

# SHERLOCK HOLMES *and the* ADVENTURE *of the* FAITHFUL FUSILIER

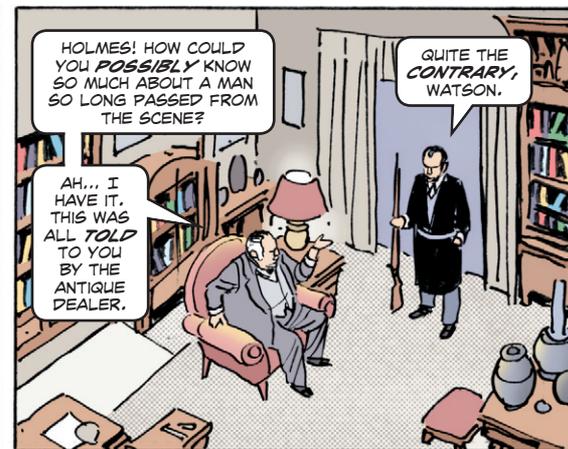
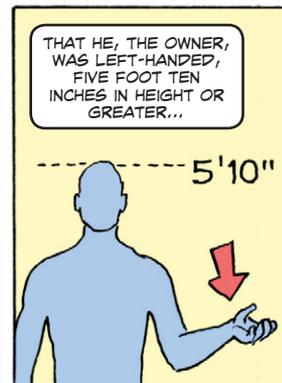
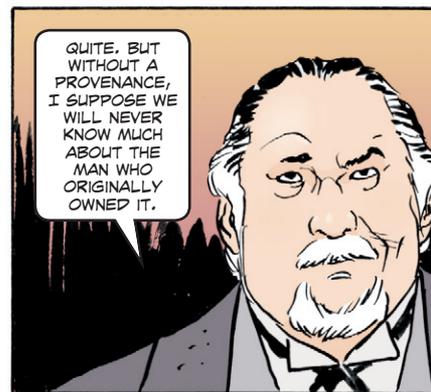
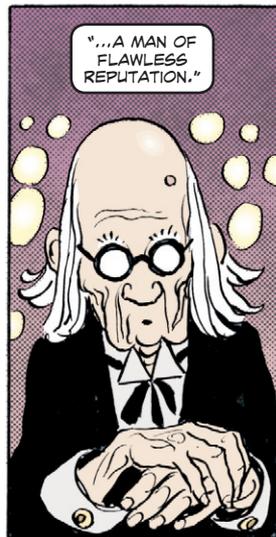
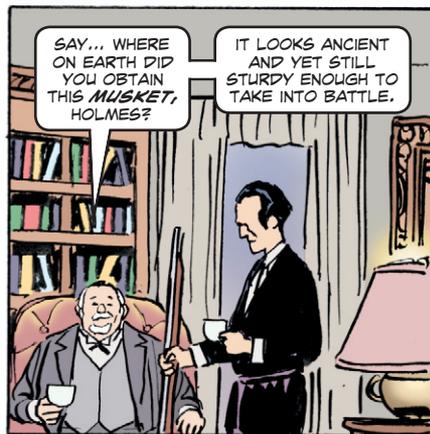


THANK YOU, MRS. HUDSON. THAT WILL BE ALL

I BELIEVE YOU HAVE OTHER PRESSING DUTIES TO ATTEND TO.

OF COURSE, SIR.







HE CONFESSED TO ME, RATHER SHEEPLISHLY, THAT HE KNEW NOTHING AT ALL ABOUT THE ORIGINAL OWNER.

THEN YOU MUST ENLIGHTEN ME, HOLMES. *HOW* DO YOU KNOW OF HIS POSITION AND HIS SERVICE TO THE KING?

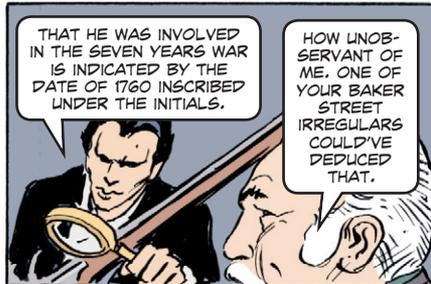


THAT IS THE *EASIEST* PART.

