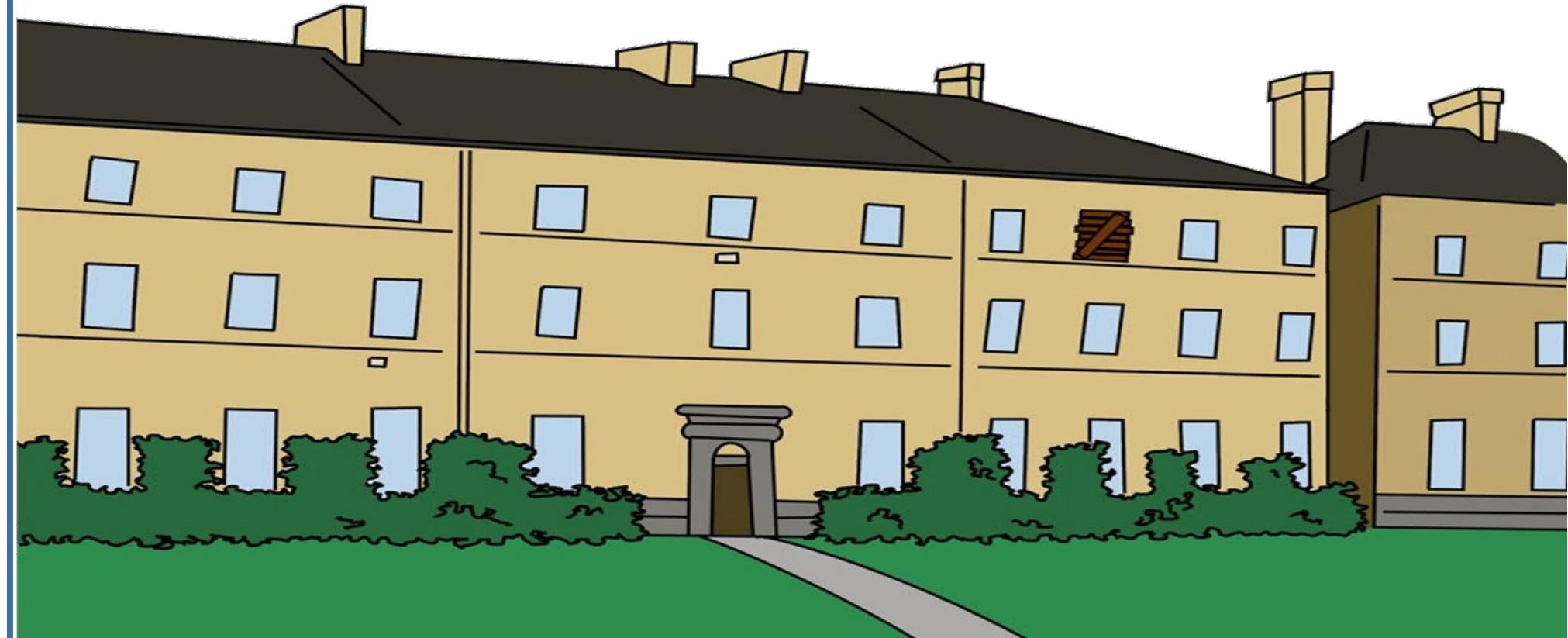


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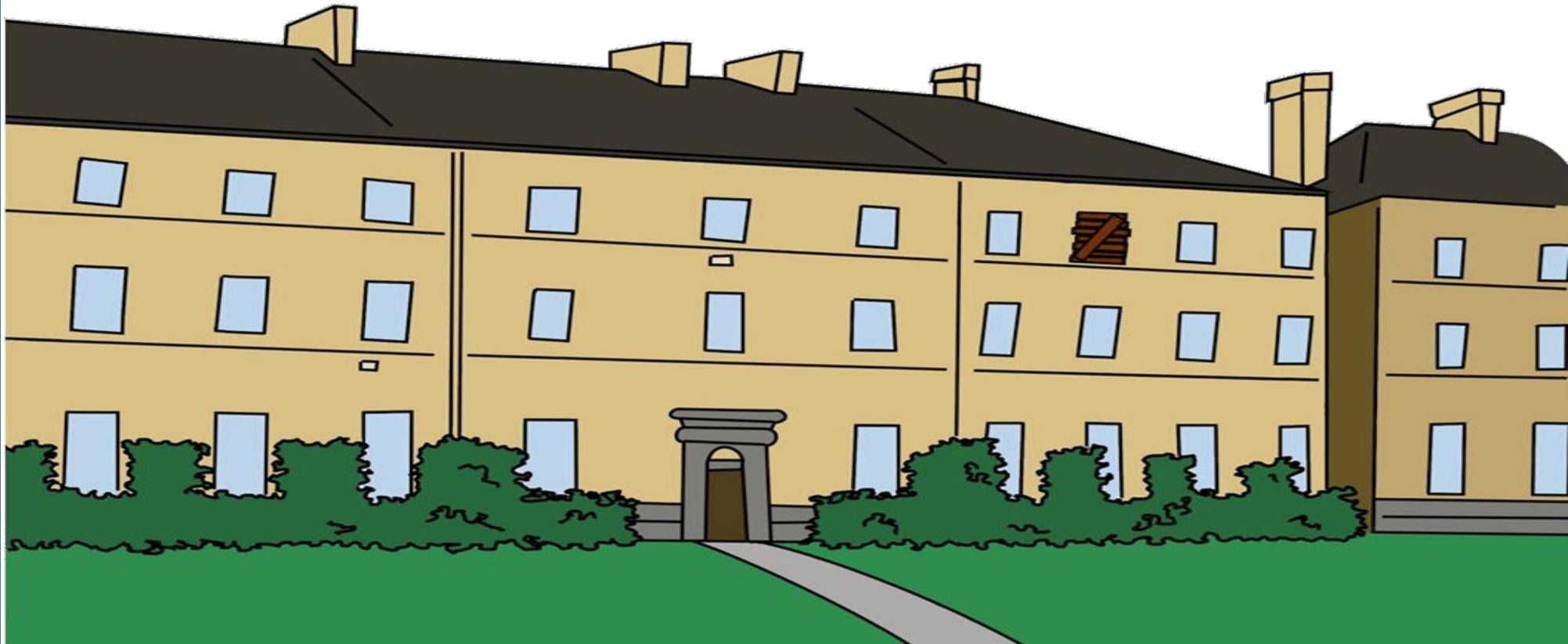
Presents

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



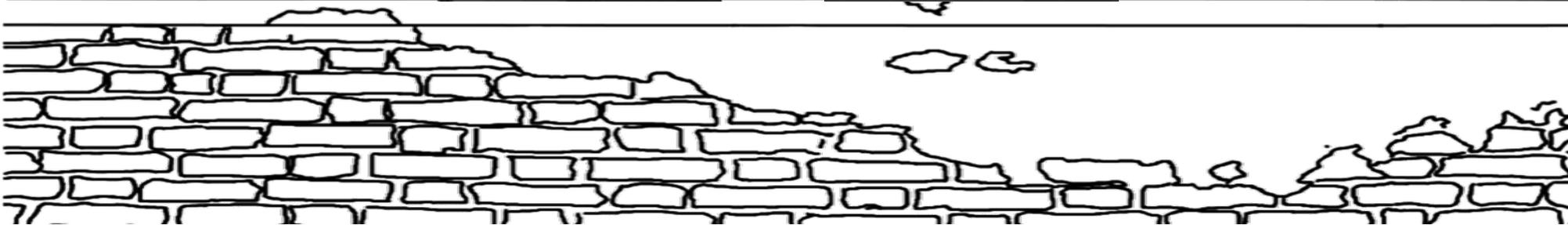
