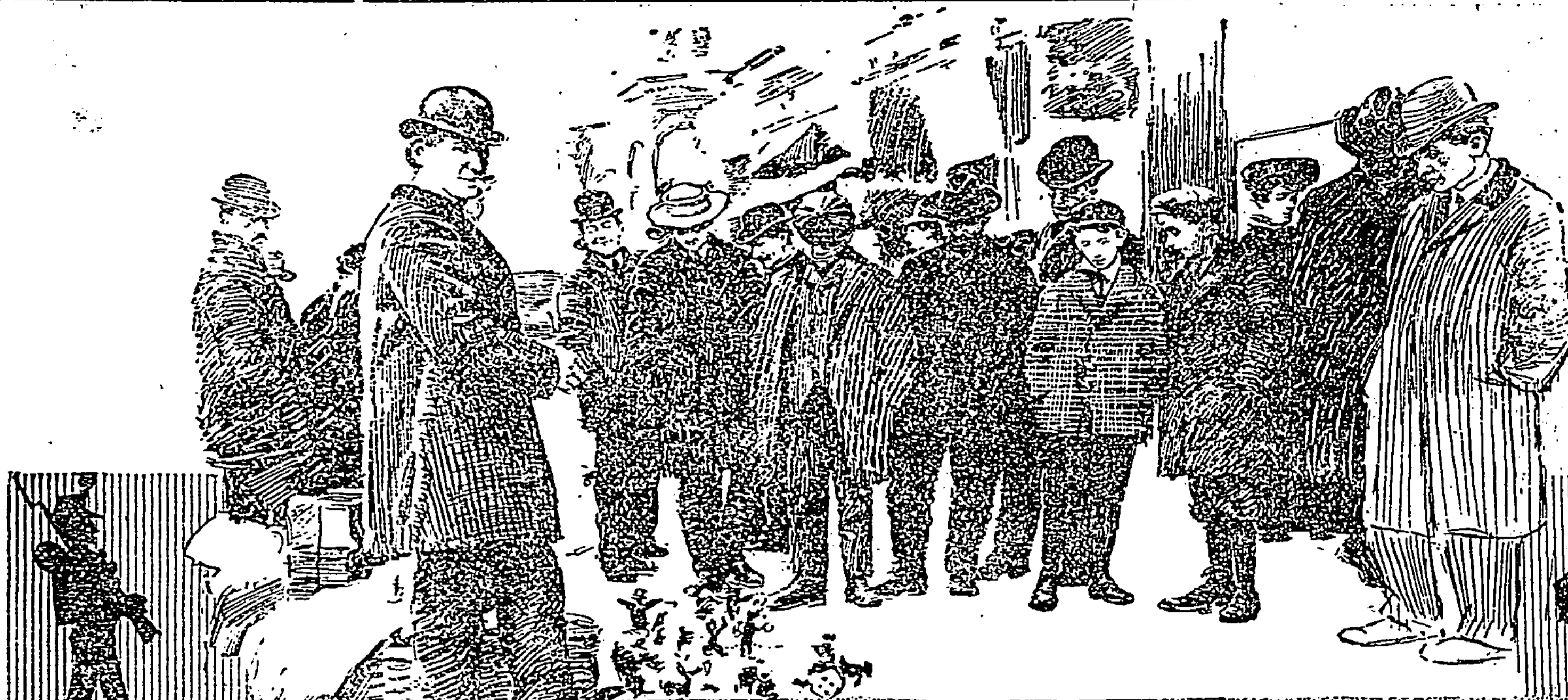


# STREET FAKER KING TELLS SOME TRICKS OF THE TRADE

## Cunningham of Ann Street Introduces Sporting John Mack, Provider of Literature; Maggie the Fly King, and Others.



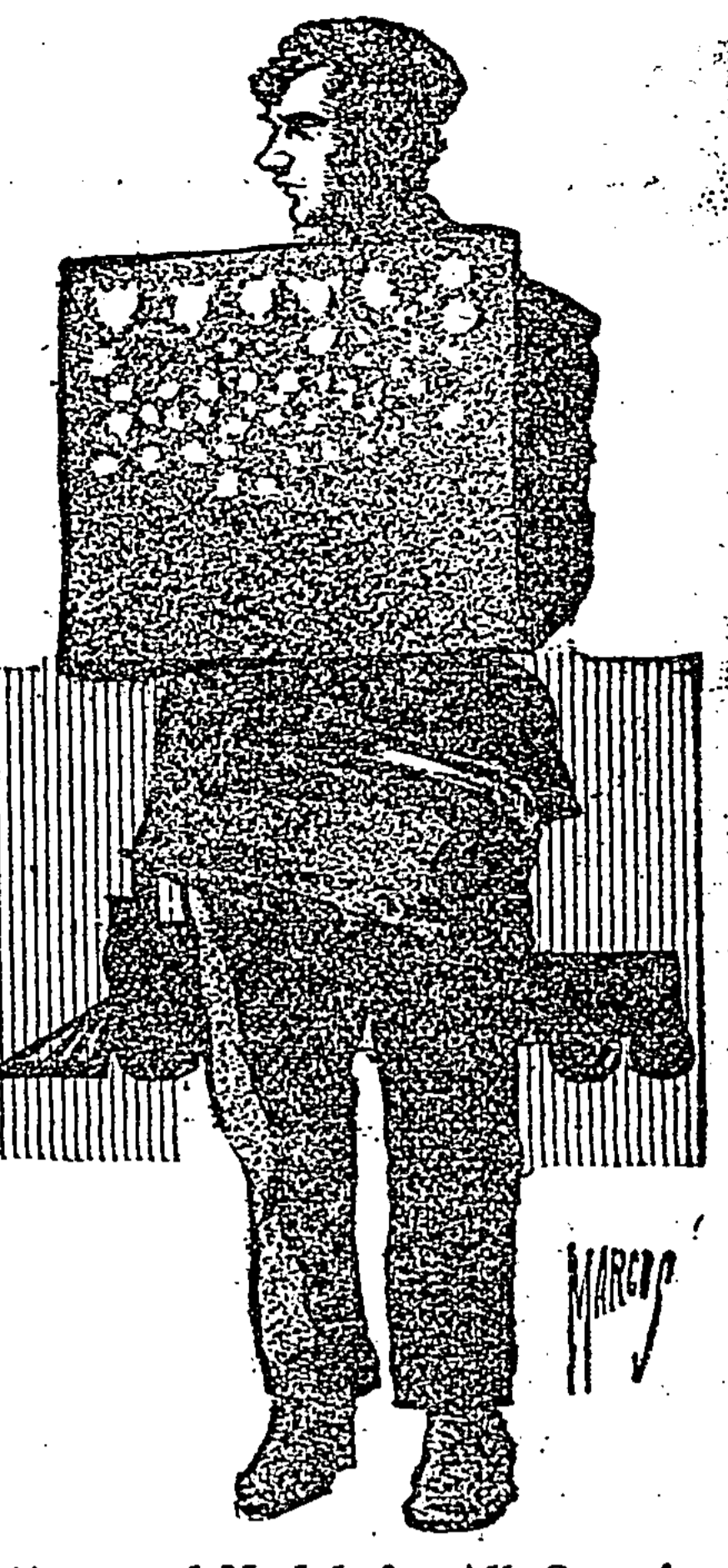
as to most of the profession. On Fourteenth Street, though, there is a faker, a small, thin man, who sells his wares with positive agony. The shrinking and yet precise way in which he says "This is very attractive, ladies and gentlemen" as he holds up a ridiculous black jumping

and when I objected he arrested me. I-I was taken to the court. They fined me. I-I urgently protest."

Mr. Smith is pretty much alone in his dislike of his business generally. (Very few sensitive people have been driven to taking it up,) but most of the street fa-

That little brown dog is the centre of attraction at present. Fly-catchers are going off, too. Toys that dance are always pretty popular. Japanese parasols are liked.

"Show her the angry mother-in-law, Bob," called Mr. Cunningham's partner.



A Vendor of Mechanical Toys.

If you're down on your luck and don't know what to do, go to Ann Street, tell Mr. Cunningham, who is at the head of a "novelty" store there, to fit you out (on credit) and then stand on the pavement and sell the public the little brown dogs with spring tails, the fly-catchers, the angry mother-in-law, &c., with which he's supplied you. In short, be a street faker.

It's the most respectable occupation in spite of having a name that calls up visions of Col. Roosevelt's wrath. You even get a license by the city to allow you to ply it, a most ornate looking license with your picture at the top.

The only trouble about the street-faking business is that it's too fascinating. It's like New York City. People can't leave it even though they could better themselves if they did.

