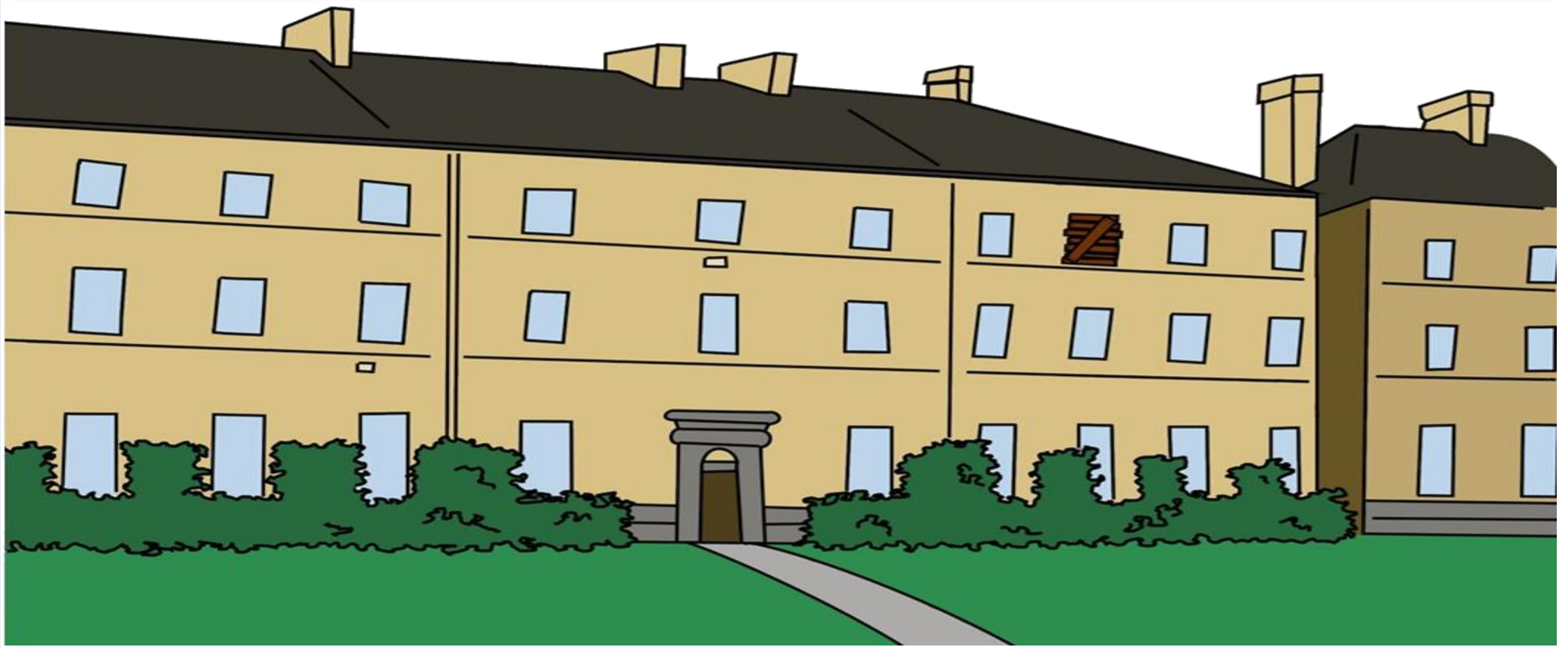
Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS

"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



Baker Street *Elementary*

THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
A003 -- THE VICTORIAN DOCTOR -- JANUARY, 2022

WELCOME TO TOPIC # 003… TODAY WE WILL BE LOOKING AT MY CAREER, BEING A DOCTOR DURING VICTORIAN TIMES.

Copyright 2022, Sherwood-Fabre, Fay, Mason, Mason

IN A STUDY IN SCARLET, I NARRATED THAT MY MEDICAL EDUCATION INCLUDED A DOCTOR OF MEDICINE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON AND ADDITIONAL STUDIES IN SURGERY WITH THE BRITISH ARMY BEFORE SHIPPING OFF TO INDIA.

JUST AS MY COUNTRY SQUIRE ANCESTRY PLACED ME AMONG THE GENTRY, YOUR PROFESSION AND TITLE INDICATED YOUR STANDING AS A VICTORIAN GENTLEMAN.

DURING THIS PERIOD, PHYSICIANS COULD HAVE THEIR WIVES PRESENTED AT COURT, BUT A SURGEON WITHOUT A MEDICAL DEGREE WOULD NOT HAVE EVEN BEEN INVITED TO DINE WITH THE VICTORIAN UPPER CLASSES.

THAT I COMPLETED STUDIES IN BOTH MEDICAL PRACTICES ILLUSTRATED HOW THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO DIMINISHED TOWARD THE LATTER PART OF THE 1800s.