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The Life and Times in Victorian London
018 - If It's a Print, It Must Be True - January, 2022

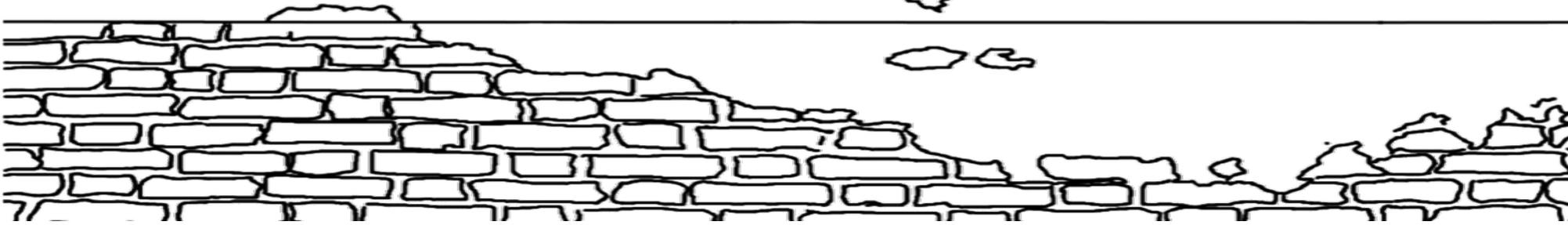
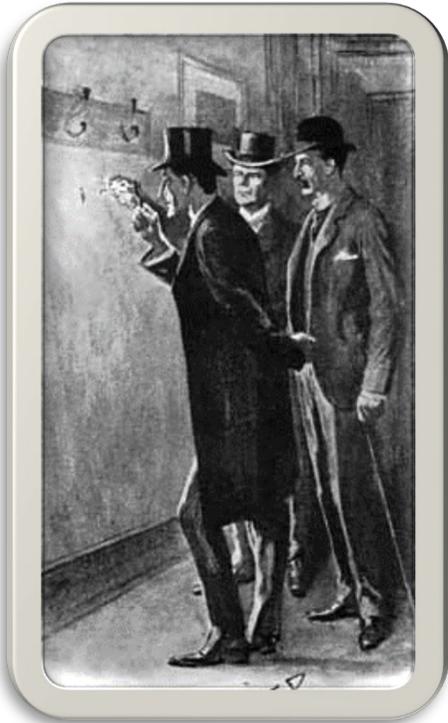




