

Baker Street Elementary

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



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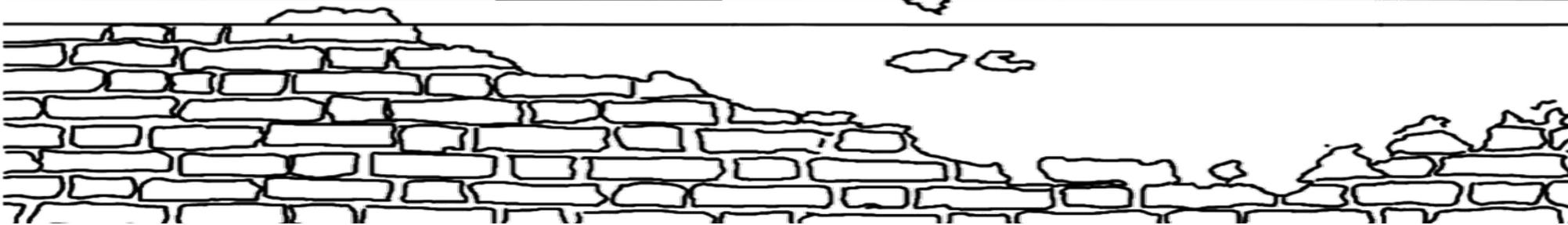
*The Life and Times in Victorian London
086 -- A Handy Helper -- February, 2022*



*Welcome to topic # 086...
Today Miss Lyndsay and I will
be looking at handkerchiefs
during the Victorian period.*



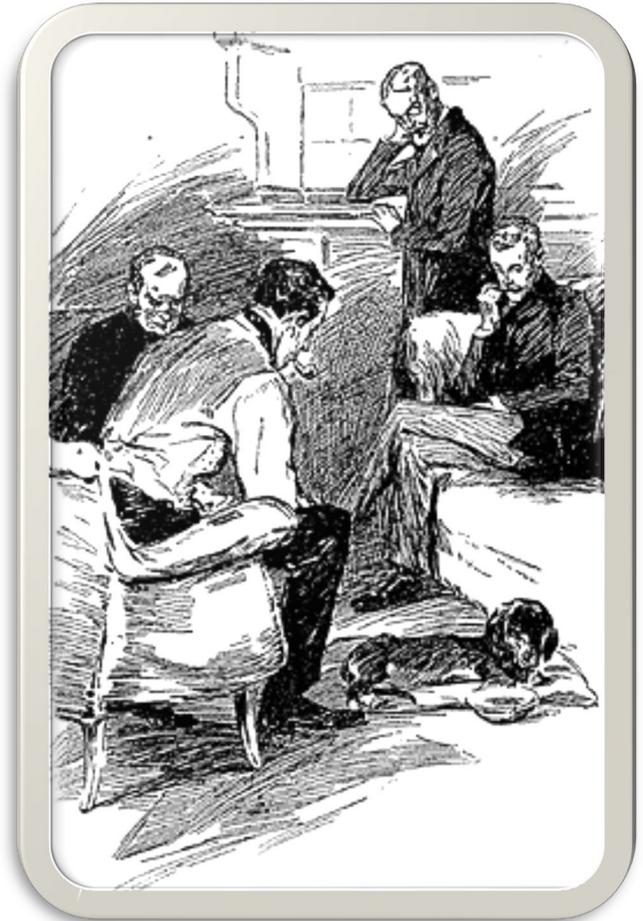
Although handkerchiefs might appear to have a limited (and outdated) use in contemporary culture...



...they served a variety of purposes from their earliest appearances, several of which are illustrated throughout the Sherlock Holmes' stories.

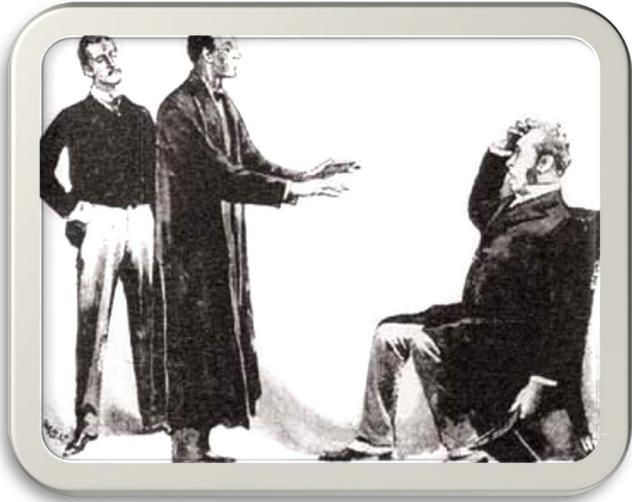


The first mention occurred in *A Study in Scarlet*, when Jefferson Hope remarked that poisoning Enoch Drebber was preferable to "firing over a handkerchief" (a duel).