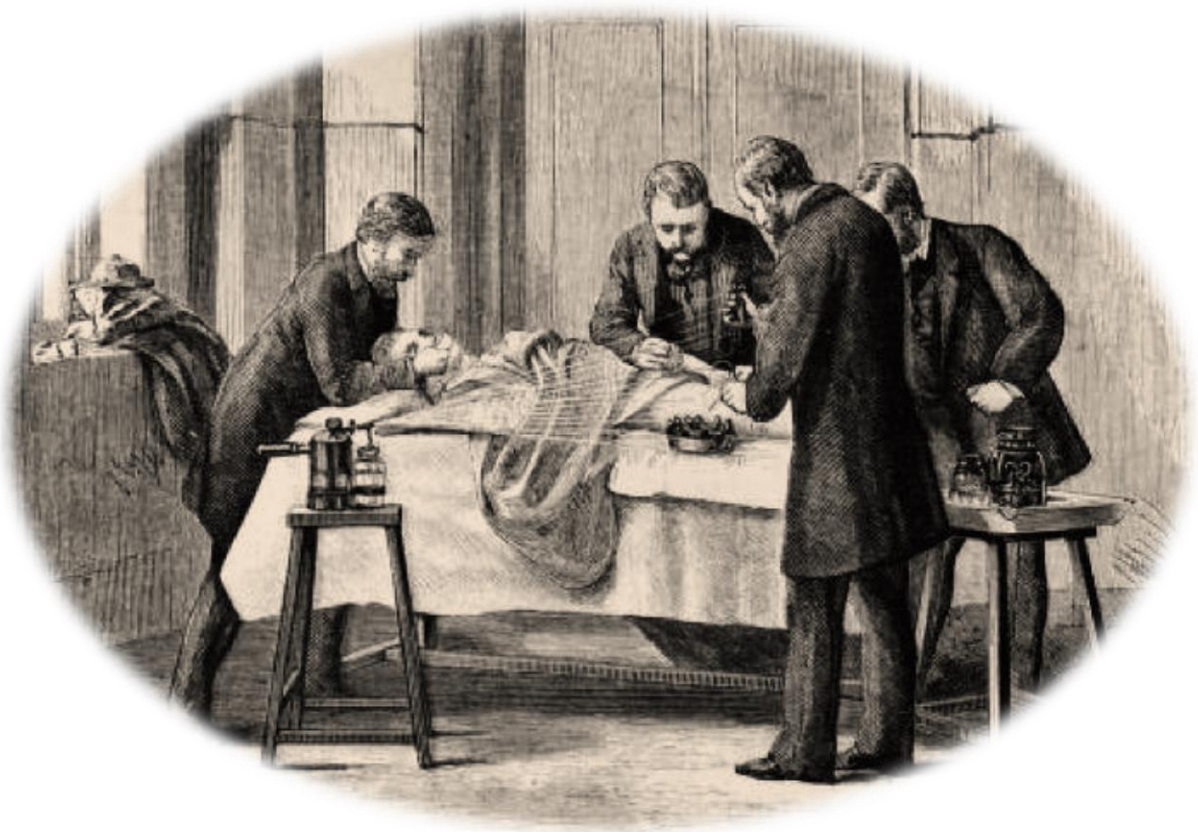
REGARDLESS, IT WAS THE 'DOCTOR' THAT PUT ME IN THE SAME CLASS AS YOU.

SOCIAL CLASS ALSO DETERMINED WHOM VICTORIANS WOULD CONSULT IN THE EVENT OF ILLNESS. THE POOREST WOULD VISIT AN APOTHECARY.

IN ADDITION TO DISPENSING DRUGS, OFTEN HOMEOPATHIC IN NATURE, THE PRECURSOR OF THE MODERN-DAY PHARMACIST ALSO PROVIDED MEDICAL ADVICE, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE ONLY ALLOWED TO CHARGE FOR THEIR DRUGS.

FOR BROKEN BONES, ILLNESSES THAT REQUIRED BLEEDING, OR EVEN TOOTH EXTRACTIONS, SURGEONS WOULD BE CALLED IN.

BECAUSE THESE MEN HAD TO TOUCH THEIR PATIENTS, THEY WERE CONSIDERED MANUAL LABORERS AND CARRIED THE TITLE OF 'MR.'



WHEN I REFER TO 'DR. JAMES MORTIMER' IN THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES, THE MAN CORRECTED ME, NOTING HE IS A 'MISTER—A HUMBLE M.R.C.S.'

THE INITIALS REFER TO HIS BEING A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, CREATED IN 1800.