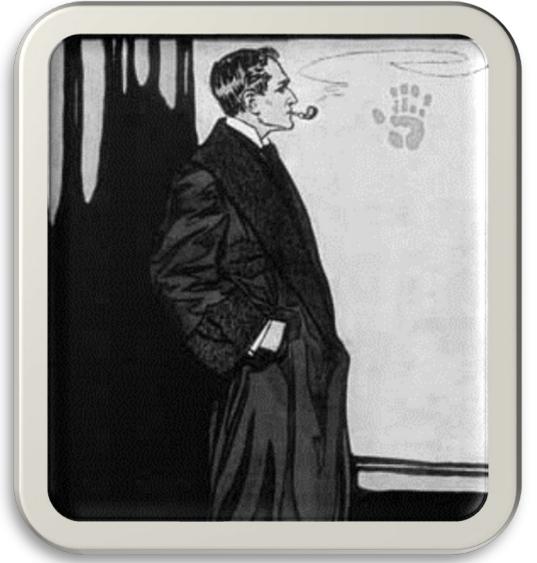
Welcome to topic # 018... Today, Master Gregson and I will look at the use of fingerprints in the pursuit of criminals.



In "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder," a bloody thumb print appears to clearly identify the murderer. Despite my certainty of the evidence, however, Holmes remains skeptical.



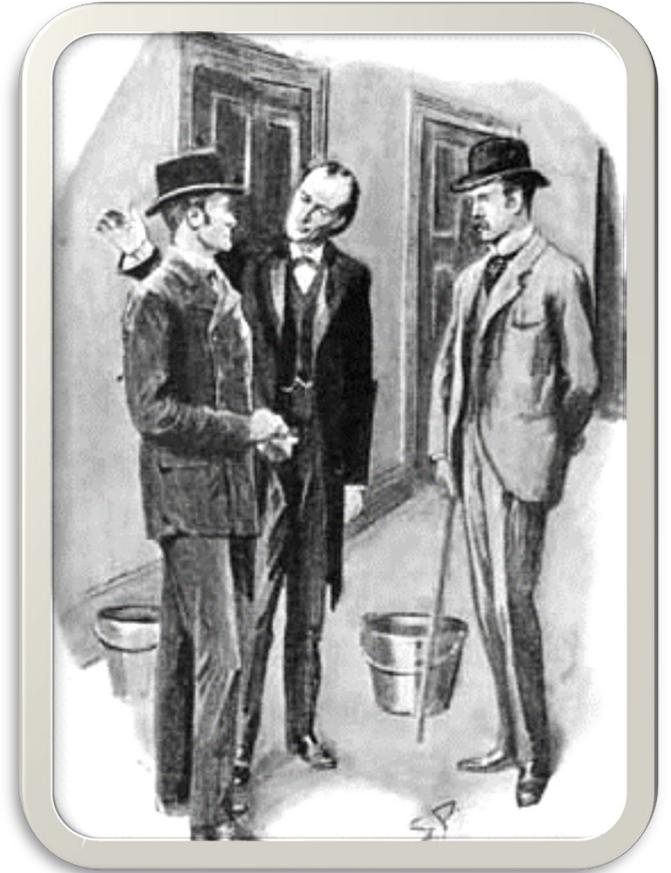
*Lestrade, given where this story lies
in the chronological order of the
Sherlockian stories, as well as when
the story was first published...*



