

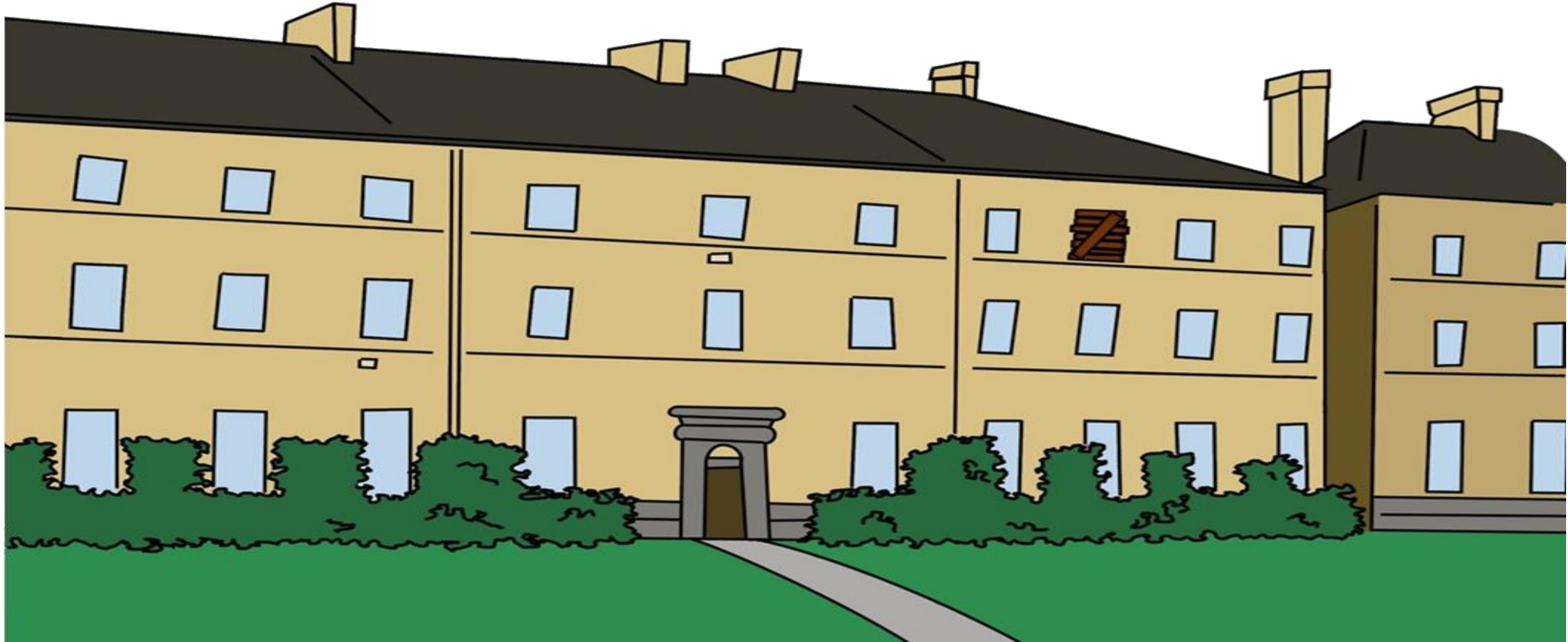
Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS
"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



Baker Street *Elementary*

THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
092 - TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY -- NOVEMBER, 2022



