

Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS
"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



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THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
136 - A SCANDALOUS BOHEMIAN - SEPTEMBER, 2023



**WELCOME TO TOPIC NUMBER # 136... TODAY WE WILL
BE LOOKING AT THE BOHEMIAN LIFESTYLE DURING
THE VICTORIAN PERIOD.**



**FIVE REFERENCES TO BOHEMIA OR BOHEMIAN
APPEARED IN THE CANON—TWO FOR THE COUNTRY:
WILHELM GOTTSREICH SIGISMOND VON
ORMSTEIN, THE KING OF BOHEMIA; AND THE
ETHNICITY OF PROFESSOR PRESBURY'S
REJUVENATION SERUM'S CONTACT; AND THREE TO
A PERSON'S LIFESTYLE..**



WATSON REFERRED TO HOLMES' "BOHEMIAN" HABITS IN "THE ADVENTURE OF THE ENGINEER'S THUMB," BUT THEN ALSO DEFINED HIS OWN DISPOSITION AS "BOHEMIAN" IN "THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL."



A FINAL REFERENCE TO "BOHEMIAN" PRACTICES OCCURRED IN "THE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE GARRIDEBS," WHEN HE DESCRIBED THE OFFICE/LIVING QUARTERS WHERE NATHAN GARRIDEB RESIDED.



THE TERM BOHEMIA ORIGINALLY REFERRED TO THE BOII... THESE WERE CELTIC TRIBES INHABITING THE ALPS IN WHAT WAS LATER NORTHERN ITALY.





THEY HAD BEEN CONQUERED BY THE ROMANS IN 220 BCE, JOINED HANNIBAL'S FORCES IN 218 BCE TO DEFEAT THEM, ONLY TO BE CONQUERED ONCE AGAIN BY JULIUS CAESAR IN 191 BCE.



THOSE WHO SURVIVED WERE ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN GAUL (PARTS OF ITALY, FRANCE, BELGIUM, AND GERMANY.)



WHILE VON ORMSTEIN'S BOHEMIA MAY HAVE GIVEN THE NAME TO THOSE UNDER HIS RULE, THE FRENCH USED THE TERM "BOHEMIAN" IN A MUCH BROADER SENSE.



IT WAS ORIGINALLY USED IN THE 1400s AS A PEJORATIVE FOR THE ROMANI BECAUSE IT WAS ASSUMED THEY ORIGINATED IN BOHEMIA.





**THIS NOMADIC, ETHNIC GROUP TENDED TO PURSUE
JOBS ON THE FRINGE OF SOCIETY, OFTEN
POPULATING PARIS' POORER SECTIONS, INCLUDING
THE LATIN QUARTER.**