Handkerchiefs were never mentioned in the stories as being used to clean one's nose, but several other uses were included...





...wiping away tears (The Sign of the Four) and sweat ("The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet," "The Adventure of Wisteria Lodge," and "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot")...



...as a gag ("The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist" and "The Adventure of Abbey Grange"); and to bind a wound ("The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb").



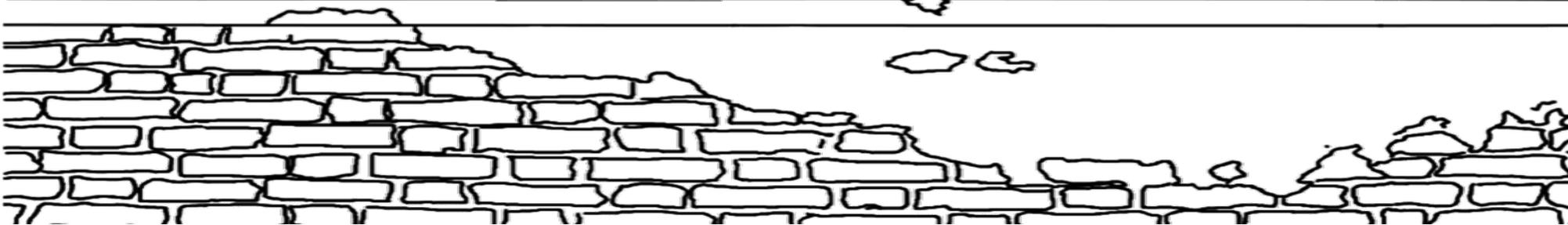
While men often carried a handkerchief in their pocket ("The Adventure of the Lion's Mane"), some, taking the habit from the military...



...carried it in their sleeve ("The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier"), and others, such as gypsies, tied large ones around their heads ("The Adventure of the Speckled Band").



*The humble handkerchief has
a long history, although its
contemporary use did not
appear until...*



...the fifteenth century when the Dutch philosopher Erasmus noted that using one's sleeve for such a purpose was boorish.



Chinese sculptures from the Chou dynasty (1122 BCE) displayed a decorative cloth head covering, assumed for protection from the sun.



Among the early Chinese exports were silk handkerchiefs.





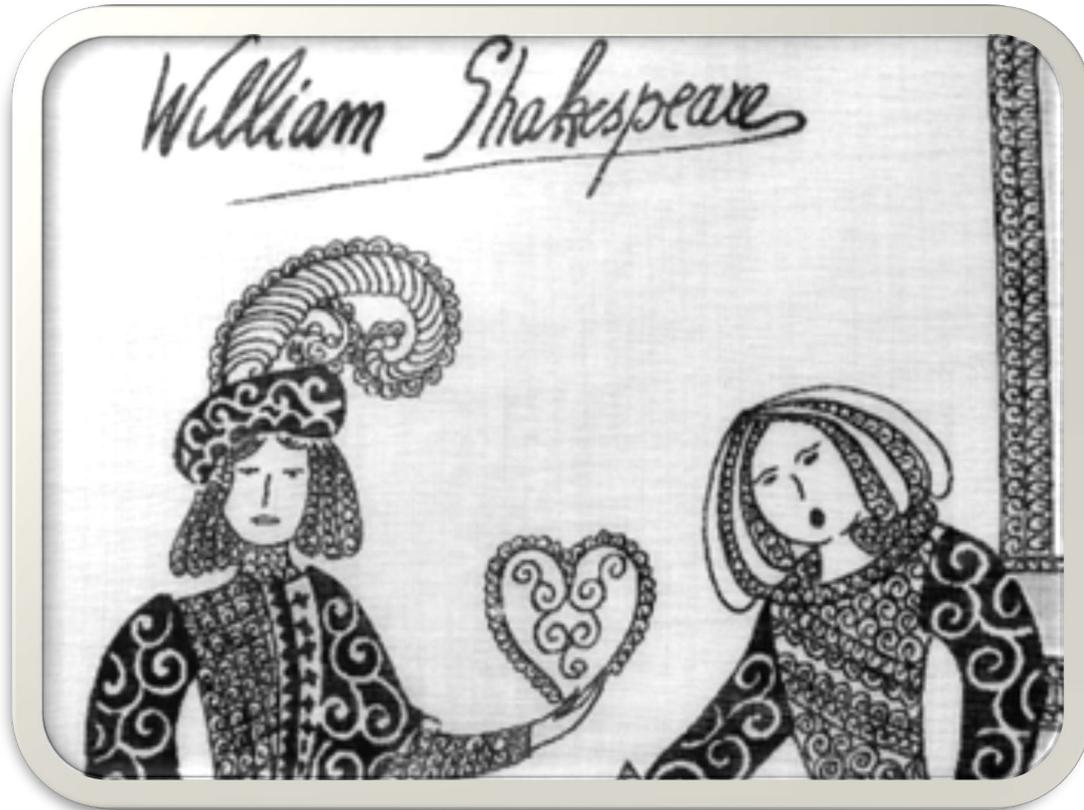
*The Japanese have used
"hankachi" since the ninth
century.*