Mr. Cunningham, who, as has been indicated, runs a store from which the street fakers get their goods, gave some information about the trade to a reporter of THE SUNDAY TIMES.

"Our fakers," said Mr. Cunningham, "earn from \$2 to \$15 a day."

"If a faker hasn't got some smartness about him, he'll be pushed out of the business quick. You see, a faker's not like a peddler, not at all! Your peddler sells things that there's a demand for, like shoestrings.

"Now people always needed shoestrings. They were on the market 300 years before Christ was born. [Upon reflection it rather seems as if Mr. Cunningham's enthusiasm got the better of his judgment here.]

"But a faker hands things to the public that really aren't wanted. He doesn't supply a demand. He creates it. Nobody needs a little dog with a spring tail, for instance, and yet these dogs are the most popular things on the street today."

As he spoke Mr. Cunningham held up a creation about as big as your hand, with very stiff legs and a melancholy expression.

"Pull its tail," said Mr. Cunningham in an awed tone.

The reporter pulled. The tail, being a spring one, kept on vibrating after the pulling had stopped.

"That dog," said Mr. Cunningham in a slow, solemn undertone, "has made a fortune for its inventor. A fortune! It's selling like hot cakes."

We all gazed with admiration at the dog for about five minutes, after which Mr. Cunningham heaved a sigh and reverently deposited him in his box again.

"A Japanese man invented that," he said.

Everybody thought with envy of the bank account of the lucky Japanese gentleman. Finally Mr. Cunningham broke the silence by starting to talk of the way his firm supplied the fakers.

"We lend them the stuff at the beginning of the day," explained Mr. Cunningham. "Then they go down on the street and try to sell it. They make anywhere from 50 to 90 per cent. on every fake they get off. At the end of the day we take back the goods they haven't sold.

"Some of the street fakers are quite rich. There's Sporting John Mack, for instance! Wait a minute, I'll have Mack up."

Mr. Cunningham put his head out of the window. "Mack!" he called. "Oh, Mack! Leave your stall a minute and come here and get in the limelight."

The street is evidently the "limelight," but Sporting John Mack must have thought that he was called to have his picture taken, because as he appeared in the doorway he said protestingly that he wasn't beautiful, he knew he wasn't beautiful, and that there was no use telling him that he was. No one volunteering that disagreeable information he quieted down and leaned over the counter.



Samuel Basch at the Left and Robert Cunningham at the Right, the Street Faker Kings.

"My specialty, Ma'am," he said, "is literature. The News Company send their books on the road, and them as isn't took is marked 'returned' in black letters on the front page and sent to New York and sent to me and is given by me to the public.

"Given, Ma'am, is the only word. I have books on my stall downstairs that would draw tears to your eyes for five steady hours while you read 'em, and I sell 'em for 5 cents.

"One thrill right after the other! Just like the scenic railway, only sadder. 'Sweet' is the word. Sad and sweet—but exciting all the time!"

Sporting John Mack really has some very nice books. A couple of Ouida's novels and one or two of Charles Dickens's are on his stall, price, as he says, 5 cents. You'd have to pay 25 at an ordinary newsstand. "Why Did He Not Die?" "Wedded but No Wife," and a book on pugilism by Corbett also adorn his collection.

Sporting John Mack's literature, though, is not the only thing he sells. Just at present, for instance, he's pushing a fly-catcher, a recent invention. Its manufacturers tried to get the goods off on the public at 50 cents per catcher. The public balked, and the manufacturers went broke. Upon which Mr. Cunningham's firm bought up the articles at a very low figure, and just now Sporting John is waxing rich selling "annihilators" at 5 cents per.

Sporting John is worth \$10,000 to-day. He could easily retire if he wanted to, but then there really seems to be something very fascinating about street faking. It gets a grip on its people like the stage does.

"My profession takes magnetism," said Sporting John, "magnetism and personality. If I'd had a better education I'd have gone in vaudeville.

"Take them fly-catchers, now," he went on. "They're fine things, but it needs a man with imagination and fascination like me to make the public stop and take notice. 'Stop! Look! Listen!' I say, just as loud and solemn as a tolling bell. People really get frightened sometimes. You'll see when you come out. My stand's right in front of this shop.

"I tried saying 'They are devilish' at first, and holding up the catchers and

making a face as I said it, but I frightened some twins—kids, you know—almost into fits, and so I had to stop.