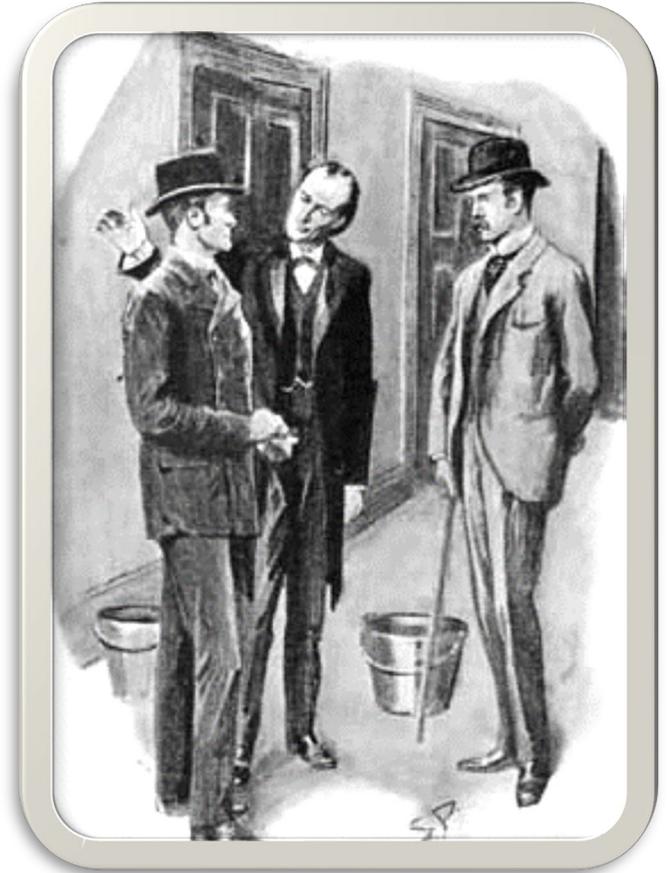
*...both you and Holmes were
on the cutting edge of the
day's forensic science.*



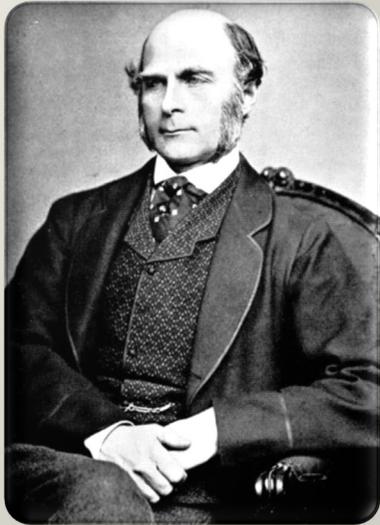
*Based on events and remarks
in the story, the case is
estimated to have occurred
in August, 1894.*

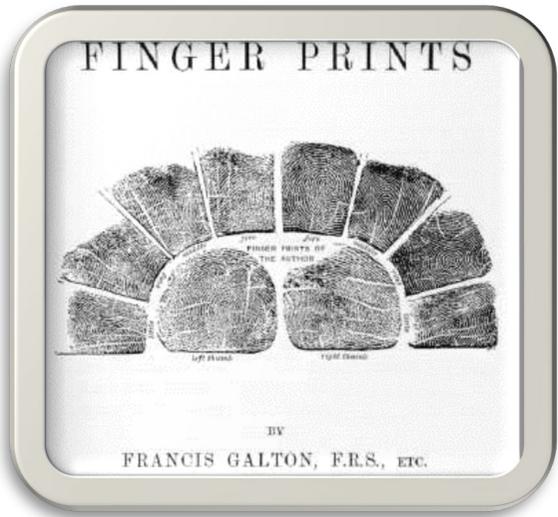


Sherlock had reappeared after his triumph over Moriarty, Watson had rejoined his friend at 221b, and Holmes searched the murder scene under the August sun.

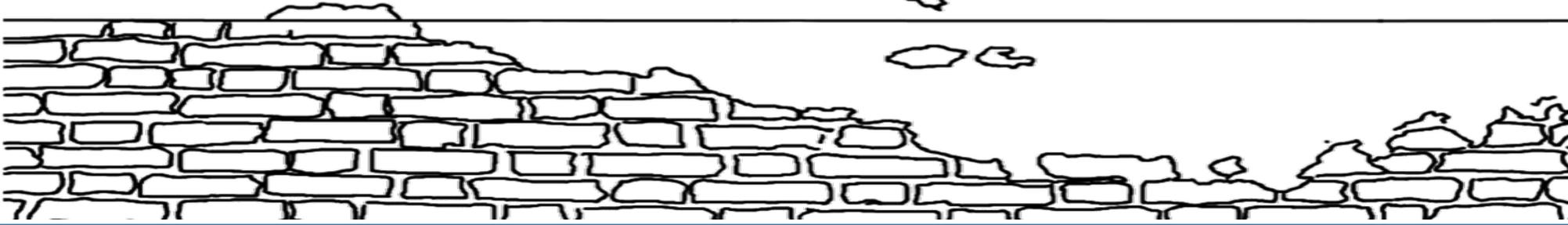


*Only two years before, Sir Francis Galton published his treatise **Finger Prints**, which identified three characteristics for identifying and comparing impressions --loop, whorl, and arch.*