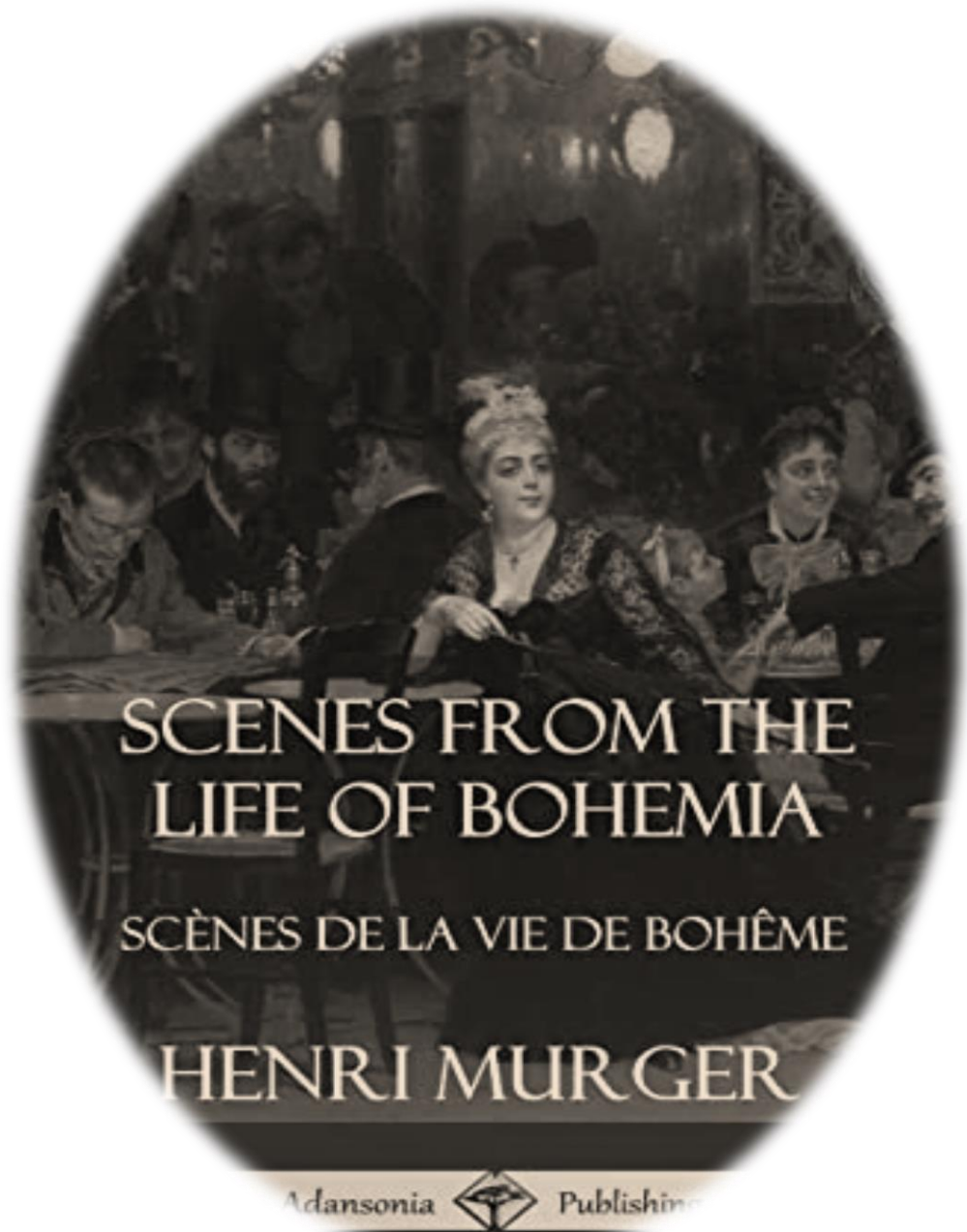
THIS SECTION OF PARIS HAD BEEN THE HOME TO MAJOR UNIVERSITIES FOR CENTURIES AND MANY INHABITANTS SPOKE LATIN, GIVING IT ITS NAME.





IN THE 1800s, IT BECAME A POPULAR AREA FOR ARTISTS, AND HENRI MURGER IMMORTALIZED IT IN HIS PLAY AND NOVEL SCÈNES DE LA VIE DE BOHÈME.





HE DESCRIBED THE LIFE OF ONE ARTIST (BASED ON HIMSELF) AND HIS STRUGGLES OF LIVING AN ARTIST'S EXISTENCE. HIS MALE CHARACTERS WERE YOUNG AND EDUCATED BUT HAD REJECTED THEIR "BOURGEOIS" BACKGROUND IN FAVOR OF A DEDICATION TO "ART FOR ART'S SAKE."





THE WOMEN TENDED TO BE LESS EDUCATED AND FROM POORER BACKGROUNDS, OFTEN REDUCED TO LOW-PAYING JOBS OR PROSTITUTION TO KEEP FROM STARVING.



