

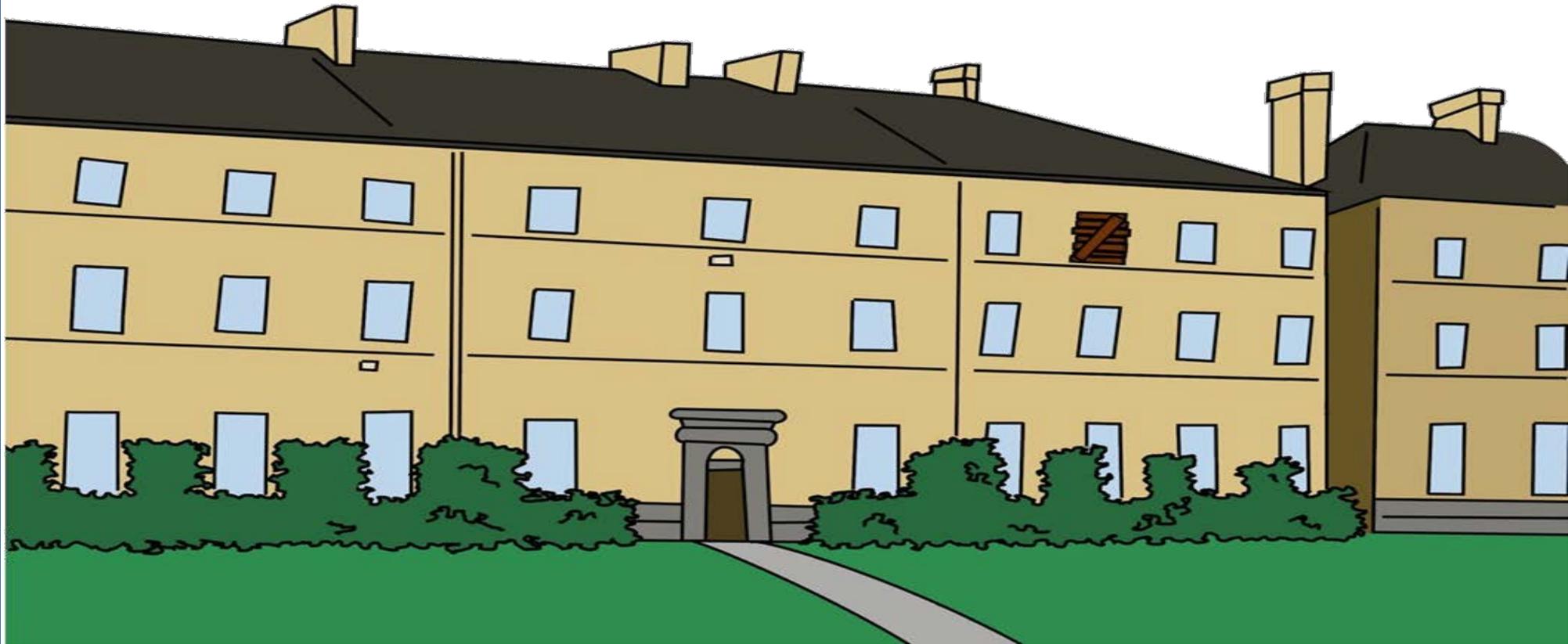
*Baker Street Elementary*

Presents  
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



# *Baker Street Elementary*

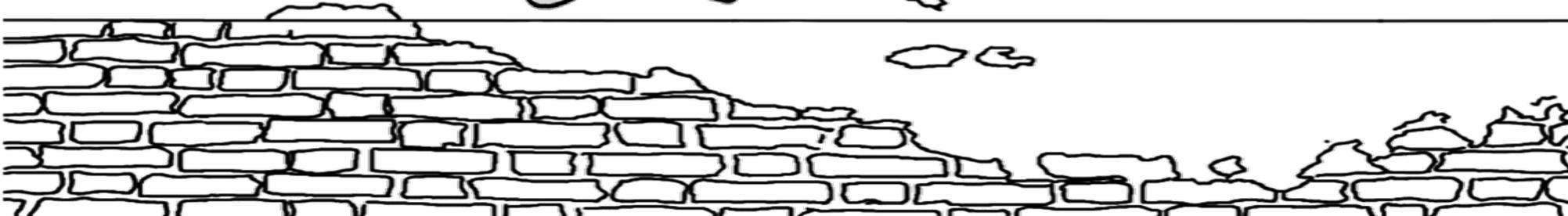
*The Life and Times in Victorian London*  
*# 063 -Victorian Clothing - 09/03/2018*