Romans used squares to wipe away sweat (sudariums) and threw them to start gladiator games.



They became a fashion accessory by the end of the 17th century.

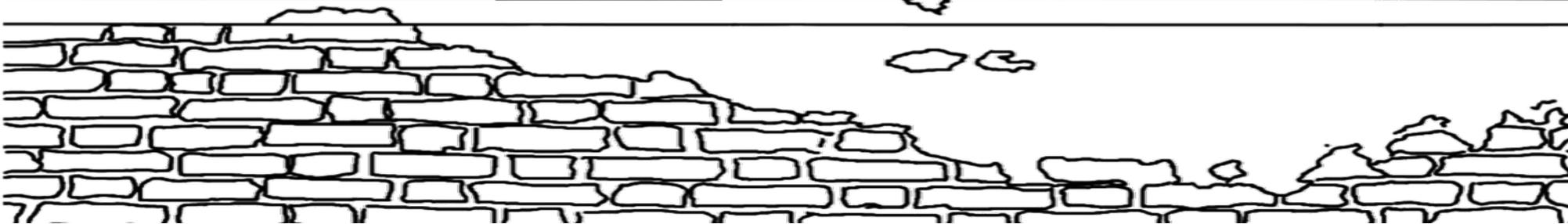




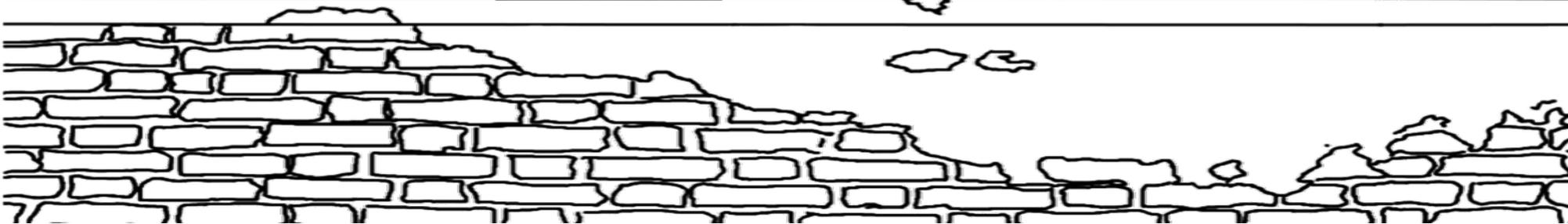
Originally arriving as a kerchief (a covering for the head), the handkerchief (to be held instead of worn) appeared in the 1500s.



Handkerchiefs became an important means of sending messages, especially where romance was concerned.



Knights would indicate their love by tying a handkerchief to the back of their helmets.



*A young lady would
drop her handkerchief
for a young man to
retrieve.*



*Should the gentleman
keep it, he declared
his love for her.*





She might also send him one she embroidered herself or a singed one to declare her burning passion for the man.





Should she catch his eye, she might hold it in the middle to indicate a late-night meeting.



He would wave his own in response, to show he'd gotten the message. Returning the object later broke off a relationship.





