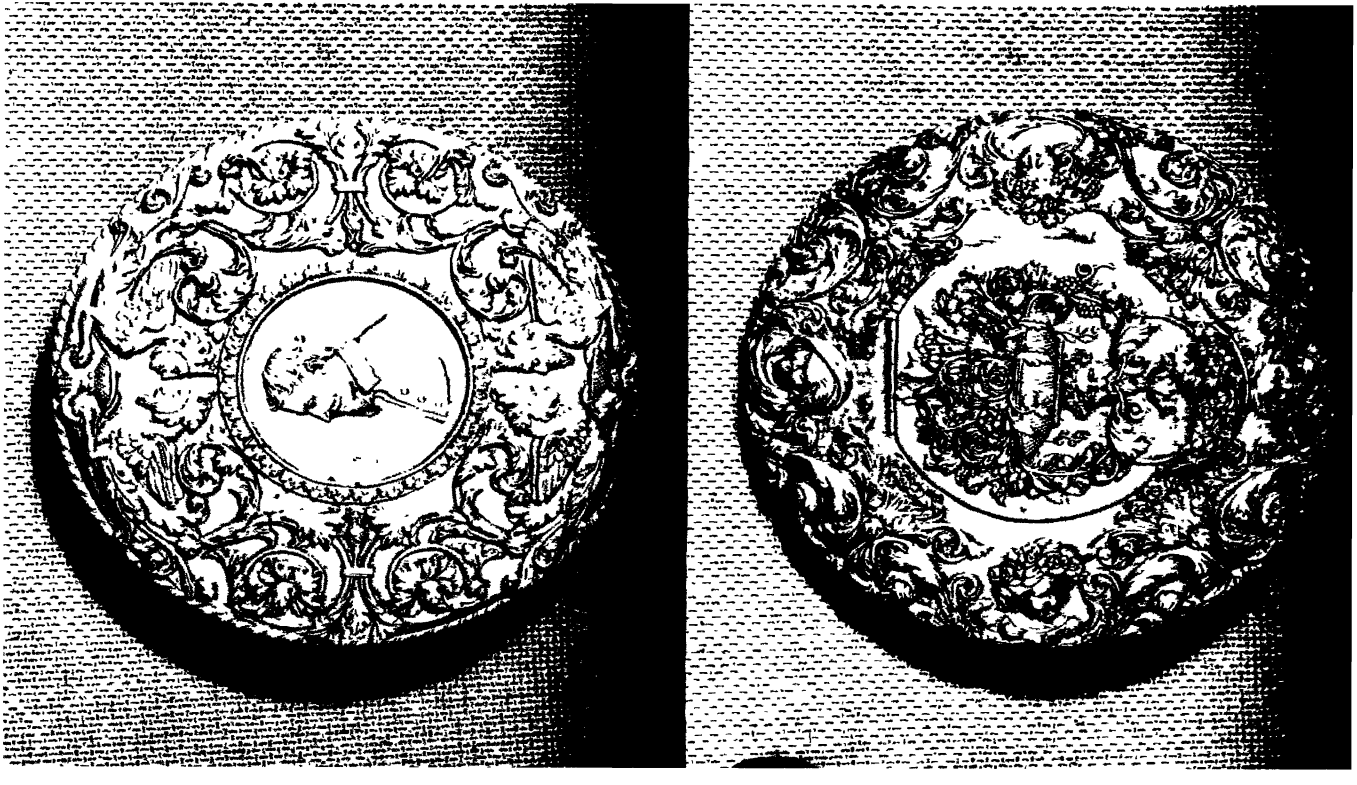
WOODEN BYGONES OF SMOKING AND SNUFF TAKING

FRONTISPIECE

The two sides of one of the most superbly carved wooden snuff boxes known. It is hollowed out of a $4\frac{5}{8}$ in. diameter block of boxwood and was probably made in the neighbourhood of Nancy about 300 years ago



Edward H. Pinto

WOODEN BYGONES OF SMOKING AND SNUFF TAKING

HUTCHINSON OF LONDON

HUTCHINSON & CO. (*Publishers*) LTD
178–202 Great Portland Street, London, W.1

London Melbourne Sydney
Auckland Bombay Toronto
Johannesburg New York

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First published 1961

This book has been set in Scotch Roman type face. It has been printed in Great Britain by The Anchor Press, Ltd., in Tiptree, Essex, on Antique Wove paper and bound by Taylor Garnett Evans & Co., Ltd., in Watford, Herts

To

MY MOTHER

who, in discovering how to grow old
gracefully, remains young at
eighty-three years of age, and will, I hope,
enjoy this book as much as
she does her daily smoke

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ILLUSTRATIONS

FOREWORD

I WAS brought up in an atmosphere of tobacco, for my father was a cigar importer, as was his father before him.

With this background and an ever-increasing interest in wood, wood craftsmanship and social history, from boyhood onwards, it was, I suppose, more or less inevitable that one day I should write a book about the wooden bygones of tobacco. I hope it will give you as much pleasure to read as it has given me to write.

My thanks are due to all those who, over a considerable period of years, have provided me with information or stimulated me to search for it. I cannot name them all, but would specifically mention Mr. Norman Cook, B.A., F.S.A., F.M.A., of the Guildhall Museum; Mr. C. M. Mitchell, F.S.A., F.M.A., of Leeds City Museum; Mr. W. A. Seaby, F.S.A., F.M.A., of Belfast Museum and Art Gallery; and Mr. T. Thornton Wills of Messrs. W. D. & H. O. Wills.

My grateful thanks are also due to Mr. Charles Rattray of Perth, for loaning me *carottes* of tobacco for photographing and for valuable information concerning Highland figures; to Mr. R. H. Bridgman-Evans, M.C., of Fribourg & Treyer, for allowing me access to the old books of his company, for showing me many interesting objects in their collection and for permission to reproduce their 18th century trade card; to Miss Ruth E. Adomeit, of Cleveland, Ohio, for finding and presenting to our collection the two cigar moulds; and to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, for providing the photograph and description of the American cigar-store Red Indian.

My greatest indebtedness is to my wife, who has, as usual, made valuable suggestions regarding the format of this book and has corrected the proofs. Additionally, she has grouped and photographed nearly all the 865 objects which are illustrated. All these, except the subject of Plate 2 and the two *carottes*, are selected from our joint collection.

EDWARD H. PINTO

Oxhey Woods House
Northwood, Middlesex

I have a liking old
For thee, though manifold
Stories, I know, are told
Not to thy credit.

Ode to Tobacco. Charles Stuart Calverley (1831–1884)

INTRODUCTION

TOBACCO, alternatively praised and reviled, smoked and sniffed, has brought into being many small wooden objects desirable to the collector. This book tells about them—the European examples, primarily; but first let us delve briefly into the history of the weed itself and the alternating encouragement and punishment meted out to its addicts.

Probably no one will ever know where or when tobacco was first used by man, nor whether he commenced by sniffing it or smoking it. Certainly the divination of omens in smoke, expelled through a pipe or tube from the mouth, goes back to priestly ritual in very ancient civilizations, but the smoke was not necessarily from tobacco. There are also records of the medicinal smoking of herbs in Europe before tobacco was introduced. Those who would like to examine the claims (which seem to me lightly based) of China, Egypt and other regions, to rival America as the cradle of nicotiana are referred to the bibliography at the end of this book.

What is indisputable is that tobacco came to Europe from America. Columbus seems to have been the first European to report on it; he observed smoking on his first voyage to the Bahamas and West Indies in 1492, and snuff taking on his second voyage, 1494–6, but there is no record that he brought tobacco to Europe. In 1502 other Spaniards reported that the weed had been chewed in South America from time immemorial and was considered 'good medicine'.

While the custom on some of the West Indian islands was to roll tobacco into a cigar and smoke it, the majority of the

natives of Central America seem to have smoked tobacco in pipes or by inhaling through their nostrils, into which were inserted the twin tubes of a Y-shaped cane, the single, long leg of which was held over the embers of a wood fire on which tobacco leaves were allowed to smoulder. The leaves themselves and the plant from which they came were known by different names in various regions. The Y-shaped instrument of smoking was the tobago, and it was the supposed resemblance of the shape of the island of Tobago to a Y which, when he passed it from the south-west, caused Columbus to give it this name; the island was neither named after the plant nor vice versa, as many people believe.

Words have a way of changing their meaning, and not only has the name of the instrument of smoking passed to the material smoked, but the name given to the smoker has now passed to the vendor of tobacco, for in literature of the 16th and early 17th centuries the smoker was known as the tobacconist and he was usually said to 'drink' tobacco and get drunk on the fumes.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that the pipe, the cigar and snuff taking were all known in America before the introduction of tobacco to Europe; so all that we have added is the doubtful blessing of the cigarette.

This book is not primarily about tobacco, but about the old-time objects associated with its use in Europe, so we will deal only briefly about its introduction to Europe and Britain and who introduced it, particularly the latter, about which many books and articles have been written without proving anything. Francisco Hernandez, who introduced the plant to Spain in 1559, may have been the first European to plant it, although the claim was disputed by Frère André Thevet, who had been in Brazil in 1555 and published a book about his travels in 1558. In this book he described tobacco—accurately—and stated that he had brought seeds to his garden in Angoulême and was growing tobacco there. Certainly the most famous name in the story is that of Jean Nicot, French Ambassador to Portugal from 1559 to 1561, for in sending seeds of the plant to Catherine de Medici, Queen of France, he

gave his name to nicotine, and for a time tobacco was known as 'The Queen's Herb'. It is interesting that tobacco's introduction to the continent of Europe was entirely on medicinal grounds, and in the form of snuff taking, which held sway for many years, before it was challenged by smoking. There is a certain grim humour in the fact that cancer was among the many diseases and disorders which tobacco was supposed to cure.

Britain, with its usual contrariness, introduced tobacco essentially for smoking; snuffing came in a hundred years later. Among the popular rival claimants for introducing tobacco to England are Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins and Ralph Lane, the Governor of Virginia. Raleigh is the most popular contender for the title, particularly because, since the 18th century, the story of the bucket of water thrown by a servant over the first smoker he had ever seen, has become associated entirely with Raleigh. Prior to the 18th century, this legend is found attached to many other persons, and the bucket of water is sometimes a flagon of wine or a tankard of ale. However, William Harrison, the Great Elizabethan chronicler, who commenced writing his description of England in the 1570's, soon after the time of the introduction of tobacco to England, says:

> 'Tobacco was first brought, and made knowne in England by Sir John Hawkins, about the yeere one thousand five hundred sixty five,[1] but not used by most englishmen in many yeers after, though at this day commonly used by most men and many women. . . .'

This seems fairly conclusive evidence in favour of Hawkins as the introducer, but in the third edition of Harrison's work, published in 1681, a footnote is added:

> 'Sir Walter Raleigh was the first that brought tobacco into use, when all men wondred what it meant.'

[1] In Cawdor Castle, Scotland, there is a chimney-piece dated 1510 depicting a fox smoking a pipe. How the fox obtained his tobacco at so early a date is unknown!

If you accept 'brought tobacco into use' as meaning popularizing it as a pleasurable smoke and a fashion, rather than as a medicine, you have, I think, the true explanation, for certainly Ralph Lane brought tobacco home to Raleigh in 1586, and by the following year he was cultivating it on his estate in Ireland. Raleigh remained a confirmed smoker of clay pipes until his last minutes on the scaffold in 1618.

It must be remembered, too, that James I anonymously published his *Counterblaste to Tobacco* in 1603 (he acknowledged its authorship some years later), and in it he went out of his way to brand Raleigh, the man he loathed and judicially murdered, as the instigator of the tobacco habit. The section of the arrogant, bombastic treatise reads:

> 'Now the corrupted baseness of the first use of this tobacco doeth very well agree with the foolish and groundless first entry thereof into this kingdome. It is not so long since the first entry of this abuse amongst us here, as this present age can very well remember both *the first* author and the form of the first introduction of it amongst us. It was neither brought in by King, great conqueror, nor learned Doctor of Physic. With the report of a *great discovery for a conquest*, some two or three savage men were brought in together with this savage custom. But the pity is the poor wild barbarous men died, but that vile barbarous custom is yet alive, yea, in fresh vigour, so as it seems a miracle to me how a custom springing from so vile a ground, and brought in by a *father so generally hated* should be welcomed on so slender a warrant.'

James ended with:

> 'Surely smoke becomes a kitchen farre better than a dining chamber; and yet it makes a kitchen oftentimes in the inward parts of men, soyling and infecting with an unctuous and oyly kind of soote as hath been found in some great tobacco takers, that after death were opened. A custom loathsome to the eye, harmfull to the braine,

dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof, nearest resembling the horrible stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless.'

Some may think that James I 'had something' in that last sentence and that it was care for the good of his subjects which also prompted him to raise the duty on tobacco from 2*d.* to the then penal figure of 6*s.* 10*d.* per lb. His record, however, shows that the obtaining of money interested him much more than anyone else's welfare and quite apart from the lucrative trade which he did in creating large-scale patents of nobility for cash, he also—and this instances what a humbug he was—diverted the taxation from tobacco to himself; moreover, he granted, for cash, a monopoly to the Worshipful Company of Clay Pipe Makers! The history of tobacco seems to have been a series of blasts and counterblasts from James I's condemnation, to Sir Compton Mackenzie's latest eulogy, *Sublime Tobacco.*

In many European countries, during parts of the 17th century, Church and State combined to stamp out tobacco. Innocent XII excommunicated those who took snuff or tobacco in St. Peter's, Rome; at Bern prohibition of tobacco was incorporated in the Ten Commandments; in Russia the penalties varied from slitting of the lips, or amputation of the nose, to public knouting; whilst in Turkey the penalty was death. In England, where the penalty under James I was only of a pecuniary nature—as it has been ever since—smoking increased rapidly, to the great benefit of the king's finances. By 1614 there were upwards of 7,000 shops selling tobacco in and near London. Later in the century the use of tobacco was prescribed by doctors for its disinfectant properties and was even used in churches as incense. The plague of 1665 gave the habit further impetus, smokers and chewers being considered immune and even children being taught to smoke. Pepys records 'chawing' tobacco to take away apprehension of the plague and it is related that a certain Etonian was whipped by his master for refusing to smoke when instructed. At the Restoration the Court brought back the snuff habit from the

Continent, but smoking went on increasing until about 1700. In the second half of the 18th century smoking in England declined rapidly in favour of snuff taking. The rest of the story will be unfolded alongside the description of the various devices, sold by the tobacconist, for use in smoking and snuffing.

Let us now enter the old-time tobacconist's shop and see the many desirable objects which he has to offer us. As we pass through the doorway, we must pause to examine, near the entrance, the welcoming, carved and gaily painted wooden figure: he may be life size, or perhaps a smaller figure, standing on a barrel.

The oldest of these figures is the black boy. *At the Sign of the Black Boy*, or *At the Sign of the Blackamoor*, has been a popular address for a tobacconist since the early 17th century. The black-boy figure was originally supposed to represent a rather 'pot-bellied native of Guinea with deformed feet' and 17th century tobacconists' figures were so depicted. In the 18th century the black boy became more refined and virtually a blackened European comedian, Plate 1—always, however, retaining his crown and 'kilt', both consisting of tobacco leaves, usually painted red, green and gold in sequence. Under his left arm is traditionally a plug of tobacco and his right hand holds to his mouth either a 'clay' pipe, or a cigar, shaped like a cornucopia.

Latterly, the Blackamoor has often been erroneously termed a Red Indian and his head-dress and kilt referred to as feathers. This is confusion: the Red Indian is the much handsomer, proud-looking figure, traditional as the sign of the cigar store or tobacconist in North America, Plate 2. This particular example is 7 ft. 3 in. tall, and is a vigorous carving of high individuality, executed by Arnold and Peter Ruef, of Tiffin, Ohio, about 1880. His hands and face are painted the traditional copper colour, and he wears a brown coat and leggings, trimmed with red, yellow and green; his hair and moccasins are black and the brown rifle has a black barrel. Note the bundle of cigars in his right hand.

Scotland's kilted Highlander, with plumed bonnet,

Plate 8, taking sneesh (snuff) from his ram's-horn mull, was carved about 1810. David Wishart, tobacconist, of Haymarket, Edinburgh, placed a 6 ft. carved Highlander outside his shop in 1720. Wishart's figure wore flat cap, jacket and trews, carried broadsword and targe and had no tobacco emblem. It denoted to Jacobite sympathizers that a smoking parlour rendezvous existed behind the shop. Wishart's imitators converted flat cap into plumed bonnet, substituted kilt for trews, and snuff mull for sword and targe. Usually such figures are dressed in Peninsular War period fashion, 1800–14. The long gap between Wishart's figure and later ones was due to 'Butcher' Cumberland's proscription of Highland costume after the 1745 rising, not being rescinded until 1786.

Formerly, the sailor, holding a clay pipe, was sometimes found in seaports, but not all sailor figures were tobacconists' signs: some were found outside pawnbrokers.

The Turk, Plate 4, with flowing robes, who should be smoking a long pipe (it is broken off), was a rather rare 18th century tobacconist's alternative form of welcome in England. In the 19th century the Turk sometimes took to a cigar.

Many tobacconists formerly hung outside their premises a cylinder of wood or metal, with horizontal reeds or ropes running round it, painted in different colours. It represented a tobacco roll and denoted that the strong-flavoured rope tobacco, sweetened with treacle and intended for smoking or chewing, was on sale within. Writers of the early 19th century refer also to hanging signs shaped to represent gigantic snuff rasps as being normal outside snuff shops. Have any survived? I have never seen one.

What may well be a unique snuff-shop sign is the so-called snuff-pedlar's staff, Plate 23. Although snuff pedlars undoubtedly did a thriving trade in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and probably some of them carried a staff, I feel it unlikely that they used anything as long, heavy or beautifully finished to brave the elements when tramping the streets or countryside. This remarkable specimen, 5 ft. 10 in. high and all cut

from one piece (actually an inverted 'fork' from a tree), shows an old woman seated, with open snuff box on knee, taking a 'pinch' between finger and thumb. The carving is full of character and the colouring, which appears to be contemporary with the date of the costume (1810–20), is extremely natural.

PART ONE

Smoking

Give a man a pipe he can smoke,
Give a man a book he can read:
And his home is bright with a calm delight,
Though the room be poor indeed.

Gifts. James Thomson (1834–1882)

CHAPTER ONE

PIPES AND PIPE CASES

DURING most of the time that Europeans have smoked pipes, and throughout most of Europe, the clay predominated, both for men and women. In the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, illustrations show that both sexes smoked the same shapes and sizes of pipes. Whilst pipe smoking permeated all stratas of male society, it was not general among women of fashion.

Elizabethan and James I clays had minute bowls, because of the costliness of tobacco, which at first cost 3*s.* per oz., coming, via Spain, from the Spanish colonies. By the 1620's Virginia was producing half a million pounds per annum and the price of tobacco dropped to 8*d.* per oz.—but these figures have to be multiplied many times to find today's equivalent.

