

Baker Street Elementary

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



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The Life and Times in Victorian London
046 - I Don't Wanna Take a Bath! -- 06/12/2017





Welcome to topic number 46... today we will be discussing a small luxury in our times, the Turkish bath.

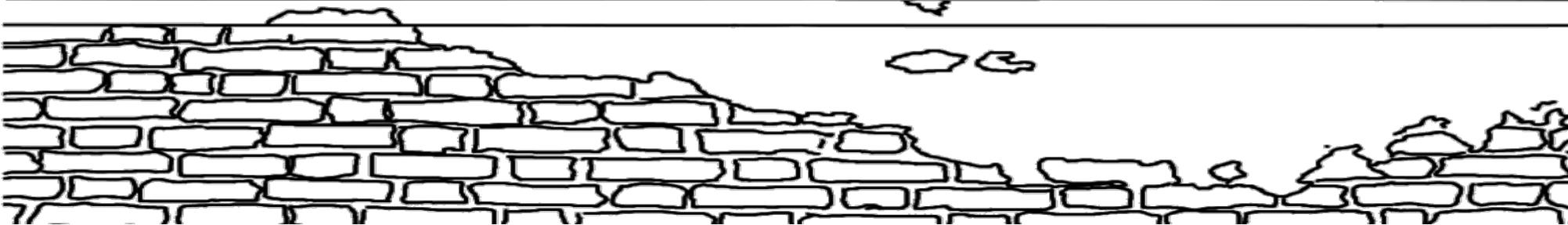


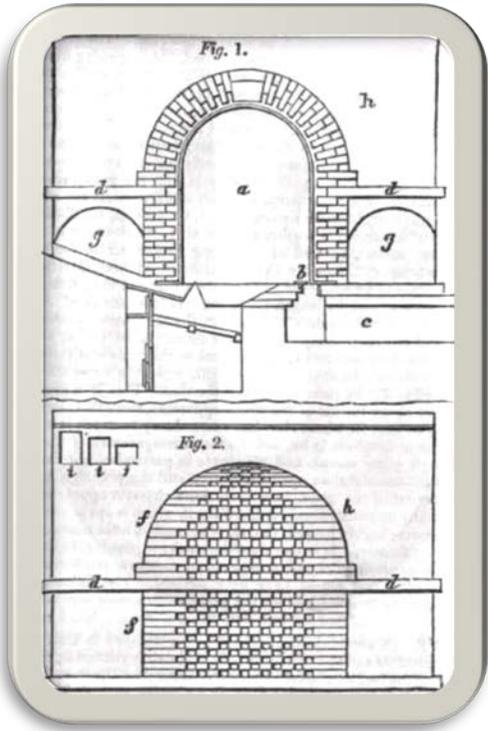
*In the "Adventure of the
Illustrious Client," Holmes and
I will enjoy Turkish baths.*



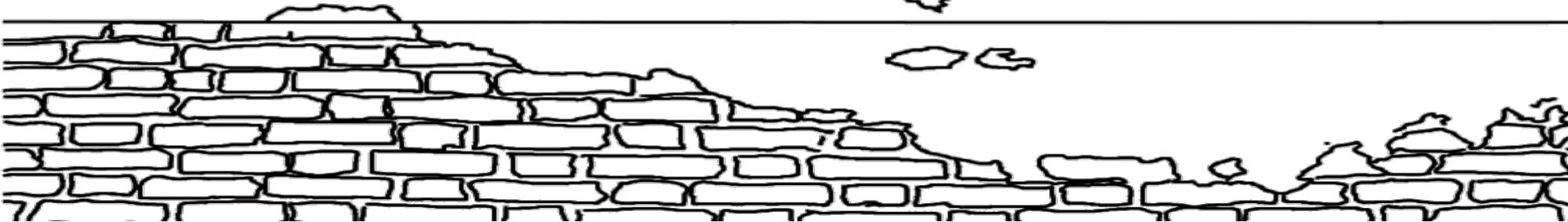


The relaxation Holmes will find in the routine makes him more open than in other environments.