*Popularity for the item
continued throughout Europe
from the 1500s into the
twentieth century.*



*Italian designs
were the most
desirable.*



They were made with the finest fabrics and were embellished with needle lace.



These were often scented with perfume and could be held over the nose and mouth to combat foul odors. (Of course, Holmes scented his with creosote in The Sign of the Four.)

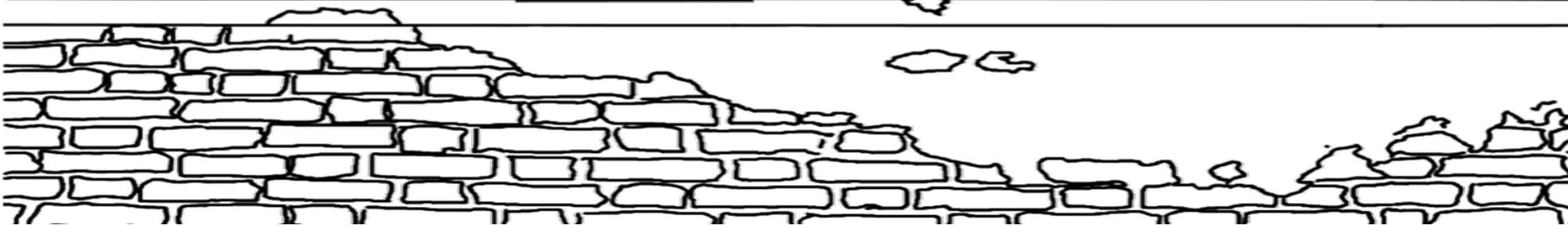


By the late 1500s, they were so valuable, they were listed in wills, used in dowries, and given as presents to nobility.





They also grew in size to the point that King Louis XVI of France declared no one could have one larger than his.



The pocket square became a men's fashion staple in the late 19th century with the introduction of the two-piece suit.





Men didn't want their clean handkerchief mixed in with coins, etc. in their pockets and moved the cloth to their upper outside breast pocket.





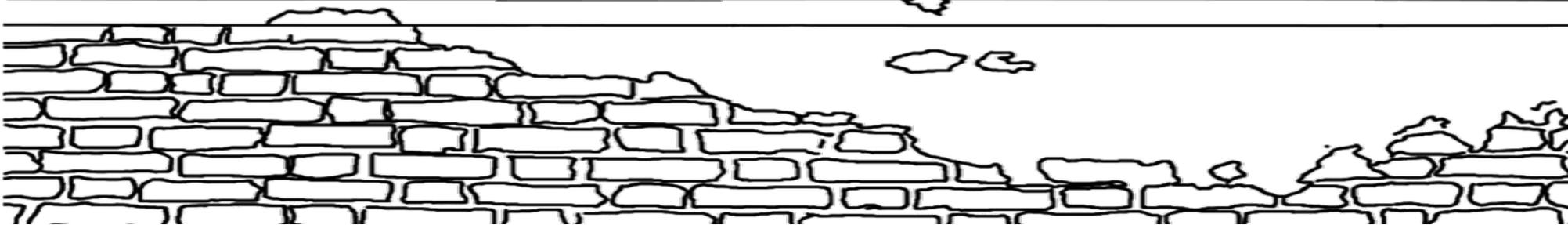
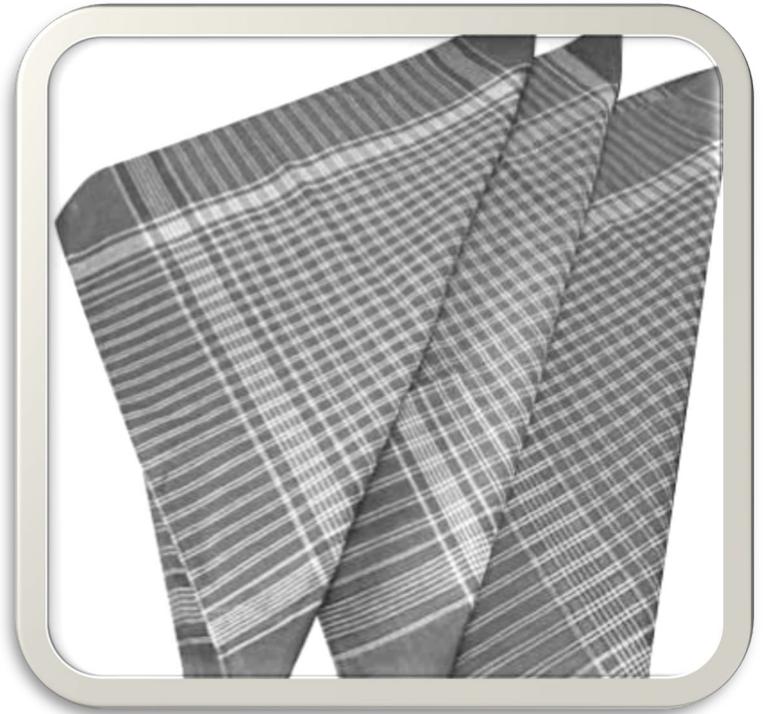
The fashion trend began in England and spread from there, in part, from their use by actors such as Cary Grant and Gary Cooper.