By 1651 the Duke of Bedford, a very large smoker, using between ½ oz. and 1 oz. of tobacco per day, was buying Virginia tobacco for as little as 3*s.* 4*d.* per lb.; but Spanish, which he also smoked, cost him 10*s.* per lb.[1] Between 1757 and 1770 Sir John Filmer, of East Sutton Park (whose day account book is in our possession), paid 1*s.* 6*d.* per lb., but then the price gradually rose and by 1774 he was paying 2*s.* 4*d.* per lb. In 1794 Parson Woodforde paid 2*s.* 8*d.* per lb.[2]

Clay pipes, being quickly fouled and easily broken, were used and thrown away in vast quantities. Admittedly, in inns

[1] Gladys Scott Thomson, *Life in a Noble Household.*
[2] *The Diary of a Country Parson,* ed. J. D. Beresford, 1924–31.

and coffee houses, where it was the custom to present customers free with clean clay pipes for smoking on the premises, the procedure was not quite as wasteful, because the long pipes were put, after use, into an open iron cradle, known as a pipe kiln or pipe roaster, which was suspended by a ring over a charcoal fire and the pipes were roasted clean. It is doubtful, however, if such a device was considered worth using in a private house, because of the cheapness of clay pipes. In 1651 the Duke of Bedford paid 18*s.* 6*d.* a gross for them, but by 1665 he bought them at 22*s.* 6*d.* per *twelve* gross lot; in 1695 he paid anything from 24*s.* to 36*s.* per *twelve* gross,[1] the variation being presumably due to differences in length as well as quality. Pipe prices seemed to fluctuate in unison with tobacco, for Sir John Filmer paid 2*s.* 2*d.* per gross in 1757 and 2*s.* 8*d.* in 1774, whilst Parson Woodforde paid 3*s.* per gross in 1793.[2]

Despite the fact that old clay pipes were often ground up and used as moth ball, for putting in woollens, etc., the bowls and parts, but usually very little of the stems, are continually being excavated on old inhabited sites. Consequently, their original length cannot be determined, but, from the start of smoking, engravings show that they were made in a considerable variety of lengths. Doubtless, quite apart from individual taste, 'shorts' were necessary for the pocket and longer ones were smoked at home, or in the inn. Thus length alone will not determine age, though other factors help considerably.[3]

As already stated, early pipes had small, short bowls, usually of barrel shape, and they became larger, particularly in height, as tobacco cheapened. Early pipes had a very forward tilt, or 'lean over', on the bowl. After about 1700 the fashionable bowl in England became more upright, as well as deeper, although some makers and some countries retained the forward slope later. In the 18th century the top of the bowl was

[1] Gladys Scott Thomson, *op. cit.*

[2] Woodforde, *op. cit.*

[3] Some pipes have dates on them, but even where this does not occur, recent research, of which some details can be obtained from the bibliography, has made it possible not only to date some English pipes within limits of twenty to thirty years or less, but also, by means of makers' marks, to say where the 'clays' were made.

usually parallel with the stem, and after about 1690–1700 the flat heel or print, on which the maker's mark was often stamped, developed into a spur, comfortably cool to hold and particularly useful with churchwardens and other long pipes which, with their heels often resting on a table, might otherwise leave burn marks.

Because of the fragility of clays, cases were essential for those who wanted to carry pipes in their pockets, and the generalities about clays, given above, help in dating their cases. Raleigh had a leather pipe case, and doubtless leather was used fairly often, but the majority of pipe cases, particularly in England, seem to have been plain, hollowed out of sycamore or birch wood. Plain wooden objects, made essentially for use, seldom survive: when worn or old-fashioned they go on the fire. So it is with plain wooden pipe cases; I have never seen one which could be dated earlier than the 18th century and even they are hard to find.

Ornamental objects of wood have a better chance of survival, and in Plate 5 are four rare and elaborate cases of 17th century design, made for pipes without spurs on the heels. They differ fundamentally from most 18th century cases in that they have sliding shutters and are unventilated, being blocked at both ends. Because the spurs, which later became usual on heels of pipes, would catch against sliding shutters, 18th century cases have hinged lids and are open at the stem end. The cases illustrated were all intended for pipes with small, forward-sloping bowls of similar angle and although a few 18th century cases were made for pipes with the forward slope, all others which I have seen take considerably larger pipe bowls. These cases are of such fine quality that it is possible that they were for silver pipes which Aubrey, the historian, refers to as early as 1600, and which had been made in the same shapes as clays. Very few of them, or of silver-mounted clays with quill mouthpieces, have survived, although both are known to have been made for the wealthy. The case at the back, on the left, was formerly in the Moir Carnegie collection. It was intended for a small-bowled pipe, 8 in. long, and is carved from walnut and silver mounted. Although it is

dated 1745, the rather naive composition and form of the ornament and the shape of the case must have appeared very old-fashioned at that time and much more appropriate to the style of a hundred years earlier. The bowl compartment is carved with a stylized lion, which grasps cherub heads between its fore and hind paws. The joints of the case and shutter are carved with dog-tooth ornament and the long panels of both are carved with foliage. On the case, pierced hearts are included in the composition, while on the shutter is a shell, and two girls, one dancing with a scarf and one holding a bird.

The case in front, shown open, with its tapering shutter separate, came from Ashburnham, Sussex, and is of boxwood, silver mounted. Carved with dogs, birds, a harpist and angels, amongst intertwined foliage, it also encloses the initials E.S. It is tempting to think that it might once have belonged to Sir Edwin Sandys, explorer, and an early 17th century Governor of Virginia; on date it could, and the knop, carved with stars in rope borders, suggests that it did belong to someone connected with maritime exploration.

The case at the back, on the right, of walnut, and probably late 17th century, takes a pipe 11 in. long and is elaborately carved with a head, in heavily curled wig, which merges into an imbricated and twisted fish tail. The shutter and lower part of the case are carved with floral swags and acanthus scrolls.

The pewter-mounted case, in front, on the right, is the exception to every rule, for it has a sliding shutter of 17th century type, but is inscribed 'An. D.C. 1800, Joseph Pont'. Comparison with the other three shows that the stem of this case is much thicker and coarser, particularly where stem meets bowl; this enabled it to be grooved sufficiently deeply to allow the shutter to slide past a spur. As the bowl aperture is a fairly large one and is set more upright to the stem than on the other three, the pipe which it held would not have been inconsistent with the date, in spite of the fact that, at first sight, this appears to be a 17th century type of case. The puzzling features go further, however, for this geometric style of carving is commonly found on Welsh and Scandinavian treen, but not on that from Latin countries, yet the use of

D.C. (dopo Christi), instead of A.D., suggests Italian or at least Catholic origin.

All the pipe cases in Plate 6 are 18th century, except the small, plain ones for 'cutties', central in front of the picture; these are 19th century. They, and the plain but well-finished boxwood example on their right, are the only ones which could be, and probably are, English. The others are all continental, and the pipes which they held, whilst varying considerably in actual angles of bowls, retained the forward tilt, usual in English pipes of the preceding century. All have metal-hinged lids, with spring catches and ventilation openings at the mouthpiece end. Five of them held pipes between 6½ in. and 7½ in. long, one a 10 in. Their bowls were 2 in. to 2½ in. deep overall, against the more usual 1½ in. held by 17th century cases. The cases at the ends of the back row, which were formerly in the Bompas collection, are both Dutch and have an acute forward slope. That on the left is of well-patinated pearwood, inlaid with brass. The amusing, late 18th century bearded-man case on the right is carved from boxwood and has an unusual stem casing, pierced with three tiers of four-light lanterns. The case, second left, probably from the Dolomites area, is of olive-wood, and is elaborately brass mounted and inlaid with piqué. The next two are Austrian: the longer is carved from pearwood, and the shorter from boxwood; the latter includes among its motifs a double-headed, crowned eagle, a boy skipping, a human head, and a cross above a heart which encloses the initials K.M. Engraving on the copper hinge repeats the initials K.M. and gives the date 1756.

The Dutch or German specimen, front left, is most interesting; of ebony, mounted and decorated with brass, it is fitted with a most ingenious combination dial lock, so that no one else could smoke it in its owner's absence—obviously owned by a man with ideas of cleanliness ahead of his time!

Whilst briar pipes often have considerable artistic merit, they are disappointing historically as, although almost universal today, their origin dates back little more than a century. According to Alfred Dunhill, the discovery that briar (which

incidentally has nothing to do with rose briar) was the ideal material for pipes occurred fortuitously: in the mid-19th century a French pipe maker, on a pilgrimage to Napoleon's birthplace in Corsica, lost or broke his meerschaum pipe whilst there; a peasant, at his request, carved him one for temporary use, utilizing the hard, close-grained root of a tree heath or bruyère, which grows around the shores of the Mediterranean. The pipe was so cool smoking and generally satisfactory in wear, that the manufacturer brought away some bruyère roots and sent them to St. Claude, a small town in a valley of the Jura mountains, long and widely noted for wood turning and carving. Soon pipe making became so important there that it virtually ousted other branches of woodworking, with which the townsmen had formerly made their living.

In this story mention has been made of meerschaum, and there is no doubt that from the second half of the 18th century both meerschaum and porcelain pipe bowls were challenging the clay, in what we would now call the higher income group of Western Europe; but neither material was suitable for mouthpieces, and on these de luxe pipes they were usually of amber or carved stag-horn, making the finished product a costly one.

In north-west Europe—Russia, Finland and Scandinavia—the lands of wood—wooden pipes were smoked commonly from an early date. In England the cherrywood, and in America the corn cob, had some following, as they still have, but they cost more than clays, and although they were cooler, they fouled quickly and were not long lasting. They possess no artistic merit for the collector.

There were, however, other pre-briar hardwood pipes, of artistic and historic merit—in fact, some of them, with scenes carved on their bowls, are, in their way, documentaries in wood; they are mostly from central Europe and are of considerable interest to collectors. Although usually lumped together as 19th century German, some of them are actually 18th century, and their provenance includes Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Holland, as well as Germany. They are made from a variety of close-grained, hardwood roots, difficult to identify,

and must have provided good, cool smoking, but probably none of these woods possessed the char-resisting qualities of bruyère, so the bowls, which are mostly of very large size, were lined with iron or silver.

These pipes are almost invariably of mid-European shape, with the bowls curving back, forming a U with the long stems; the stems curve back again at the mouthpiece, so that in smoking, the heavy pipe hung down, needing hand support. This shape drains well and occasionally a screw-capped outlet for tobacco juices was provided at the junction of stem and bowl. The stems were usually cherrywood, said to improve the flavour of tobacco, and the mouthpieces were stag-horn. In some instances there is a junction length of woven, flexible tube between stem and tube, or between tube and mouthpiece. Most of these pipes are silver mounted and the majority seem to have been fitted with hinged and ventilated lids, sometimes elaborately pierced and ornamented, for smoking outdoors.

A selection of these attractive, carved pipes is shown in Plates 7 and 8. For convenience in grouping, some of the stems have been removed. The first left, top row, Plate 7, is probably Bavarian, skilfully carved with an allegorical subject and a coat of arms. The next, an unusually small pipe of unknown nationality, has a horse and initials G.W. engraved on the silver cover; a ploughman with plough is engraved on the ivory ring which connects stem and bowl, and on the wooden bowl, which is held between the claws of an animal paw, the ploughman and plough theme is repeated in the carving.

The third is one of the well-known, late 18th century series of German dolphin pipes, in which the dolphin holds the stem connection in his mouth. Like many of this series, a figure of Mercury appears in the carving on the bowl; here Mercury is shown seated, holding a shield which encloses a merchant's mark, with initials W.S. The silver cover is unusually elaborate, pierced in the Gothic manner, and has knights in armour in the 'windows'. The last in this row is carved with a stag, another popular theme on German pipes.

Bottom left is carved with Mercury on tip-toe, spreading

his benediction over a sailing ship, alongside a bale-and-barrel-loaded quay. Bottom right, another dolphin pipe, shows Mercury in flight, holding a benediction scroll above a village, in which are peasants with casks and a beer dray.

Second left is a vast silver-mounted bowl of walnut, skilfully carved, showing two figures, a gallant and a maid, in mid-18th century costume, among rococo scrolls; this exaggerated pipe, which has a bowl 3½ in. deep inside, and holds nearly 2 oz. of tobacco, is a mid-19th century, Victorian-English romantic revival, probably made for exhibition at the Crystal Palace, for it bears the 1851 hall mark. The antithesis of this example is the artistic, Austrian, mid-18th century pipe bowl alongside. It shows a hound chasing a stag above a delicately carved series of pierced rococo scrolls, which provide a cool hand-grip, whilst keeping the weight down nicely; the bowl is silver lined.

In Plate 8 the silver-lidded pipes each end of the upper row are German, competently carved with coats of arms, and are representative of a large group made in the second quarter of the 19th century.

The specimen between them, also silver lidded, probably Italian 18th century, portrays in its fine carving The Holy Family.

The Austrian pipe, bottom left, with a rather unusual silver lid, dates from 1790–1800. The bowl is carved much in the documentary manner fashionable on high-quality treen around that time. It bears the name Johann Gölner. The miniature scenes depicted, showing wine making, a wine cellar and peasants drinking in a garden, are based on the style of Teniers. At the other end of the row is another Austrian 'documentary' pipe, of equally high quality and perhaps with even more interesting scenes depicted. It shows, in considerable detail, merchandise landing at the quay, being carried to the warehouse, in the warehouse and being sold over the counter. It appears to have been carved between 1800 and 1810 and may well be from the Adriatic coast.

The pipe second left is an unusual and powerful sculptural head of an elderly man, with a wart on his crooked nose; the

eyes are glass and the mouth is coloured. It suggests a study from life. Who was the original?

The last specimen in this row, the small pipe carved with flowers and foliage, is 18th century, probably Viennese.

The six briars in Plate 9 are a representative selection of the vast number of subjects carved between 1860 and 1900. They include a dolphin, in this later vogue, forming the whole bowl; a bull with silver nose chain, linked to the silver lid; a hand grasping a bowl; a Russian soldier and a horse. The pipe in the bottom row, left, is carved with the crest of the Suffolk Regiment and the inscription 'Boer War 1899–1900'. Centre, the reclining nude is graceful and the acute forward slope of the pipe is reminiscent of the 17th century. In contrast, the very vertical French bowl on the right, carved with a figure of a legionnaire, perpetuates the style and size of pipe of the early 19th century.

From 1850 up to the present, it is a curious fact that there has been no outstanding style in pipes. Every size, shape, style, angle of bowl, and both plain and carved, seems to have been tried; but there have been a few short-lived fashions and plenty of novelties.

Under this last heading come the walking stick containing a long-stemmed briar pipe with windshield, Plate 41, and the wooden 'bottle', left of Plate 10. Both were made in Germany about 1890–1900. The cap over the end of the pipe is ingeniously constructed with a double inner thread. When it is removed from the pipe, and the pipe itself is taken out for smoking, the cap screws back on the stick to form a knob handle. With the bottle pipe, the upper part unscrews and contains the mouthpiece; this fits into the hole in the front of the lower section, which is the bowl. The cap of the bottle and the metal mounts of both these pipes are silver-plated copper —poor quality—and probably made by the firm who, about the same period, produced similarly mounted and jointed novelty walking sticks, containing pencils, pens and inkpots.

The clumsy, iron-studded, mahogany, one-piece pipe, with iron 'candle socket' bowl, is rather interesting, because it is a once common (in every sense of the word), but now rare, Irish

pipe, of a type which was fully documented by Hone. These extremely heavy and ill-balanced pipes were used by working men in Clonmel and Dublin between 1820 and 1830; their owners must have had good teeth! Originally they cost 6*d.* each; in 1956 this well-worn specimen was bought for £2. What a pity it is that our possessions do not attain antique value in our own lifetimes!

The standing-figure pipes, in this same photograph, are mostly Swiss and Tyrolean novelties of the 1870's. They generally represent celebrities and caricatures; note Mr. Gladstone. The bowls are in the heads and the stems go down into the bodies; one is shown in front, taken apart. The bust of the negress is much more sophisticated and carefully finished than the usual production; it may be French or from French Morocco.

Little tube of mighty pow'r,
Charmer of an idle hour,
Object of my warm desire,
Lip of wax, and eye of fire;
And thy snowy taper waist
With my finger gently brac'd;
And thy pretty swelling crest
With my little stopper prest.

A Pipe of Tobacco. Isaac Hawkins Browne (1706–1760)

CHAPTER TWO

TOBACCO STOPPERS

As EVERY pipe smoker knows, to obtain the maximum enjoyment from his smoke he must have something hard to press down the tobacco in his pipe at intervals and correct 'the draw'. Admittedly some smokers manage quite well by using a finger or thumb as a stopper, but it hardly improves the appearance of the digit so used.

It is curious that tobacco stoppers have gone out of fashion, for, averaging a mere 2½ in. in length, they take up little room in the pocket, are pleasant to look at and handle, and their lack causes all sorts of odd objects to be used as substitutes: pens and pencils seem to be the most popular, but even umbrella ferrules are seen serving the purpose at times, with considerable danger to the eyes of anyone in the vicinity. Most tobacco stoppers which have survived are in the form of small costume figures or busts, cast in metal. Some of these are pleasing and ingenious, but the majority obtainable today, particularly those made of brass, are modern reproductions, some deliberately faked to look old. Usually they represent great ones of days gone by, particularly popular being Cromwell, Charles I and Nelson; as they cost pence to produce but often sell for shillings or even a pound or two, they must be profitable productions.

The most interesting to collect, but difficult and expensive to obtain, are those of individuality, carved from wood, bone or ivory. There are numerous references to tobacco stoppers in literature of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and they show that silver, pewter, bronze, brass, ivory, bone, mother-of-pearl and wooden tobacco stoppers were formerly made in large quantities and that the last four provided an outlet for the imagination and artistry of anyone handy with knife or chisel; probably many of the most original and skilfully carved examples were the work of amateurs. Will Wimble, one of Sir Roger de Coverley's circle in the 18th century *Spectator*, is related by Addison to have made great quantities of tobacco stoppers during the winter, 'and that he made a present of one to every gentleman in the country who has good principles and smokes'. In Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Wemmick's collection of curios, in his house at Walworth, contained several tobacco stoppers carved by the 'Aged Parent'.

Sir Roger de Coverley on another occasion, when viewing the Coronation Chairs in Westminster Abbey, remarked that 'if Will Wimble were with us and saw those two chairs, it would go hard but he would get a tobacco stopper out of one or t'other of them'.

Taylor, the 'Water Poet', in 1649, referring to the famous Glastonbury Thorn, said: 'I did take a dead sprigge from it, wherewith I made two or three tobacco stoppers, which I brought to London.' Many tobacco stoppers were, in fact, carved from famous wood, such as the Thorn, the Boscobel Oak or Shakespeare's mulberry tree. Others were caricatures of the famous, such as the Duke of Wellington, a rabid anti-smoker, who aroused much resentment among soldiers by forbidding smoking in barracks. Carved tobacco stoppers, mostly sold by street vendors, seem to have died out in the first half of the 19th century. Mayhew in *London Labour and the London Poor*, published in 1851, records an interview with a street seller who said:

> 'At that time—well, really, then, I can't say how long it's since—I sold little bone "tobacco-stoppers"—they're seldom asked for now, stoppers is quite out of fashion—

and one of them was a figure of "Old Nosey", the Duke [of Wellington] you know—it was intended as a joke you see, sir; a tobacco stopper.'

As a broad generality, stoppers with small bases are early, to fit into the small-bowled early pipes. But whilst all the 17th century stoppers probably had small bases, some of the 18th century specimens, which show figures in costume of the period, or have dates carved on them, also have small bases.

All kinds of hardwoods were used, sometimes protected by silver or pewter mounts, but more often unmounted and left to protect themselves with a coat of char. For the finest carvings—and some really are works of art—dense, close-grained boxwood was almost invariably preferred.

Arms and legs seem to have been the most popular themes, but in the 18th century the coursing greyhound and the squirrel holding a nut both enjoyed quite a vogue and were the subjects of some very spirited carving.