NO, WATSON, IT IS ALL RIGHT *HERE...* IN *FRONT* OF YOU... *IF* YOU KNOW WHERE AND HOW TO LOOK.

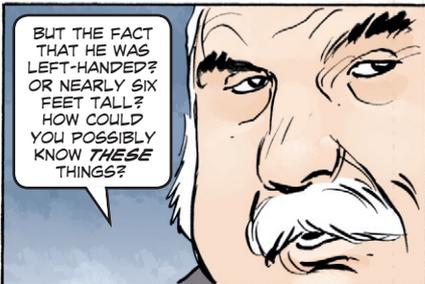


SEE THE BRASS PLATE ON THE BUTTSTOCK? IT IS INSCRIBED KRRC. A QUICK VISIT TO MY BOX OF CLIPPINGS BEGINNING WITH THE LETTER K TOLD ME THAT THIS INSCRIPTION COULD ONLY REFER TO ONE OF THE KING'S MOST TRUSTED FUSILIERS, A MEMBER OF GEORGE II'S KING'S ROYAL RIFLE CORPS.



THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN THE SEVEN YEARS WAR IS INDICATED BY THE DATE OF 1760 INSCRIBED UNDER THE INITIALS.

HOW UNOBSERVANT OF ME. ONE OF YOUR BAKER STREET IRREGULARS COULD'VE PEDITCED THAT.



BUT THE FACT THAT HE WAS LEFT-HANDED? OR NEARLY SIX FEET TALL? HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY KNOW *THESE* THINGS?



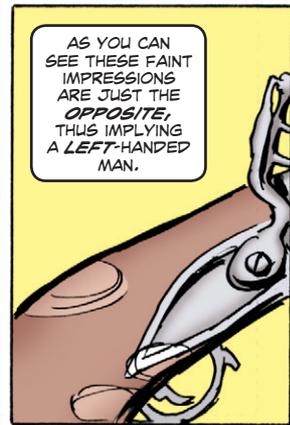
LOOK HERE, WATSON... AT THE HAND GRIP AND THE BARREL.

SEE THOSE FAINT INDENTATIONS?



OVER MANY YEARS OF USE, A *RIGHT*-HANDED MAN WOULD LEAVE THE IMPRINT OF THE THUMB OF HIS RIGHT HAND HERE IN THE GRIP AREA...

...WHILE THE FINGERS OF HIS *LEFT* HAND WOULD HAVE SLIGHT INDENTATIONS HERE, ON THE UNDERSIDE OF THE STOCK.



AS YOU CAN SEE THESE FAINT IMPRESSIONS ARE JUST THE *OPPOSITE*, THUS IMPLYING A *LEFT*-HANDED MAN.

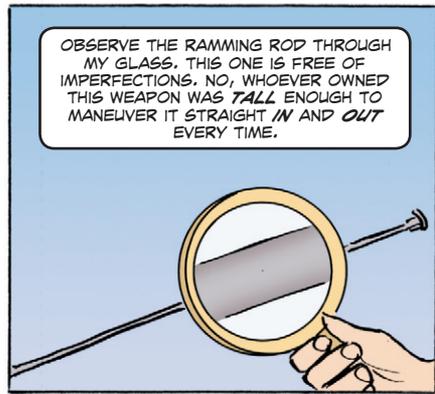
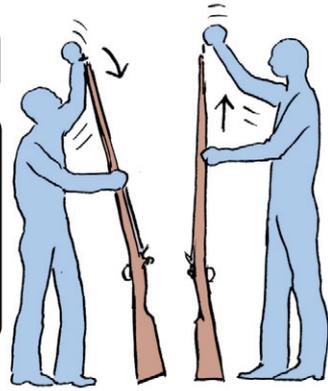


OF COURSE! AND HIS HEIGHT?

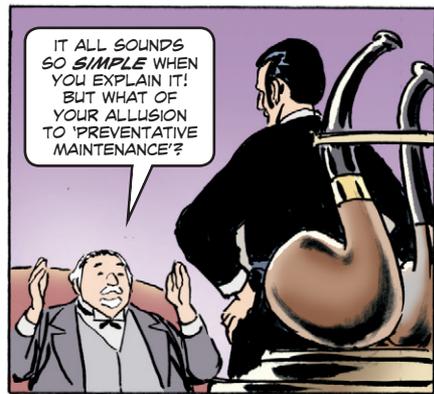
ELEMENTARY, WATSON.

