horsecars, shouting, "Extra, extra, read all about it!"

Boys worked shoveling coal, cleaning pigsties, and begging. They did all sorts of things to make a few pennies.

They did magic tricks, played music on a hand-organ or in a band, delivered packages, ran errands, and carried heavy coal and firewood.





Girls sold matches, toothpicks, cigars, ribbons, candy, shoelaces, and flowers. They sold hot corn out of baby carriages or children's wagons.

### *What happened to children who didn't have a home?*

A great many poor children were homeless. Some ran away from bad homes. Some were orphans without a mother or a father. Some had parents who didn't have enough money to feed them.



Thousands of homeless children lived in shelters run by the Children's Aid Society. They got a bunk, a breakfast of bread and coffee, and a supper of pork and beans.

To keep from starving, some children stole food from carts and crates outside grocery stores.

### *How old did children have to be to work?*

There weren't any laws that said children couldn't work. So many children as young as five went to work.

Between 1880 and 1900, two million to three million children in America didn't go to school. They worked instead.

### *Where did poor children play?*

Poor children had to work long hours, so they didn't have much time for playing. The tenements were too far from Central Park and there were hardly any other parks in the city. Children played in the hallways, on the roofs, in the streets, and they swam in the East River.

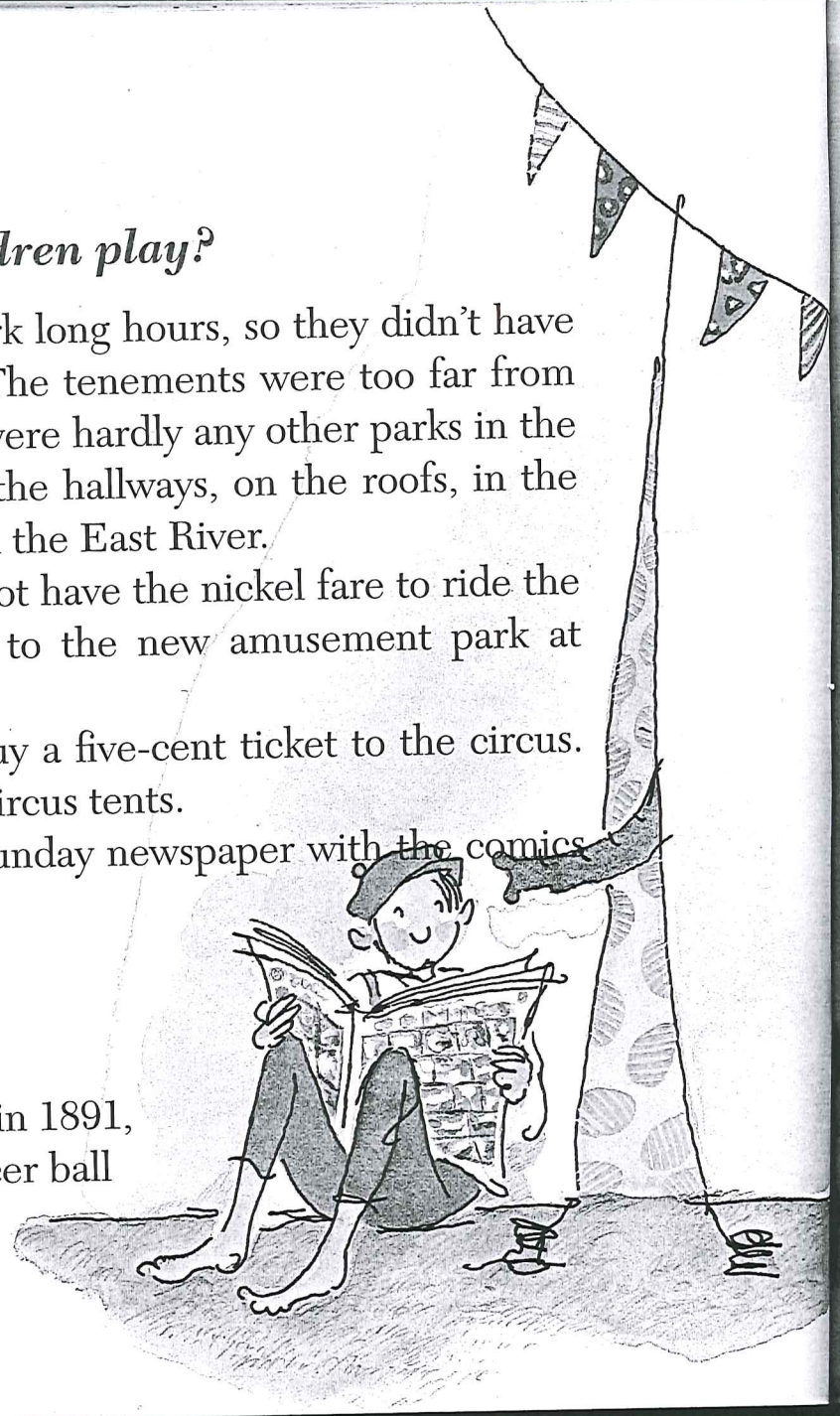
Poor children might not have the nickel fare to ride the trolley to the beach or to the new amusement park at Coney Island.