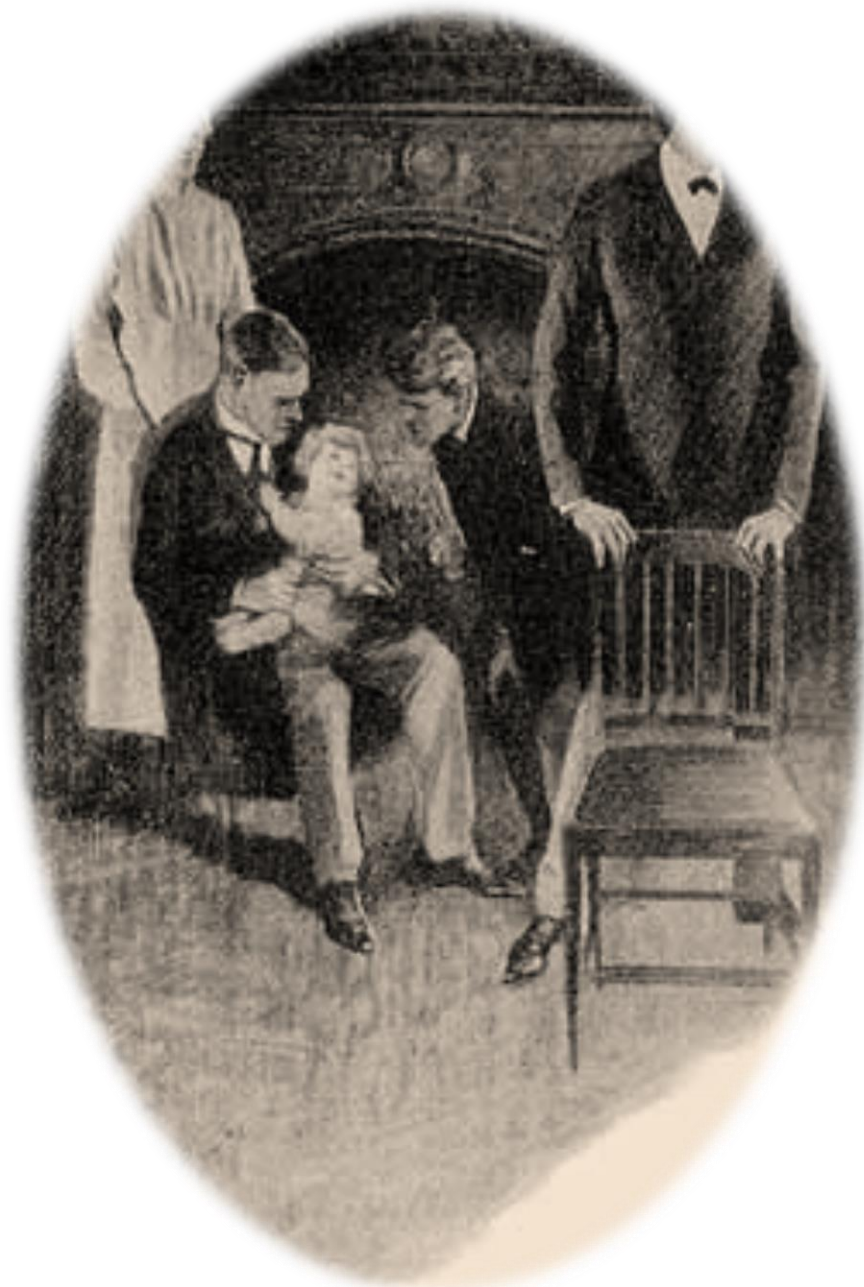
**WELCOME TO TOPIC # 092... TODAY WE WILL BE
LOOKING AT THE USE OF CURARE AS A POISON IN
THE SHERLOCK HOLMES' STORIES.**



**IN 'THE ADVENTURE OF THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE,'
YOU DETERMINED A MOTHER, THE ACCUSED
VAMPIRE, WAS ACTUALLY SUCKING A TOXIN FROM
HER CHILD'S NECK.**



**THE BOY HAD BEEN WOUNDED WITH A POISONED
(MOST LIKELY CURARE) ARROW... HIS HALF-BROTHER
HAD STOLEN THE WEAPON FROM THEIR FATHER'S
COLLECTION OF SOUTH AMERICAN ARTIFACTS.**



*CURARE HAD A LONG HISTORY IN THE AMERICAS,
AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE POISON TRAVELED BACK
TO EUROPE ALMOST FROM ITS DISCOVERY.*