THIS MUSKET IS AN UNUSUALLY *LONG* WEAPON.

A MAN OF *SHORT* STATURE WOULD TEND (EVER SO SLIGHTLY) TO SCRAPE OR BEND THE ROD GETTING IT DOWN INTO AND OUT OF THE MUZZLE.



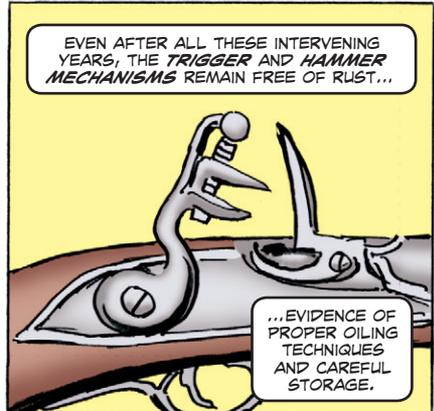
OBSERVE THE RAMMING ROD THROUGH MY GLASS. THIS ONE IS FREE OF IMPERFECTIONS. NO, WHOEVER OWNED THIS WEAPON WAS *TALL* ENOUGH TO MANEUVER IT STRAIGHT *IN* AND *OUT* EVERY TIME.



IT ALL SOUNDS SO *SIMPLE* WHEN YOU EXPLAIN IT! BUT WHAT OF YOUR ALLUSION TO 'PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE'?

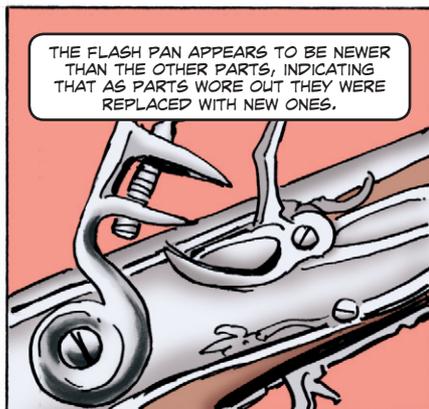


"PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE." AGAIN, WATSON, MY GLASS WILL TELL THE TALE. SEE HOW CAREFULLY THE OWNER MAINTAINED THIS WEAPON?

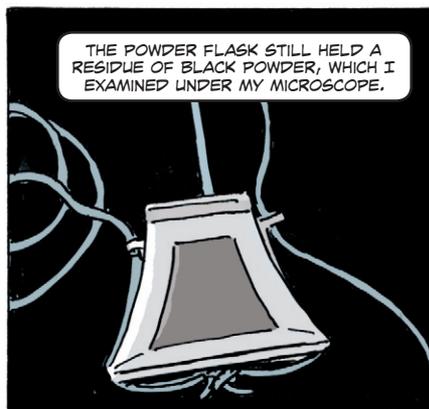


EVEN AFTER ALL THESE INTERVENING YEARS, THE *TRIGGER* AND *HAMMER* MECHANISMS REMAIN FREE OF RUST...

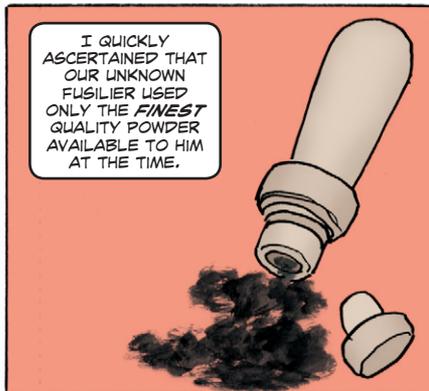
...EVIDENCE OF PROPER OILING TECHNIQUES AND CAREFUL STORAGE.



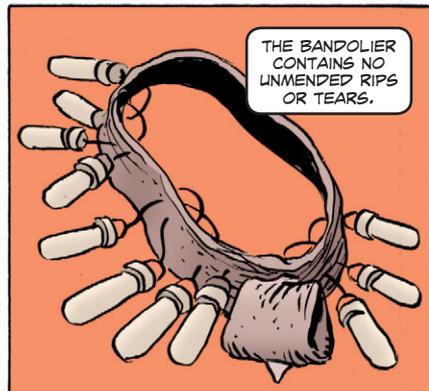
THE FLASH PAN APPEARS TO BE NEWER THAN THE OTHER PARTS, INDICATING THAT AS PARTS WORE OUT THEY WERE REPLACED WITH NEW ONES.