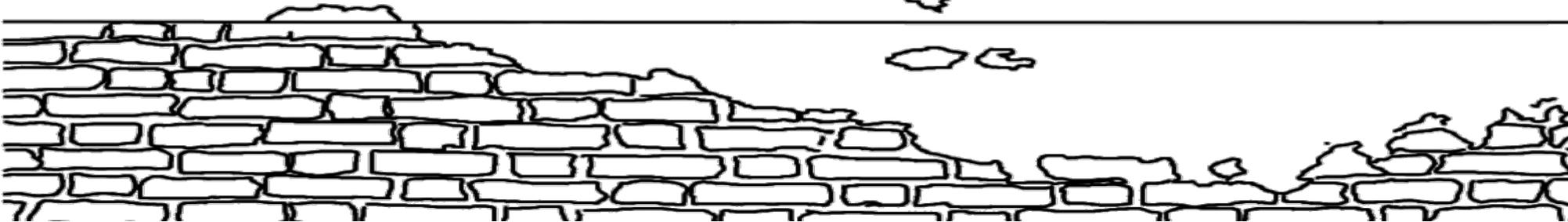


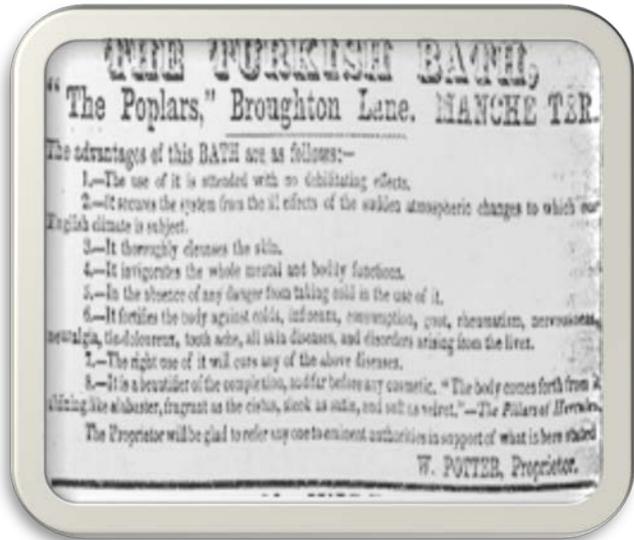


Holmes's affection for the bath, however, seems to have developed later than yours.



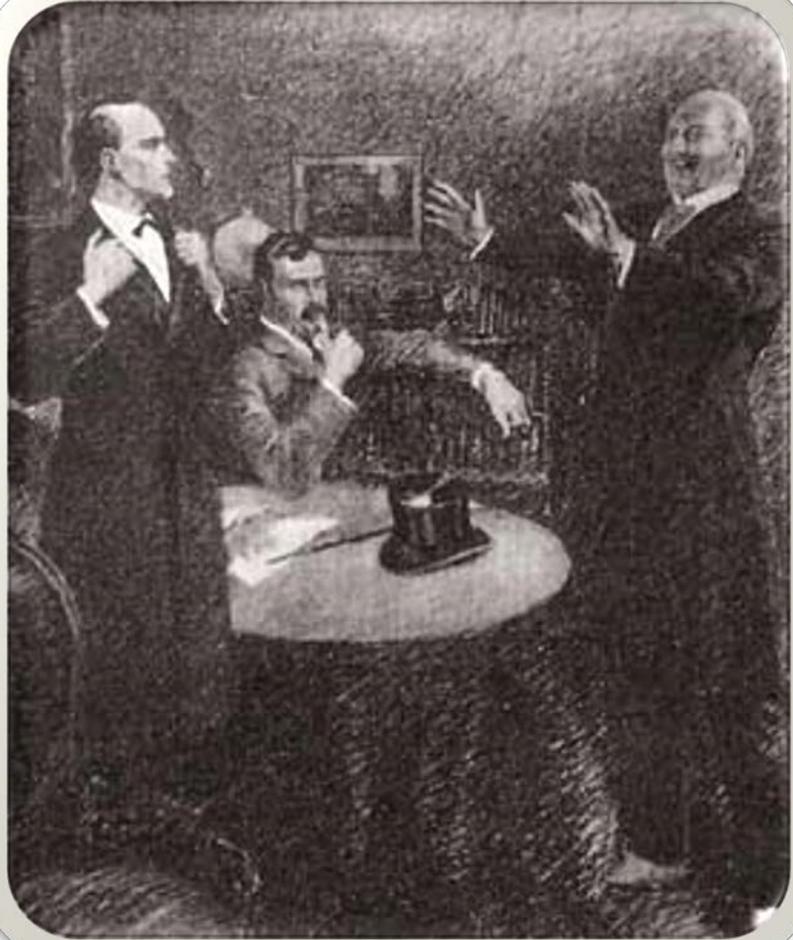
Holmes will question the need for such a bath (over one at home) at the beginning of "The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax."