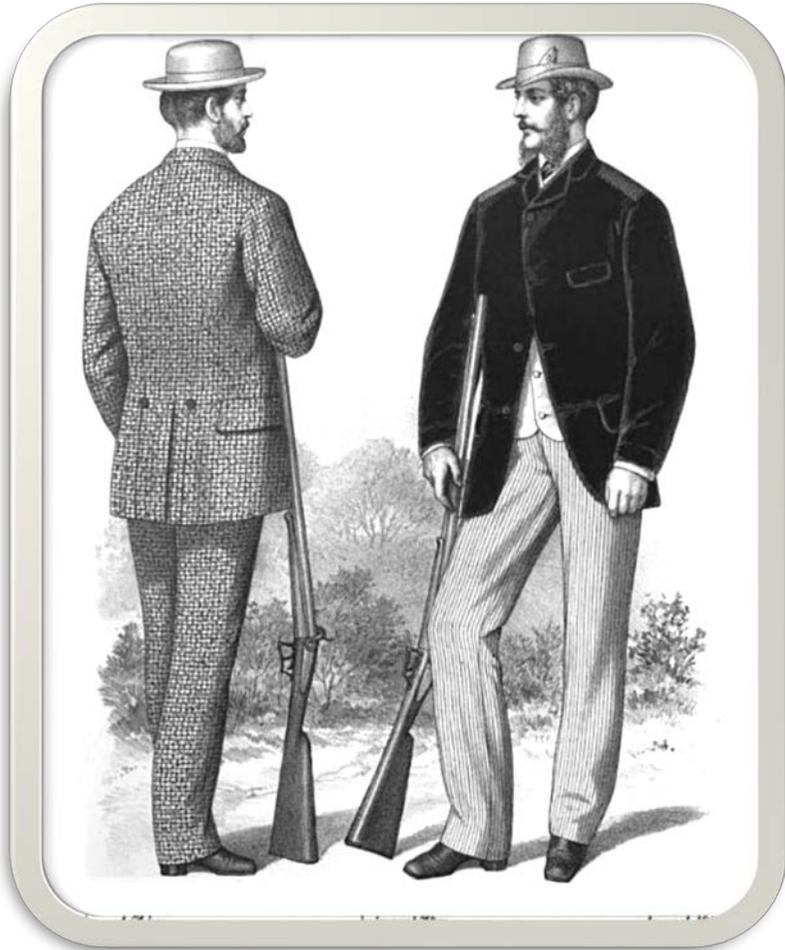
*Welcome to topic number 63... Victorian Clothing... Thanks so much to AboutBritain.com for use of their summary text for this lesson...*



*"The clothes make the man" is a phrase that could have been coined during the our Victorian period.*



*Victorian clothes are very much a symbol of who you are, what you do for a living, and how much money is in your bank account.*



*For the wealthy, silk stockings cover the legs.*

*For the less wealthy, it is wool socks.*



*Beachwear in Victorian times consist of a costume which covers the entire body with yards of material.*



*There are exceptions though - arms  
can be bare from the elbows down.*



*Ladies have to have their legs completely covered.*

*This is either done by wearing black stockings or, later in the century, trousers.*