**BY THE MID-1800s, THIS ROMANTICIZED
CONCEPT OF BOHEMIANISM HAD SWEEP
ACROSS EUROPE.**



*CHRISTINA, DANTE GABRIEL AND ELIZABETH
ROSSETTI WERE CONSIDERED AMONG THE FOUNDERS
OF THE BOHEMIAN MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND.*



CHRISTINA WAS KNOWN FOR HER UNCONVENTIONAL LIFE AND POETRY; DANTE GABRIEL FOR HIS CO-CREATION OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD AND REJECTION OF CURRENT ACADEMIC TEACHINGS OF ART; AND ELIZABETH (HIS WIFE) FOR HER ART AS WELL AS HER SELF-MADE FASHIONS.



THEIR EFFORTS IN SUPPORT OF EXPRESSIVE FREEDOM IN BEHAVIOR, FASHION, AND ART PUT THEM IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO VICTORIAN ENGLAND'S NORMS OF SOCIAL PROPRIETY, BUT THE GROUP HAD A POPULAR FOLLOWING, INCLUDING ART CRITIC JOHN RUSKIN AND US PAINTER JAMES ABBOTT WHISTLER.



**WATSON CHARACTERIZED HIS, HOLMES' AND
NATHAN GARRIDEB'S LIFESTYLES AS
"BOHEMIAN" BECAUSE EACH DISPLAYED A
SIMILAR REJECTION OF SOME VICTORIAN
NOTIONS OF RESPECTABILITY.**





**ALL THREE EXHIBITED LESS-THAN-TIDY HABITS,
TO SOME EXTENT SIMILAR TO THE COMMON
STEREOTYPE OF THE "DIRTY" ROMANI.**



WATSON, HOWEVER, POINTED OUT THAT HIS BOHEMIAN SPIRIT HAD LIMITS THAT HOLMES IGNORED.



*BEYOND HIS CLUTTERED HABITS, HOLMES
SHUNNED OTHER CONVENTIONS OF PRESCRIPTIVE
VICTORIAN NORMS.*



ESCHEWING SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, HOLMES SECLUDED HIMSELF "AMONG HIS OLD BOOKS," AND DRUGGED HIMSELF WITH COCAINE WHEN SUCH USE WAS RECOGNIZED AS ADDICTIVE.