It certainly must take something remarkable to sell those "annihilators." They are labyrinths. If the fly can see which way the labyrinth goes, (and it's much smarter than the reporter if it can), and if it makes its body follow its eye, it ends up by getting into a little screened-up space from which there's no getting out.

"And then," said Sporting Mack, "you drown 'em or roast 'em or get rid of 'em in some easy way. Gee, I sold twenty-four of them catchers to-day. That was my high-water mark in selling. The next most thing I sold was 'The Christian'—twelve copies.

"Sporting John Mack is one of the richest men in the trade," said Mr. Cunningham as Mr. Mack went down the stairs. "A good many street fakers are careless and easy-going about their money. Few of them save anything.

"They're fond of reading, though. At night you'll see a lot of fakers bending over tables at Cooper Union really educating themselves.

"A good many fakers passed the census examination a few months ago. One man wrote to President Taft—oh, that's nothing very remarkable, but he got an answer from the President and the appointment he was after.

"The man wrote that he had passed the census examination, but that he understood political job had a great deal to do with getting a job. He said frankly that he was a street faker and asked the President to help him. The President did.

"The reason that our men, even after they've got an education, stay in this business is that selling stuff on the street has a good many advantages over other trades. A faker's got his own hours. He doesn't have to get up till 10 in the morning if he doesn't want to. Nobody minds. 'He's his own boss. He gets a lot of traveling. Fakers follow conventions and political meetings and celebrations around the country, you know. They're always where things are doing. They gradually get dependent on the variety and the freedom of life, and wouldn't quit faking even for something that had more money in it."

Mr. Cunningham is undoubtedly right



"The Latest Popular Songs, Words and Music."

Jack is pitiful. This man gave his name as Mr. Smith.

"I was in—in need," said Mr. Smith, "and consequently I embarked in this occupation. Excuse me, I see a gentleman approaching who may buy this toy for the little girl with him." And Mr. Smith started to wiggle his doll violently, the very picture of shame and distress. The gentleman went past, almost to Mr. Smith's relief.

"I should like to mention one feature of the trade which is not connected with any—er—personal distaste," said Mr. Smith. He blushed very suddenly and vividly.

"I have been taken to prison," he said.

"I—I complain of unjust and oppressive usage on the part of the authorities of the law," he cried. "The law states that we may remain in one spot for twenty minutes. We may go on all the streets except a few of the ones downtown, which are very crowded. After I had been standing here for only ten minutes, one day, a policeman told me to 'move on,'

kers seem to be one with him in feeling "sore at the cops."

Even Mr. Cunningham said that in his opinion street fakers weren't treated altogether fairly by the police.

"If a policeman feels angry," Mr. Cunningham remarked, "he hauls in a man who's selling things on the street—says that he's been standing in one place longer than twenty minutes. Maybe he has 'the faker can't hold his watch in one hand and his wares in the other. If the Magistrate's feeling good he says 'Discharged.' If the Magistrate isn't feeling good he says 'Two dollars.'"

Mr. Cunningham showed the reporter a letter from a street faker to a friend of the profession.

The angry mother-in-law is a scream. It comes in a small box and consists of two beads and two pieces of rubber. You make a fist of your hand, stick the two beads at the top, the long piece of rubber in the middle in a vertical position and the short piece of rubber at the bottom in a horizontal position. Then you tie a handkerchief about the whole and wriggle your fingers.

The result is really killingly funny. The beads are eyes, the piece of rubber in the centre is a nose, the piece of rubber at the bottom is a mouth, the handkerchief is hair, and the whole effect, without using much imagination, either, is that of an awfully ugly old woman who's making faces.

You can't help laughing as you look at it. The little brown dog seems rather inadequate considering the burst of enthusiasm it has aroused, but the angry mother-in-law is really funny.

"To see Maggie work that mother-in-law!" exclaimed Mr. Cunningham.

"Who's Maggie?" asked the reporter.

"What! You don't know Maggie, the belle of the trade? Maggie, the fly king? Maggie's as well known in Wall Street as Pierpont Morgan. He's as clever a man as there is in New York City."

"Yes, every one knows that Mr. Morgan is—"

"No, no. I mean Maggie, Maggie, short for Mary Ellen, nickname for Edward Joseph!"