ITS SECRETS, HOWEVER, TOOK CENTURIES TO UNCOVER, AND ITS MEDICAL USES APPEARED ONLY WITHIN THE LAST ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

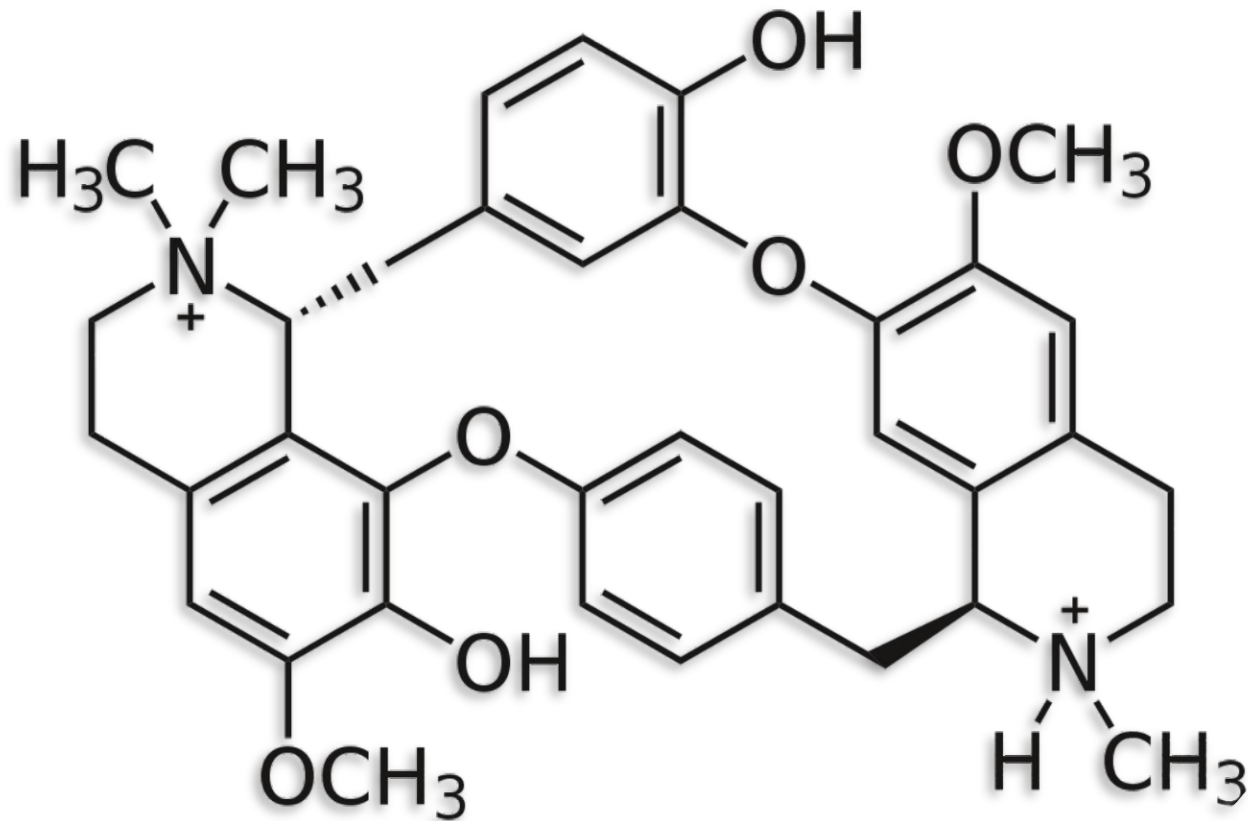




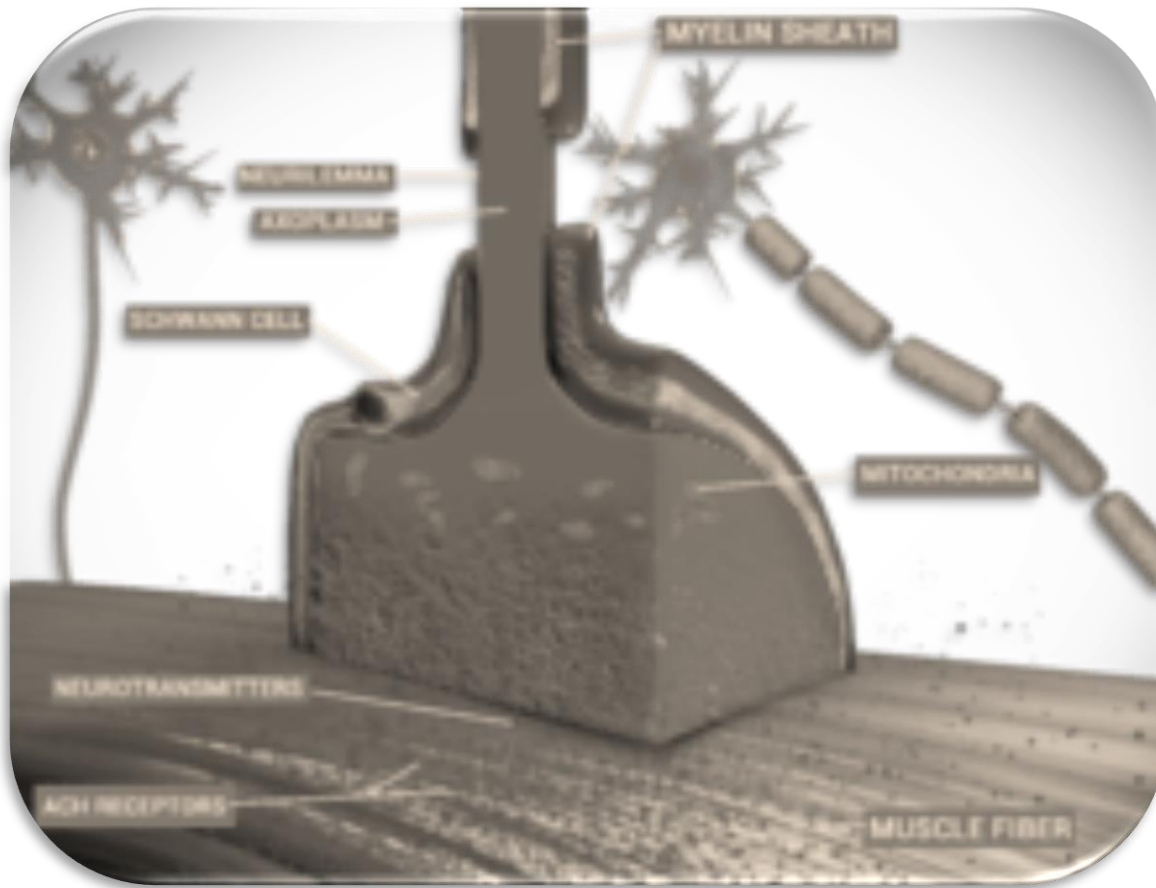
CURARE, OR CHONDRODENDRON TOMENTOSUM, IS A WOODY VINE THAT GROWS IN THE SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLES... IN ADDITION TO THE PRIMARY METABOLITES PRODUCED TO MAKE THE PLANT GROW, IT ALSO CREATES SECONDARY METABOLITES, THE ALKALOID D-TUBOCURINE, THAT SERVES AS A DEFENSE MECHANISM.



D-TUBOCURINE IS A NEUROTOXIN THAT CAUSES PARALYSIS WHEN IT ENTERS THE BLOODSTREAM.



THE PARALYSIS OCCURS FROM AN INTERFERENCE WITH THE CONTRACTION OF THE MUSCLE CELLS, BEGINNING WITH EXTREMITIES SUCH AS THE TOES, EARS, AND EYES WITH A PROGRESSION TO THE NECK AND LIMBS, AND FINALLY, THOSE CONTROLLING RESPIRATION.