They couldn't even buy a five-cent ticket to the circus. Some sneaked into the circus tents.

It was fun to find a Sunday newspaper with the comics printed in color!

### *Were there sports?*

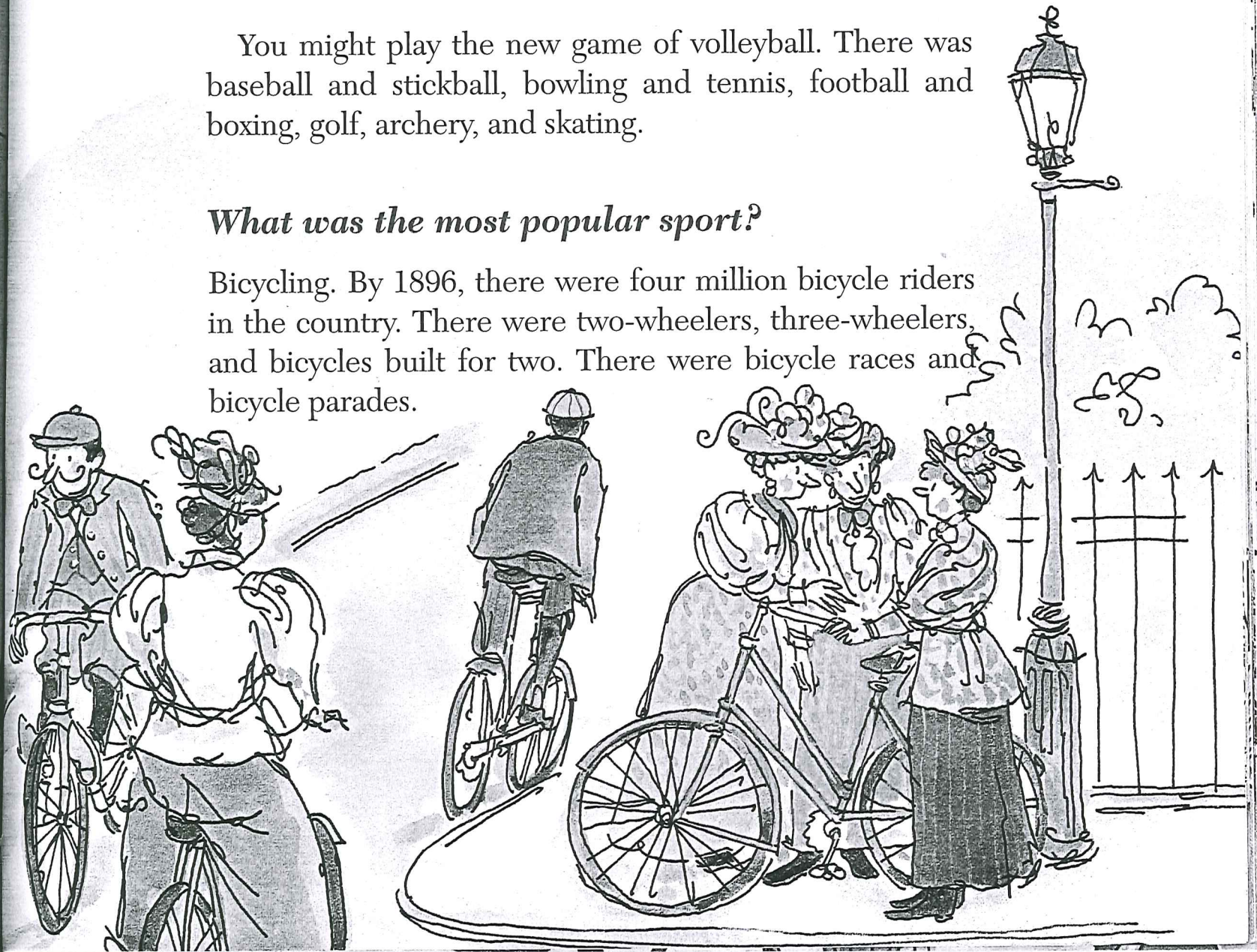
When basketball began in 1891, it was played with a soccer ball and two baskets.