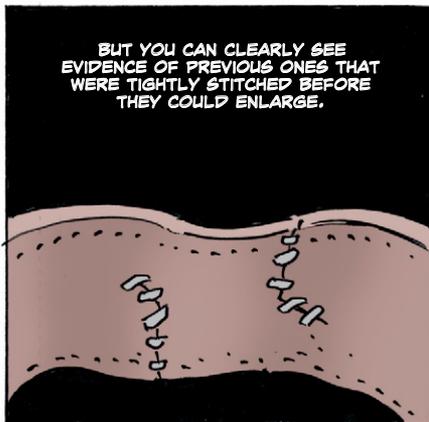
THE POWDER FLASK STILL HELD A RESIDUE OF BLACK POWDER, WHICH I EXAMINED UNDER MY MICROSCOPE.



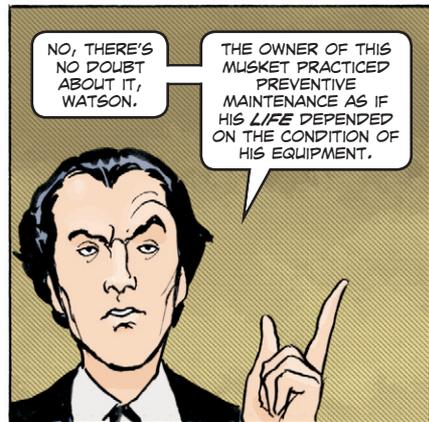
I QUICKLY ASCERTAINED THAT OUR UNKNOWN FUSILIER USED ONLY THE *FINEST* QUALITY POWDER AVAILABLE TO HIM AT THE TIME.



THE BANDOLIER CONTAINS NO UNMENDED RIPS OR TEARS.



BUT YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE EVIDENCE OF PREVIOUS ONES THAT WERE TIGHTLY STITCHED BEFORE THEY COULD ENLARGE.



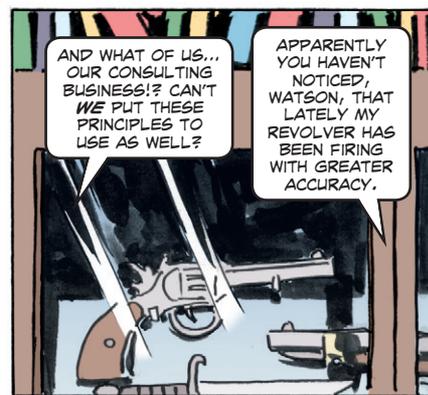
NO, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, WATSON.

THE OWNER OF THIS MUSKET PRACTICED PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE AS IF HIS *LIFE* DEPENDED ON THE CONDITION OF HIS EQUIPMENT.



PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE... WHAT A SIMPLE, BUT VITAL CONCEPT. WHY SCOTLAND YARD MUST HEAR OF THIS!

I'VE ALREADY SENT INSPECTOR LESTRADE A MONOGRAPH ON PM THAT I PUBLISHED LAST WEEK.



AND WHAT OF US... OUR CONSULTING BUSINESS!? CAN'T *WE* PUT THESE PRINCIPLES TO USE AS WELL?

APPARENTLY YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, WATSON, THAT LATELY MY REVOLVER HAS BEEN FIRING WITH GREATER ACCURACY.



OUR CARRIAGE WHEELS HAVE BEEN TURNING WITH LESS SQUEAKING AND WOBBLING.



OUR PLUMBING HAS BEEN WORKING WITHOUT STOPPAGE.



AND MY VIOLIN HAS NEVER SOUNDED SO SWEET.



YES, YES... COME TO THINK OF IT YOU ARE QUITE RIGHT! BUT HOW? I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN UNDERCOVER LATELY WITH THIS 'RED-HEADED LEAGUE' MATTER.

WHEN HAVE YOU HAD TIME TO DO PM?

SOMEONE AT THE DOOR...

**KNOCK KNOCK**