Three versions of the greyhound theme, all in boxwood, one silver mounted and with silver tail, are shown in Plate 11. The outsize specimen, also silver mounted, on a plateau above leaf branches, carved and pierced in the style of mediaeval ecclesiastical work, is quite outstanding in its quality. On the right in the same row is a grotesquely carved and silver-mounted vine-stem stopper, engraved J W 1773. Below are a delightful carved boxwood figure of a boy dated 1720; a fine, silver-mounted, boxwood *memento mori* stopper, carved with a skull, hour-glass, cross-bones, mattock, coffin and dated 1715; a superb Flemish early 19th century stopper, of intricately carved and pierced boxwood. It depicts David with the head of Goliath around an open 'lantern', supported on a tapering, leaf-carved pedestal, encircled by a free-revolving ring, above a lozenge-carved base; and, finally, a silver-mounted boxwood figure of Shakespeare, above a fluted column. This last was the speciality of an old man named Salsbee; the standing figure of Shakespeare, with right elbow leaning on the volumes of his comedies, tragedies and histories, placed on a pedestal supported on the busts of Henry V, Richard III and Elizabeth I,

is based on the statues by Peter Scheemakers (1691–1770) in Westminster Abbey and at Wilton.

In spite of their being copies, Salsbee's Shakespeare stoppers, of which I have recorded four or five dating between 1765 and 1773, all have some quaint variations and individuality imparted by their carver. Salsbee always carved his name, age and date of carving. His memory was evidently confused and sometimes there are slight contradictions in his age compared with the date. Some Salsbee stoppers are silver mounted, others are not and they vary in quality. The one illustrated is a good early specimen, dated 1765, and Salsbee gives his age as sixty-three. The mount is engraved Thomas Stevens, Bermondsey Street.

Most of these stoppers, as is fairly general with 18th and early 19th century specimens, have end diameters varying between $\frac{9}{16}$ in. and $\frac{5}{8}$ in.

The stoppers in the top row of Plate 12 are 17th century specimens and, as such, naturally very worn. The burry-root stopper, on the left, is mounted in pewter and the diameter of the stopper end is only $\frac{7}{16}$ in., the same as on the carved figure of a kneeling man in 17th century costume, also mounted in pewter, the dog, and the finely modelled lion rampant, with paws resting on a crown. The flower girl in Stuart costume, one from left, carved from boxwood, probably commenced life as a statuette, but the charring of the base shows that it has been used as a stopper.

In silver and gold, finger-ring stoppers exist. Some are made all in one piece; others have the stopper part made to unscrew from the ring, which in its turn may include a signet. One which I have seen of silver was a Jacobite relic of the '45. The dog stopper is the only example of the ring type in wood which I know, and is a particularly interesting survival. The ball-and-lantern stopper at the end of the row, with chained signet, all cut from the solid, is probably Welsh, dating from about 1700.

In the bottom row, the first two stoppers, rather crudely carved as heads of Shakespeare, are said to have been made from the famous mulberry tree at New Place, Stratford-on-

Avon, and as such would date from the second half of the 18th century. The attractive Flemish stopper, carved with low-relief dancers, the miniature soldier, the figure with the masonic symbols and the silver-mounted bulldog head are all of the same period and of carved boxwood.

Prickers, for preventing tobacco caking in the pipe and for helping the 'draw', also rank among smokers' requisites; several of these are included in Plate 13. In the front of the picture the clenched-fist pricker is made of thornwood. Top row, on the left, is a simply turned stopper which contains a brass pricker. The negro in the same row, made of horn, also contains a brass pricker attached to the bone screw cap which forms the stopper. In the lower row the silver-mounted boxwood hand grasps a detachable miniature pipe of steel, which is also a pricker. These and the other stoppers in this picture are probably all English, 18th century, though the two bellows and the ivory 'crowned mace' stopper may be 17th century. The last is a dainty piece of work, and is shown with its original lignum vitae protective case behind it.

But he's a frugal man indeed that with a leaf can dine,
And needs no napkins for his hands his fingers' ends to wipe,
But keeps his kitchen in a box, and roast meat in a pipe.

Knave of Clubbs. Samuel Rowlands (17th century)

CHAPTER THREE

TOBACCO JARS AND BOXES

UNTIL the introduction of the vacuum-lid tin, a lead container was the best method of keeping tobacco in condition. If you were wealthy enough to afford a silver jar it was a good alternative. Even today, domestically, a lead or lead-lined tobacco jar cannot be bettered, particularly if it has a lead weight inside, to compress and protect the tobacco from exposure to the air.

Lead jars were probably used from the introduction of pipe smoking, but, being easily damaged and the lead being reusable, the majority have been destroyed. Of those still extant some are of 17th century design, but no dated specimens, so far as I know, have survived from earlier than the 18th century. They seem to have died out about 1850, and were largely replaced by glazed earthenware which, although cheaper, was less efficient. Earthenware jars had been used to some extent for at least one hundred years, both in tobacconists' shops and the home, before they finally superseded lead.

Most wooden tobacco jars originally had lead or foil liners, and being lighter than wholly lead jars, but just as efficient and less easily damaged, they enjoyed great popularity. From the early days of smoking they were made in a great variety of shapes and woods for home use, but usually in the form of turned barrels for standing on the shelves in the tobacconist's shop. Both because of its weight and the ease with which the metal deforms, it is doubtful if lead jars, other than those of small size, were ever used as shop containers. A large storage

barrel, for shelf use, probably, though not necessarily, intended for tobacco, is shown in Plate 14. It measures 12½ in. in height and 11 in. in diameter. It is a rare survival, probably from the 17th century, and is pole-lathe turned from an unjointed block of sycamore. Externally it is painted red, with remains of decoration in green and other colours. Inside are considerable traces of a lead paint or foil lining. The domestic tobacco jar on the shelf on the right shows an interesting comparison of size. By analogy of design, which is also confirmed by its appearance of age, this oak jar was made about the same time as the barrel.

The cigar moulds in this same illustration will be described in the next chapter.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between tobacco jars and certain tea-caddies, but as a generality tea-caddies had locks, tobacco jars did not. This test is not infallible, however, as some jar and box-like caddies had no locks, because they fitted into outer 'tea chests' or tea poys which locked.

In Plate 16 is a representative selection of wooden tobacco jars, all of which appear to be English, except those otherwise described. I have never seen any date-inscribed, wooden tobacco jars, so it is usually impossible to assess age accurately, but design, when compared with other objects of related shape and condition, plus knowledge of fashion, make the following attributions probable. In the top row, left to right, the outsize oak jar—it is 12¾ in. high over the acorn finial—is probably not as early as it looks; I place it as a Victorian 'revival' of a 17th century design. The ring-turned barrel, on stem and foot, appears to be a genuine 17th century example. The pyramidal, octagonal mahogany jar dates from *circa* 1900. The lead-lined, mahogany coffin exemplifies the kind of macabre jest which delighted our Georgian ancestors; an example of this grim humour was noted in a *memento mori* pipe stopper, and later we shall be seeing coffin snuff-boxes. The yew-wood jar, well turned and nicely patinated, is almost certainly a mid-18th century specimen. The Scottish alternate light and dark staved jar dates from *circa* 1890; this light and dark staved

turnery, or coopering, occurred both in Scotland and Holland in the 18th and 19th centuries. In both countries, designs were sometimes additionally ornamented by horizontal moulding of the built up cylinder on a lathe or, in later work, on a spindle machine.

In the middle row the first jar, of lignum vitae, can confidently be dated as 18th century; it so closely resembles mortars of the same period. The next small jar, also of lignum vitae, is rather an indeterminate object; it has been made out of the base of an 18th century coffee mill, but at some time has been used for tobacco. The cylindric ebony jar—an unusual 18th century specimen—retains its original lead weight. The jar formed as a snake-infested skull was made in China, about 1900, for the European market. Inkstands, smaller versions of this unpleasant theme, were also shipped here.

In the bottom row the sycamore barrel was made at Tunbridge Wells or Tonbridge early in the 19th century and the lid is decorated with the famous mosaic. A nice piece of carving is the walnut jar, cut from the solid to represent a negro market vendor, with some sort of circular discs displayed for sale on his lap. The upper part of the figure forms the lid, hinged at the 'lap' level. Beside the seated negro is an empty sack and in front an empty barrel, presumably for matches and ash. It appears to have been made in the second half of the 19th century, possibly in France. The jar decorated with carved heads, all cut from the solid, came from French Morocco about 1900 and is most attractive and skilful in its sculptural modelling of the different types of inhabitants of the country. The carving is lightly stained to give a naturalistic quality to the faces and head-dresses. A pipe rack *en suite* is shown in Plate 20. The olive-wood barrel is believed to be 19th century, Italian.

The dividing line between small tobacco jars and large tobacco boxes is thin: it is often non-existent between small tobacco boxes and large snuff boxes. To keep tobacco in condition, many tobacco boxes originally had lead-foil linings, but frequently these have perished and the remnants have been removed. As snuff likewise must be carefully conditioned,

snuff boxes were often similarly lined; lining, therefore, does not help in deciding original usage. In all probability a great variety of tightly lidded boxes were sold by tobacconists for either snuff or tobacco, according to choice. Doubtless, if a box were a good one, it might, at different times during its long life, be used alternatively for snuff and pipe tobacco, and if it were not too large it might sometimes be treated as a table box and at other times as a pocket receptacle. The wear on the carving on some quite large boxes shows that they must have been carried in the pocket over a long period. In spite of certain advantages offered by tobacco pouches, many pipe smokers, even today, prefer the protection which a rigid box gives against crushing and making the tobacco dusty.

It has become a convention, chiefly amongst silversmiths and writers on silver, copper, brass and pewter, to designate oval boxes as tobacco and round ones as snuff. This theory does not seem to have any sound basis; nevertheless, on the principle of 'follow my leader', we will describe all the boxes in Plates 17 to 19 as 'tobacco'. The late 18th century, oval, Sheraton box, left of Plate 17, is unusually finely made and veneered; the fan is satinwood, with a mother-of-pearl centre, the lunettes and side rims of curl mahogany and the angles are finished with a boxwood and ebony stringing.

The oval box of masur birch, carved with an urn, medallion and border, is Finnish, *circa* 1800; it has the clever integral wood hinge, which probably originated in the Karelian Isthmus. The oval cedar box, rimmed in horn and inlaid with bone, belongs to a small and rare English group, which all appear to have been made by one man between 1680 and 1710. They bear varied but attractive inscriptions and dates; the one illustrated proclaims 'For you the best is not too good—1706'.

The oval maple (?) wood box, with a dog and three birds in a centre shield, flanked by initials I-G, must be one of the earliest dated specimens known, for its low-relief carving also states EW. FECIT 1664. Even today the lid is a perfect fit. This box, the previous one and the next to be described appear never to have had foil linings, but they have been treated

inside with wax or oil, which has rendered them extremely hard and non-absorbent.

The last of the ovals in this plate, carved and hollowed from boxwood, and well worn, is quite a documentary. It shows a haberdasher's shop, *circa* 1780, with heavy barred doors, interior fitments with pigeon-holes and shelves, bales of cloth and suspended scissors. Behind the counter the haberdasher measures out ribbon (?) against the ell rule which his customer is holding.

In Plate 18 are three deep, but crudely carved, Dutch boxes, all cut from the solid. The central specimen, showing traces of red polychrome in the background of the scrolling and dated 1792, and that on the left, have integral wood hinges. The latter, carved not unskilfully with a scene after David Teniers, is date-inscribed inside the lid 'Den 17 October 1572', but this date, an instance of 'fake it' not '*fecit*', is probably 200 years before the box was made. The box on the right, inscribed 'Den 27 APR.' (no year), has copper hinges, a feature as common on Dutch wooden tobacco boxes as is sealing the interior with a paint lining, which two of these boxes retain. A short clay pipe was often kept with the tobacco in these large boxes.

In Plate 19 the boxes extreme left and right, both lead-foil lined, were undoubtedly for tobacco, not snuff. The first, with its depth of 5 in. and integral wood-hinged lid, opening at the top, would have been unsuitable for snuff; likewise would the other, which would have caked with snuff and jammed in the slide.

The oblong walnut box, scooped from the solid and inlaid with mother-of-pearl and brass pin-points, was a specialized tourist souvenir of the isle of Rhodes in the last quarter of the 19th century. Many of these boxes seem to have been made, all varying slightly in size, shape and design of inlay, but alike in general technique.

The next box, carved from solid boxwood, is dated 1767 and is most intricately and confusedly carved both all over the outside, and also inside the lid—the latter with Adam and Eve. I do not know its nationality, but there is doubtless some

folk legend somewhere which links up such diverse subjects as men in Elizabethan costume, naked Red Indians (?), a man with a tail, two others with asses' heads, one of whom wears his heart outside his breast, a man with a peg leg, who holds his severed leg in his hand, a pig with a barrel round its body, and other weird and wonderful creatures too numerous to describe here.

The fourth box, also carved from the solid, and probably German or Austrian, has the appearance of very considerable age. The box itself is grasped by a lion rampant, with Moses and Aaron, one at each side, under its paws; in front the integral wood-hinged lid is carved with a coat of arms.

Literary references to fops' tobacco boxes go back more than 350 years. One such, penned by Henry Fitz-Geffery in 1617, mentions 'A spruce coxcomb . . . that never walkes without his looking-glass, in a tobacco box or diall set, that he may privately conferre with it.' These words may well have been apposite to the original possessors of the two rare boxes pictured in Plate 15. These handsome boxes, which date from the mid-18th century, must have been expensive productions; though bought by me many miles and several years apart, they were obviously the work of one skilful man. The larger of the two is 5½ in. long, the smaller 3 in. Both of them are hollowed from the solid wood and have integral wood hinges; this may denote Scottish origin. The larger box has three 'windows' cut in the lid, two each in the back and front and one in each end. These nine windows are mirror-glass backed; against the centre one on the lid is carved in relief, figures of a man, woman and two children, in mid-18th century costume; flanking this large window are smaller ones showing profile busts. Each of the windows is framed by carved rays which produce a rather rococo effect. The whole of the background is infilled with a carefully composed pattern of imbrication. Inside the boxes, the lids are mirror-glass lined and the box sides and bottoms covered with a heavy gauge of lead. The small box follows the same general lines, but with only the single window, silhouetting two costume figures.

Sweet, when the morn is grey;
Sweet, when they've cleared away
Lunch; and at close of day
Possibly sweetest.
Ode to Tobacco. Charles Stuart Calverley (1831–1884)

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SMOKER'S MISCELLANY

BOWLS UP! Bowls down! Pipes horizontal! Which is the right way to store them? The controversy has continued for centuries, and as Plate 20 shows, the obliging woodworker has made pipe receptacles to meet all views.

The large, 18th century, country-made oak rack, to hang on the wall, was a type once commonly found in inns and farmhouses. It provided ample 'accommodation' for visitors, holding ten 'churchwardens' horizontally, and seven shorter clays, 'bowls up', at the base. Additionally, it includes a useful trough for spills, etc.

The churchwarden pipe box, or tray, was an 18th century alternative. It was usually a simple, plain mahogany object, divided into compartments, as illustrated. Occasionally a more decorative one is found, inlaid with crossed churchwarden pipes. Normally these boxes are about 26½ in. long, including the small lidded box, for tinder and steel, at the end; this is a common, but by no means universal, feature. Where it does not occur the overall length is about 23 in. Widths vary between 5½ in. and 6 in.; depths are usually 2¾ in. A few such boxes, or trays, survive in silver and brass, with tobacco jars, and occasionally candlesticks, *en suite.*

For those who preferred their churchwarden pipes stored vertically, the circular pillar stand, with candle serving both for illumination and lighting, was the ideal. Old engravings sometimes show this type on a small table alongside a con-

tented smoker, at ease in his armchair. The 17 in. high, mahogany pillar pipe stand, with octagonal scallop-edged base tray, shows the grace of 18th century design. The heavy oak specimen, with three built-in spill vases, typifies the clumsy deterioration which had developed by the 1820–30 period.

Although friction matches had been invented in 1826 by John Walker, a Stockton-on-Tees chemist, they remained expensive and comparatively little used for at least a decade after: so the spill, or an ember from the fire, picked up in ember tongs, normally continued to provide the smoker with a light.[1] Special spill planes were made until quite recently, for producing the curled shaving spills seen in the illustration.

The rather grotesque wooden figure, with spill basket on his back, standing on a 'rocky' mound pierced for five pipes, is German, mid-19th century.

The rack for pipes, 'bowls up', is a good example of character carving, *circa* 1900, made *en suite* with a tobacco jar in Plate 16.

The smoker's compendium, left of Plate 21, is one of those amusingly busy, but none the less useful, multi-purpose objects, in which Victorians of the 1850–70 period particularly delighted. It is made of pearwood, stained and polished mahogany colour. Like many other objects of related style, such as string barrels, match containers, ink-wells and pen-wiper buckets, made about the same time, it is heavily mounted with brass. The barrel for tobacco has a tap, which is a cigar cutter; the severed cigar-ends fall into the bucket in front. At each side of the barrel is mounted another bucket, one for candle, the other for matches. On the front edge of the plinth is a match striker.

'Smokers' Companions', small fitted tables, to stand alongside 'father's armchair', enjoyed their heyday about the same time, but continued to be made until the first decade of the 20th century. The majority had circular tops and bases and a central turned pillar. Equipment built into or on the top

[1] Bygone fire and lighting appliances will be dealt with comprehensively in another book in this series.

always included a tobacco jar and pipe rack. The earlier examples also had a holder for spills and usually another for pipe cleaners. Late specimens replaced spill vase by match holder and some have secondary lidded jars for cheroots and possibly cigarettes. The whole companion and its equipment is usually of wood, sometimes metal mounted.

Cigar cutters, being mostly all metal, offer little scope to collectors of wooden bygones, but Plate 21 shows two which qualify for illustration. Mephistopheles, nicely carved and polychrome finished, is probably Edwardian; he bites off cigars, inserted into his mouth, when the plunger under his chin is pressed. The turned lignum vitae object alongside, with circular 'mouth', is a cigar piercer of about 1870, made for the torpedo-shaped cigars which were formerly so popular. The bone stud on top is the head of a long pin which passes centrally through the circular aperture and into the wood below. To use the piercer, the pin is raised clear of the aperture into which the sealed end of the cigar is pushed; then the pin is stabbed down, piercing the cigar effectively from side to side, without tearing the leaf. For years it was among our 'dunno-whats'. Then it was shown on television; and two old gentlemen, one viewing in Yorkshire, the other in the Isle of Wight, who remembered seeing similar piercers used in their youth, sent us the answer. A test confirmed its efficiency; the side piercing gives a good 'draw' on the cigar and no bits of leaf or dust get in one's mouth.

The circular plug-tobacco cutter of mahogany, with horn-handled knife, was probably used on a tobacconist's counter less than a century ago. The very individual pocket plug cutter, made in the form of a sea horse, suggests the work of a seaman in the days of sail. For shop use, a plug-slicing 'machine', not illustrated, was developed in France in the first half of the 19th century. The plug of tobacco, D shape in section, is placed, flat side down, on a moving carriage. When the handle is turned, the carriage, by means of a worm gear, conveys the tobacco along the slides from left to right and forces it up against a wheel formed of diagonally set cutter blades. The cutter rotates under a curved boxing at one end and the sliced

tobacco drops into a drawer beneath. The cases are usually beech, grained to resemble rosewood.

The sycamore pipe mould, made in two halves, is the only one which I have seen; this is not surprising, because iron, not wood, moulds for pipes were normally used. This example, some 150 years old, makes an 11½ in. pipe. The pipes were made in a 'flow' series of operations. Briefly, after kneading pipe clay of the right consistency into long tailed lumps, each amply large enough for one pipe, the kneader passed them to a moulder who, with his right hand, drew the long clay tail over a fine steel rod, held in the left hand; his dexterity was such that he always exactly bedded the rod in the centre of the clay and left a ball of solid clay at one end to form the bowl. Having placed the stem, with solid clay attached in one half of the mould and closed the other half tightly down on it, a metal cone, the size of the inside of the bowl, was then driven into the clay cone by means of a lever, forcing the surplus clay upwards. This surplus of bowl wall was next removed by a knife, inserted into the cut in the mould. The rough pipe was then passed to a trimmer, usually a lad or a girl, and a certain amount of finishing operations and testing for 'draw' took place, prior to burning in the kiln. Fairholt, in 1859, relates that the average output per employee was nearly 500 pipes per day, and the price wholesale for these pipes was about 1*s.* 4*d.* per gross. They were retailed at four for a penny—theoretically a good profit, but the percentage of breakages was high.