Maggie, it appears, is a gentleman about 50 years of age, who weighs 250 pounds, hasn't a tooth in his head, and is known from the Bronx to the Battery for his fun and cleverness. Just for the sake of curiosity, the reporter asked a policeman on Broadway, a newsboy on Fourteenth Street, a postal card man on Fifth Avenue, and a broker in Wall Street if they'd ever met Maggie. They all broke into an irrepressible grin at the sound of the name, and said of course they had.

"There is a story that one day when Maggie was feeling particularly "smart and sassy," he induced Mr. Russell Sage to buy a tin doll that turned somersaults. Maggie considers this day the high-water mark of his career.

Mr. Joseph got his feminine title because he can take off women as well. He'll stand in the downtown business section, and holding up a very little doll at a passing broker, he'll call out in his great big rumbling voice, "Finest thing in the market! Here you are, Sir!"

If the broker waves the doll off impatiently, Maggie's just as likely as not to hunch together his shoulders, purse up his mouth, and squeak out, "Oh, you

Buttons and Medals for All Occasions.

that she could make an exact reproduction of a fly. She got the idea of attaching a pin to the mock fly and selling the result as a novel stickpin. Nobody wanted to buy her wares. Then she met Maggie. Maggie went out on the street and sold the pins by the thousand. The woman is so grateful that now she won't let anybody besides Maggie handle her pins.

The pin is pretty nearly as funny as the mother-in-law, by the way. You stick it in your coat in such a way that the pin part is hidden. Then a friend comes along and gets his eye on the motionless fly. The friend thinks he's got a fine chance to kill the fly, which is nice, because it's such a big, wicked-looking one.

The friend says: "Hold on a minute, old man! 'What's up?' you say in an innocent, surprised way, and stand very still. The friend, with joyful anticipation in his eye, makes a violent jab at the fly. Then the friend says "Ouch!" puts his finger in his mouth, and feels silly.

"Maggie could sell anything, though," said Mr. Cunningham. "He's a genius, in his own way, of course."

On the whole, the street fakers seem to have a jolly life. They can talk to anybody and everybody. They can out-pace and have all the fun they want so. They don't have to remember, as the rest of us do, that

"Life is serious, life is solemn," &c., &c.

Their trade doesn't pay badly and isn't uncertain. If things get dull in the city, as often happens in the Summer months, the fakers are always sure of a market, for their goods in the smaller towns. People there, having lots of time, are glad to waste a nickel or a dime in an entertaining way. All that a street faker who's broke has to do is to go to a nearby village, pay a dollar for a license, and then stand in the middle of the main street, and be the centre of attraction.

One or two men who used to be street fakers have risen pretty high in life. A certain Wall Street broker usually drops a dollar into the hand of one or another of the fakers whom he passes as he walks from the Subway to his office.



The Supply Store in Ann Street Where Thousands of Fakers Get the Goods to Start in Business.

The letter is in part as follows:

"You kindness toward our fraternity will go far to help us along in our most laborious efforts to bring peace with our neighbors, and also with the authorities of the law by whom we are not rightly understood, or we would never have to complain of unjust and bothersome usage."

