

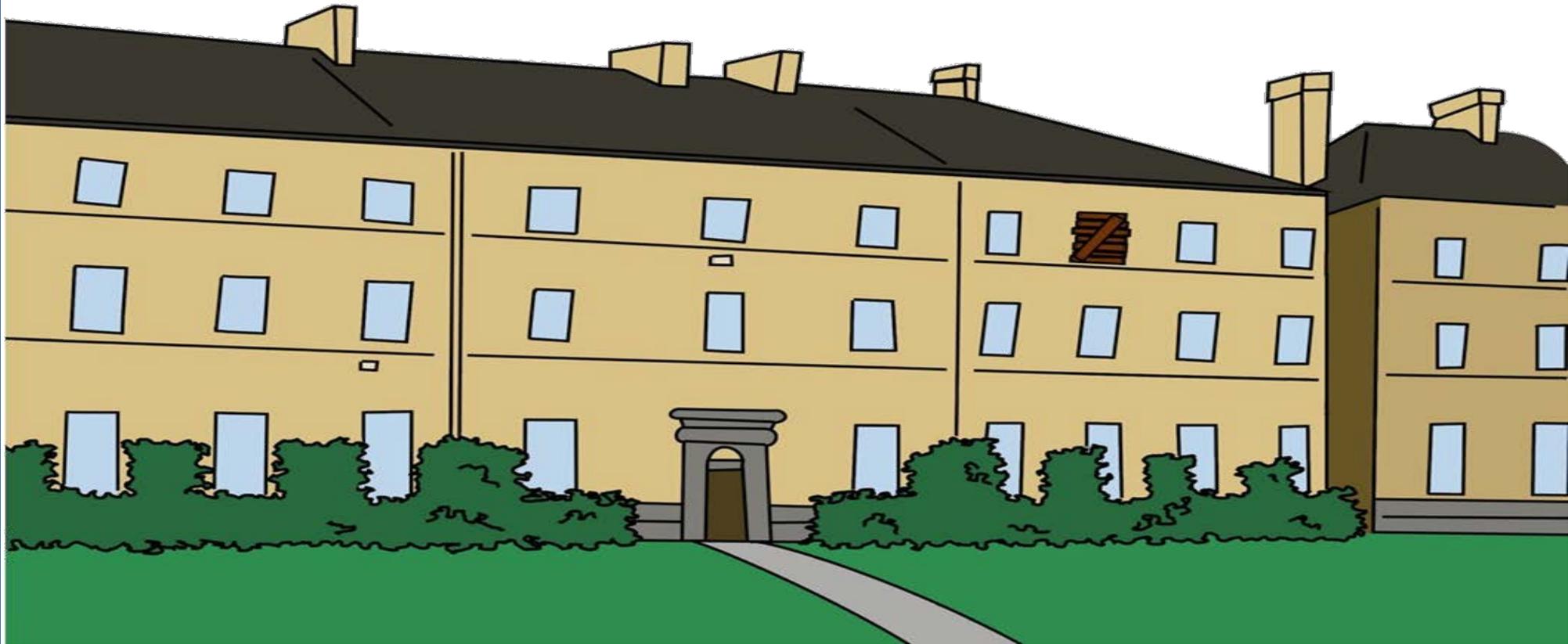
Baker Street Elementary

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



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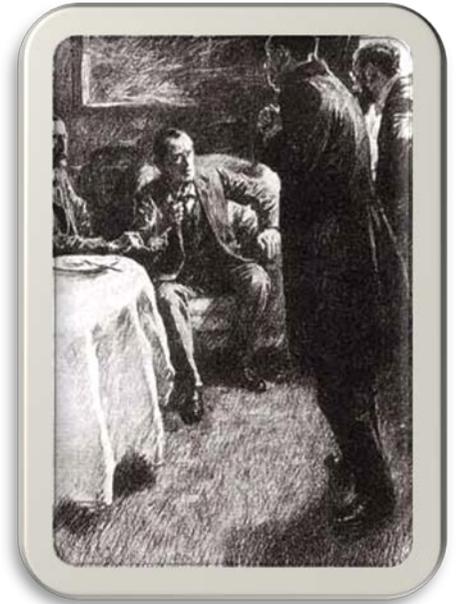
The Life and Times in Victorian London
081 - Parson, Vicar, or Rector? - 11/16/2018



*Welcome to topic number 81...
today we will be looking at the
clergy in our Adventures.*



Eight stories in the canon refer to men of the cloth, with four stories each using either the term "vicar" or "parson."