Cigarette smoking did not come to Britain on a large scale until after the Crimean war of 1854–6. Even then the habit penetrated slowly. In consequence most of the production came into the 'automatic' machine age, whilst hand-made cigarettes virtually required no tools. There are, therefore, but few pieces of treen connected with cigarettes, apart from cigarette boxes or cases, many of which are beautifully made but too familiar to appeal to the collector yet. The cigarette stand with an ivory-nut head and lignum vitae body, from South America, is perhaps unusual enough to merit inclusion in Plate 21.

Probably the most interesting gadget is the rosewood,

home-cigarette-making tube, brought out in the 1870's or 1880's. Two examples are shown in front of Plate 21; one is closed, the other open, to show the thinly turned tube, funnel and ramrod, which comprised the neat little device for making tapering, paper-covered cigarettes. Similar devices, made of pearwood and horn, were designed in France. They are stamped:

MOULE À CIGARILLES

LEMAIRE-DAIMÉ
PARIS

PROPRIETE INDIVIDUELLE DE DESSINS
GARANTIE PAR LA LOI

Packets of brown-coloured, thin, tapering paper tubes were sold for use with the gadget. They also are printed as above, but some are additionally worded: 'Henry Solomon & Co. sole agents for Great Britain and its colonies. London.' As the rosewood cigarille makers are not stamped, it appears likely that they are English-made versions.

It is an interesting fact that Russian cigarettes were imported in large quantities from 1866 onwards and were more mouthpiece than cigarette. They seem to have been an early attempt at a combined holder and cigarette, for the paper was cut on a spiral and tapered to a point at one end.

Wars and variations in excise duty have been responsible for many changes in tobacco-using habits. Although a few cigars were imported to Britain in the second half of the 18th century, the general taste for cigars was introduced by the military, who had acquired the habit in Spain, during the Peninsular war of 1807–14; but with the duty on imported cigars at 18*s*. per lb. in 1815, when the general peace threw open our ports, nearly all the cigars smoked here must have been made in this country. In 1823 only 26 lb. of manufactured cigars were recorded as imported. Then the duties began to be reduced, until by 1830 they were halved, and the imports of cigars in that year went up to more than a quarter of a million pounds. Incidentally, by 1825 cigar consumption in

The Blackamoor, the earliest tobacconist's sign in England, dates back at least to the early 17th century. This specimen, 19 in. high, is an 18th century example

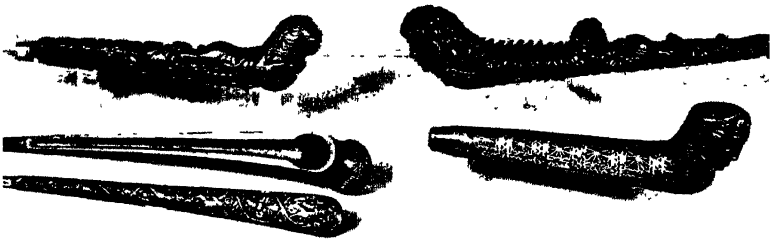
The carved Red Indian is the traditional cigar-store welcome in the U.S.A. This vigorously carved, outsize specimen—7 ft. 8 in. high—is by Arnold and Peter Ruef of Tiffen, Ohio, made about 1880. *Photograph by courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan*

PLATE 2

North of the border, the kilted Highlander, with plumed bonnet, has, for the past 200 years or more, welcomed those who partake of 'sneesh'. This boldly carved, 19th century, polychrome figure is 36 in. high

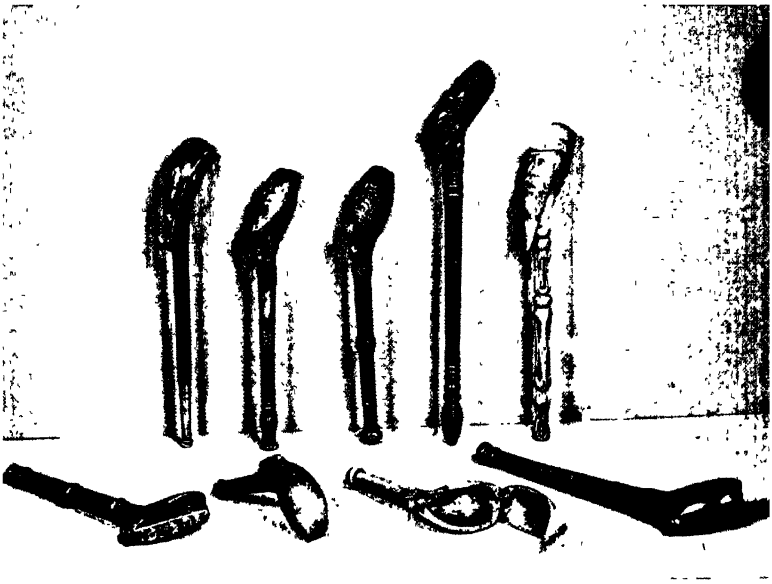
The 28 in. high figure of a Turk, in striped flowing robe, with red sash and head-wear, is a rare, alternative 18th century tobacconist's sign. His long pipe has been broken off. In 19th century examples, a cigar takes the place of pipe

PLATE 4



Four elaborate, carved wood cases of 17th century design, for protecting clay pipes in the pocket. The chip carved case, right, front, is dated 1800 and is a 'throw back' in style

PLATE 5

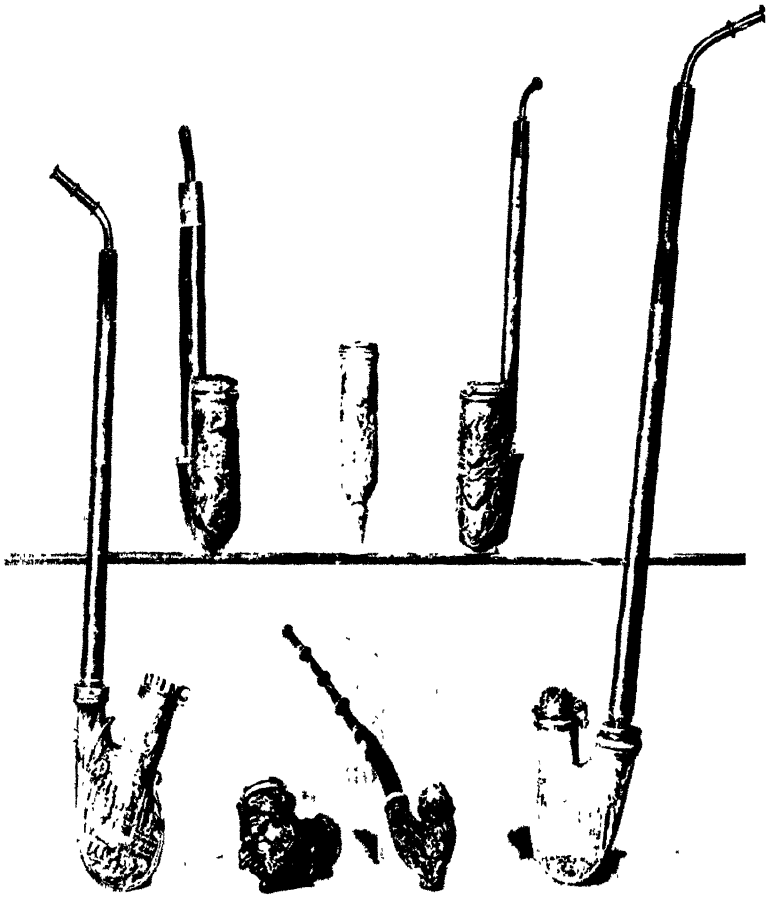


Carved pipe cases of the 18th and 19th centuries. Left, front, an 18th century specimen, obviously belonged to a man ahead of his time in hygiene: the case has a combination lock, so that the pipe could not be smoked in its owner's absence

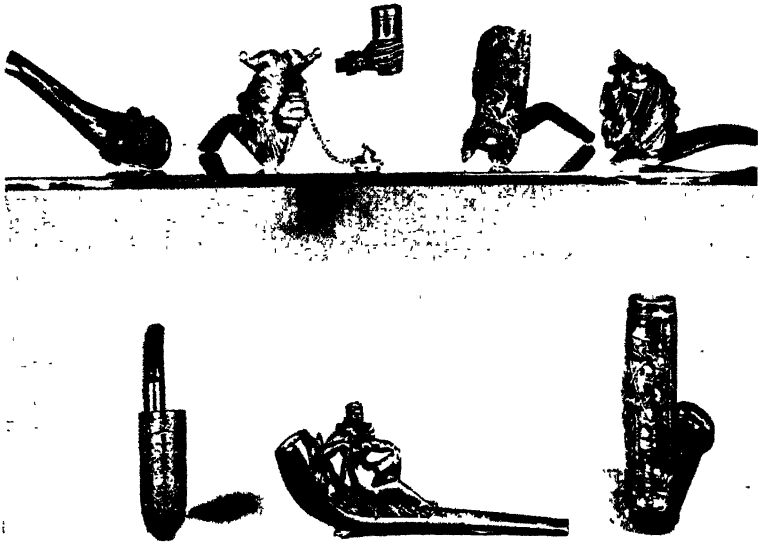
PLATE 6

Carved wood pipes of the 18th and early 19th centuries, mostly German. These pre-briar pipes have silver or iron bowl linings

PLATE 7

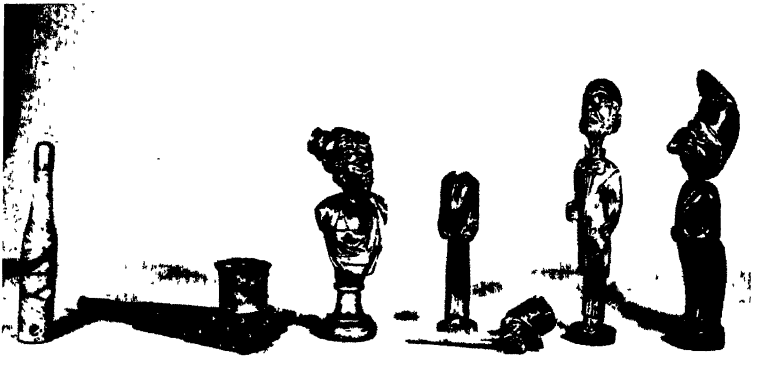


A further selection of late 18th and 19th century mid-European pipes. Left and right in front are Austrian, *circa* 1795



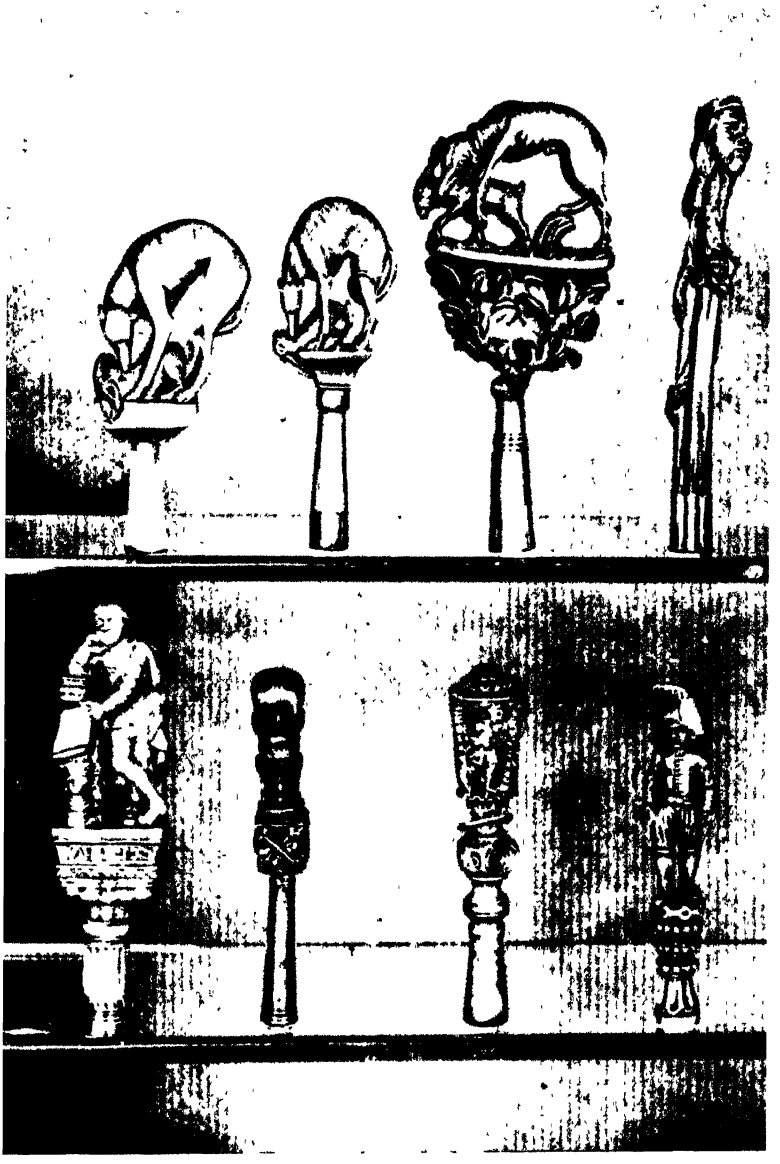
Carved briar pipes, made between 1850 and 1900

PLATE 9

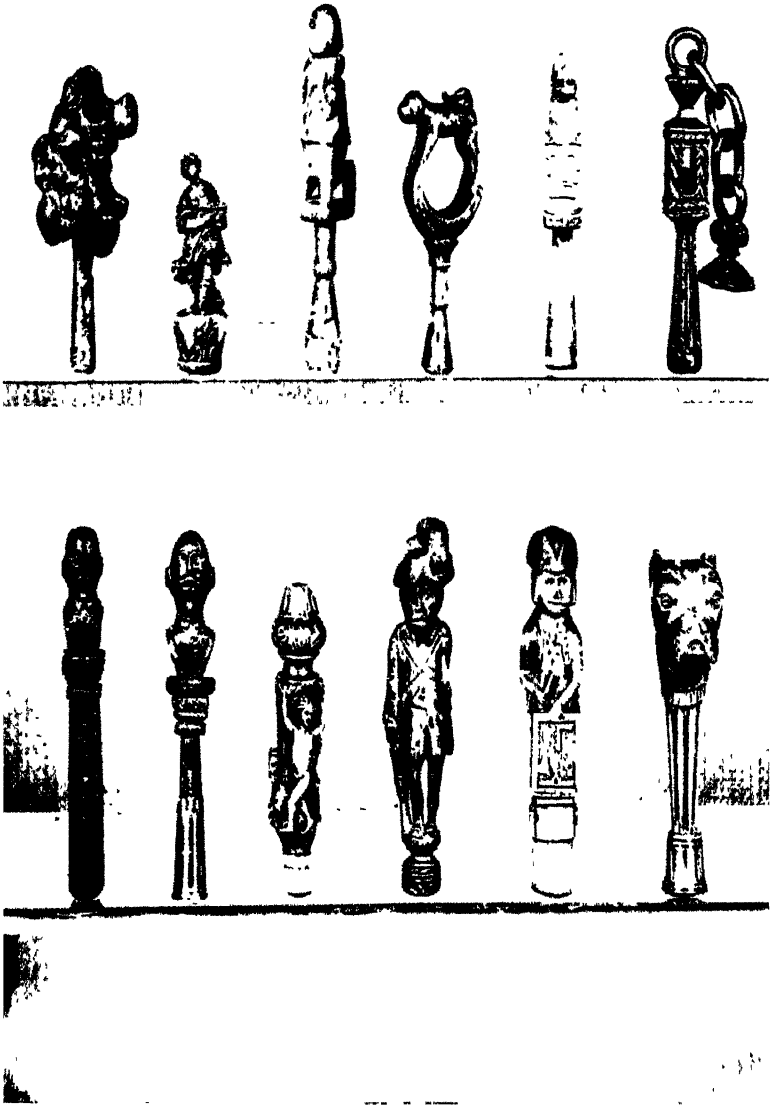


German novelty 'bottle pipe', *circa* 1895. Irish labourer's pipe, *circa* 1825, and a selection of 'figure' pipes, popular in the 1870's

PLATE 10

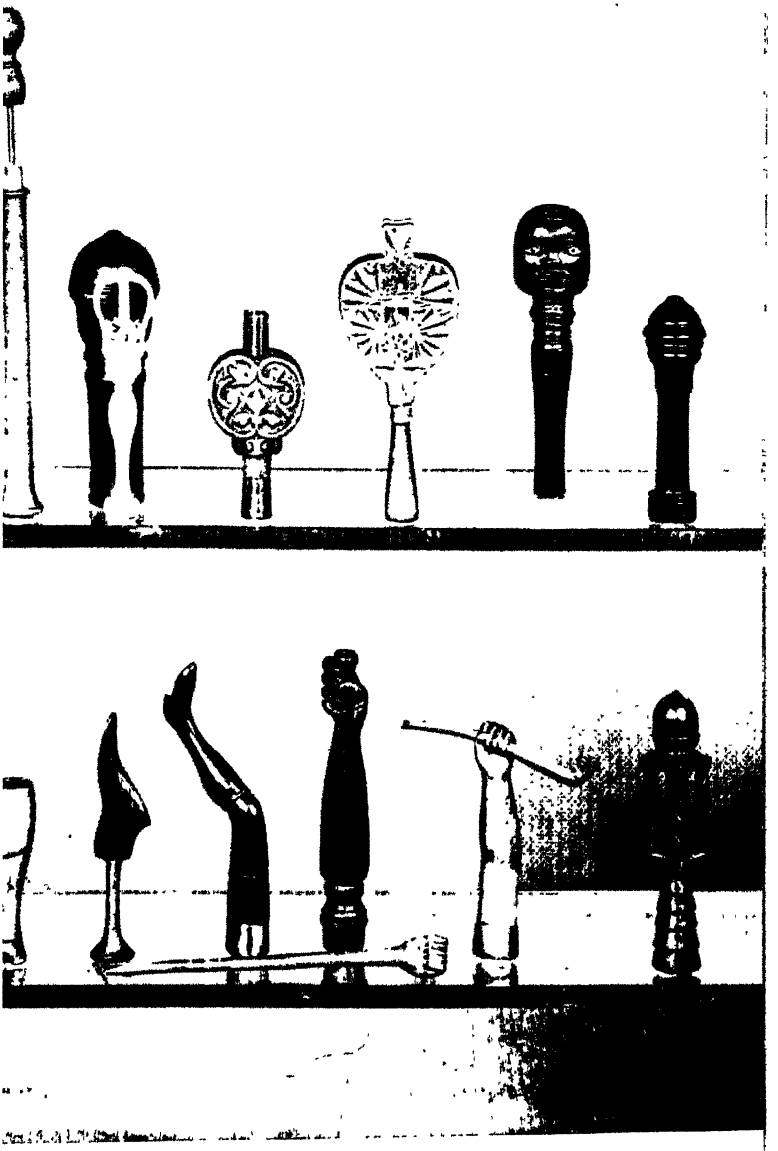


Carved boxwood tobacco stoppers of the 18th century are highly ornamental, as well as useful