**WITHOUT INTERVENTION, DEATH WILL OCCUR...
THE RATE OF FATALITY DEPENDS UPON THE SIZE
OF THE ANIMAL.**



*BIRDS PERISH WITHIN ONE TO TWO MINUTES,
SMALL MAMMALS UP TO TEN MINUTES, AND LARGE
MAMMALS UP TO 20 MINUTES... ALL THE WHILE,
THE VICTIM IS CONSCIOUS AND FEELING ALL
THAT IS OCCURRING, BUT UNABLE TO MOVE.*



EUROPEAN EXPLORERS LEARNED OF INDIGENOUS
USE OF CURARE SOON AFTER DISCOVERING THE
NEW WORLD.



WARRIORS ATTACKED CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS' CREW DURING A LAND EXCURSION, AND TWO DIED VERY QUICKLY AFTER WHAT APPEARED TO BE MINOR ARROW WOUNDS.



A BROWN PASTE WAS FOUND ON THE TIPS,
INDICATING THE WEAPONS CARRIED POISON.



CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE ENGLISH, SPANISH,
AND PORTUGUESE, HOWEVER, LIMITED
ADDITIONAL EXAMINATIONS OF THE
SUBSTANCE UNTIL THE 1700S...

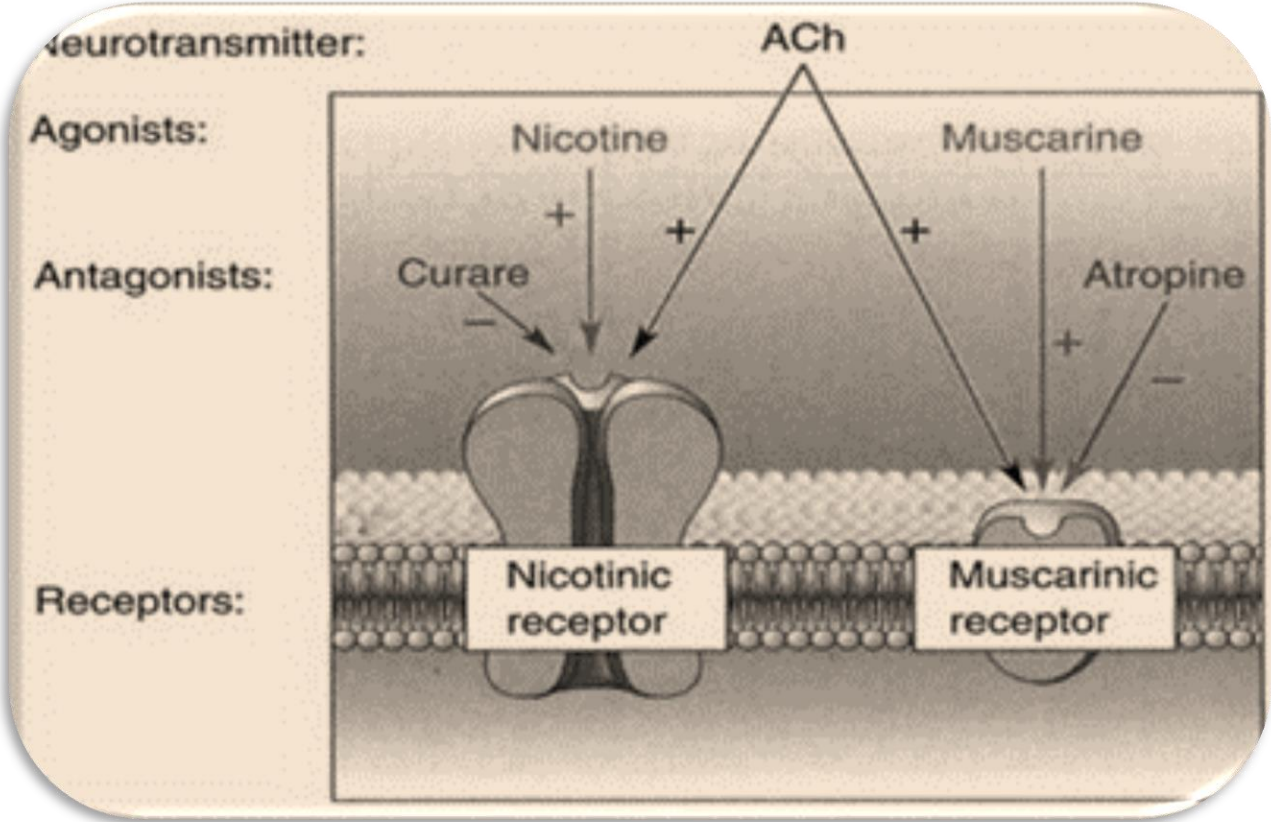


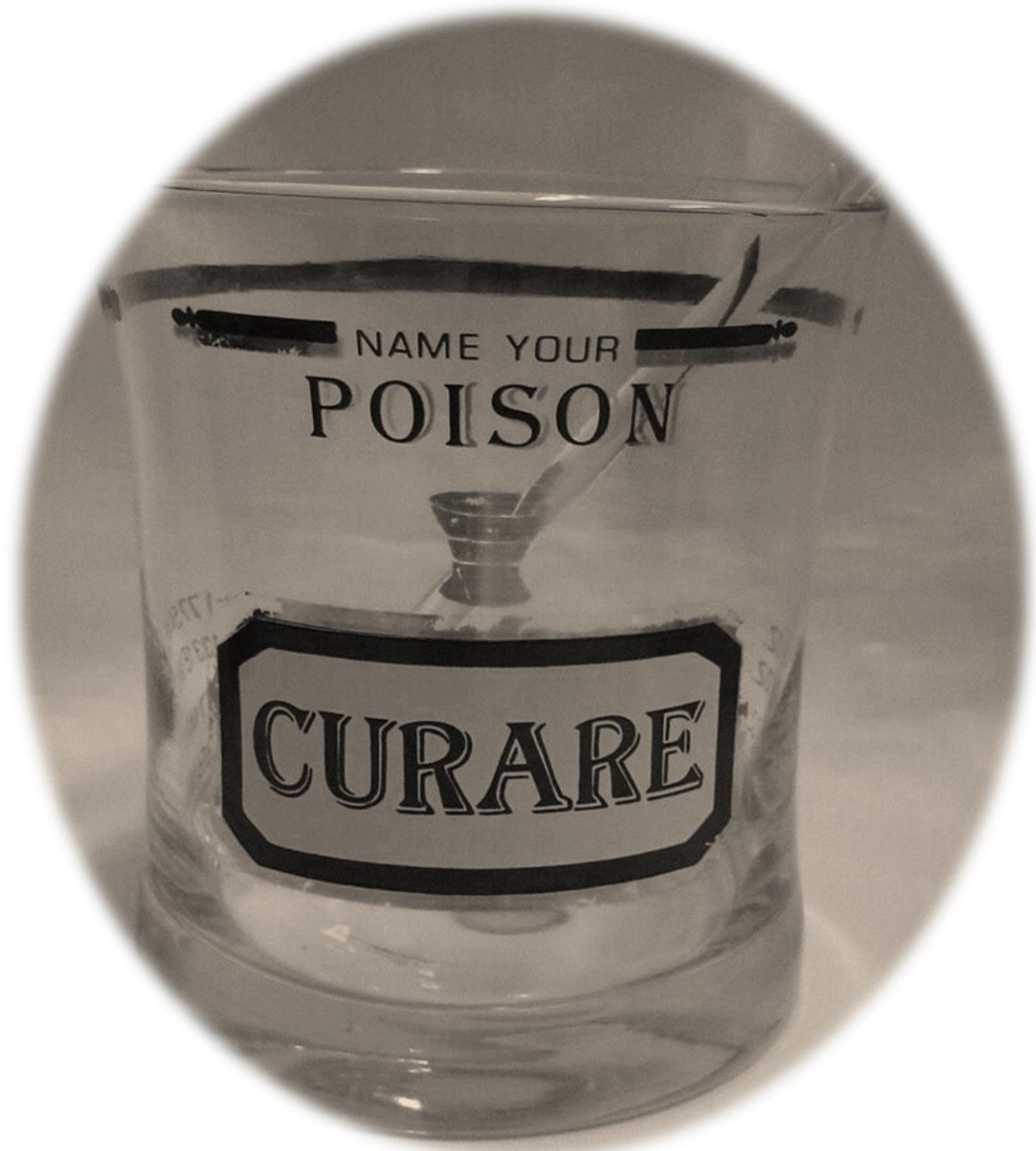


AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY, ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT SPENT FIVE YEARS IN SOUTH AMERICA AND STUDIED CURARE PREPARATION WITH AN INDIGENOUS HEALER.