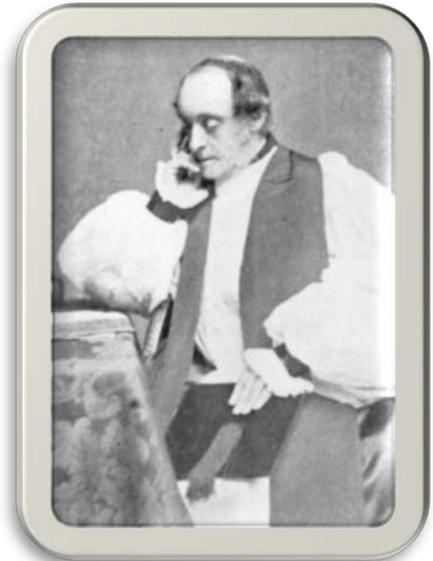
*In "The Adventure of the Valley of Fear,"
Holmes uses a local rector's library for research.*

*While both Holmes and I call J.C. Elman in "The
Adventure of the Retired Colourman" a vicar, I
use at one point "parson" instead.*



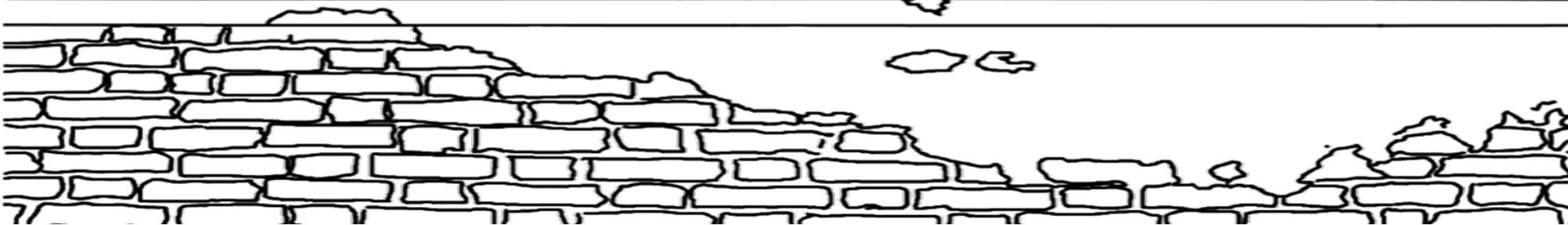
All three of these terms indicate they are Anglican.

The term "priest" appears only once in the canon and is used for a foreigner (Catholic or otherwise).





The Church of England was, and continues to be, the established, or state, church, linking the two through the monarch who serves as the Supreme Governor of the church.



*When taking the throne,
the new king or queen
promises to maintain the
Church during his or her
coronation oath.*



The church structure involves two Archbishops (one in the north, York, and one in the south, Canterbury) who oversee forty-three dioceses (each with a Cathedral, the seat for the assigned bishop), which, in turn, are divided into archdeaconries (run by archdeacons).



The archdeaonries are divided into deaneries, which cover a group of parishes.



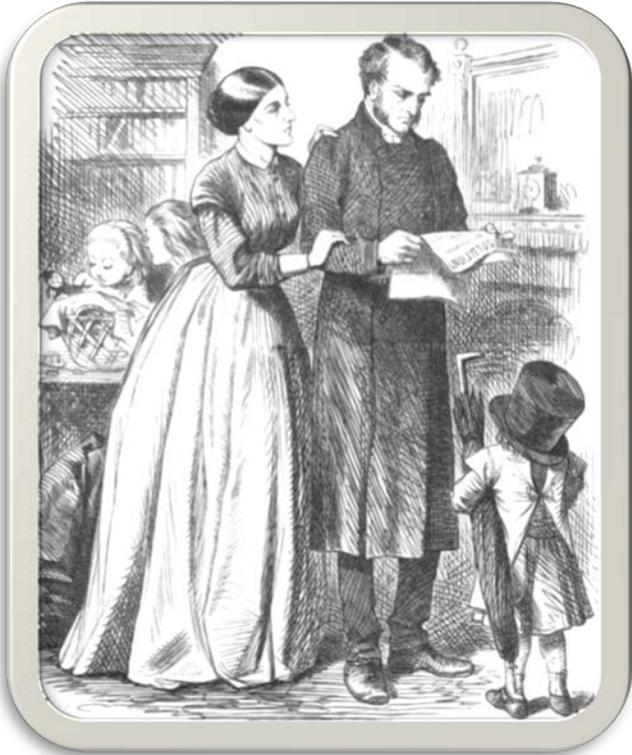
In other words, for everyone in England, there is a parish church and a rector or vicar.