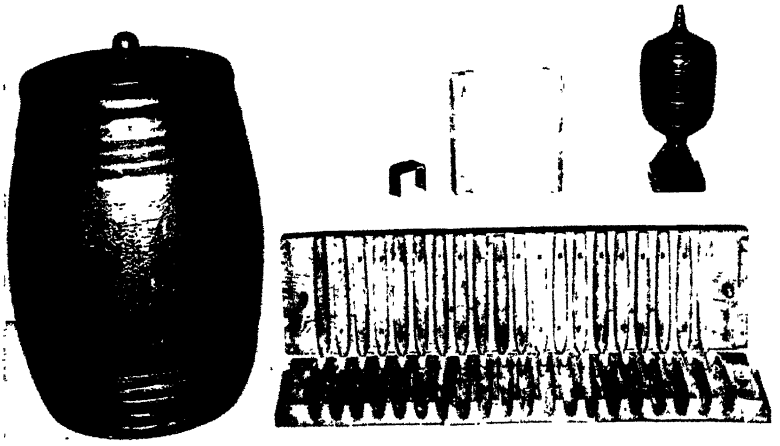


The tobacco stoppers in the top row have the very small bases which were used for the small 17th century pipe bowls. The dog 'finger ring' type stopper is very rare in wood. Many of these stoppers, by reason of their subjects, are quite documentaries

PLATE 12

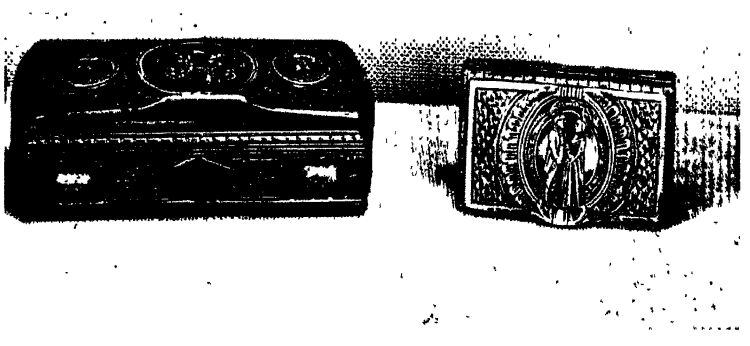


Arms and legs were particularly popular motifs. Prickers, for preventing tobacco 'caking' in the pipe, were sometimes incorporated in tobacco stoppers; some are shown here



17th century shop counter and domestic tobacco jars; late 19th century single and multiple cigar moulds from Massachusetts

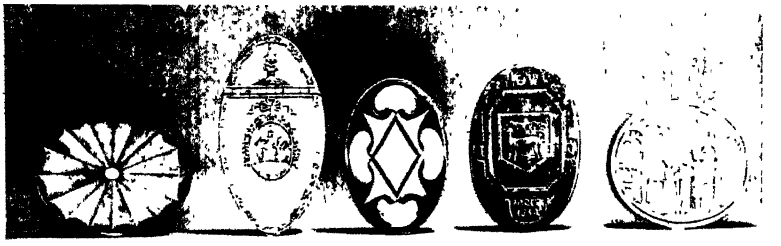
PLATE 14



Fops' tobacco boxes of the mid-18th century have mirror-lined lids. These two handsome specimens, with integral wood hinges, may be Scottish

PLATE 15

A representative selection of wooden tobacco jars, from the 17th century to about 1900

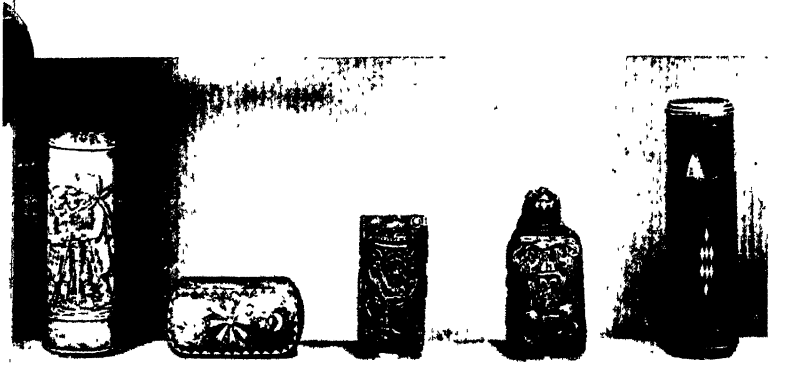


A selection of fine quality tobacco boxes. The fourth, dated 1664, must be one of the earliest dated wooden specimens extant

PLATE 17

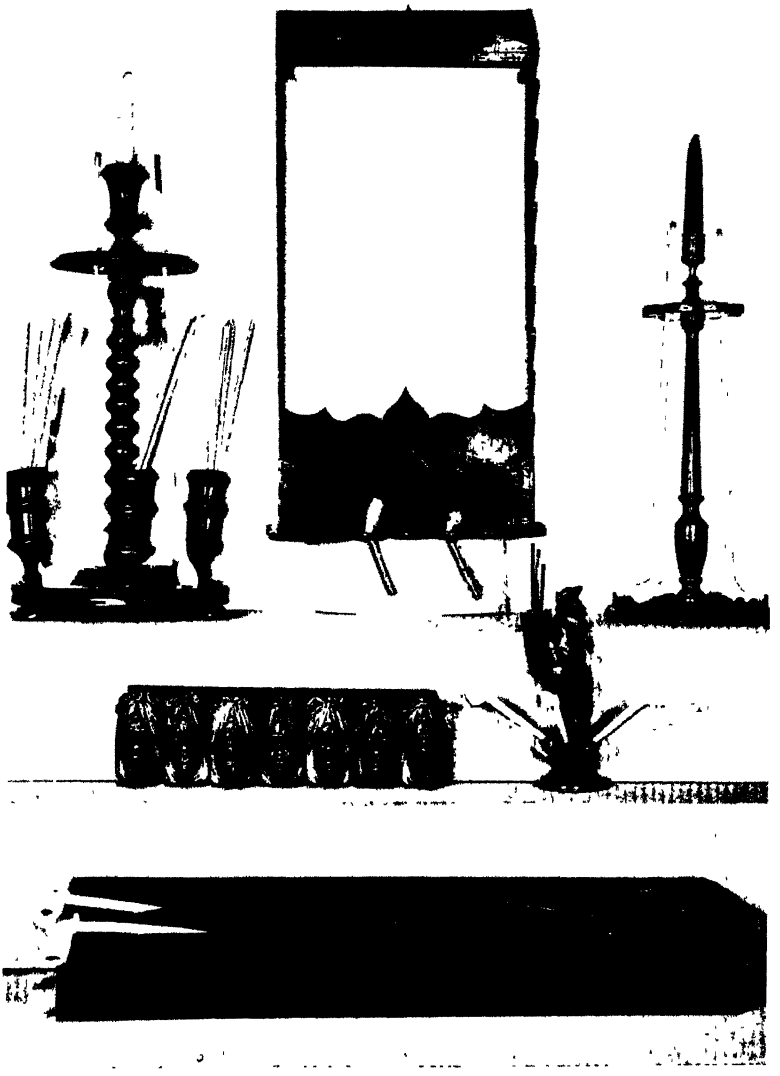
Three deep, but crudely carved, Dutch tobacco boxes, all cut from the solid

PLATE 18

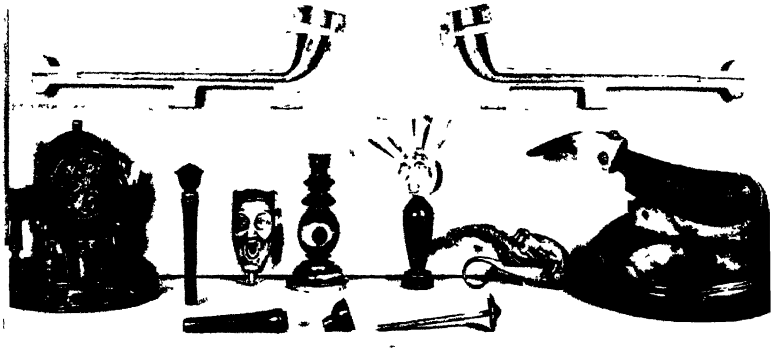


These five unusual tobacco boxes are described fully in the text

PLATE 19

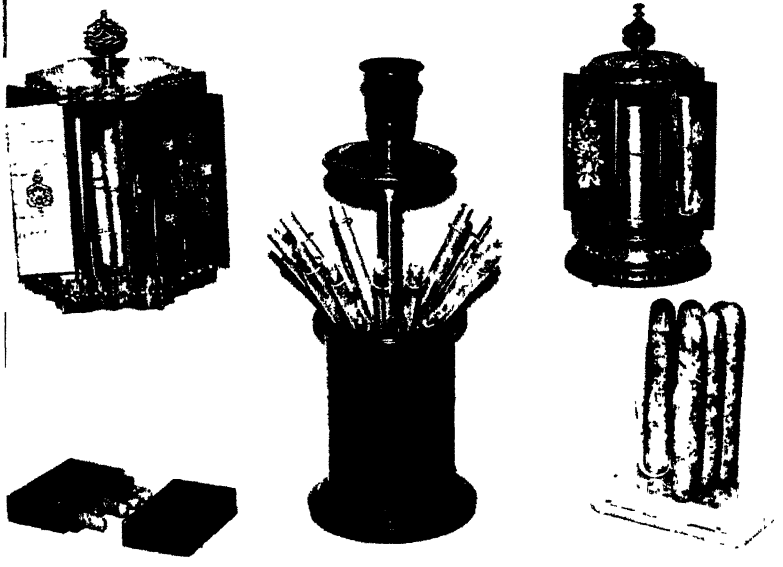


Whether pipes should be stored vertically 'bowls up or down', or horizontally, remains controversial; pictured here are some 18th and 19th century alternatives



Early 19th century wooden pipe mould; Victorian smoker's compendium; tobacco cutters; cigar piercers; cigarette stand; and cigarette-making gadgets

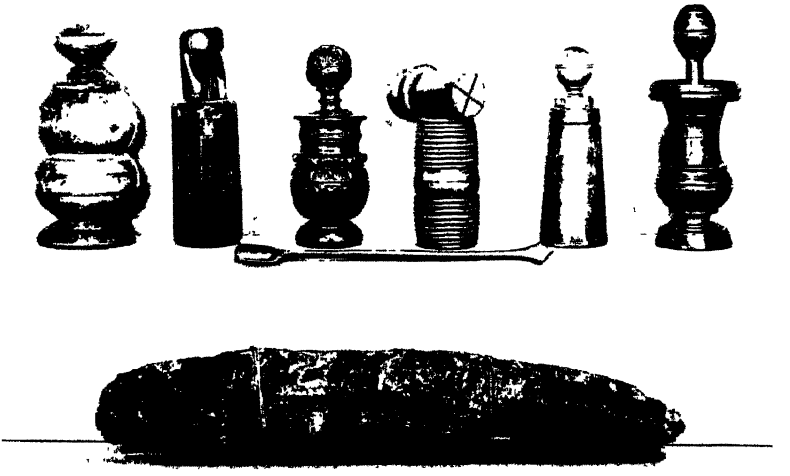
PLATE 21



The 19th century produced some attractive semi-mechanical novelty caskets for cheroots; being fragile, few have survived. Also here are wooden pocket cases for cigars and cigarettes

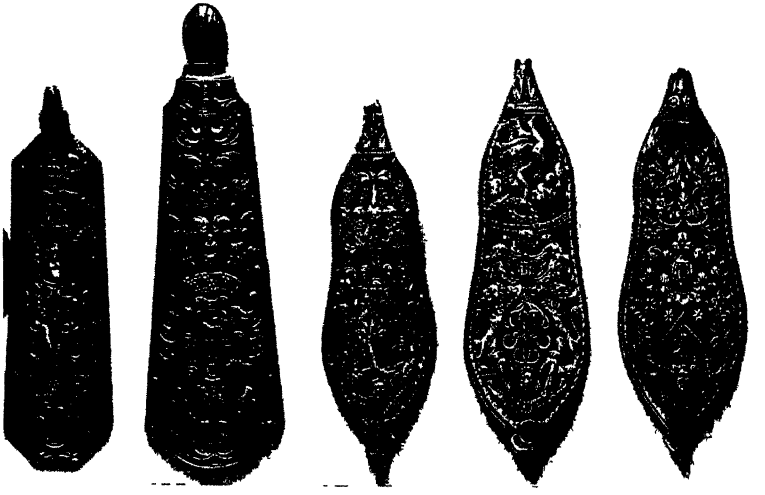
PLATE 22

A unique snuff-pedlar's staff or shop sign, carved with an old woman taking a pinch from the box on her knee; painted in natural colours. *Circa* 1815



Early graters, of the type used by apothecaries and tobacconists for grinding tobacco into snuff; the first two on the left are 17th century, the next is Elizabethan, the last three 17th or 18th century. Lignum vitae spoon, for taking snuff out of glass bottles; and a large *carotte* of tobacco

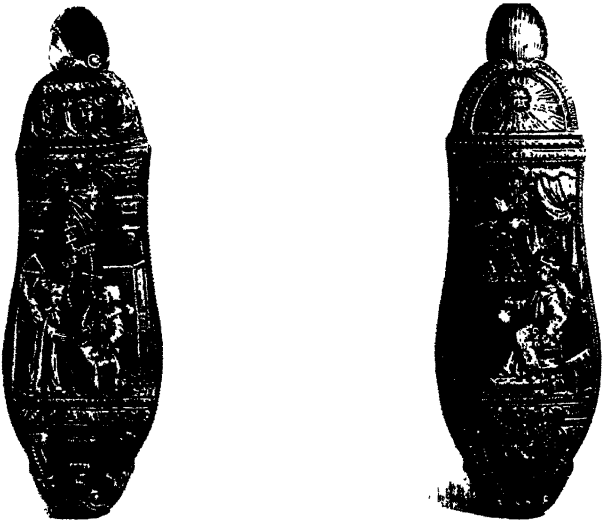
PLATE 24



Fine quality, Louis XIV, late 17th century snuff rasps, some of boxwood, others pearwood. They are examples of the so-called Cesar Bagard work, executed at Nancy

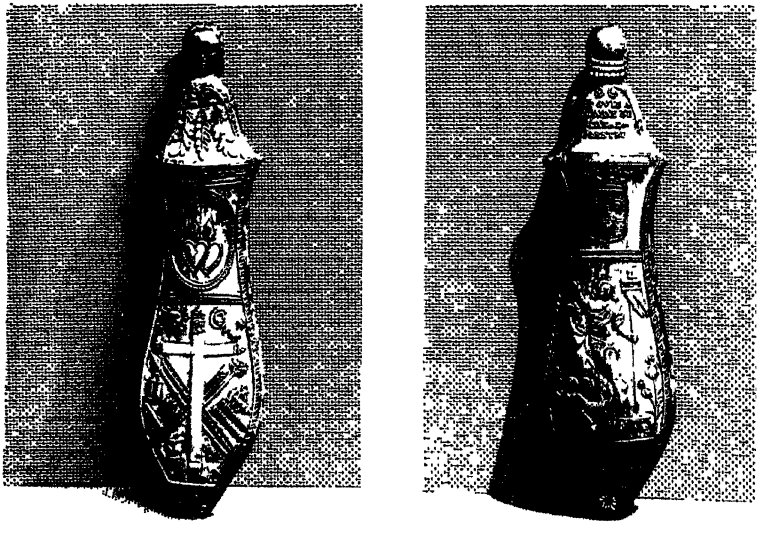
PLATE 25

18th century trade card of Fribourg & Treyer. A *carotte* of tobacco is shown among the rococo scrolls, top left



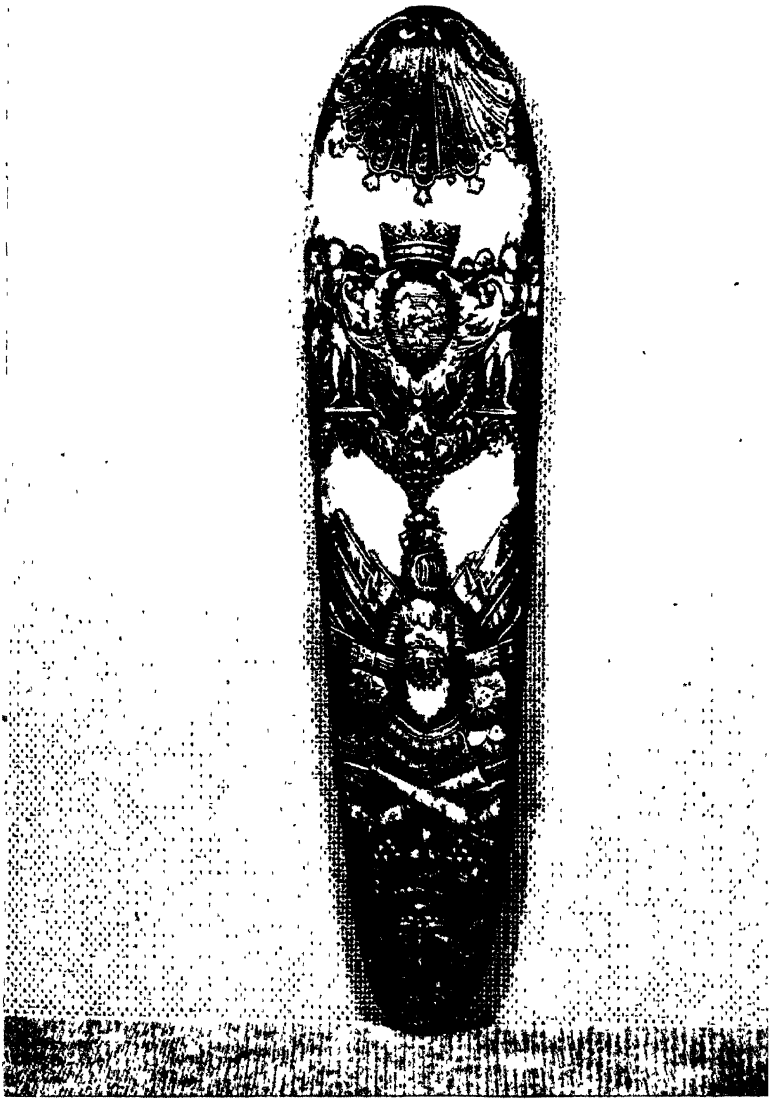
The two sides of an outstanding, Louis XIV, 17th century, boxwood rasp. It is believed to depict a satire on methods of church preferment of the period

PLATE 27

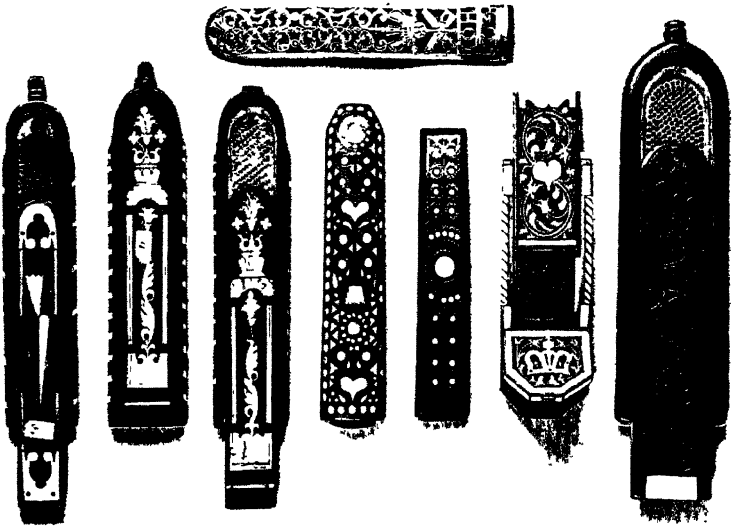


The front and back of another boxwood rasp of the same period as that in Plate 27. This specimen is particularly interesting because it records its owner's name and calling, and maker's name