My defense of my preference will be the bath's dry heat offers an "alternative in medicine" to treat my rheumatic feelings.

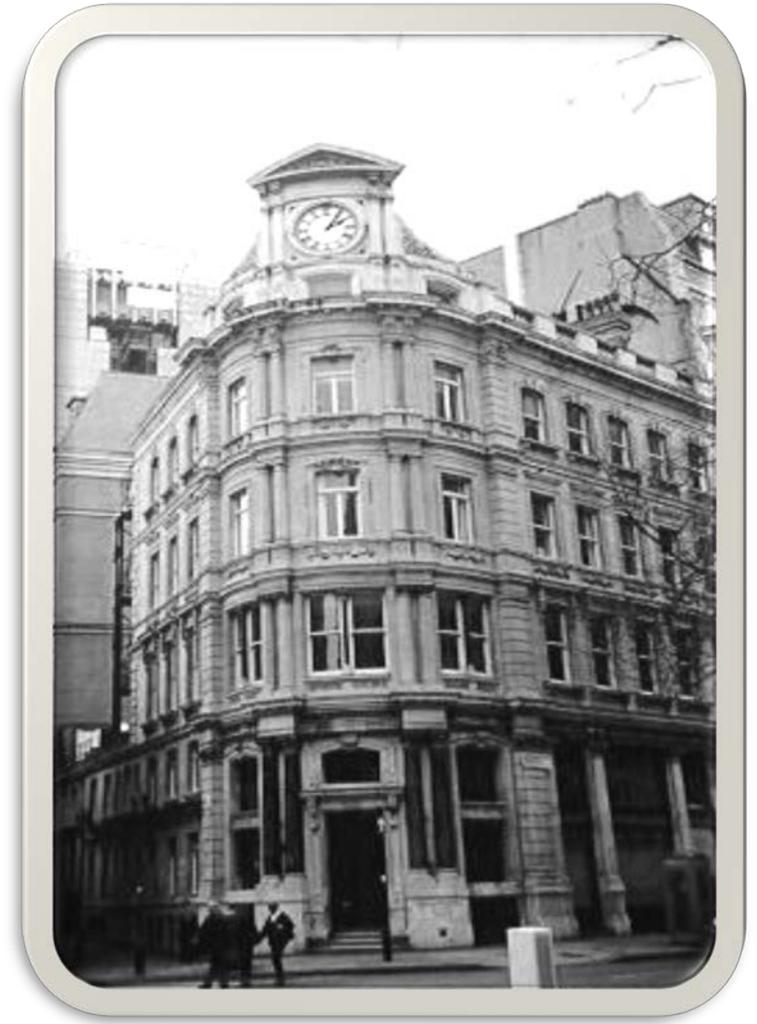




By 1902 (when Sir James Damery will arrange for a meeting with the great detective), you report the bath on Northumberland Avenue is your favorite.