You might play the new game of volleyball. There was baseball and stickball, bowling and tennis, football and boxing, golf, archery, and skating.

*What was the most popular sport?*

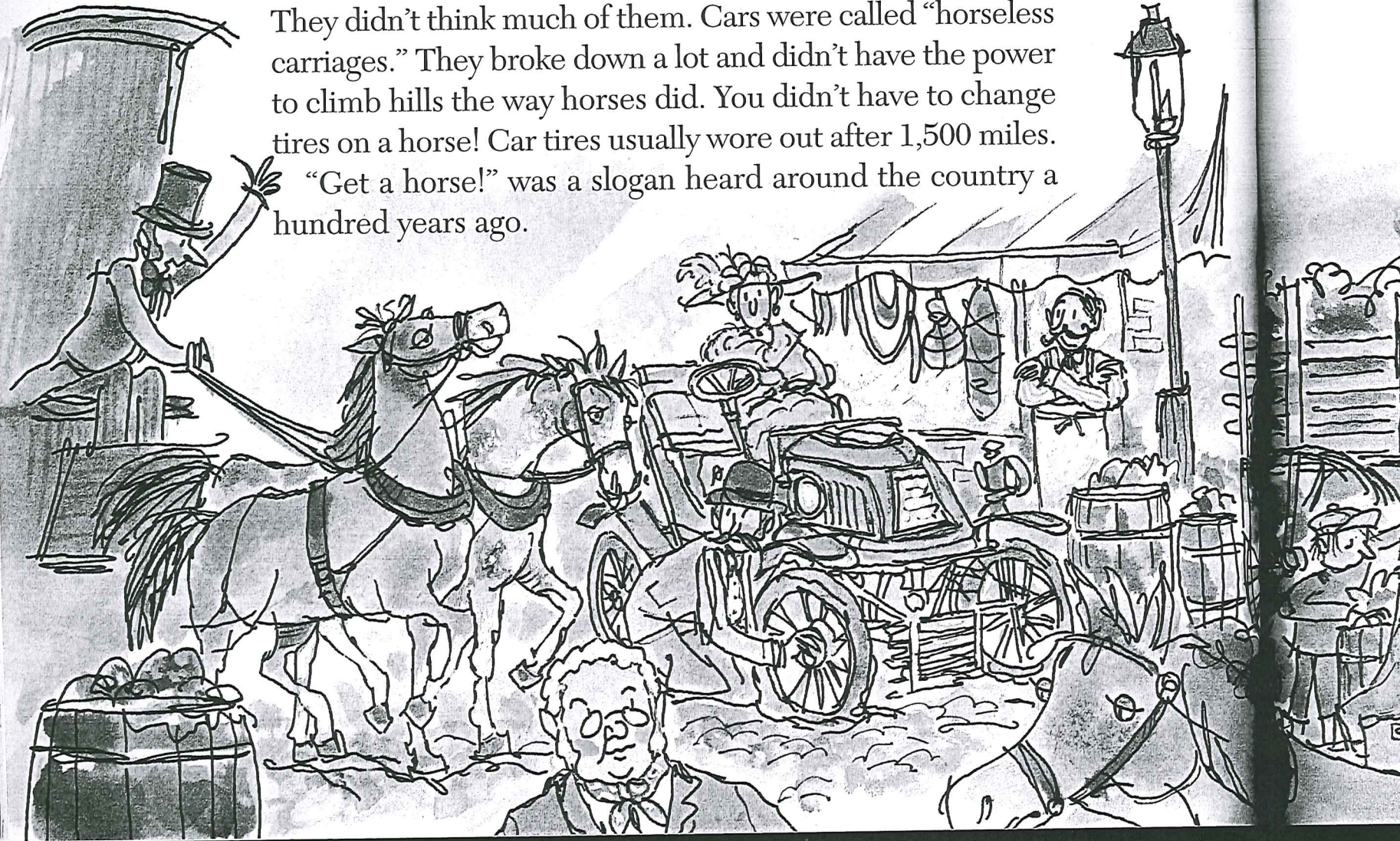
Bicycling. By 1896, there were four million bicycle riders in the country. There were two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and bicycles built for two. There were bicycle races and bicycle parades.