PLATE 28

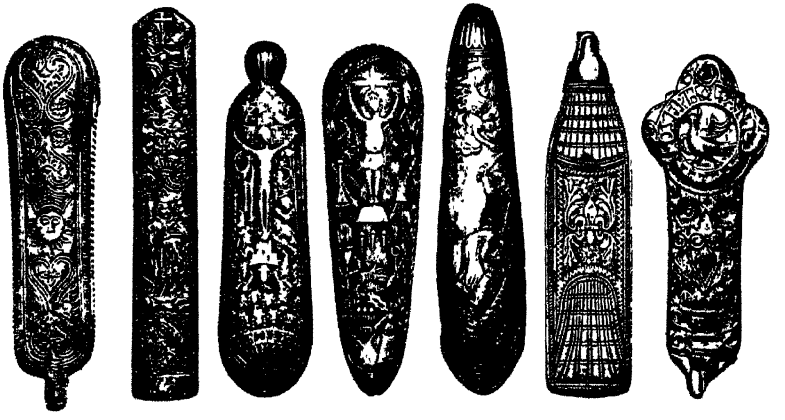


One of the finest 17th century, boxwood rasps extant. The Royal French Coat-of-Arms shows the bar sinister between the fleur-de-lis



Three 17th century, inlaid, German rasps, with sliding shutters; two open-back, Italian rasps of 17th or 18th century date; and two dated 18th century, Dutch rasps. (*Above*) a brass rasp of 1754, with an unusual feature

PLATE 30

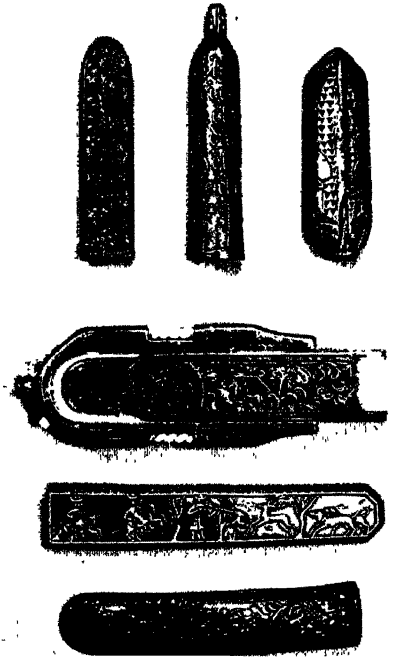


Late 17th and early 18th century wood rasps, mostly French and Italian. Four of them are carved with religious themes

PLATE 31

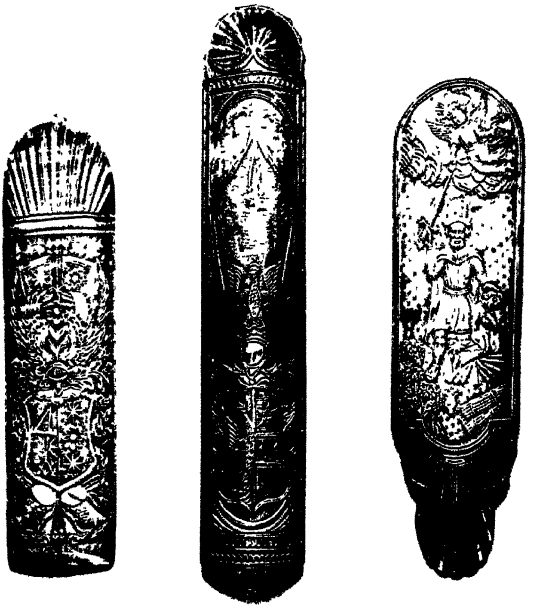
More notable carved rasps of the 17th and 18th centuries. The one on the left is an unusual, inlaid. Hungarian specimen, dated 1745. The next one, depicting St. Louis, is rare

PLATE 32



Nearly all the rasps in this picture have uncommon features. The Dutch coaster rasp on wheels, centre, may well be unique; its maker almost certainly made the rasp dated 1725, right of Plate 30

PLATE 33

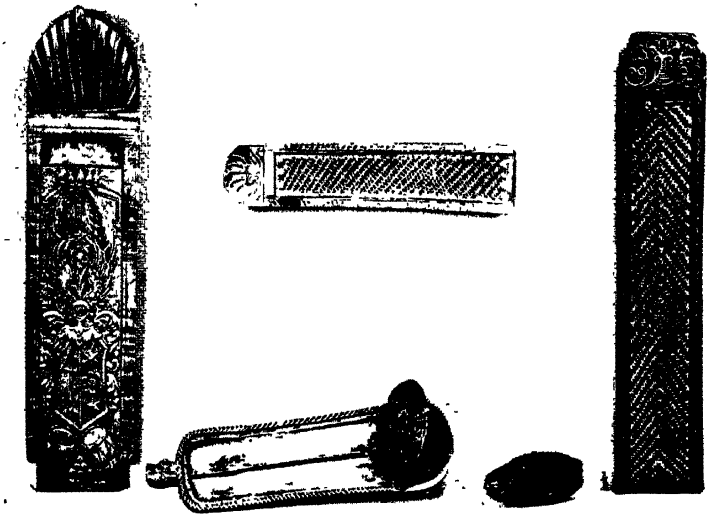


Three outsize rasps of fine quality. They measure respectively 11½ in., 13⅞ in. and 12 in.

PLATE 34

Late 17th and early 18th century ivory rasps. The same craftsmen often worked in ivory and boxwood

PLATE 35

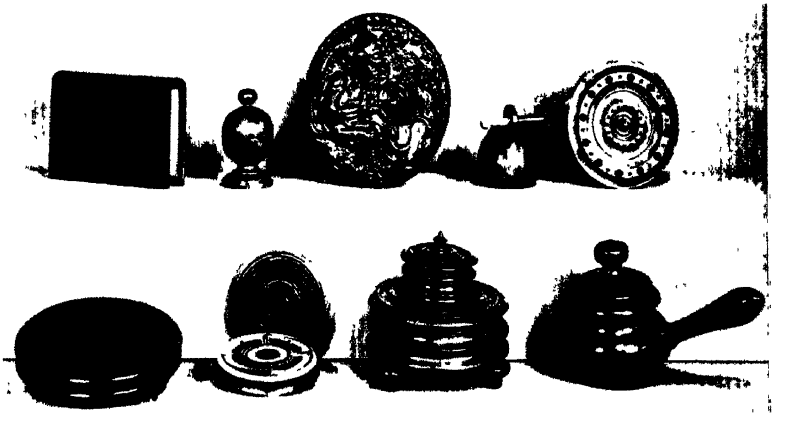


The working parts of snuff rasps. Left, is back of rasp shown left of Plate 34, with snuff box above sliding shutter; right, is back of Hungarian rasp, shown left of Plate 32; at the bottom, is back of rasp, shown left of Plate 31, with grater removed. Alongside is a small *carotte* of tobacco

PLATE 36

Assortment of table and counter snuff boxes. One in front has the snuff box mounted on the lid of a tobacco box

PLATE 37

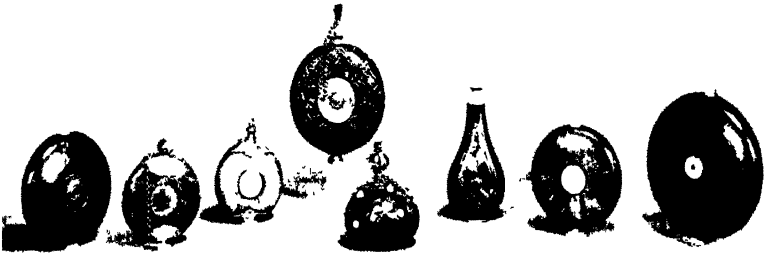


Some of these are souvenir boxes, made from famous trees. or wood of notable buildings. Also included are an example of Tunbridge wood mosaic, a Scottish pen-and-ink decorated box, and two Scottish mulls, the one on the left with the early date 1684

PLATE 88

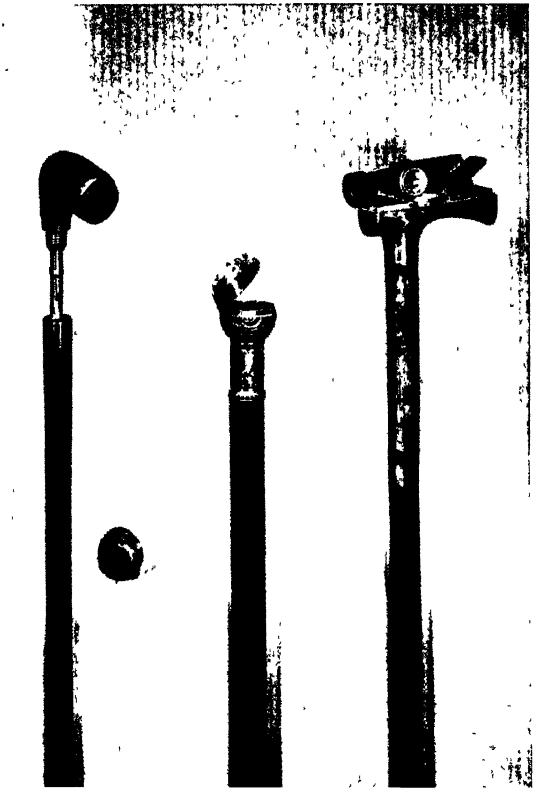
Two views of a 16th or 17th century, boxwood snuff box, with sculptural quality, technical skill, and virtuosity in the style of Cellini. It depicts various figures of mythology, riding on a cloud, fanned by cherubs

PLATE 89



Scandinavian, 18th century snuff flasks, hollowed out of birch and maple burrs. The flasks were filled at the foot and emptied from the spout

PLATE 40



An early 19th century walking stick, containing a snuff box in the knob handle. Another, late 19th century, with three silver-gilt receptacles in the handle, and one, *circa* 1900, containing a pipe

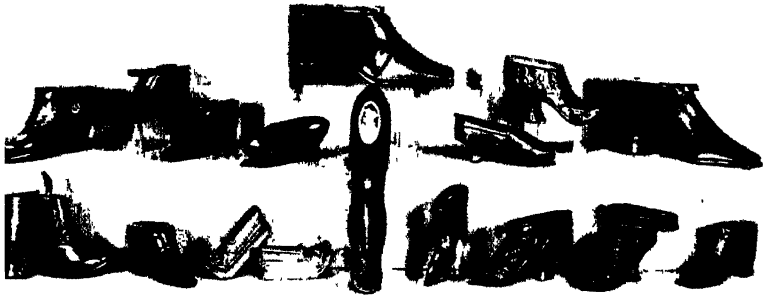
PLATE 41

Boot and shoe snuff boxes; the former are 19th century, but the latter enjoyed popularity both in the 18th and 19th centuries. The most exact models were probably apprentices' passing-out pieces, but many, including the rare double shoes, were love tokens

PLATE 42

The mediaeval-type shoe, centre, front, is probably Victorian romantic. The green snake, which emerges from the shoe, front, left, when the lid is slid back, must, when covered in snuff, have been enough to scare the stoutest heart

PLATE 43

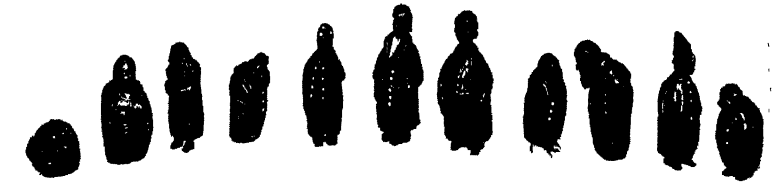


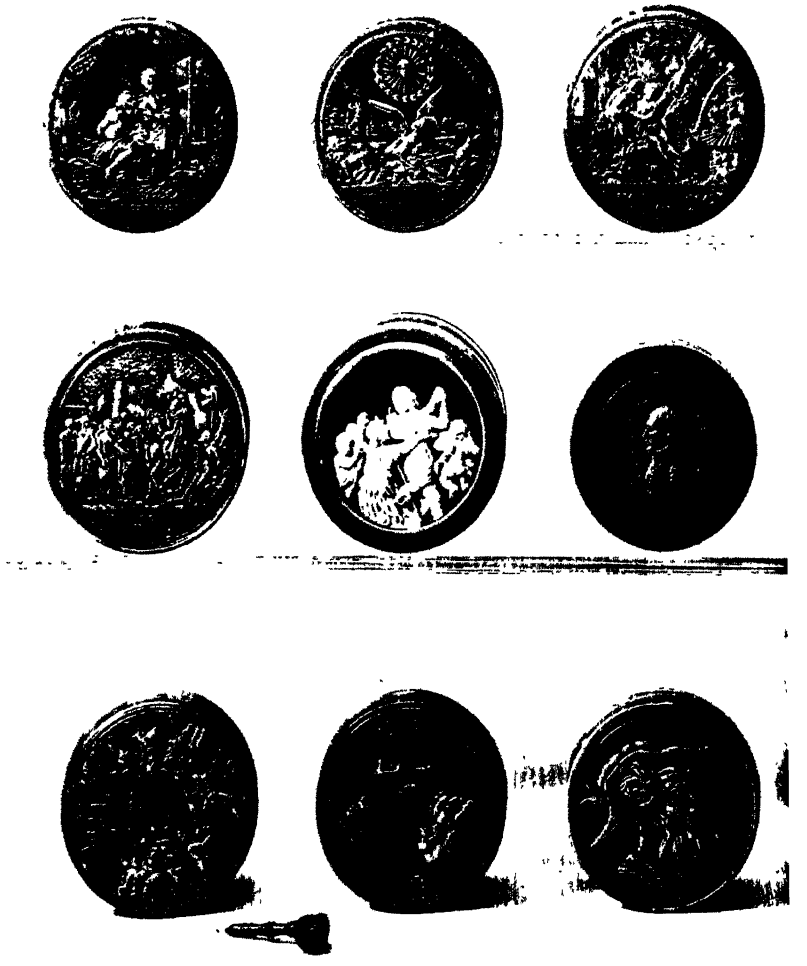
The three French, early 19th century, ship snuff boxes, back row, are good examples of coquilla-nut carving. The ship on the left, same period, is of boxwood. The round and the oblong burr boxes, in front, are of exceptional quality. The two carved boxes on the right are shaped to fit the pocket

PLATE 44

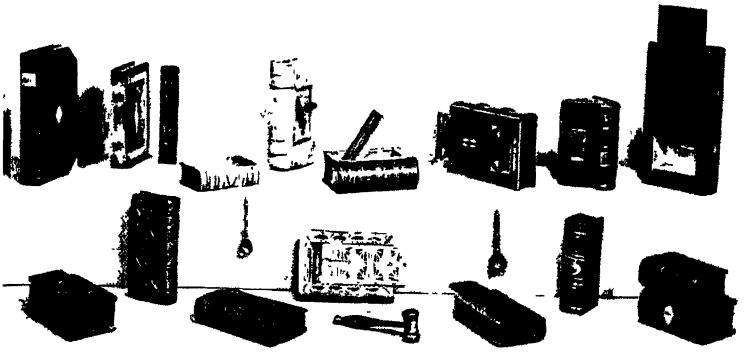
Selection of snuff boxes, carved from coquilla nut. Most of the figures are German or Dutch, early 19th century. The two boxes, right of upper shelf, are believed to be mid-19th century, in the style of mid-16th century

PLATE 45



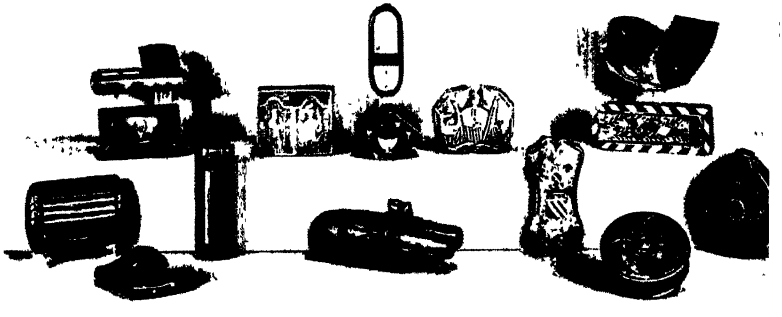


French burr-wood snuff boxes, with tortoiseshell linings; early 19th century. The ornament was impressed after the wood had been steamed. A very wide range of subjects was used. Some of the boxes have secret compartments.



Book snuff boxes are said to have been the bibliophile's choice. They are charming and ingenious in their simulation of volumes and were popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. Also in the picture are two wooden snuff spoons and a snuff mallet

PLATE 47



A miscellany of boxes. The group of five on the left are Scottish hinged boxes, mostly of amboyna. The twin-barrelled pistol is a novel design

PLATE 48

Animal and grotesque boxes were great favourites; some of them show considerable character and humour. A selection of ivory snuff spoons is also shown

PLATE 49

Bellows, pinch-of-snuff hands, planes, hats, helmets and coffins are all to be found among the bygone boxes of snuffing

PLATE 50

London was sufficient for a Mr. Gliddon to open a 'Cigar Divan' in King Street, Covent Garden. It was really a superior coffee house and social club for men only. Illustrations show it furnished with divans and small tables against a scenic background, purporting to represent the Middle East. Cigars, snuff, coffee, etc., were served and the latest periodicals available. It was because cigar smoking developed so much as a social custom that it dealt such a severe blow to snuffing, which, by its addicts in high society, was considered a graceful part of the design of living. The 'opposition' view on smoking is deliciously summed up by the following extract from *Hints on Etiquette* published in 1834:

> 'If you are so unfortunate as to have contracted the low habit of smoking, be careful to practise it under certain restrictions; at least, so long as you are desirous of being considered fit for civilised society.
>
> The first mark of a gentleman is a sensitive regard for the feelings of others; therefore, smoke where it is least likely to prove personally offensive by making your clothes smell; then wash your mouth, and brush your teeth. What man of delicacy could presume to address a lady with his breath smelling of onions? Yet tobacco is equally odious. The tobacco smoker, in *public*, is the most selfish animal imaginable; he perseveres in contaminating the pure and fragrant air, careless whom he annoys, and is but the fitting inmate of a tavern.
>
> Smoking in the streets, or in a theatre, is only practised by shop-boys, pseudo-fashionables—and the "SWELL MOB".
>
> All songs that you may see written in praise of smoking in magazines or newspapers, or hear sung upon the stage, are *puffs*, paid for by the proprietors of cigar divans and tobacco shops, to make their trade popular—therefore, never believe nor be deluded by them.
>
> Never be seen in cigar divans or billiard rooms; they are frequented, at best, by an equivocal set. *No good* can be gained there—and a man loses his respectability by being seen entering or coming out of such places.'

Cedar cigar boxes, when empty, have more appeal for the amateur woodworker than for the collector. Cedar cigar cabinets, although often examples of fine cabinet making, are mostly somewhat large for collectors of wooden bygones. There remain, however, cheroot caskets and cases, and cigar cases.

Some of the caskets are both attractive and ingenious, being semi-mechanically operated. Two, both about 9 in. high overall, which open by turning the knob on the top, are shown, back of Plate 22. The knob turns the centre stem, which passes through the base into a large, wooden cog wheel. This centre cog controls smaller ones, which actuate the opening and closing of the six doors of each casket. The hexagonal example is French or Swiss, 1830–40 period. It is veneered with kingwood and has ebonized pivot pillars to the doors. The mounts are of ormolu and include a lyre on each door. Possibly there was once a musical box under the base. Five of the doors are each fitted with gilt holders for three cheroots; the sixth has a piercer affixed, which also combines a match holder and striker.

The circular model, to hold six cheroots, is of mahogany, ebonized externally and hand painted with flowers to harmonize with the papier mâché vogue of 1850; it is probably English. Many variants of these designs were made, including some in the Oriental taste. Being rather delicate objects, few of this type of casket survive in good condition. The circular rosewood casket operates on a different principle. When closed, it is 10 in. high overall and resembles a large tobacco jar, with an outsize candle holder on top. This holder, or cup, contains a plunger; when this is operated, the top rises on a brass column and displays, umbrella-wise, twelve cheroots in gilt metal holders of leaf form. It appears to be mid-19th century and may be English or continental. Wooden pocket cases, to hold any number from three to six cheroots, each in its own separate cavity, were made in the same period. Additional to the rosewood 'book' type illustrated, amboyna cases, and sycamore cases decorated with tartan or with transfer pictures, were made in Scotland and were known as 'magazines'.