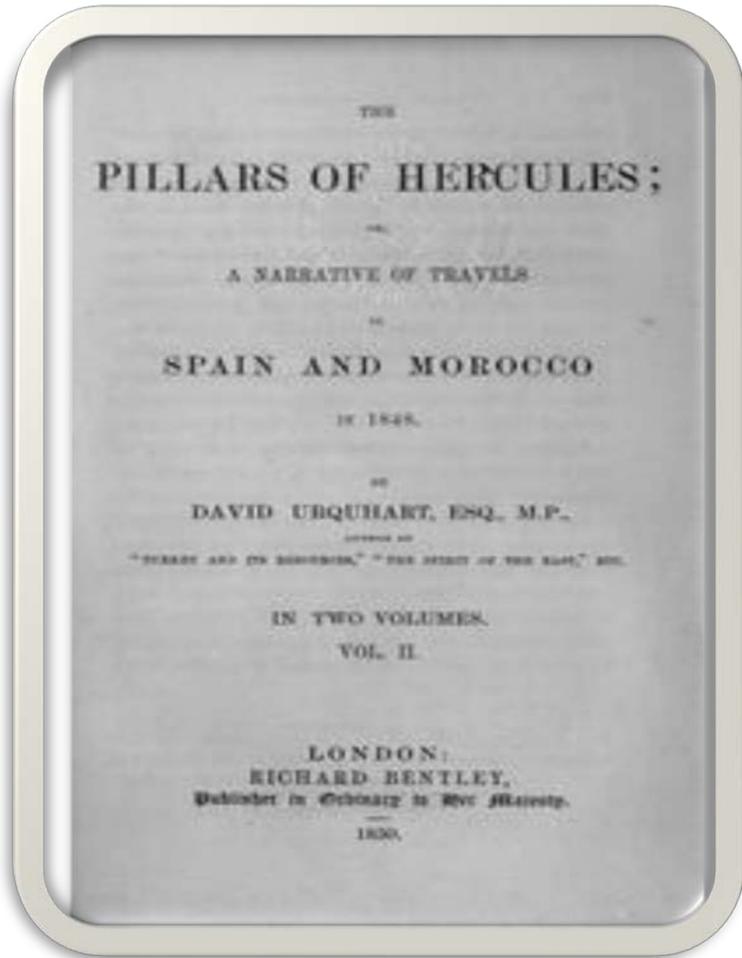
Interestingly, the Charing Cross Turkish Baths does truly exist on Northumberland Avenue, just minutes away from 221B.



The popularity of Victorian Turkish baths will already be waning by the time the two of you relax in the Charing Cross drying room.



Their sudden rise in the mid-1800s results from two enthusiasts who had read David Urquhart's 1850 book The Pillars of Hercules.



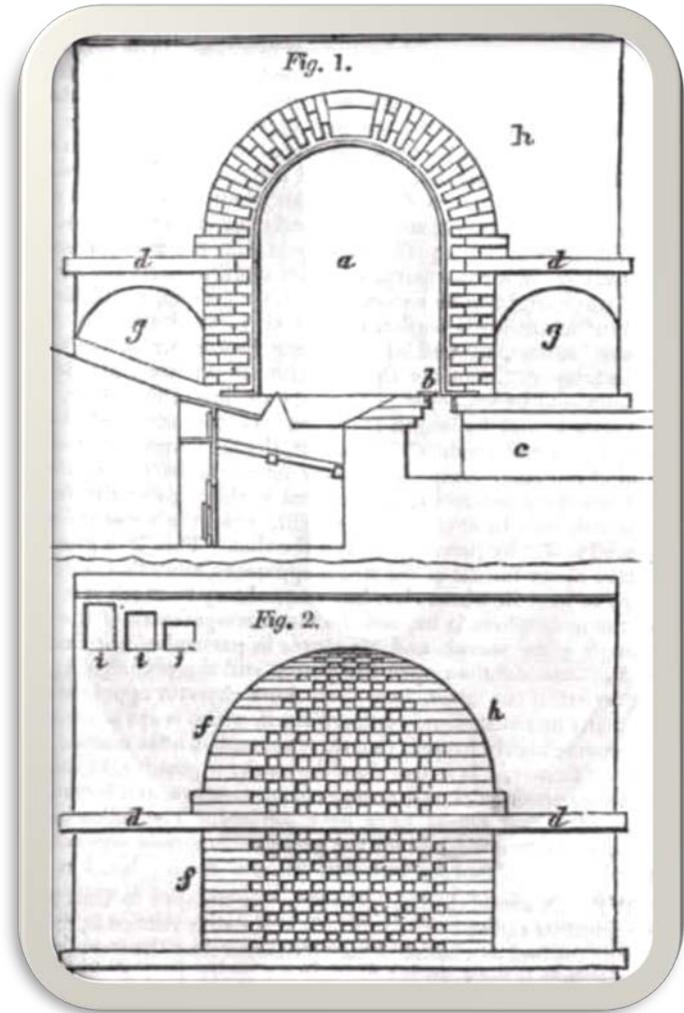
Urquart described the Hammam (Turkish bath) in detail, and sparked the interest of Dr. Richard Barter and Charles Bartholomew.