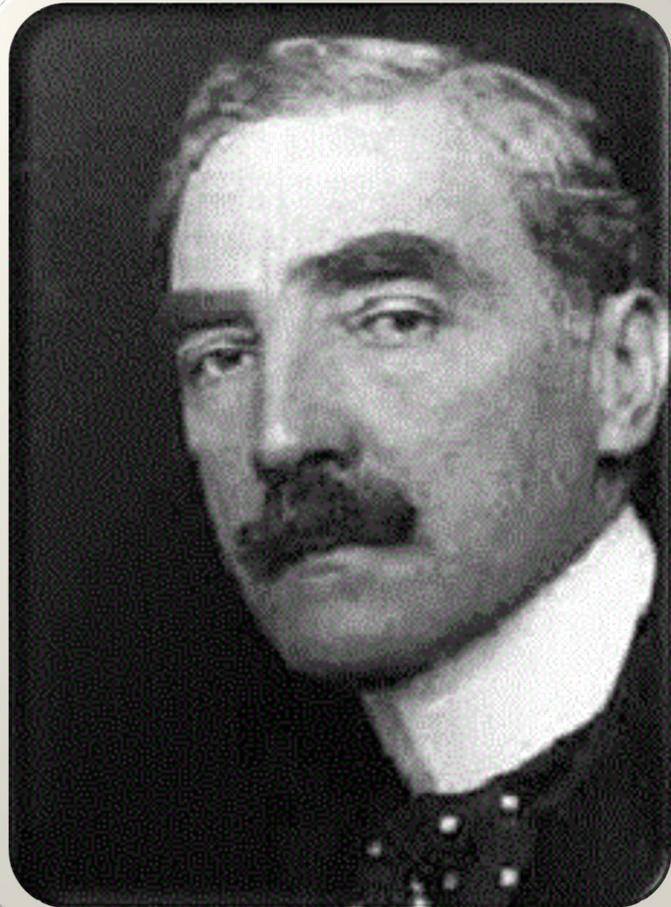




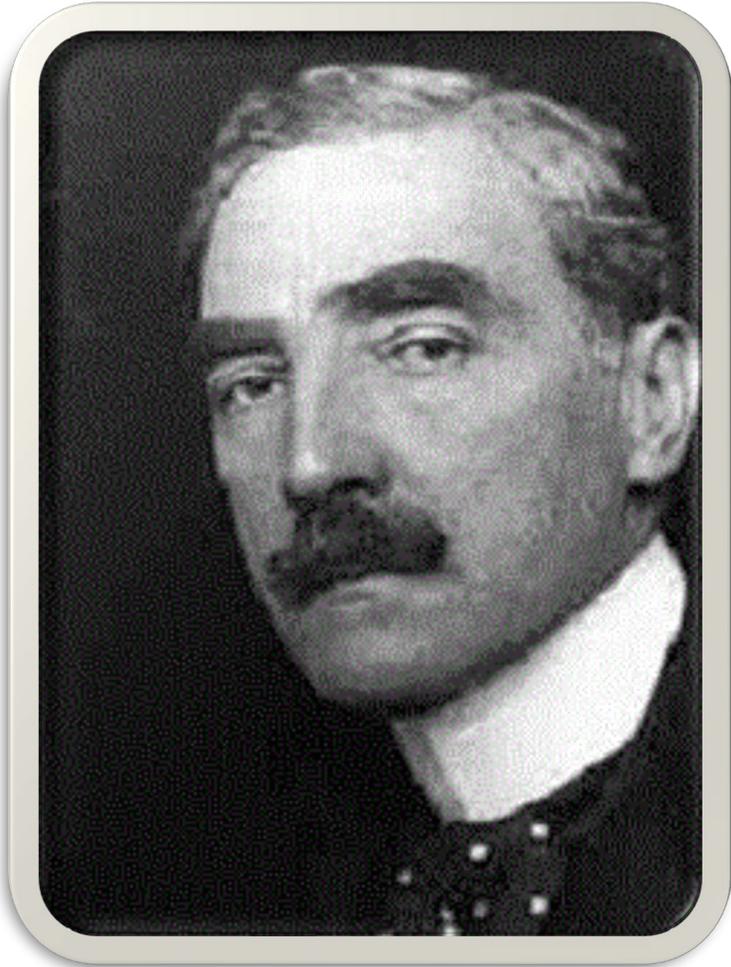
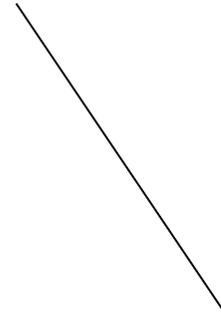
These attributes, now referred to as Galton's details, are still used today.