*Men are able to show their shins.  
Bathing bonnets are worn by both.*



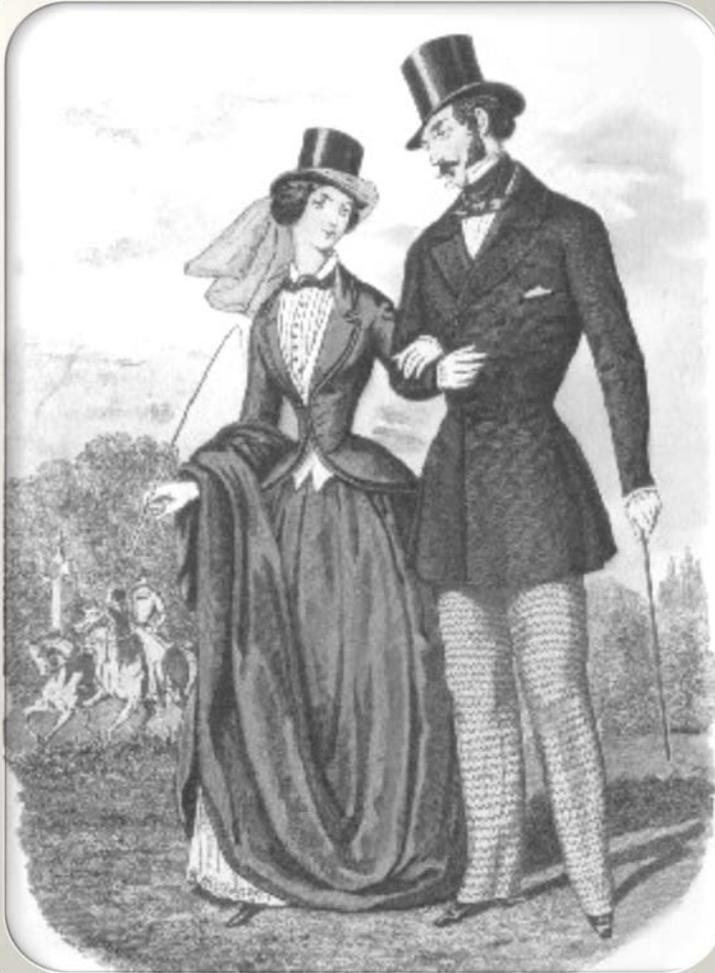
*Good quality leather shoes can be made-to-order, but by 1850 manufactured shoes, are available for purchase.*

*Shoes are now made for the 'proper' feet.*



*Etiquette plays its part in  
Victorian clothing.*

*It is considered 'good etiquette'  
to dress appropriately to ones  
age, and position in society.*



*To own an umbrella is a  
social-scale barometer.*



*The wealthy own their own  
bumpershoots, while the general  
public rent an umbrella if the  
weather turns wet.*



*Victorian dress is not complete without a walking stick, or cane.*



*Some canes contain  
compartments which are useful  
for holding vials of perfume.*



*Victorian fashion does include  
eyeglasses,*

*But, they are strictly for looks and  
not for the correction of vision.*



*Often, if there are lenses in the frames, those lenses are removed and the empty frames become part of the ensemble.*





*Although the cloth for Victorian era clothing is manufactured, ready-made outfits are unknown.*



*Seamstresses and tailors are responsible for custom-made creations.*

*Milliners, glovers, and hatters help to complete the look.*



*If the pocket-book doesn't allow such individual attention, families make their own Victorian clothes or find used garments.*

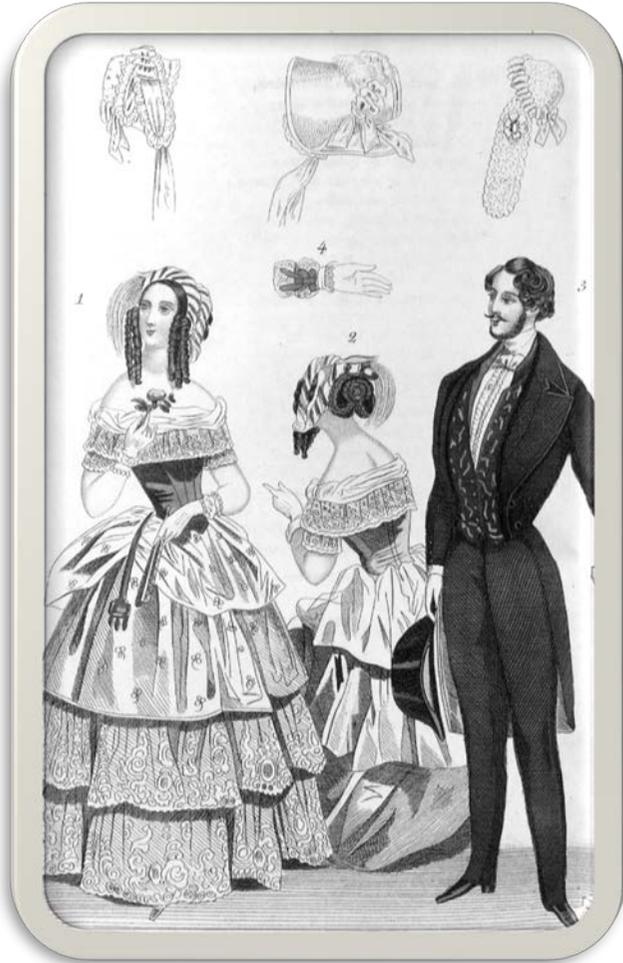


*The poorer members of society visit second-hand, even third and fourth-hand, shops for garments which still have some wear in them.*