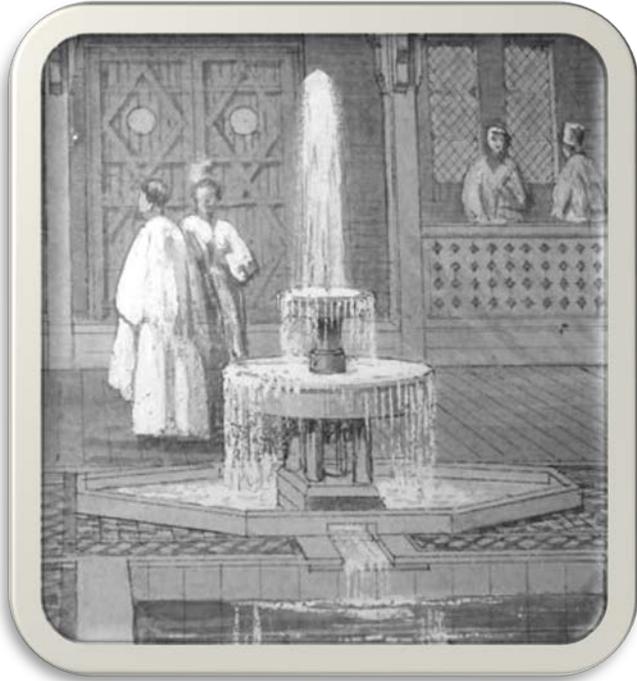
Barter remodeled a vapor bath in Blarney, Ireland and Bartholomew asked Urquhart to help him design another bath in Blarney, and then used that design to open a chain of baths across England.



The bath is designed with a series of pools and rooms, each with a specific function.



After the man (and in some cases, women have separate facilities in the same building) has paid the entrance fee, they leave their shoes and belongings in lockers and then disrobe, wrapping a towel about the waist and the shoulders.



They then pass through a series of three rooms, each one hotter than the last.



The dry heat, which distinguishes the Turkish bath from other steam baths, reaches a temperature of about 154° F in the last room.



After a cold-water plunge, the person lay on a table for a "shampooing."



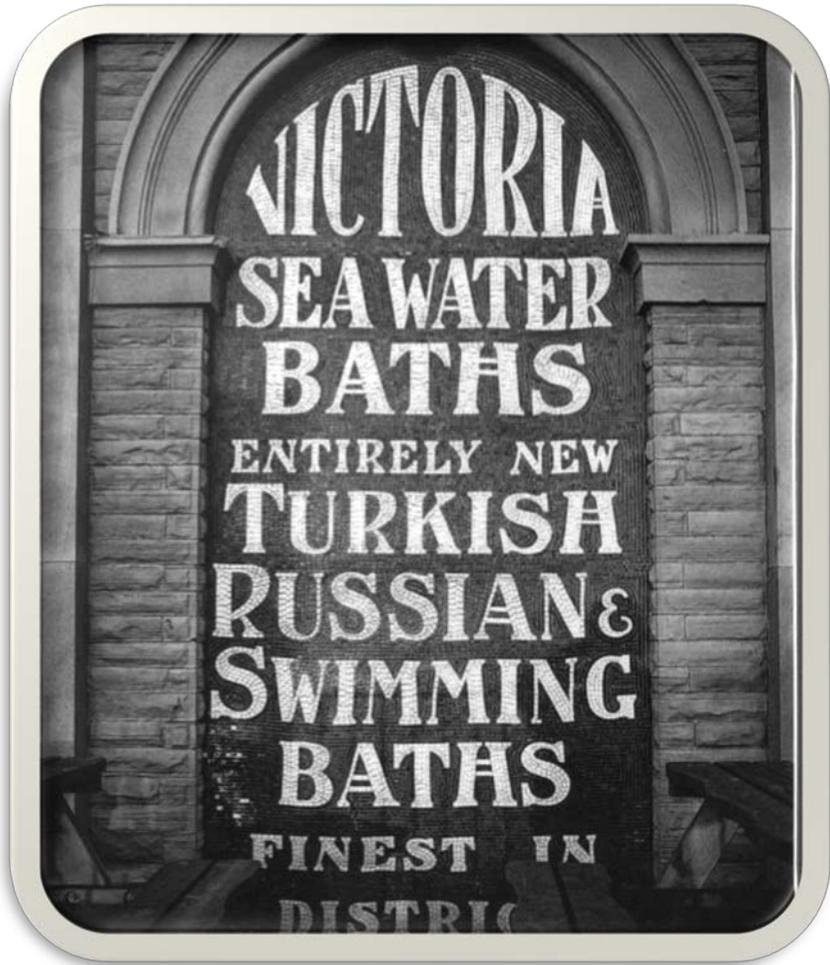
In this process, a "shampooer" massages the muscles, then vigorously scrubs the body with camel hair gloves, and finally cracks all the joints.