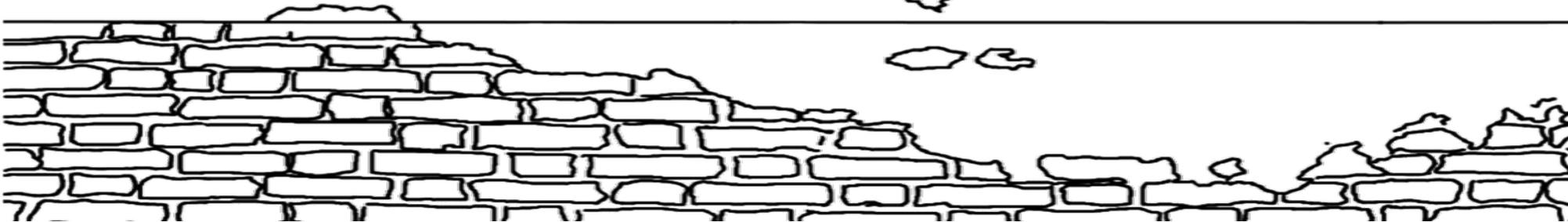
Sir Edward Richard Henry further developed these classifications and provided the system adapted by Scotland Yard...



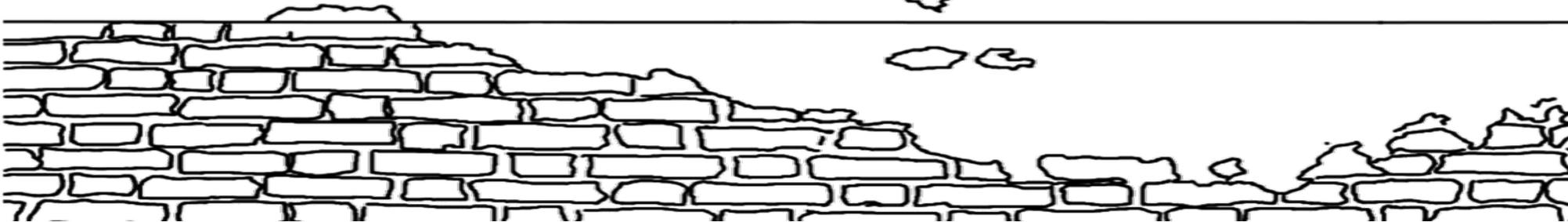
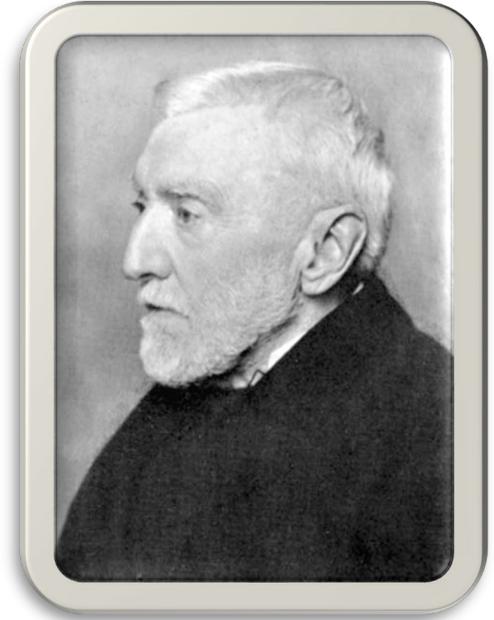
...when its fingerprint branch was created in 1901, two years before publication of "The Adventure of the Norwood Builder."



The first scientific study of fingerprints, or "skin furrows," appeared in Nature in 1880.



Dr. Henry Faulds, a Scottish medical missionary in Japan reported on his observation of finger-marks in ancient pottery, which led to the study of monkey and human finger tips.