*Throughout the Victorian era, fashion changes dramatically.*

*Skirts have gone from straight to being spread over large hoops.*



*At the end of the era, the hoop will disappear from view and it will be back to slimmer skirts, although now sporting a bustle.*





*Sleeves make different fashion statements, also.*

*Slim sleeves will give way to "leg o'mutton" sleeves by the end of Queen Victoria's reign.*

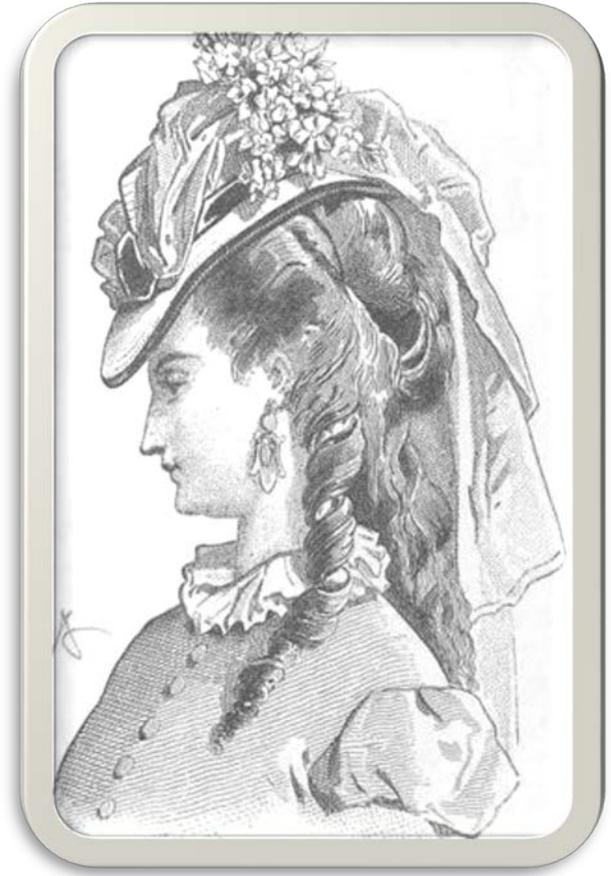


*Head gear is a style all its own.*

*From large lavishly decorated hats, covered with feathers and flowers, the close-fitting bonnet will soon be the need-to-have garment.*