*What did most people think about the new automobiles?*

They didn't think much of them. Cars were called "horseless carriages." They broke down a lot and didn't have the power to climb hills the way horses did. You didn't have to change tires on a horse! Car tires usually wore out after 1,500 miles.

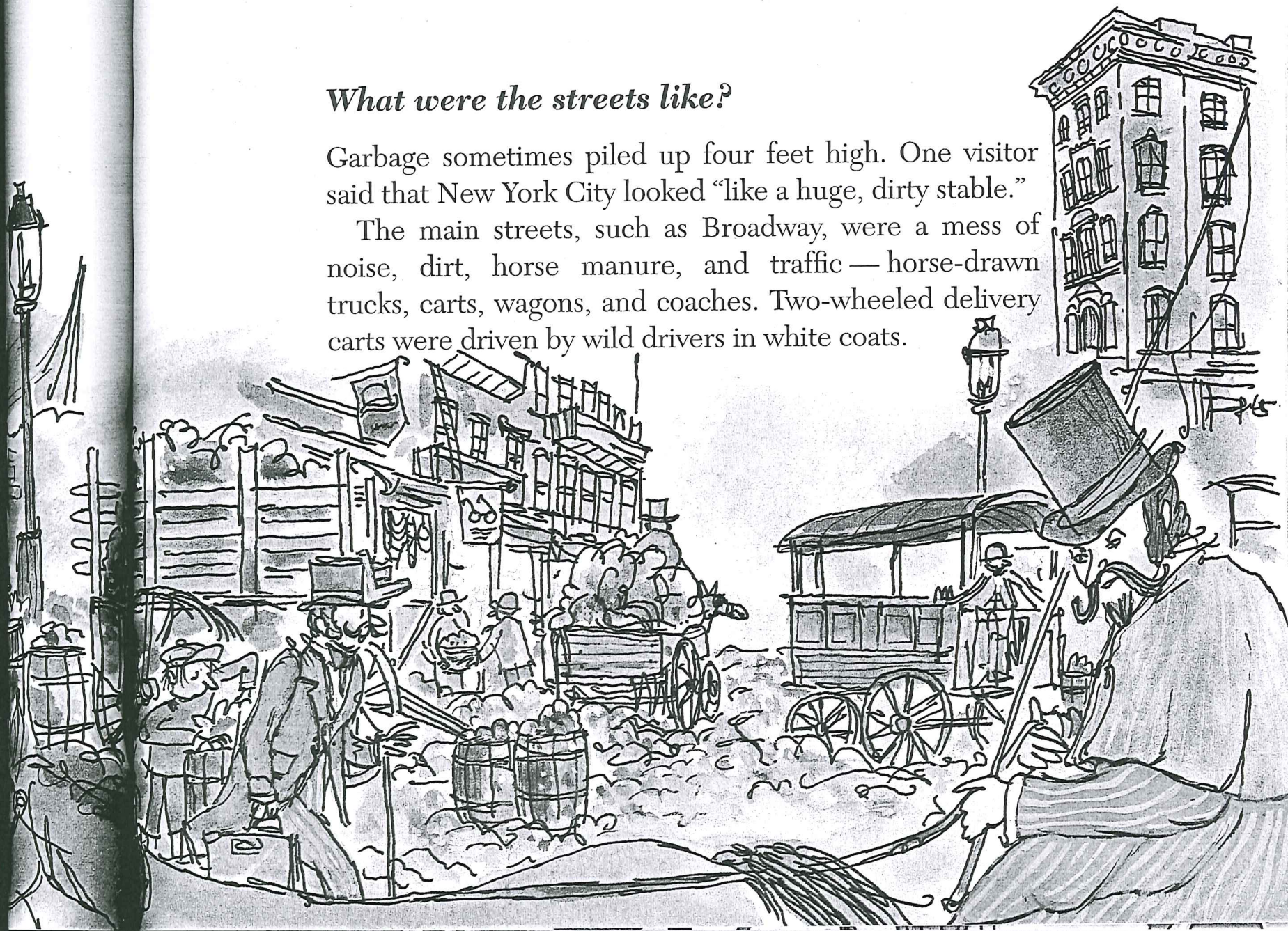
"Get a horse!" was a slogan heard around the country a hundred years ago.