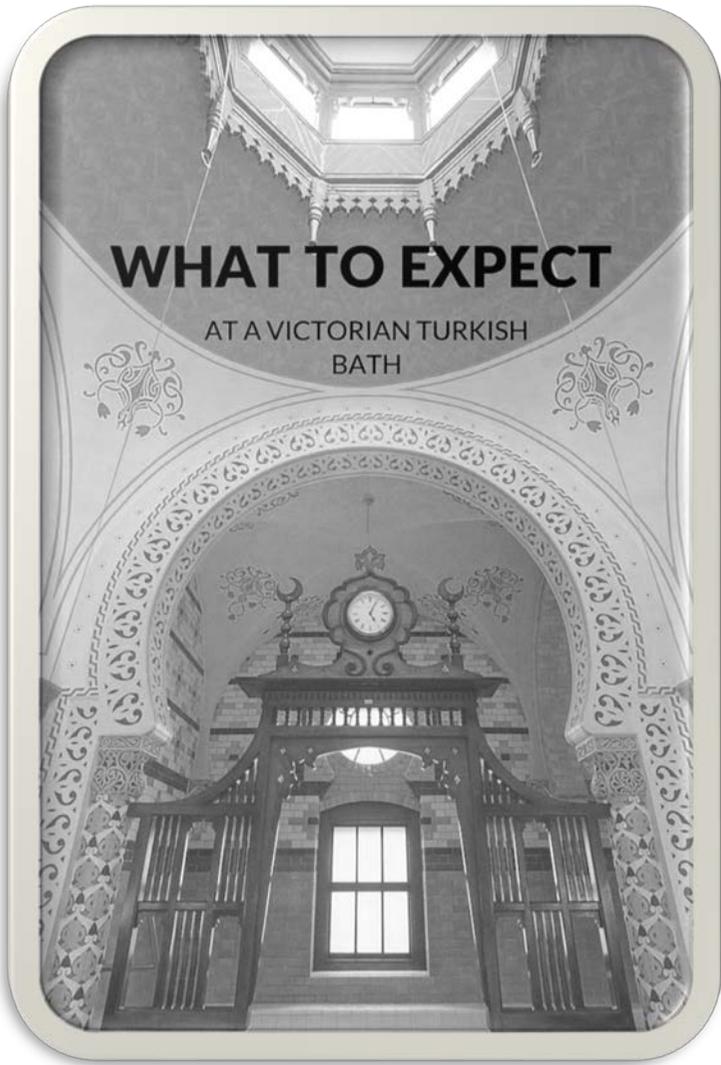
*Finally, the bather
relaxes in the
cooling-off room.*





Early descriptions of the baths' benefits include cures for all sorts of illnesses, including smallpox, gout, liver troubles, and, as in your case, rheumatism.