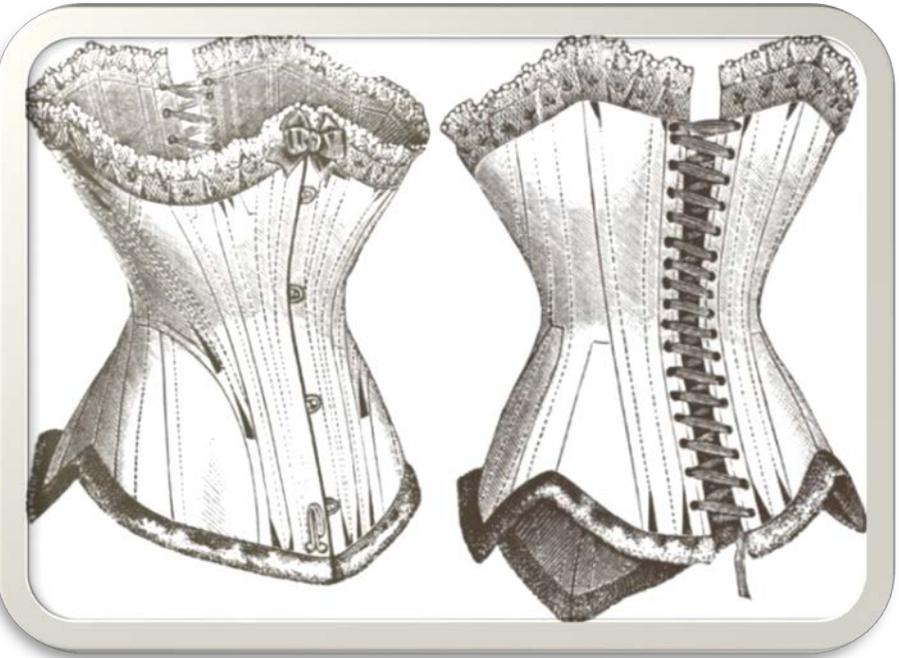


*Not that these are any plainer -  
feathers, lace, and flowers are  
still be used for decoration.*



*There is a constant, though; the corset.*

*The design throughout the era will change, but the initial purpose never varies.*



*To wear Victorian dress, it is necessary to have a cinched-in waist.*





*For younger ladies, having a waist in inches the same as your age is the goal.*

*Seventeen years old?*





*That means you strive for a  
seventeen inch waist.*

*Older ladies are allowed  
more leeway.*



*The baring of the shoulder and upper part of the chest is strictly for evening apparel, and most usually this style is worn by upper and middle class ladies.*



*Working-class women are more modest.*

*Because of the exposure of flesh to cool air, shawls join the Victorian costume.*



*Satins, silks, and heavy  
velvets for the older  
generation are the norm.*



*For younger society ladies who were on the look-out for "a good catch", the lighter the material, the better.*



*Fragile gauze dresses,  
covered with bows or  
flowers, are made to catch a  
prospective husband's eye.*



*On average, these dresses are worn only once or twice... and then thrown away!*





*Middle-class women buy either garments, or ready-made clothes, with the idea that they will last.*





*If necessary, the garment will at some point be cut-down so that it can be worn by children.*





*For the well-dressed female tradesman (aka "monger"), a bright silk scarf is worn around the neck, and a flower-strewn bonnet adorns the head.*





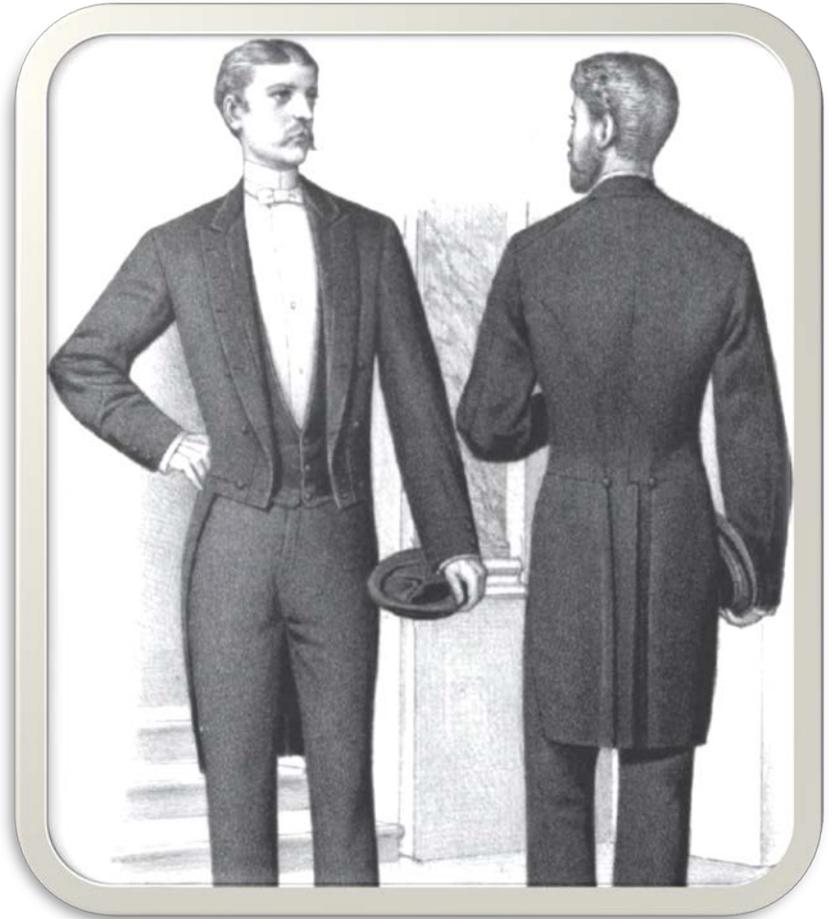
**Brightly polished boots are proudly shown beneath a many petticoated skirt, which just reached to the ankles.**