### *What were the streets like?*

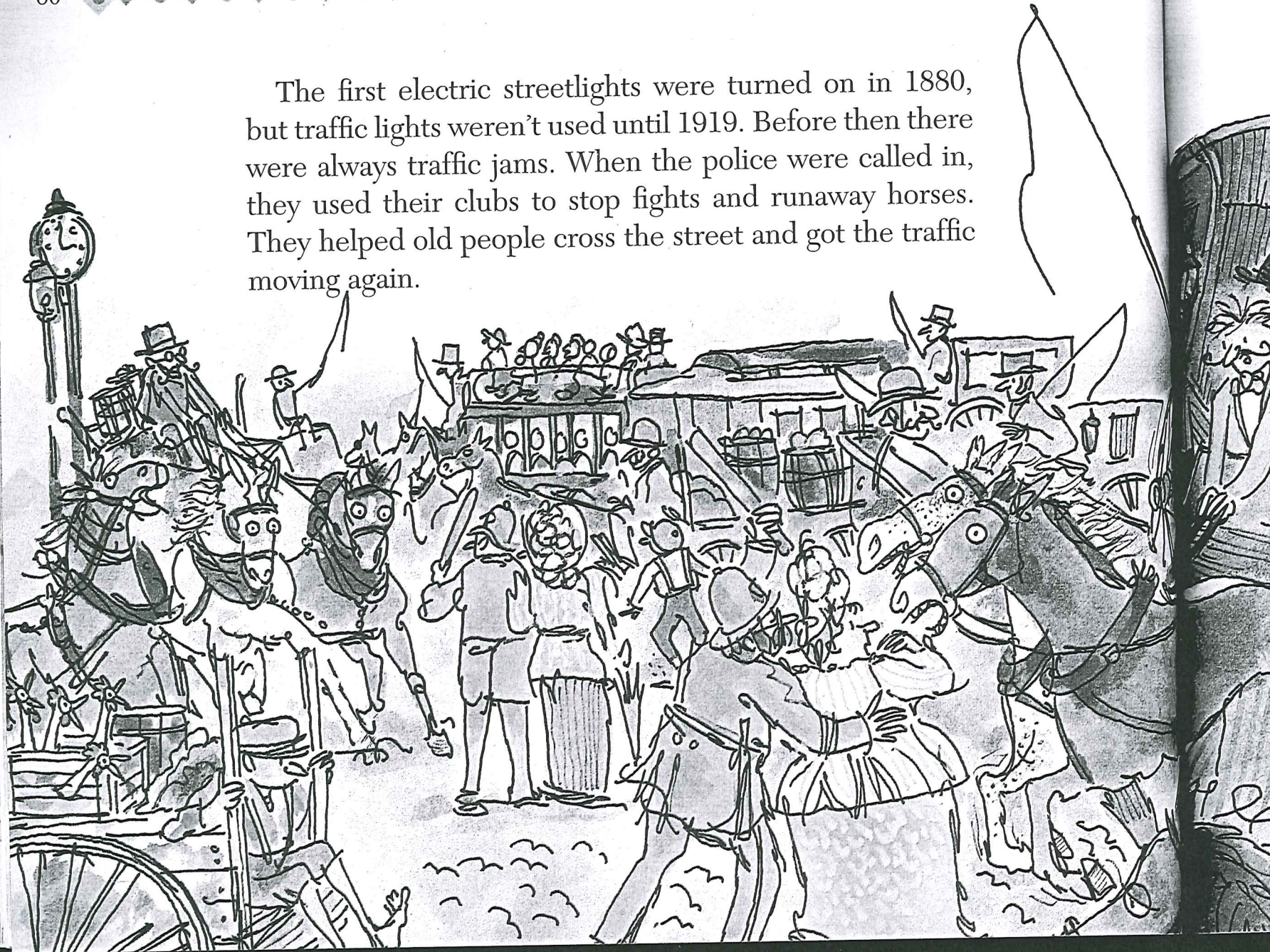
Garbage sometimes piled up four feet high. One visitor said that New York City looked “like a huge, dirty stable.”

The main streets, such as Broadway, were a mess of noise, dirt, horse manure, and traffic — horse-drawn trucks, carts, wagons, and coaches. Two-wheeled delivery carts were driven by wild drivers in white coats.





The first electric streetlights were turned on in 1880, but traffic lights weren't used until 1919. Before then there were always traffic jams. When the police were called in, they used their clubs to stop fights and runaway horses. They helped old people cross the street and got the traffic moving again.



The streets were so bad that an expert was hired to solve the problem. The first law he made said no carts and horses were allowed to stand in the street overnight. Stables were built for all the horses.

He organized a street cleaning department in 1895 to clean up the 60,000 gallons of horse urine and the two and a half million pounds of horse manure in the streets every day! The cleaners wore white uniforms.

By 1898, most of the main streets were made of hard asphalt. Other streets were still covered with rough broken stones called *cobblestones*.