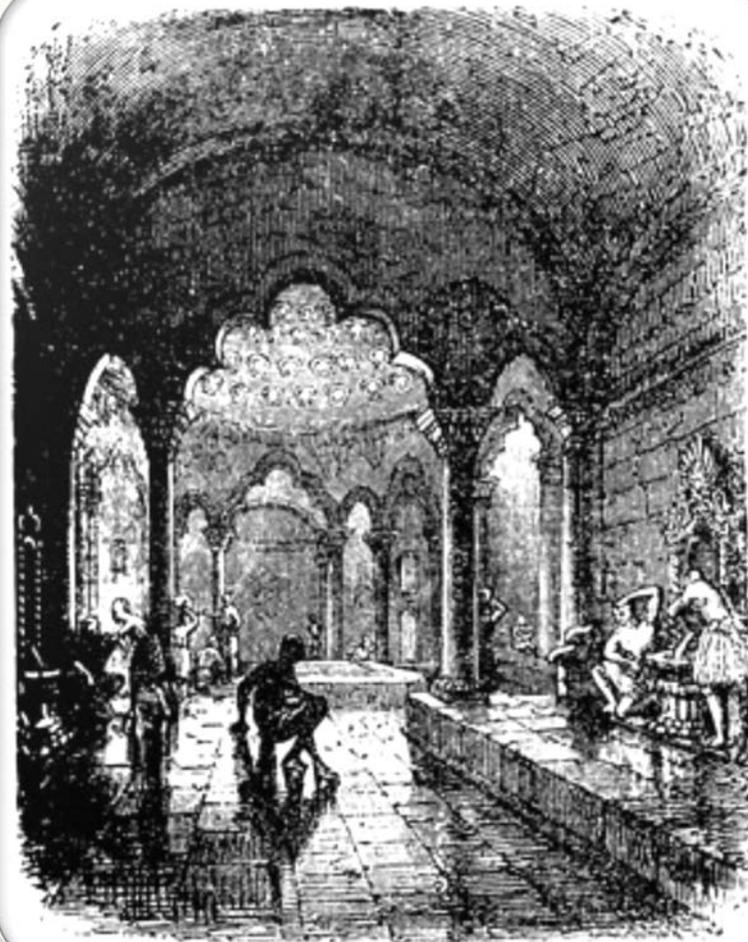
*These are all attributed to
the release of toxins through
the skin and perspiration.*



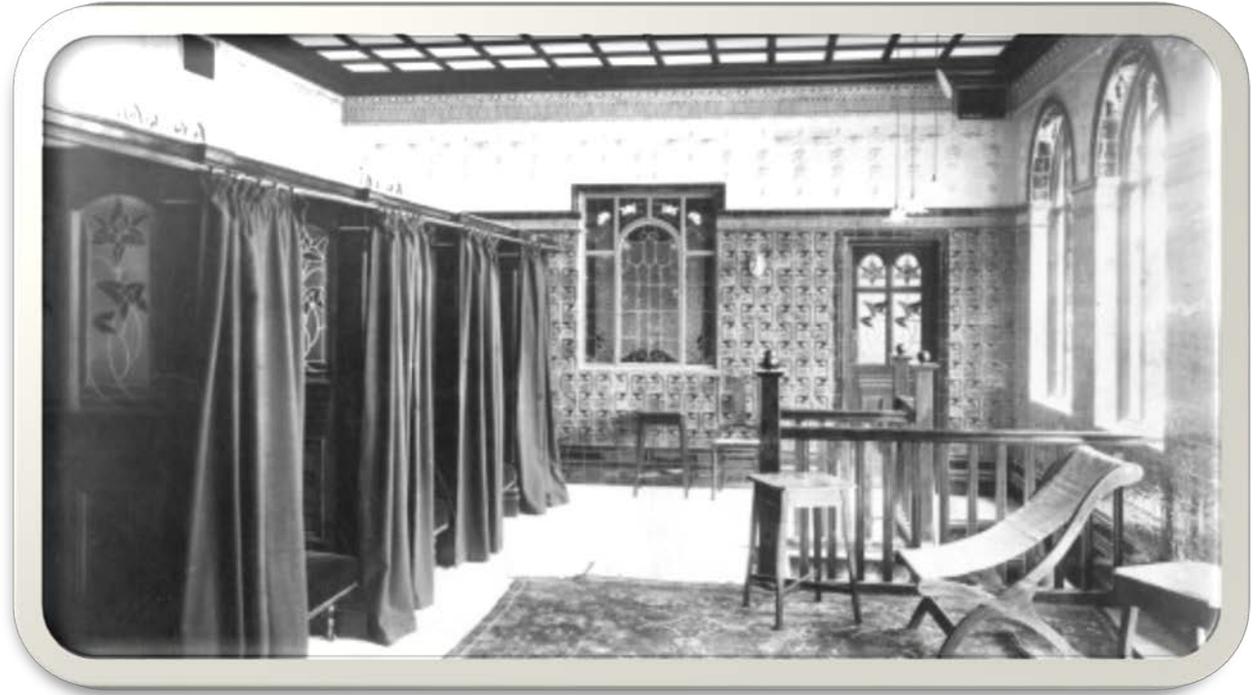
The medical community, however, is not able to substantiate such claims, and within thirty years, Bartholomew will offer some of his baths for sale.