The Archbishops and twenty-four of the bishops also serve in the House of Lords and are responsible for such civic responsibilities as state weddings, funerals, and coronations.



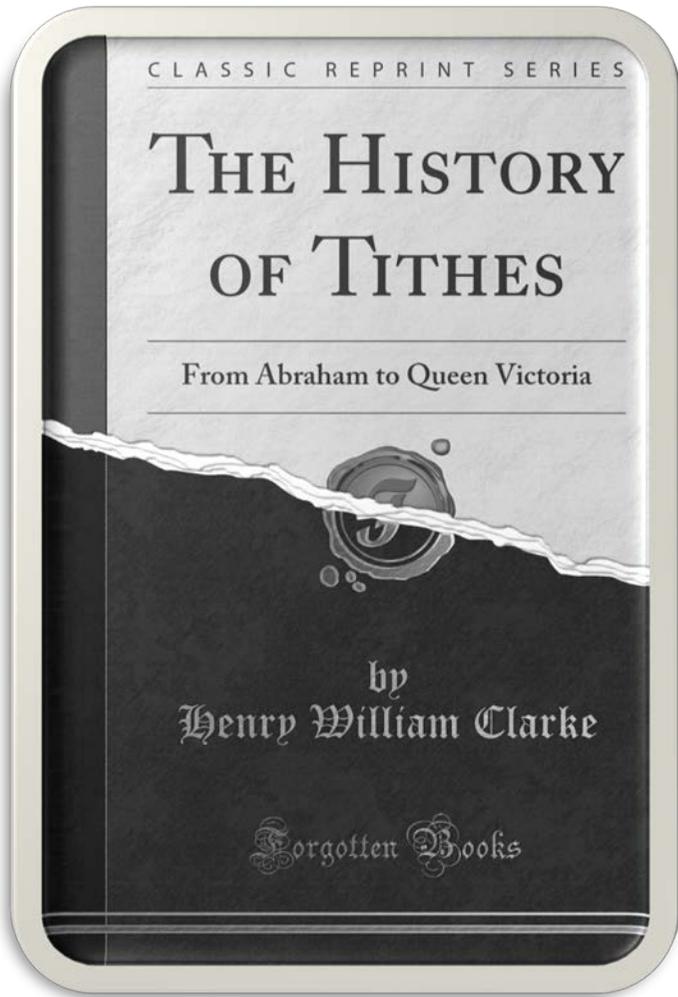
Whether the local churchman is a "vicar" or a "rector" depends on how they are funded, although their duties are the same.



Vicars are paid through tithes on major crops collected and managed by a lay corporation or individual.

Rectors receive tithes directly.





This is called a "living" and explains the note "living of Moosmoor" at the end of Elman's signature in the telegram Holmes sent in "The Adventure of the Retired Colourman."



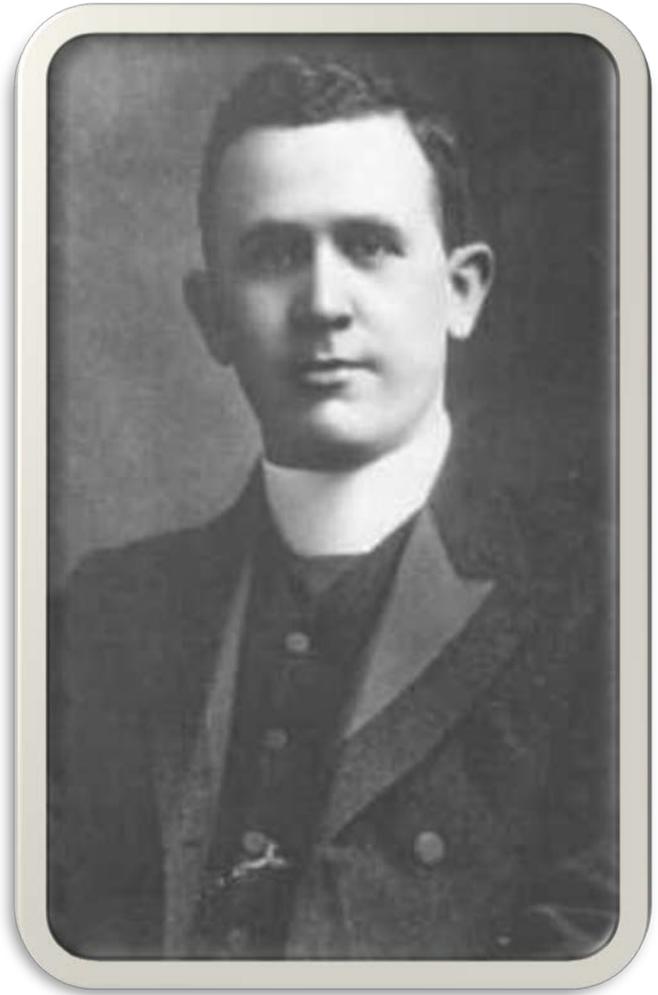
*In addition to the tithes,
the rector or vicar also has
a "glebe"—a piece of land
he can farm or lease out.*