Royal College of Surgeons of England

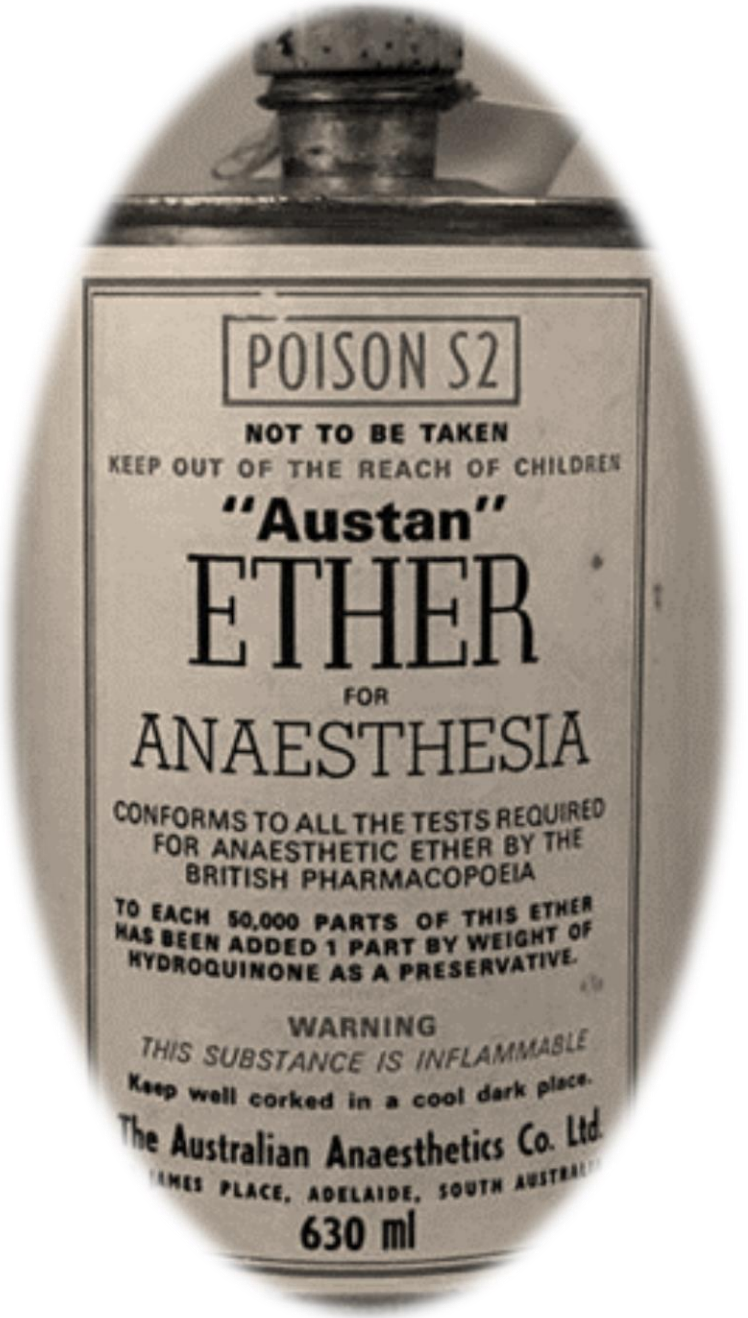
UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, A MAN WITH THE TITLE 'DOCTOR' WAS MORE LIKELY A CLERGYMAN WITH A DOCTOR OF DIVINITY DEGREE THAN A PHYSICIAN BUT WITH MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS' PROFESSIONALIZATION AND CERTIFICATION, THE TITLE SHIFTED TO THOSE WHO HAD COMPLETED A BACHELOR OF MEDICINE, OR 'M.B.'

CAMBRIDGE, OXFORD, THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, WHERE SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE ATTENDED, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON OFFERED SUCH STUDIES.

AS GENTLEMEN, THEY RARELY TOUCHED THEIR PATIENTS (PRIMARILY FROM THE UPPER CLASS) BEYOND CHECKING THEIR PULSE.

THEIR PRACTICE CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF LISTENING TO A PERSON'S COMPLAINTS AND THEN WRITING A PRESCRIPTION TO BE FILLED BY THE APOTHECARY.

BY THE LATE 1800s, AS ANESTHESIA BECAME COMMON PRACTICE AND DISEASE WAS LINKED TO THE SPREAD OF GERMS, BOTH PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS REQUIRED MORE RIGOROUS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING.



THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS BEGAN HOLDING JOINT EXAMS IN THE 1880s CREATING THE QUALIFICATION 'M.R.C.S. L.R.C.P.' (MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS AND LICENTIATE BY THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS) AND CARRIED THE DISTINCTION OF 'GENERAL PRACTITIONER.'

Royal College of Physicians

THOUGH I WAS SCHOOLED IN BOTH MEDICINE AND SURGERY, I MISSED THIS NEW DESIGNATION BY ONLY A FEW YEARS.