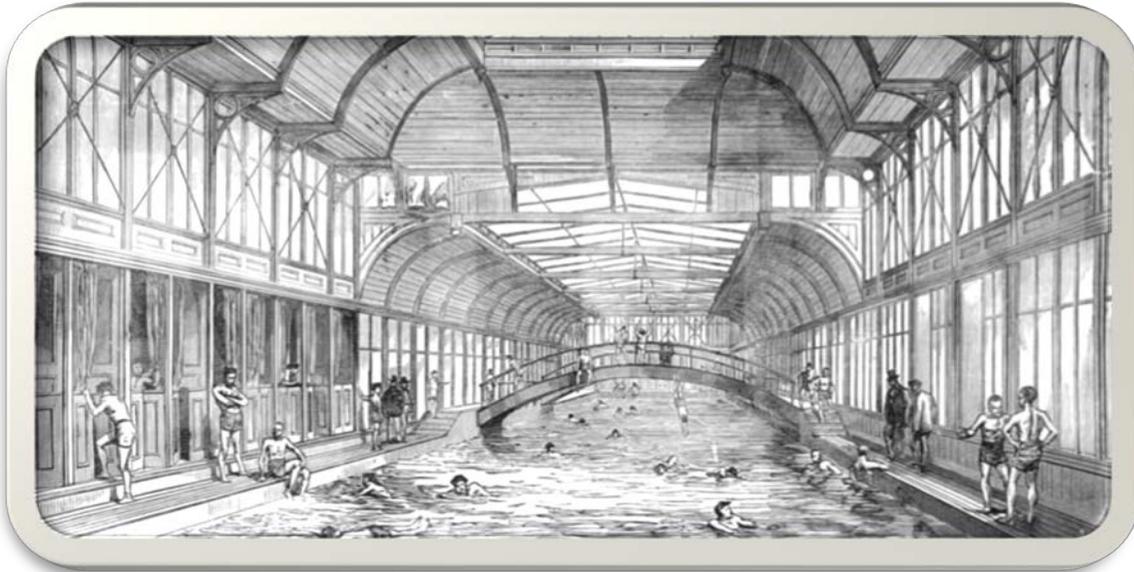
*At their height,
more than 100
Turkish baths
operate in London.*



*By 2017, only
12 will remain.*



Your preferred bath will be turned into a warehouse sometime in the 1900s, but the Charing Cross Bath at 25 Northumberland Avenue will be resurrected as a Thai spa in the 21st century.



The dry-hot bath has been replaced with steam rooms, and the shampooing with a Thai massage.

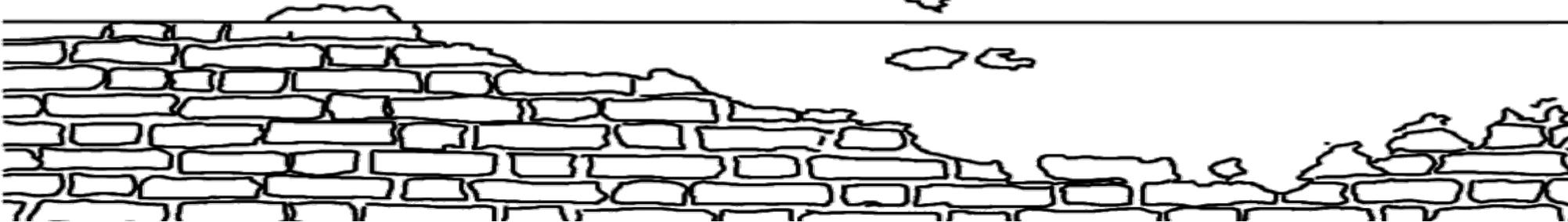


While we may not recognize the treatment, we will most certainly appreciate the relaxation offered at these facilities.



*So we have completed
topic 46 in our series...*

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



References for this topic:

- Leslie Katz, "Plunging into 'the full tide of human existence': the Charing Cross Neighbourhood in the Sherlock Holmes Adventures." February 19, 2017.
- Peter Kandela (2000). The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Bath in Victorian England. International Journal of Dermatology.
- Malcolm R. Shifrin, "Victorian Turkish baths" www.victorianturkishbath.org. May 2017.
- <https://www.bookyourlifestyle.com/thai-square-spa-101308.html>



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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY

LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

RUSTY MASON

&

STEVE MASON