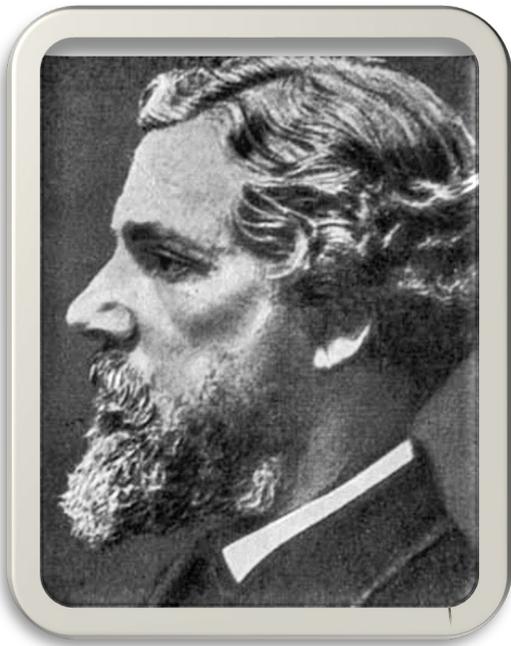


He was the first to propose using prints to identify criminals, hands or arms severed from bodies, and possibly family members.

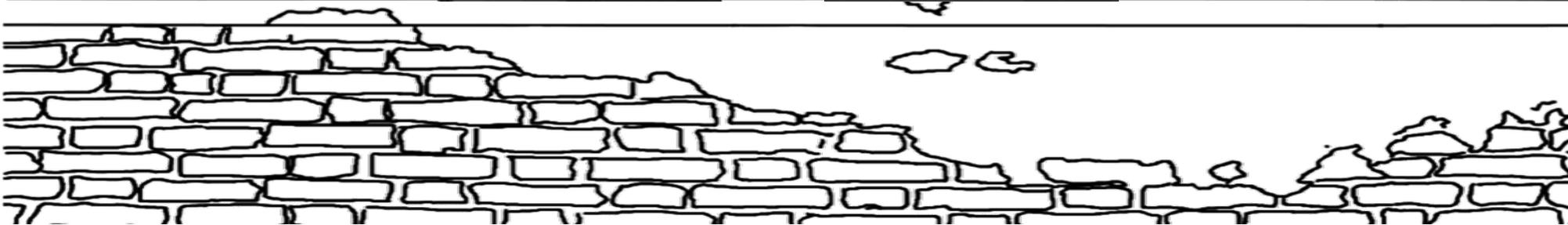


Sir William Herschel, a British civil servant stationed in India, responded to Nature in the next issue that he had used fingerprints for signing contracts since 1860 and had noticed no two matched.





He, however, did not suggest its uses for criminal matters.



*Galton, a relative of Charles Darwin,
intrigued by what he'd read,
corresponded with Hershel extensively
and published his book in 1901...*

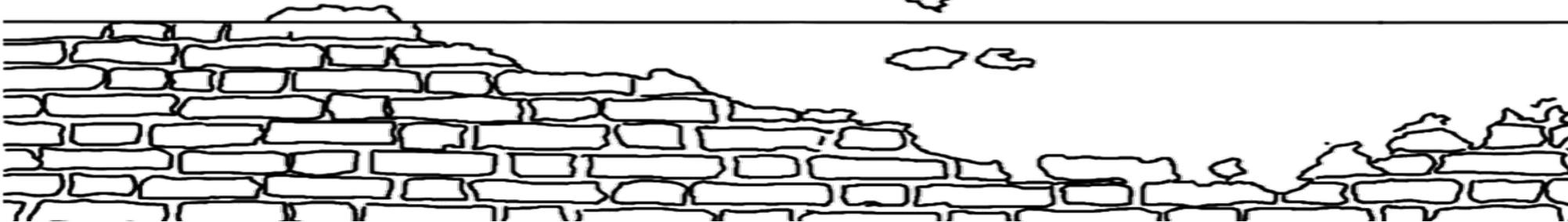
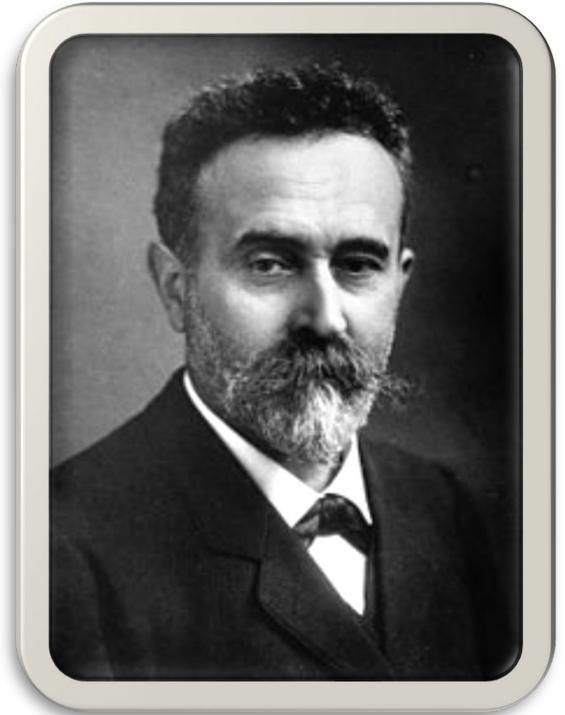