Karelian birch cigar and cigarette cases, beautifully made from highly figured wood and with integral wood hinges, as shown in Plate 22, enjoyed quite a vogue in the first thirty years of this century.

In Plate 14 are two interesting cigar moulds from Massachusetts. The large one holds twenty of the torpedo-shaped cigars which were popular in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of this one. The two halves of the mould peg together. The single mould, which has a steel clip to keep it closed, has a separate base to the cavity which facilitates removal of the cigar, and also, by variation in thickness, can be used to adjust the weight of the cigar.

PART TWO

Snuff Taking

She that with pure tobacco will not prime
Her nose, can be no lady of the time.

News from the New Exchange (1650)

CHAPTER FIVE

SALUTATION TO STERNUTATION

ENGLISH words disappear and new ones appear in our vocabulary from time to time; they also change their meaning. My generation visualizes a square as an open space in a city or a draughtsman's instrument. Now, I gather, we ourselves are 'squares'! This, however, is merely a revival of an old term, for a square or square-toes, in 18th century parlance, denoted a precise, old-fashioned person. It appears, therefore, that our ultra-modern youth are even more antiquated in their speech than some of them are in their costume.

What a pity that those wonderful words, sternutatory, sternutation and sternutative—all common parlance prior to 1850, among snuff takers and writers on the subject—are no longer in everyday use. Sternutatory means a substance, such as snuff, which provokes sneezing; sternutative is provocative of sneezing, and sternutation the act of sneezing.

Snuff taking formerly came under two distinct headings—habit and fashion. The latter was naturally responsible for the finest of the bygones associated with snuffing. These, the elaborately carved or inlaid snuff rasps, alternatively known as rappoirs or *râpes à tabac*, for individual use in rasping tobacco into snuff, and some of the many varieties of snuff boxes will be described and illustrated in the following chapters—but first, some notes on the custom.

The snuff-taking habit in 16th century western Europe originated as a supposed curative for various maladies, and

continued to be used for 300 years as an antidote to evil smells. On the Continent it had by 1620 also become a social grace among a large proportion of the aristocracy, and one with a distinct etiquette of its own among nosologists, as the nose-hungry were known.

Although there were also a few individual snuff takers in Britain and it was a well-established custom in Scotland early in the 17th century, it is generally accepted among historians that the exiled court of Charles II, both men and women, brought the fashion home, as one of the results of their continental sojourn.

It does not seem to have made great progress in challenging the supremacy of smoking, even in Court circles, until snuff-taking William and Mary came to the throne in 1689. During their reigns the vogue spread rapidly in aristocratic circles, and by the time of Anne (1702), another confirmed snuff taker, it is related that scarcely a man of rank but carried the insidious dust about him, either in an elaborate box of wood, horn, agate, tortoiseshell, enamel, gold or silver, or else in the hollow, ornamental silver head of his cane, Plate 41, at that time as indispensable an appendage as a sword.

Throughout the 18th century, and during the first thirty years of the 19th, snuff taking remained the fashionable addiction, gaining in popularity from the examples of the Hanoverian kings and queens. Queen Charlotte, though only seventeen when she married George III, was such a confirmed snuff taker that she was known as 'Snuffy Charlotte'. The Prince Regent and his Beau Nash set of dandies continued the snuff fashion at the top level, but by this time, even in aristocratic circles, the custom of grinding one's own snuff freshly, with an elaborate continental pocket rasp, was dying rapidly. Instead, the nobility had their individually perfumed snuffs blended and prepared for them by high-grade snuff specialists, who often named the brand after the patron. At Windsor Castle George IV had a snuff-jar chamber, with a page in charge of the expensive stock of varieties of morning, afternoon and evening snuffs, stored in labelled jars, bottles and canisters, on tiers of shelves. Additionally, Fribourg

and Treyer of the Haymarket acted in an overall supervisory capacity.

Dates on some of the rasps illustrated in Plates 25 and 27 to 36 show that they were still being made as late as 1775, but all those in question are continental and there is no proof that they were ever used in England. Hardly any individual snuff rasps seem to have been made in Britain, because the beaux who used them thought it beneath them to have anything other than the latest continental fancy, whilst lower-class habitués had bought their snuff ready ground from the commencement of the 18th century.

In fact, snuff taking as a habit, among all classes in Great Britain, as opposed to a fashionable addiction of society, dates fortuitously from the introduction of ready-ground snuff in 1702. In that year the fleet, under the command of Sir George Rooke, captured from the Spanish, near Cadiz, several thousand barrels of choice Spanish snuff, and near Vigo a further cargo of Havana snuff, intended for the Spanish market. This vast quantity of sneezing powder was sold at the English seaports at a very low price, the proceeds being prize money for the benefit of the sailors and officers. Thus was the general snuff habit born in Britain. At first tobacconists and apothecaries met the demand for the powder by grinding it in mills similar to those illustrated in Plate 24, most of which have iron-tipped or studded pestles. Some few, like that on the left, are made in two parts: the upper has an iron grater base, through which the *carotte* of tobacco was rubbed into the compartment below. An alternative was a large grater tray, with a receptacle below it. After rasping the roll or *carotte* to a rough 'bran', it was then pounded in a basin mortar, with a peculiarly shaped pestle. By about 1740, snuff was being prepared wholesale, in a large grinding mill, powered by a horse, and specialist snuff shops were coming into being.

In the 18th and 19th centuries there were hundreds of varieties of snuff sold, flavoured or perfumed with different scented oils. In the main they came under eight headings—coarse and fine, dry and moist, dark and light, scented and plain. Rapee, the best-known coarse, dark snuff, derived its

name from the French *râper*, to grate. It was available plain or scented and was made from Virginia tobacco. It is generally regarded as the parent of all other snuffs. Artificially coloured snuffs, finely powdered varieties, and, above all, scented snuffs, according to old accounts, lent themselves to most repulsive forms of adulteration. The fearsome additives were effectively cloaked by the perfumed oils of bergamot, orange, jasmine, violet, lily of the valley, civet, musk, cedar and various wines, in which the *carottes* of tobacco were steeped, after the leaves had been prepared by steeping in water to which various salts had been added.

Some of the best-known mixtures bore such grandiloquent names as Etrenne, Bureau, Bolongaro, Montagne Carotte, Martinique, Façon de Paris, Hardham's 37, Violet Strasbourg, Prince's Mixture, King's Morning Mixture, King's Evening Mixture, King's Carotte, King's Plain, Macouba, Norcott's Mixture, Jesuits' Snuff, Spanish Bran, Cologne, Old Paris, Havre, Bordeaux, Rouen, St. Omer, Dieppe, Antwerp, Mannheim, Seville, Morocco, St. Vincent, Masulipatam, etc.

The Scots had no use for these scented varieties, and Scotch snuff, made only from the stalks of tobacco, was renowned for its purity. In Ireland and Wales a taste developed for snuff made from toasted or roasted tobacco. According to old accounts, a large tobacco warehouse was burnt down in Dublin, and one Lundy Foot, a porter at the said warehouse, purchased for a very small sum a large quantity of the burnt and scorched tobacco. This he ground up into snuff which he sold very cheaply to the poor, 'the blackguards' of Dublin. The snuff was both very pungent and very popular. Lundy Foot went on making more of it, opened a shop and became a wealthy man, selling Lundy Foot's 'Irish Blackguard'.

In the great days of fashionable snuff taking there were teachers of the etiquette of correctly wielding a snuff box, just as there were of wielding a fan, or dancing, or fencing; there were also books on the subject explaining the rules of offering snuff to a stranger, a friend, or a mistress, according to the degrees of familiarity or distance. Some users grated snuff from a rasp on to the back of the hand and sniffed it thence;

some took a pinch from a snuff box. Others used a snuff spoon. According to an 18th century complainant:

> 'To such a height with some is fashion grown
> They feed their very nostrils with a spoon.'

Snuff-takers' chatelaines of silver were made. Certain elaborate ones were for ceremonial use at Scottish army mess dinners. These were attached to horn snuff coasters, passed along the table, and the equipment included a mallet for dislodging any snuff adhering to the side of the mull, a pointed instrument to prick it, if it caked, a rake to smooth it, a spoon for placing it on the back of the hand or thumbnail and a hare's foot for dusting the moustache, lip or hand.

Special snuff handkerchiefs, usually about 24 in. square, were also sold for dusting the hand and lip, or protecting the neck-cloth. For practical reasons, most of these handkerchiefs had snuff-coloured, chocolate, yellow or red backgrounds, further embellished by closely printed designs of ballads, fashionable scenes, or popular events. In 1798 Fribourg and Treyer sold them at 28*s*. per dozen. Incidentally, they still sell them today.

Snuff taking, as a fashion, declined rapidly between George IV's death in 1830 and Victoria's accession in 1837, though a most amusing book *A Pinch of Snuff* by 'Dean Snift', published in 1840, says that it is still 'increasing in popularity'. I suspect that the book was sponsored by snuff interests, to keep the fashion alive.

In spite of the world of fashion changing over to cigars, snuff taking never died out; indeed it is having a mild resurgence now and one firm claims to make sixty-five varieties. Only recently I read of a judge apologizing for delaying a hearing because his snuff box had come unfastened in his pocket! Until very recently the 'court' was by no means the only place where smoking was forbidden. Until the 1920's, when sprinkler systems first made smoking permissible in many woodworking factories, most woodworkers were snuff takers. I shall always remember a woodworking factory

manager of forty years ago, who from the front appeared to be wearing a snuff-coloured suit, but the back view disclosed it to be blue serge!

Like smoking, snuff taking had its enemies. Here is the anti-snuff view expressed by *Hints on Etiquette*, 1834.

> 'As snuff-taking is merely an idle, dirty habit, practised by stupid people in the unavailing endeavour to clear their stolid intellect, and is not a custom particularly offensive to their neighbours, it may be left to each individual taste as to whether it be continued or not. An "Elegant" cannot take *much* snuff without decidedly "losing caste".
>
> "Doctor," said an old gentleman, who was an inveterate snuff-taker, to a physician, "is it true that snuff destroys the olfactory nerves, clogs, and otherwise injures the brain?" "It cannot be true," was the caustic reply, "since *those who have any brains never take snuff at all.*" '

Oh Snuff! our fashionable end and aim!
Strasburgh, Rappee, Dutch, Scotch! whate'er thy name;
Powder celestial! quintessence divine!
New joys entrance my soul while thou art mine.
Who takes—who takes thee not! where'er I range
I smell thy sweets from Pall Mall to the ' 'Change'.

Shrubs of Parnassus. James Boswell (1740–1795)

CHAPTER SIX

SNUFF RASPS

SOME old devices used in a shop for converting tobacco into snuff were described in the last chapter, but the most common was probably an outsize rasp, a foot or more in length, tapering in width from about 6 in. to 4 in. It was usually a plain board of 'bat'-like form, rebated out, so that a wood rim was left round the flush grater, which was nailed in, and consisted of a sheet of iron, crudely punched with a close pattern of perforations. Sufficient space was allowed under the grater for the snuff to fall into a cavity beneath. An opening at one end allowed the snuff to be poured into a jar or canister. In Fribourg and Treyer's snuff shop, whose early Georgian bow windows happily still grace the Haymarket, one of these graters still survives. Before the days of street numbering the sign of the shop was 'The Rasp and Crown'. An old trade card, probably of about 1730–40,[1] Plate 26, shows the rasp below the crown, in a framework of rococo scrolls and tobacco leaves, which also includes, near its top left corner, a *carotte* of tobacco.

I have recently had the opportunity of examining Fribourg and Treyer's account books, which go back to 1764 (with a reference to an earlier one). From these books, which read like

[1] Rococo fashion in engraving, as in goldsmiths' and silversmiths' work, reached England from France twenty years before Chippendale's *Director* (1754) showed fashionable designs for rococo furniture.

pages out of *Debrett*, it is apparent that even by 1764 the individual rasp, for use at home, was passing out of fashion. Some customers were still buying *carottes* unrasped until the end of the 18th century, but the generation which did so was even then rapidly dying out. The following entries show different ways of buying snuff:

1764.	Sir John Chapman paid	
	for rasping	1.0.
1764. Jan. 16	Mr. Rakes.	
	1 carrote Montn.	18.0.
May 29, 1765.	1 lb. rappee	5.0.
	Lead cannister	6.
1765. Aug. 22	Lord Spencer	
	1 Paris carrote	1.1.0.
	Rasping	1.0.
	Cannister	6.
1766. April 26	Walter Smythe	
	8-lb. Paris Rappee Carrote	2.8.0.[1]
	Jar and Basket	2.0.

(At that time rappee snuff was 6*s*. per lb.)

1774. December 5	Snuff spoon	6.

The canisters to which reference is made were of lead; some still survive at 'The Rasp and Crown'; so also do the alternative glazed pottery jars; both of these are circular and probably hold no more than 1 lb. Square glass jars, shouldered to a wide circular neck, seem to have been used for larger quantities and were the variety which were protected by basketware, as many foreign winebottles still are. References to these glass jars in baskets seem most common round about 1750. Additional to being packed in a glass jar for dispatch from the snuff shop, some of the most expensive foreign snuffs were imported from abroad in long-necked glass bottles, exactly like winebottles. To remove the snuff from these

[1] An 8 lb. *carotte* must have been a very large one. The old *carotte*, 21 in. long, Plate 24, weighs 3¼ lb. now. It is very dry: originally it may have weighed double, but hardly more; so presumably the 8 lb. one referred to in the account must have been grated, though this is not mentioned. Otherwise it is doubtful if it would have gone into the type of jar used.

bottles, long lignum vitae scoops or spoons, such as the rare survival shown in Plate 24, were employed.

Martinique, or King's Martinique as it was also called, from George IV favouring it, was in particular vogue between 1830 and 1840 and was the last of the expensive fashionable snuffs to be imported in the long-necked bottles. Martinique was prepared by a Madame Grandmaison, in the island of the same name, and retailed at 21*s.* per lb.—compared with the normal price range which varied from 6*s.* to 11*s.* at that time. In the 18th century most snuffs were sold in the 3*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* per lb. range, but some imported and perfumed grades, used largely as 'essences' for extending other mixtures, were much more expensive. Spanish Bran is the most expensive snuff which appears in the Prince Regent's accounts. It was popular between 1760 and 1815 and cost £3 per lb. It was always sold in conjunction with a phial of Vinagrillo, an aromatic rose-scented vinegar of Spanish origin, which was used for moistening it; only a small quantity was ever moistened at one time. This snuff was particularly popular with ladies. The question of keeping in condition and moistening when necessary, usually with salt water, was very important among those—the majority—who liked moist rather than dry snuffs. Small wooden snuff pots, which also acted as miniature mortars, or, more correctly, mixing pots, for stirring while adjusting the moisture content, were sold by snuff shops in the 18th and early 19th centuries. One of these, with spoon and pestle or stirrer attached to opposite sides of the lid, is shown in Plate 37.

The Fribourg and Treyer accounts give a good idea of the amounts of snuff used by fashionable addicts. Half an ounce per day seems to have been slightly below average. Beau Brummel, a customer from 1799 to 1815, who appears to have introduced the Prince Regent to the firm, used considerably less.

One customer is recorded as using over 2 oz. per day. Fribourg's say he took snuff to excess. It sounds fair comment! Lord Shrewsbury was the exception to the normal habit of ordering a little, often. From 1798 onwards he usually

purchased 30 lb. of snuff at a time and repeated the order at approximately eleven-month intervals, which I reckon out at about 1½ oz. per day—rather a lot, but perhaps he supplied the family. However, that could hardly explain why he ordered 150 lb. in one lot in 1825!

Having now shown that snuff taking was both expensive and quite a major occupation and social grace of the fashionable, it becomes easy to see why the beaux of the hundred years from 1660 onwards demanded elegant, continental snuff rasps. Fashionable snuff rasps were mostly made of silver, ivory and wood. The wood chosen for the finest carved rasps was usually box, which is close grained, even textured, hard and takes a fine patination. In its qualities it closely resembles ivory and the same craftsmen usually worked in both materials. Although one refers to snuff rasps as being of these substances, the actual graters are of perforated iron, set either behind or between two faces of these materials. Most of the iron graters are missing now, but to the collector this makes no appreciable difference in the value. In the main, snuff rasps measure about 8 in. in length, but they actually vary between 5 in. and 14 in., and they divide into three principal groups: open-backed rasps with exposed metal graters, which were kept in leather cases; rasps with sliding shutters; rasps with pivoted shutters.

Silver snuff rasps, quite often, are long snuff boxes with a grater covering one side, and a hinged outer cover enclosing it; the box part is large enough to hold a small *carotte* for grating. Ivory rasps frequently incorporate a small snuff box at one end. With wood rasps the small snuff box is a rarity. With both wood and ivory rasps which include a snuff box, it is never large enough to hold even a small *carotte*. Presumably, therefore, those who carried a wood or ivory rasp in the pocket had a separate box, or perhaps a leather roll, for the *carotte*. I can find no literature which throws any light on this. Although some rasps, judging by their wear, were carried in the pocket, and others are curved to fit the pocket, it is possible that wood and ivory rasps were not carried as extensively as is thought. Perhaps most of them were kept at home, to fill the pocket box

or boxes daily, for different boxes and different snuffs were used by fops at different times of the day.

Wood and ivory rasps follow the same patterns. In their mechanics, Plate 36, they include an insert iron grater covering a cavity, which is divided longitudinally by a centre rib. This rib prevents the grater sagging and also, by diverting the snuff into two channels, prevents it clogging. At the narrow end of the rasp there is usually a spout through which snuff may be poured into a separate box, or on to the back of the hand. If a snuff box is incorporated, it is in the wide end. There seems to be no significance, regarding date or country of origin, in the wide or narrow end occurring at top or bottom of the design. The earliest types illustrated are those in Plates 25, 27, 28, 29 and the first three from the left of Plate 30.

The five Louis XIV boxwood rasps, Plate 25, all come into the fine art class and are excellent examples of the so-called Cesar Bagard work, which is believed to have been executed at Nancy in the last quarter of the 17th century. Like most of the finest *râpes à tabac*, they were individually commissioned and exquisitely carved with the coats of arms and mottoes of their noble owners, against a small-scale background of flowers, formal foliage and arabesques. The two on the left are of the open type, with exposed graters at the back. The other three have pivoted shutters and are equally finely carved on both faces. One of them has a *risqué* and amusing carving on the back. The second and third from the left are a particular pleasure to me because I bought them as a boy, more than forty years ago, in the Caledonian Market and they cost me less in shillings than some do in pounds today.

In Plates 27 and 28 are back and front views of two further outstanding examples of Louis XIV, 17th century, boxwood *râpes*, with pivoted shutters. Plate 27, which was formerly one of the prizes in the Evan-Thomas collection, is fully described in his book. Briefly, the subject of this highly skilled and cleverly composed carving appears to be a burlesque on methods of church preferments of the period.

Plate 28, following the same late 17th century outline, is

not nearly so sophisticated in its carving, but is extremely interesting as a documentary. It is the only rasp I have ever seen which records both its carver's name and its owner's name and profession. On the front, below stylized acanthus leaves, are carved twin flaming hearts in an oval inscribed *L'amour nous unit.* At the base are the Emblems of the Passion. At the back, above a coat of arms, is the inscription *Je suis à Claude de Cabaza, prestre.* Beneath the carving of the Ascension is inscribed *Faite par F. Castel.* The snuff flows out through a hole in the man's head.