REGARDLESS, AS A PHYSICIAN WITH A UNIVERSITY DEGREE, I REPRESENTED YOUR SOCIAL EQUAL, BUT AS A SURGEON, I WAS NOT ABOVE ROLLING UP MY SLEEVES TO EXAMINE A PATIENT OR COLLECT EVIDENCE FOR A CASE.

THIS DUAL TRAINING MADE ME THE PERFECT PARTNER FOR YOU AS A COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND.

SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 003 IN OUR SERIES…

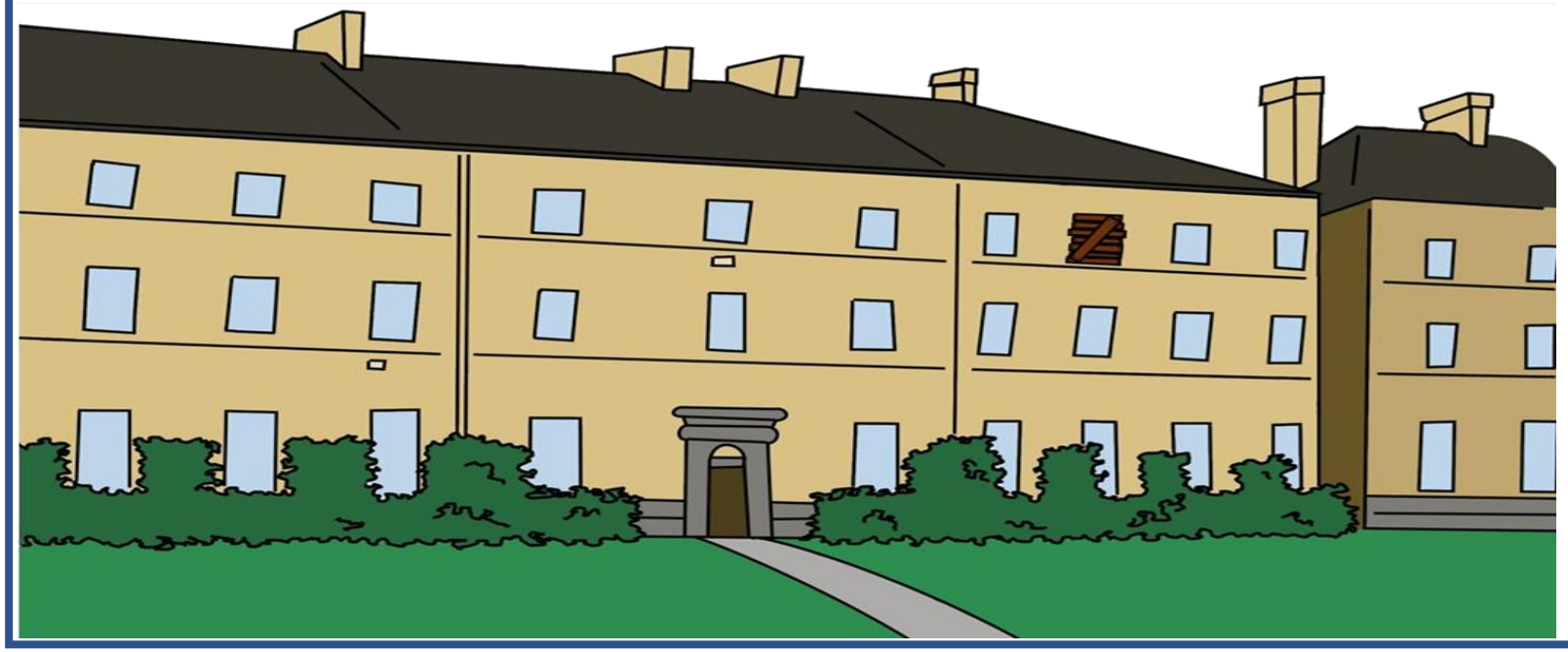
IN TOPIC # 004, WE WILL LOOK AT VICTORIAN TRANSPORTATION.

REFERENCES FOR THIS TOPIC:

- DANIEL POOL, WHAT JANE AUSTEN ATE AND CHARLES DICKENS KNEW (NEW YORK: SIMON AND SCHUSTER, INC ., 1993)
- HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/ROYAL_COLLEGE_OF_SURGEONS_OF_ENGLAND
- SALLY MITCHELL, DAILY LIFE IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND (WESTPORT, CT: GREENWOOD PRESS, 1996)
- HTTPS://WWW.RCSENG.AC.UK/ABOUT/HISTORY-OF-THE-COLLEGE

Baker Street *Elementary*

"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY
LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE
RUSTY MASON
&
STEVE MASON