*Victorian dress doesn't  
go in for such radical  
changes with men.*



*But coat lengths did vary over time and the cinching of the waist (yes, men would wear a type of corset) has given way to the ease-of-breathing loose jacket.*



*Men's fashion history can be traced via the style of trousers.*

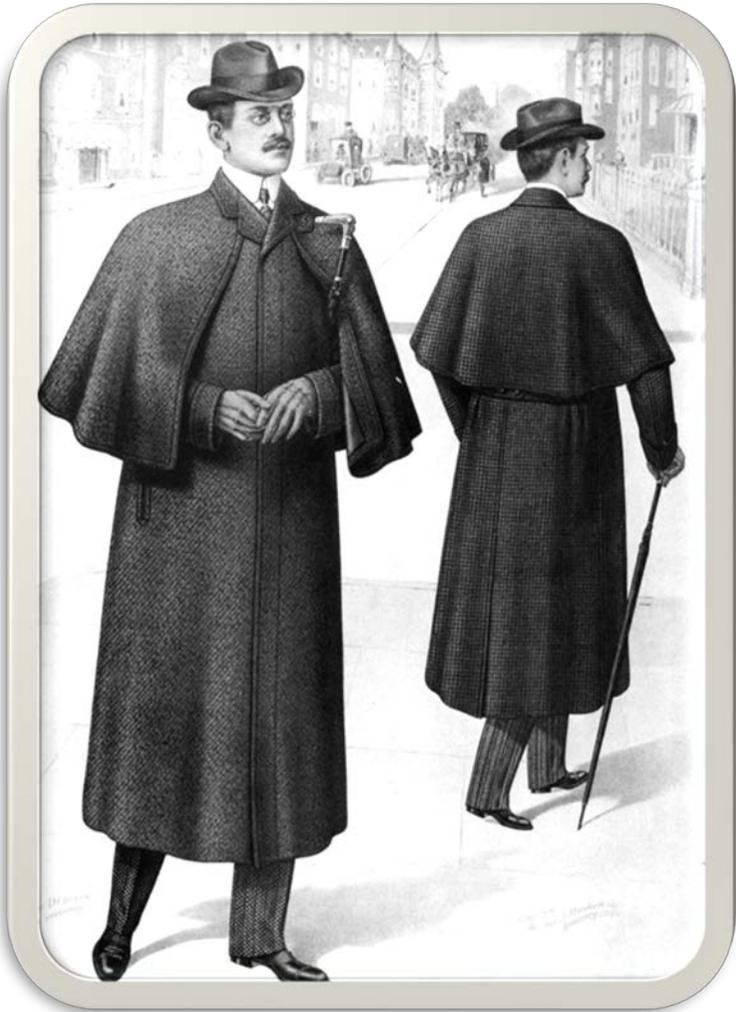
*Early in Queen Victoria's reign, legs were covered in tight form-fitting cloth.*



*This appearance soon changed to a looser tubular style.*

*Straight slacks, with a crease in front and back, will be common by the end of the century.*





*The elegant dress-coat for the day slowly gave way to a long frock coat, usually black.*

*The dress coat does continue to make appearances, though.*





*'White tie and tails' is the formal eveningwear for gentleman, the 'tails' being the former daytime coat.*





*Games and cycling are the major catalysts for any change in male Victorian clothes.*

*By the late 1800's, knickers will be introduced and a more casual style adopted for daytime wear.*



*Plaids and checks are seen more often, although most often in the country.*



*Like his female counterpart, a male monger wears a bright silk scarf around his neck.*

*Atop his head is a closely fitting cap which completely covers his hair.*



*A long waistcoat and seamed trousers completes his Victorian costume, ending with the sight of polished boots.*



*Again, thanks to  
AboutBritain.com for their help...  
So we have completed topic 63 in  
our series...*

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



**Original Source Material for this topic:**

1) <http://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/victorian-clothes.asp>



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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

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