**THESE PRACTICES AND HIS FAMILY'S ARTISTIC
BACKGROUND CERTAINLY COULD HAVE DEFINED HIM AS A
VICTORIAN BOHEMIAN.**



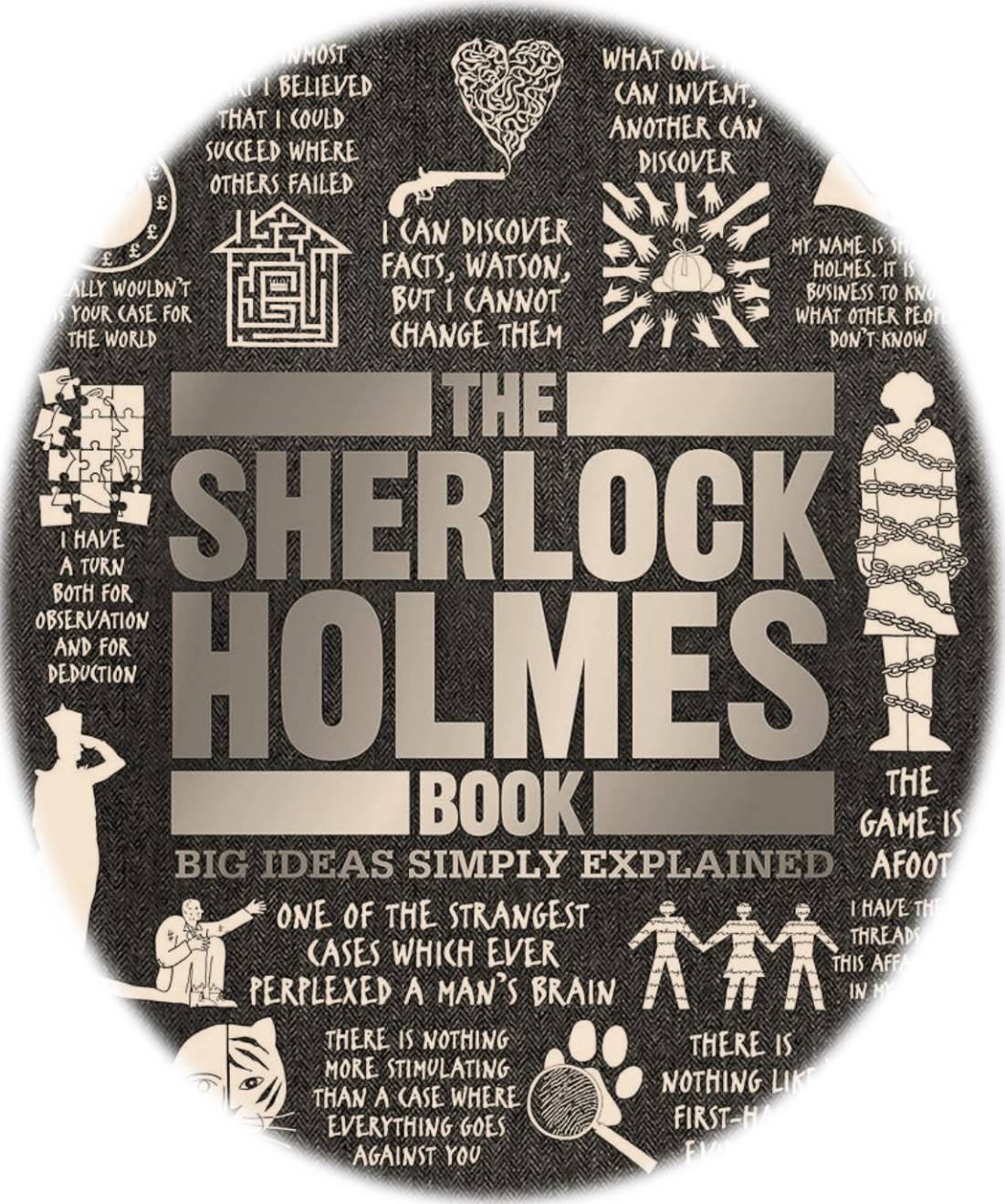
HIS PROFESSED REJECTION OF EMOTIONS FOR LOGIC, HOWEVER, PUT HIM IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION WITH OTHER FOLLOWERS— WITH PERHAPS ONE MAJOR EXCEPTION.