While not required for a formal suit, many men still wear one in their jacket.



These are distinguished today from a normal handkerchief by a rolled hem and can be worn in several different styles...



(from a flat square running parallel to the pocket edge to a puff that shows more).



Despite continued use in men's suits, the handkerchief itself is no longer the fixture it once was. Its demise began with the introduction of the paper tissue.



6 Reasons to Carry a Handkerchief



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The Art of
MANLINESS



"Gayetty's Medical Paper" (a brown, rough, thin paper that continued to be available in parts of Europe through the 1970s)...





...appeared in 1857, but the tissue paper recognized today was not developed until 1920.



Kimberly-Clark produced a disposable, soft, absorbent paper developed by "creping" (a process of microfolding) that broke down the paper fibers.



The company introduced Kleenex, first as a means of removing cold cream, and later for blowing one's nose, with the slogan, "Don't carry a cold in your pocket."

"DON'T PUT A COLD IN YOUR POCKET"

MY SWEETHEART CRIED,
AS I STUFFED A DAMP
HANDKERCHIEF IN MY POCKET.
SO NOW I'M SMART... IT'S
NOTHING BUT SOFT, INNOCULATE
KLEENEX FOR ME! USE
EACH SHEET ONCE --
DESTROY IT.

© 1948 & 1949, W. G. Mason Company, Inc.

**"Tell me
Another" says
KLEENEX
and win \$5⁰⁰**

for every "Kleenex True Confession"
published. Mail to KLEENEX at
111 North Michigan Avenue,
Chicago, Ill.



*Although handkerchiefs have,
for the most part,
disappeared in the US, they
remain popular in Japan.*



One hand
takes the cream, the
other takes
KLEENEX!

Kleenex's patented pull-out carton feeds tissues

Most Japanese carry at least one or two, primarily for drying one's hands in public restrooms...



wiping one's face on a hot day, and covering one's mouth and nose in the event of a fire.

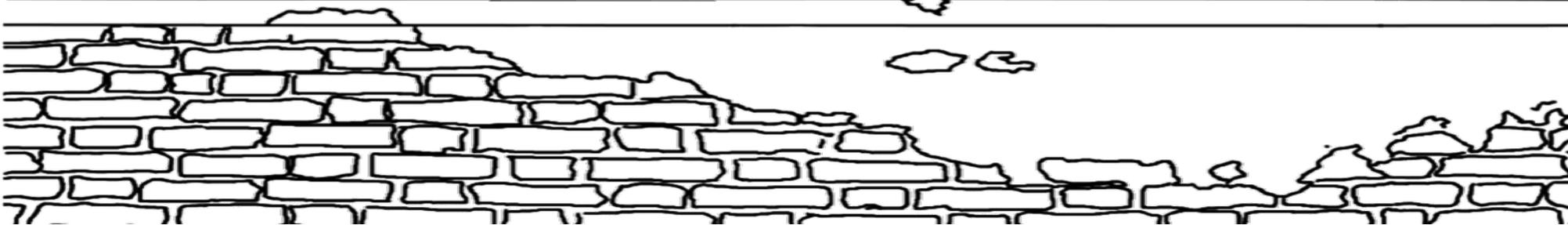


As the Japanese demonstrate, the lowly handkerchief still proves its usefulness in a variety of ways — just as it did more than a hundred years ago.



*So we have completed
topic # 086 in our
series...*

*Yes, but we'll be back
with another topic
soon...*



Original Source Material for this topic:

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Baker Street Elementary

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

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