*Such position and funds
are for life, and, as
such, those with more
lucrative resources are
highly desirable and
quite competitive.*



*Those with the
best patronage and
connections are
more likely to the
get better posts.*



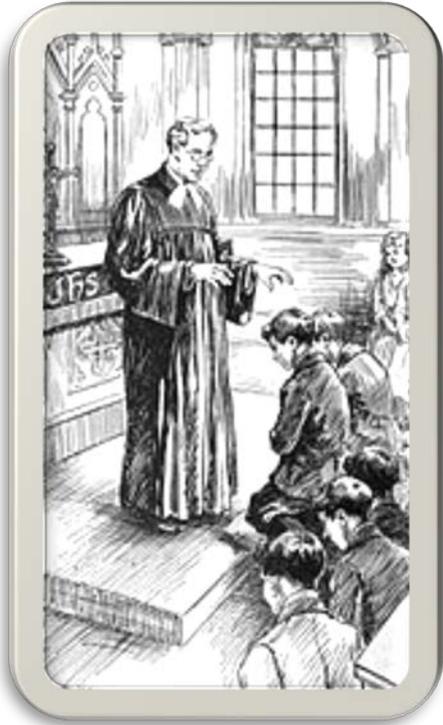
Appointment is decided by an individual, the lay corporation, the bishop, or a college at Oxford or Cambridge, depending on who controls the specific parish or church.



While the parish parson is expected to be married and can be ordained at age twenty-three, they have to wait until their appointment comes through to have the income to do so—often at much older age than a recent graduate.

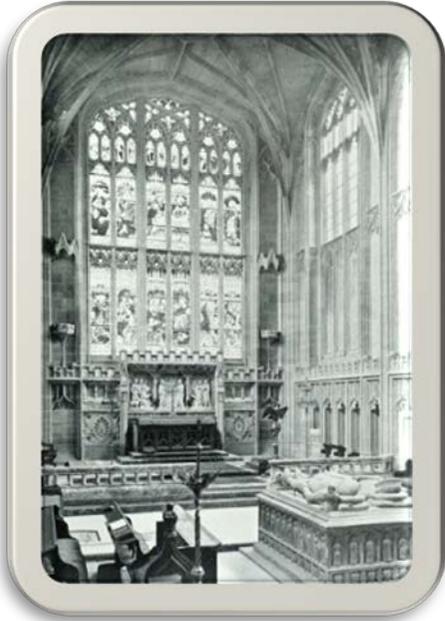


While this system is well supported when the country is primarily agrarian, the shift to an industrial economy with most moving to the city will lead to major shifts in the church.



Tithes and glebes will diminish, leading to a dependence on fees, pew rents (for those who don't want to sit at the back of the church), and collections.





*Church attendance will decrease,
and other denominations and
religions will grow.*



By the end of the century, the majority of the population will not attend services and the decline continues over the next century.

In 2002, about 1% will attend church on Sunday.



During our times, the individual parson has a great deal of freedom within the parish with respect to how services are run, what outside activities (such as Sunday schools to teach poor children to read) are offered, and oversight of any local religious celebrations.



Often one of the few locals with a college education, they are sought for advice on any number of subjects—a trait not ignored by Holmes when he needs to consult some references concerning Vermissa Valley to determine the identity of a murder victim in The Valley of Fear.



As a person of learning who was well-connected to village life, Holmes will recognize the role the parson plays as a source of information both local and referential.



*So we have completed
topic 81 in our series...*

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



References for this topic:

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- http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/cofe/cofe_1.shtml
- Sally Mitchell, editor, *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988, page 157.
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- Mitchell, *Daily Life*, page 248.
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