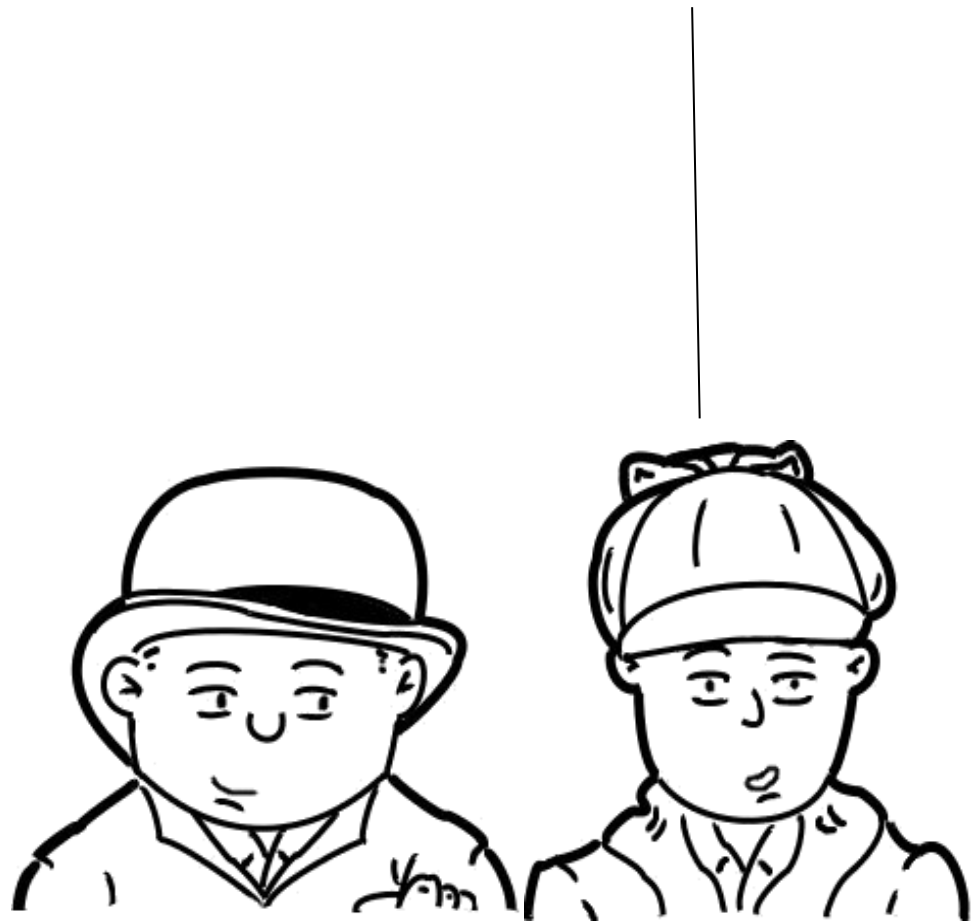


IN "A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA," WATSON PRESENTED THE MOST FAMOUS INSTANCE WHERE HOLMES' INTEREST IN IRENE ADLER RAN CONTRARY TO HIS EFFORTS TO DENY EMOTIONS AND COULD BE VIEWED AS A DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION OF THE CASE'S TITLE.





THE SHERLOCK HOLMES BOOK POSITED THE TRUE SCANDAL WAS HIS DISPLAYED FEELINGS FOR A WOMAN AND REJECTION OF HIS ART (LOGIC AND DEDUCTION) FOR A MORE CONVENTIONAL ATTRACTION.



WHILE SCANDALOUS INDEED FOR THIS BOHEMIAN, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT LIKE WATSON, HOLMES, TOO, LIMITED HIS BOHEMIANISM WHEN PRESENTED WITH A PROPER SITUATION LIKE IRENE ADLER.



SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 136 IN OUR SERIES...

IN TOPIC # 137, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT CRIMINAL INSANITY DURING THE VICTORIAN PERIOD.



ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL FOR FOR THIS TOPIC:

- [HTTPS://WWW.MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM/WORDS-AT-PLAY/BOHEMIAN-WORD-HISTORY-ORIGIN](https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/bohemian-word-history-origin)
- [HTTPS://WWW.BRITANNICA.COM/TOPIC/BOII](https://www.britannica.com/topic/boii)
- [HTTPS://WWW.BBC.COM/NEWS/MAGAZINE-12711181](https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-12711181)
- [HTTPS://WWW.WBJC.COM/THE-BOHEMIAN-LIFE/](https://www.wbjc.com/the-bohemian-life/)
- [HTTPS://WWW.BBC.COM/CULTURE/ARTICLE/20230412-THE-ROSSETTIS-THE-BOHEMIANS-WHO-SHOCKED-VICTORIAN-BRITAIN](https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20230412-the-rossettis-the-bohemians-who-shocked-victorian-britain)
- [HTTPS://WWW.NATIONALWW2MUSEUM.ORG/WAR/ARTICLES/ROMA-EUROPEAN-CULTURE](https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/roma-european-culture)
- P. BOYLD, C. DUNFORD, J. DUNNE, J. EDWARDS, S. KENNEDY, P. NEWMAN, C. SCOT, D. WOLTER (EDS.) , THE SHERLOCK HOLMES BOOK, NEW YORK: DK PUBLISHING, 2015.



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"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

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