AMONG THE WISDOM LEARNED WAS THAT CURARE HAD NO EFFECT WHEN INGESTED, ONLY BECOMING EFFECTIVE WHEN IT PENETRATED THE SKIN.





AS A RESULT CURARE COULD BE HANDLED
WITHOUT INCIDENT IF THE SKIN WAS
UNBROKEN... THE MEAT OF POISONED ANIMALS
COULD EVEN BE EATEN WITHOUT HARM.



ADDITIONALLY, PARALYSIS COULD BE AVOIDED IF THE POISON WAS SUCKED FROM THE WOUND... THE ONE REMOVING THE TOXIN, HOWEVER, NEEDED TO BE FREE OF SORES OR CUTS IN THE MOUTH TO AVOID THEIR OWN PARALYSIS.



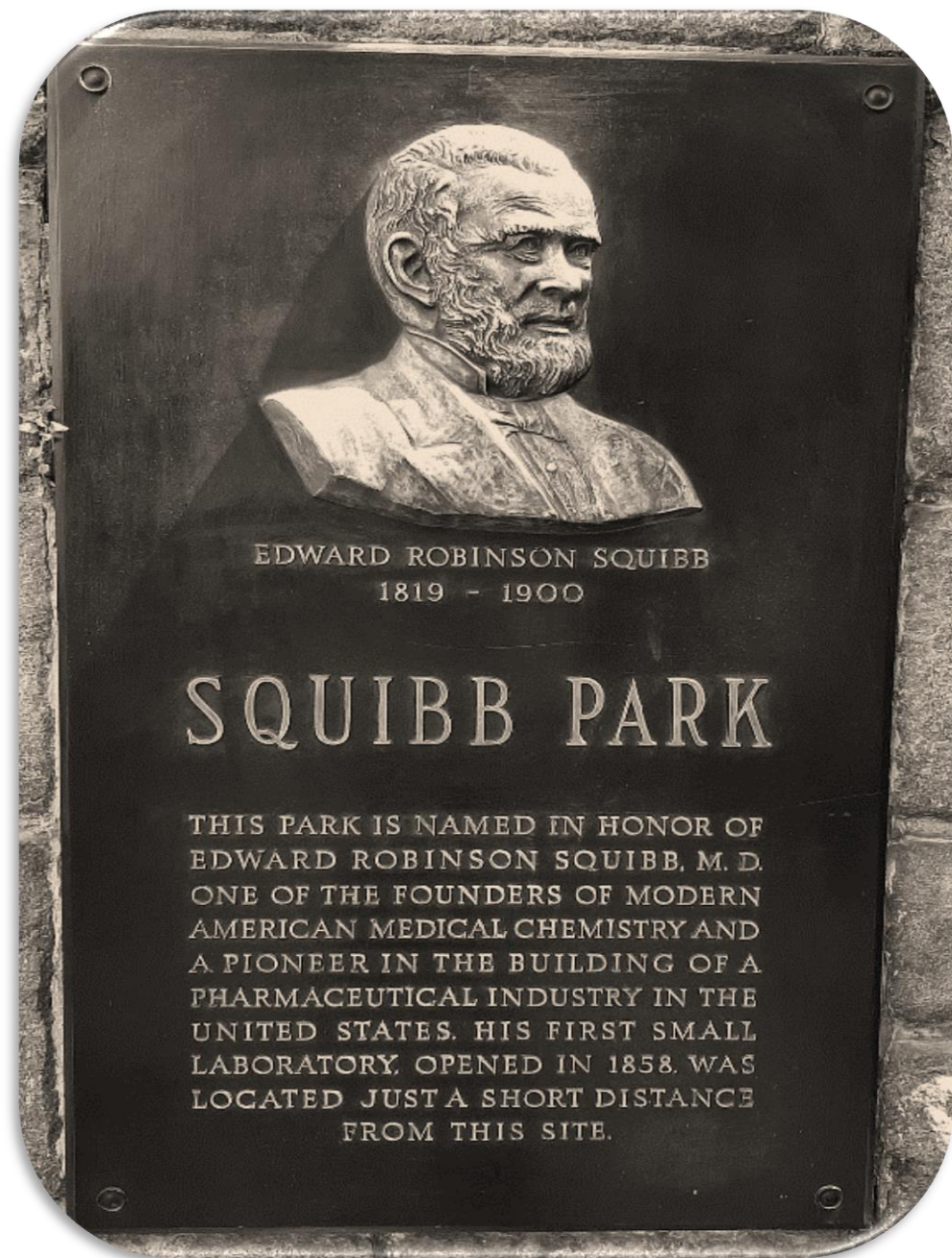
EXPERIMENTATION INTO THE USES OF
CURARE CONTINUED INTO THE 19TH AND
20TH CENTURIES.