...offering it as an addition to an earlier system of body measurements, anthropometry, used to identify criminals.



Developed by the Frenchman Alphonse Bertillon, this first classification process involved eleven body measurements considered unchangeable after the age of twenty and was the basis...



...along with photographs and other information such as hair and eye color, for the files maintained by the French Police Identification Service.



With some reluctance, Bertillon, who considered finger prints a rival to his work and system, added the right thumb print to the files.





*His unwillingness to fully embrace
this new research led to a major
embarrassment when he was
unable to identify a print...*





*...found at the scene of the
Mona Lisa theft in 1911
because it came from the
man's left thumb.*



*Additional difficulties with prints,
such as blurred or partial
impressions, were studied by Edmond
Locard, a student of Bertillon.*



Edmond Locard, also known as the "Sherlock Holmes of France" came up with a principle that states that every contact by a criminal leaves behind a trace.



"Elementary,
my dear
Watson!"

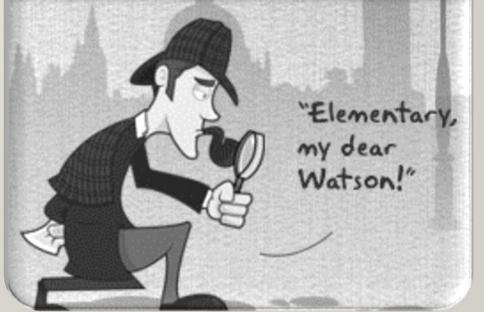
In 1913, he discovered it was possible to plant false prints using a finger fashioned by tree gum.



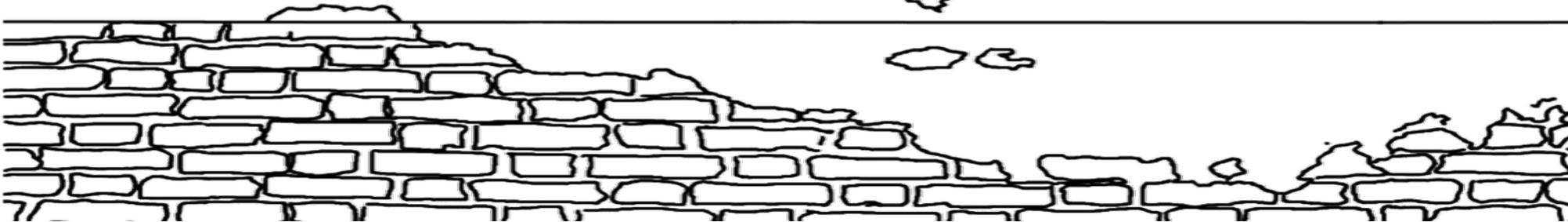
*This sort of deception,
however, had been shared by
Doyle ten years earlier.*



Edmond Locard, also known as the "Sherlock Holmes of France" came up with a principle that states that every contact by a criminal leaves behind a trace.



Holmes determines the bloody print found at the scene had been planted using a similar procedure with wax.



Ever on the cutting edge of forensic science, Sherlock demonstrates his extensive knowledge of the use—and misuse—of fingerprints even before it became standard practice.



*So we have completed
topic # 018 in our
series...*

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



References for this topic:

- 1) Doyle, Arthur Conan; Ryan, Robert. The Complete Sherlock Holmes. Kindle Edition.
- 2) Steven Doyle and David Crowder, Sherlock Holmes for Dummies (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2010).
- 3) www.sherlockpeoria.net/Who_is_Sherlock/ChronCornerReturn.html#NORW
- 4) www.fingerprintamerica.com/fingerprinthisory.asp
- 5) <http://onin.com/fp/fphistory.html>
- 6) E. J. Wagner, The Science of Sherlock Holmes. (Hoboken , New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006).



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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

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LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

RUSTY MASON

&

STEVE MASON