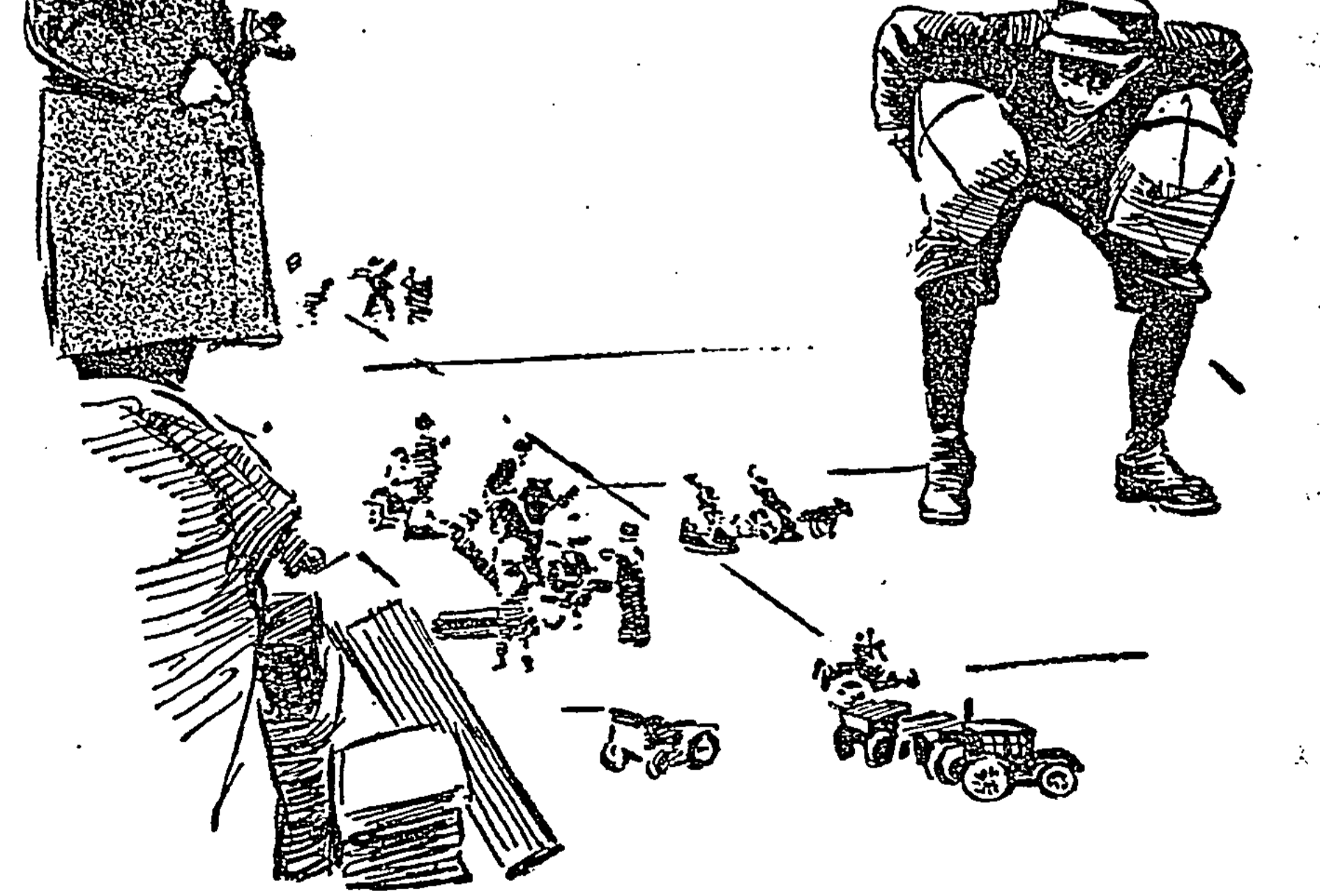
The staples of the street-faking trade are banners and buttons.

"We look at all the papers every day just as regularly as an editor does," said Mr. Cunningham. "What we want to find out, though, is if there's any big gathering or jollification coming off soon in any part of the United States.

"If there's a convention, say, of the Elks, we start making their banners and badges as fast as we can, give the supply to our fakers, and send them to stand outside the hall the Elks are meeting in and sell the articles to the members as they come out. Everybody knows how common badges and buttons are. That's due to the street fakers.

"Some of the clever fakers look through the magazines and papers on their own account every night at Cooper Union, in the hope of landing a 'scoop.' A man who sometimes come across a small notice of a coming affair that the other fellows have missed. Then he's got a nice field to sell his goods in all to himself.

"Badges and buttons are the staples, as I was saying. But the real sport of the trade is in selling novelties. What's a novelty? Ah, anything new that anybody thinks up.



The Errand Boy Can't Resist Them.

brute!" in a killingly feminine manner.

Of course the crowd around him—Maggie's always got a crowd around him—laughs. The broker slinks off wising he'd bought the old doll. You can't stay angry at Maggie, though, the way. He's the most popular man in Wall Street.

Maggie's got a faster monopoly than has Mr. John D. Rockefeller. Maggie's the fly king. Likewise Maggie is always dead broke, but that's because, says Mr. Cunningham, he's a "terrific" spender.

A couple of years ago a lady in straitened circumstances and the Bronx (the two often go together) found out

He remembers when he did their stunt for a living himself.

Most of the street fakers know each other. They give each other funny names, like "Information Kid," "Zeb-boken Mike," &c., are some of the stars of the profession.

"We're a fraternity," said a street faker, speaking of the members of his trade. "That's what we are, a fraternity. We make people laugh. That's more than some Wall Street brokers do. We're all right, we street fakers. You'd miss us if we didn't show up at our stands."