OF PARTICULAR NOTE WAS RICHARD GILL WHO BROUGHT BACK 25 POUNDS OF CURARE AND BOTANICAL SAMPLES IN THE HOPES OF FINDING A CURE FOR HIS OWN INFIRMITY (POSSIBLY MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS).



HE PROVIDED THEM TO E.R. SQUIB AND SONS FOR RESEARCH... WHILE NEVER FINDING THE ANSWER TO GILL'S MEDICAL ISSUES, RESEARCHERS DID IDENTIFY ITS USEFULNESS AS A MUSCLE RELAXANT DURING SURGERY.



EDWARD ROBINSON SQUIBB
1819 - 1900

SQUIBB PARK

THIS PARK IS NAMED IN HONOR OF EDWARD ROBINSON SQUIBB, M. D. ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN AMERICAN MEDICAL CHEMISTRY AND A PIONEER IN THE BUILDING OF A PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES. HIS FIRST SMALL LABORATORY, OPENED IN 1858, WAS LOCATED JUST A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THIS SITE.

IN WWII, A COMBINATION OF A CURARE DERIVATIVE AND ANESTHESIA WERE FOUND TO FACILITATE OPERATIONS.





AS A NATIVE OF SOUTH AMERICA, MRS. FERGUSON—THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE—WOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR WITH CURARE AND HOW THOSE INDIGENOUS TO THE AREA SUCKED THE TOXIN FROM A VICTIM TO SAVE THEIR LIFE.



AS I NOTED, THIS WIFE IMITATED YET ANOTHER
WOMAN OF SPANISH DESCENT... QUEEN ELEANOR
SUCKED VENOM FROM THE ARM OF EDWARD I WHEN
HE WAS WOUNDED WITH A POISONED KNIFE.





*IN THE CASE OF MRS. FERGUSON, I RECOGNIZED
BOTH HER KNOWLEDGE AND COURAGE.*



SHE PREFERRED TO PUT HERSELF IN JEOPARDY NOT ONLY BY DRAWING OUT THE POISON FROM HER SON BUT ALSO ACCEPTING THE TITLE OF 'VAMPIRE' RATHER THAN UPSET HER HUSBAND BY EXPOSING THE TRUE CULPRIT—THE OLDER BROTHER.



SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 092 IN OUR SERIES...

*IN TOPIC # 093, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT ADDICTIONS DURING THE
VICTORIAN PERIOD.*



REFERENCES FOR THIS TOPIC:

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"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

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