This is obviously an example of a secular object which did belong to a priest; but although records show that snuff taking was formerly very prevalent among the clergy, I do not share the common belief that all snuff rasps and other secular objects, carved or engraved with the sacred initials, religious texts, or biblical episodes, were originally owned by priests, made by ecclesiastical craftsmen or intended for priestly or church use. So many homely objects were decorated in this manner—even trade tools—that I think one must assume that the main purposes were usually to remind people that religion was a part of their daily life and to please the devout with emblems of their faith.

One of the finest carved boxwood rasps extant is the 11½ in. long, French, 17th century specimen, Plate 29, formerly in the Trapnell collection. The Royal French coat of arms, above the trophy of arms, armour and standards, shows the bar sinister between the fleur-de-lis. The whole design is masterly and well matched by the skilled execution.

The first three rasps, left of Plate 30, are South German, or North Italian, 17th century. The next two are Italian, of the late 17th or early 18th century. Most of these examples were formerly in the Evan-Thomas collection and, before that, in the Hilton Price or Drane collections. The three rasps inlaid with engraved ivory and some dark wood have sliding shutters and hinged brass nozzles. The Italian rasps have open backs, curved to fit the pocket, and originally would have had leather cases. The heavy, dark wood of which they are made is inlaid with mother-of-pearl and brass piqué.

No. 6 is an unusual Dutch specimen, of pearwood, only 5½ in. long, carved in low relief on both sides with tulip scrolls and inlaid with bone or ivory. It has a sliding shutter over the grater, and the cavity beneath connects by holes to the hinged snuff box, which is lined with red lacquer. It is dated on the back of the case 1740. Like two others in this picture, it includes a heart motif in its decoration and was doubtless a love token. The Dutch rasp on the right, with sliding shutter, is inlaid on the edges with bone, has a border of brass piqué and includes among its low-relief carved motifs a heart, double-headed arrow and the initials I.S. On the back is carved RECHD. V BASCHIN and date 1725. The brass rasp, across the top of the photograph, differs from all others which I have ever seen, inasmuch as the snuff from the exposed grater on the other side is precipitated through the piercing over the whole length and, therefore, it was presumably used over a long snuff box. Its nationality is unknown. Its motifs include a crown above a pair of scissors, initials I.O.H. and date 1754.

Plate 31 shows a selection of late 17th and early 18th century carved wood rappoirs, mostly French and Italian and several of them characterized by religious themes in their carving. The majority were formerly in the Evan-Thomas collection. No. 1, left, is dated 1733 and bears initials G.Q. and B.I. Presumably the centre motif, between the hearts, represents *le roi soleil*. It is unusual in shape and, more so, in having a snuff box at the back, fed by a hole in the right half of the divided receptacle behind the grater, whilst the left half feeds the spout. The back of this rasp, with its grater removed, is shown in Plate 36. No. 2, dated 1743, is a rather ambitious, but not very skilled, composition of interlocked biblical scenes and religious motifs. Nos. 3 and 4 are both carved from boxwood, with the Crucifixion and Emblems of the Passion; No. 3 also includes an Adoration, heads of angels, etc., and, though very worn, is much the finer composition and carving; it is inscribed FLORENT BERTAUT. No. 4 is dated 1741. No. 5 shows a rather naïve rendering of Abraham being restrained by the Angel from sacrificing Isaac. No. 6 is bold and unusual in its carving,

with a boar's head forming the spout and acorns carved on the back; its nationality and date are speculative. No. 7, with pivoted shutter, the only rasp in this picture which has not an open back, is Italian, probably 17th century. It is carved with the name JOSEPH LANTI.

Plate 32 shows some more notable 17th and 18th century rasps. The 11 in. long rasp, on the left, is a rare specimen, dated 1745, probably Hungarian. It is of dark, heavy wood, inlaid with contrasting light panels, carved with armorials and bordered with silver piqué; its back is shown right of Plate 36. It was formerly in the Carnegie collection. Next at the top is an early 17th century boxwood rasp, portraying St. Louis crowned. I have seen other examples of this subject in ivory, but not in wood. On the right, the John the Baptist rasp is inscribed at the back that it belongs to Jean Baptiste Gimier, living at Aviltaneus, 1749. The other four rasps in this photograph are all French, boxwood, carved with coats of arms, and dating from the first quarter of the 18th century.

Centre, top of Plate 33, is a finely lettered, German, 18th century rasp of unusual type, so deep inside that it could have held a small *carotte*. On the left is its shutter, continuing the lettering. The inscription translates:

'I will in lowly state remain
and not for high position strain.'

How happy for the world it would have been had Hitler been the owner! The chip-carved crudity on the right, another very deep rasp, which bears some resemblance to a fish, is the only domestic specimen which I have ever seen which is likely to have been made in the British Isles. I believe it to be Welsh, 18th century.

Though there are not many survivals now, coaster snuff boxes, for passing along the table after a dinner or other social function, were not unusual, neither were wine coasters on wheels, but the coaster snuff rasp on wheels, centre of this picture, must always have been a rarity. It was obviously made by the same man who fashioned the rasp right of Plate 30,

and may also be dated around 1725. The 18th century rasp immediately below it, either English or German, is an open-backed, curved type for the pocket; it is unusual in two respects —portraying a hunting scene, and in having it arranged to view horizontally. It was formerly in the Carnegie collection. Bottom is another 18th century, curved, open-back rasp, probably Dutch, formerly in the Trapnell collection.

Three outsize rasps, but of such fine quality that they could not have been intended for shop use, are portrayed in Plate 34. They could hardly have been carried in the pocket, however, as they measure respectively 11½ in. by 3⅜ in., 13⅞ in. by 3 in. and 12 in. by 3¾ in. Curiously, the largest is the curved type, which one usually regards as shaped to the pocket. This one, centre, is probably from one of the 18th century German, Austrian or Hungarian Archduchies; its carving is inlaid with brass piqué. The rasp on the left, 18th century, possibly Austrian, has a sliding shutter and hinged snuff box at the back (shown left of Plate 36). The interesting armorial designs on the two sides are not identical, but both include a merchant's mark. The open-back rasp on the right, an Italian, 17th century conception of the sacrifice of Isaac, is a competent carving, flattened by wear. Six fine-quality, late 17th and early 18th century ivory *râpes à tabac* are shown in Plate 35. The details of the photograph render description of the carving unnecessary. Second from right is likely to be Flemish, the others French. The three longest incorporate silver-hinged snuff boxes at the back.

Here's two full boxes, taste which you think right,
The one's to smoak, the other's to clear the sight;
I do declare they're both the very best;
Then pray confess I'm the Tobacconist.

A bill of Von de Heyde in Bermondsey Street (1760)

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE BOX FOR THE SNUFF

SNUFF BOXES were formerly made in such variety of materials, shapes, sizes, styles and finishes, that they can easily provide an assortment diverse and large enough to satisfy the most discriminating and, indeed, the most voracious collector. They are also available at prices to suit most purses, although it would not take many of the jewelled *bibelots* of the 18th and early 19th century to make a hole in a sizeable fortune.

Tobacco being the basis of snuff as well as smoking, many old boxes formerly used for snuff have sometimes been described as tobacco boxes. For whichever purpose they were intended—and often this is debatable—the few 17th and very early 18th century survivals are usually oval and either plain or engraved, or simply carved in low relief. The materials generally used appear to have been wood, silver, horn, pewter, brass and ivory.

As fashionable snuff taking increased in the 18th and early 19th centuries, so the snuff-box family proliferated. Although wooden boxes were doubtless always made in greater quantities than any other, they were largely superseded, in aristocratic circles, by Battersea and Limoges enamel, tortoiseshell, silver and gold. The last two were sometimes further embellished by chasing, to form mounts for panels of enamel, mother-of-pearl, jade, rock crystal, agate and other semi-precious stones, or miniature paintings on ivory. Additionally,

the most elaborate and expensive were encrusted by the jeweller with diamonds, pearls, rubies, etc. Some of the most precious of George IV's snuff boxes were melted down to form jewellery for Queen Victoria.

From George I to George IV, the equivalent of 'saying it with flowers' was the gift of a snuff box, to either sex. A large-scale example of the custom is recorded in the coronation accounts of George IV, which record that £8,205 15*s.* 5*d.* was paid to Rundell & Bridge, the Royal silversmiths, for snuff boxes for foreign ministers.

Although the tendency was to lavish the most exquisite workmanship on the most expensive materials, there are many snuff boxes of wood which come into the category of excellent design and perfect craftsmanship and a few which come into the fine-art class. Two superlative examples are illustrated in the frontispiece and Plate 89. Admittedly, the intricacy of their carving must have rendered both of them most unsuitable for holding 'dust'; but that remark applies to all the jewel-studded, chased silver and gold, and filigree boxes which were made; this unsuitability of certain snuff boxes for purpose was commented on by early 19th century writers.

The circular box, of which both sides are shown in the frontispiece, is hollowed from a single block of boxwood It closely resembles a modern powder compact It measures 4⅝ in. in diameter and would have been made in France, probably in the neighbourhood of Nancy, approximately 300 years ago. The design is a masterly composition and the fine-scale carving, very much undercut, has the crispness which denotes the work of a master. Doubtless because it is so exquisite, it never appears to have had any use, and except for the patination which it has acquired through age and waxing, it is still just as it left its maker's hands. The pictures are so clear that no account of the carving is needed; the hinge is silver.

The snuff box pictured in Plate 89 is not so photogenic and, therefore, needs more description. It is much smaller than the last; it could be contained in a 2½ in. diameter ball. Like the last described, it is boxwood, but there the resemblance ends.

style of Cellini—and may be 16th or 17th century, southern French or Italian. This unique and remarkable box, which in the posture of its figures so much resembles the much larger salt-cellar which Cellini made for Francis I, displays the same outstanding technical skill and virtuosity, but, like Cellini's work, somewhat lacks artistic sensibility.

The subject of the carving is Diana and her hound, with an infant, possibly Jupiter, holding Ganymedes (in the form of an eagle), and Pan holding his pipes. They are riding on a cloud, fanned from below by cherubs. Snuff is put in through a sliding shutter under the clouds, and released through a side nozzle, concealed in a cloud swirl.

Throughout the snuff period, in humble circles, the principal alternatives to wood remained ivory, brass, pewter and horn, with nutshells and, in the 19th century, papier mâché, additional. Incidentally, a variety of papier mâché made from potatoes was said to be particularly efficacious in keeping snuff moist.

Although special snuff waistcoats were worn, with capacious flap pockets in them for snuff boxes, many of the boxes were too large, or else too elaborate and delicate, to be entrusted to the pocket. They were, in fact, intended for table use in the home, for passing along the table at convivial functions, or, in the case of the more robust specimens, for a free dip on the counter of a tobacconist's shop or at an inn. The last was a very common custom which, incidentally, is still retained in an inn at Gerrards Cross. The snuff was rasped daily and a large circular box was provided, sometimes engraved with such sentiments as 'Only he is a true man who will help a friend at a pinch'. Such boxes were usually about 6 in. in diameter. One made from figured mahogany is shown, front left, Plate 37. Another, of yew wood, carved in spirited fashion with a demon playing a drum, is central at the top; on the right, the satinwood box, inlaid with ebony, may have served the same purpose, but was more likely used in the home. The other boxes in the same picture are all table boxes. On the left is a large 'book' box with hinged lid, and next to it a yew-wood sphere. Between the two circular boxes is one of the

wooden mixing jars referred to in Chapter Six. The two-tier box in front comprises a snuff box on the lid of a tobacco box and, like the adjacent mahogany jar with handle, was probably used for passing round among friends. All these specimens appear to be of the late 18th or early 19th century.

I have seen engravings of fanciful silver snuff-box coasters on wheels, for passing along the table, but have never seen specimens in wood. Probably the most famous ceremonial table snuff box, or series of boxes, is that belonging to the Past Overseers' Society of St. Margaret & St. John, Westminster, which meets annually for a dinner. The original inmost box of the series is a humble one of horn bought by a Mr. Henry Monck at the Horn Fair for 4*d*., and presented to the Past Overseers' Society in 1713, for the general use of members. It was ornamented with a silver plaque, engraved with the donor's name and date. As time went on, more inscriptions on silver were added, until no space was left. As it became the custom each year to engrave some account of an important happening during the period, it was soon necessary to add an outer case to the first, and so on. By 1878 the nest of boxes had grown to seven in number, of which the outer one, an imposing octagonal casket, 40 in. high and 24 in. in diameter, was made from a beam of Westminster Abbey.

The making of snuff boxes from famous trees, or timber and metal from famous buildings, was formerly quite a mania and, according to a writer a hundred years ago, boxes made from Shakespeare's mulberry tree would have cubed up sufficient wood to build a warship. This may be somewhat of an exaggeration, because you can make a great many snuff boxes out of a fair-sized branch. Nevertheless, some relic boxes may not be genuine and I like the old story of the meeting of snuff addicts boasting about their relic boxes: one had one made from the deck of the *Victory*; another from the table on which Wellington wrote the Waterloo despatch; a third from Canova's footstool; a fourth from the timbers of the *Royal George*; a fifth from the wreck of the *Betsy Caines*, the vessel that brought William III to England in 1668; a sixth from a plank of the Red Barn with Corder's shots and Maria Martin's

blood distinctly visible! All these were capped easily by another member of the party, who said he had a rather worm-eaten box made from the tiller of Noah's Ark!

In Plate 38 is a selection of those boxes which announce their history. At the back, left, the large circular box is made from the oak of 'Old London Bridge 1176'. The box, extreme right, proclaims 'Lancaster Church 1094'. In front, left, is 'Oak and Bell Metal of York Minster, burnt May 20, 1840' and, next to it, 'The roof of the House of Commons destroyed by fire, October 16, 1834'. The large burr box, right, in front, contains a silver-lined receptacle, with hinged silver lid engraved 'A knot of oak from Cowper's Tree, Yardley Chase 1840'. Then follows an extract from one of Cowper's poems, referring to the oak.

Central, in the top row, is a Regency souvenir box, transfer printed, 'He that is not a friend at a pinch, is not worth a snuff'. To the right is a Tunbridge wood-mosaic box, also early 19th century, and on the left a pen-and-ink-decorated Scottish box, depicting the 'Death of the fox'. This box has the famous Scottish integral wood hinge. The wide range of Scottish tartan, pen and ink, and transfer-ware and also Tunbridge-ware snuff boxes will be described and illustrated in a further book in this series, devoted to 19th century souvenir ware.

Of the two boxes in this picture not yet described, the oval mull or box, centre front, must be one of the earliest-dated specimens extant. It is Scottish, made of lignum vitae, silver mounted, and is engraved with initials I.K. and date 1684. Next to it is a typical 18th century horn mull. Its silver band is engraved 'A grand refreshment'.

The Scots pronounce mill as mull, and the original Scottish mulls were grinders, like those shown in Plate 24, but the name mull became transferred to the Scottish receptacle for the snuff, usually a horn with the point curled. In the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, is a conical horn box for snuff, tapering to a straight point. My guess is that such boxes were originally used to hold the *carottes* and may have had graters under their lids. When the snuff was purchased ready

ground, and a pocket box was needed, it would become logical to curl the horn to prevent it making a hole in the pocket.

Before proceeding to the next chapter and its pictures of many varieties of snuff boxes, brief mention should be made of snuff flasks or bottles, which were formerly an alternative receptacle in aristocratic circles in several parts of the world.

The wealthy aristocratic Chinese, who grew their fingernails to a great length to indicate that they did no manual labour, could not, in consequence, grind their own snuff, nor could they take a pinch between finger and thumb. By keeping their snuff in exquisitely fashioned, carved and inlaid hardstone bottle with short necks, which had spoons fitted to their stoppers, they overcame the dilemma which they had created. With the spoons, they transferred the snuff to the back of the hand for sniffing. A similar procedure was formerly common among the wealthy in Spain and Morocco, but the bottles were usually made from small gourds and nut-shells.

In the Scandinavian countries snuff flasks were used in the 18th century, Plate 40; some of them are fitted with chained silver stirrers or spoons, which form the stoppers; others have ivory stoppers. They vary considerably in size, some doubtless for table, others for pocket use. The bodies of the flasks are usually hollowed out of maple or birch burrs; the actual scooping out is done from the centre of each side, where the ornamental silver or ivory disc is then inserted. The flasks were filled, presumably with a small funnel, through the hole at the base and the snuff removed through the spout at the top. For convenience of photographing, the flask on the left, with handle, is shown upside down. Though the inscriptions which sometimes occur on them make their purpose abundantly clear, these snuff flasks are often confused with and described as gunpowder flasks in various collections.

'The time has come,' the author said,
'To talk of many sorts;
Of shoes . . . and ships . . . coquilla nuts . . .
And snuffy, burry warts.'

(With apologies to Lewis Carroll)

CHAPTER EIGHT

'OF SHOES . . . AND SHIPS . . . AND . . .'

SHOES represent one of the largest groups among wooden snuff boxes. A selection is shown in Plates 42 and 43, but there are literally hundreds of varied specimens to be obtained, particularly if materials other than wood are included.

The shoes which were carved cover, in their styles, every period from mediaeval times (see centre, front row, Plate 43) to the end of the 19th century. As snuff was not known in Europe in mediaeval times and as, moreover, the few dated specimens usually show dates in the 1880's, many people are inclined to dismiss all boot and shoe snuff boxes as Victorian romantic revival work. This, however, is wrong, as regards the shoes anyway, because Fairholt, writing in 1859 about quaint forms of snuff boxes, says 'One favourite in the last century was *A Ladies Shoe*' and he illustrates one similar to the pair, one from the right, front of Plate 43, and to one on the stand immediately above them.

It looks, therefore, as though the shoe had at least two phases of popularity—one in the 18th century and another in the late 19th, and that probably it was out of fashion in the mid-19th century, when Fairholt was writing.

It has often been said that shoe snuff boxes were made as 'passing out' pieces by cobbler apprentices; this is probably true of the most accurately produced models, particularly those studded with brass tacks and having steel sole and heel tips. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that woodworking

formerly was a very essential part of the cobbler's trade, and miniature 'lasts' were an apprentice's recognized passing-out piece.

The association of shoes with love and marriage goes back to the Bible. The silver shoes on the wedding cake, the ancient Yorkshire custom of 'trashing'—throwing old footwear after brides and bridegrooms, as they leave the church—and the old shoe tied behind the carriage, continue the connection to this day. The heart motifs frequently found, inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl on shoe snuff boxes, suggest that this type were particularly regarded as love tokens. This is further substantiated by some dated examples being made in pairs and having different initials on each shoe and also by the rather rare twin-joined-pairs, which proclaim 'We two are one'. The nicely chip-carved, twin-joined-pair, one from left, front, Plate 42, is Scandinavian; it contains two separate cavities. The balancing twin-pair, on the right of the picture, has hearts carved on the toes and MARRY on the lid; it has a single snuff cavity and is Welsh, as is also the large chip-carved shoe with mirror insert, central in the front row. Left of this are a pair of button boots, dated 1884, and right a pair of mahogany shoes (one on the shelf above). Both of these are probably apprentices' pieces, as is also the accurately steel-tipped and brass-nailed mahogany shoe, on its side, back row, right. Next to the latter is a boot, the heel of which pivots round, to disclose the snuff cavity in the sole. This is the only instance I know of this treatment. All the other boxes shown, open from the top; the majority have sliding lids, but a few are hinged and some have lift-off lids.

In Plate 43 more pairs of shoes are included; those at the back, near the left, are particularly good apprentice examples, in brass-studded and steel-tipped rosewood. In front, a pair of carved sabots provide a pleasant variation. The boot, left, front row, in this picture must have provided many a shock, for when the lid is slid back a most realistic green snake, with metal eyes, pops out. If it emerged from a cloud of snuff it must have appeared horrific enough to startle the most iron-nerved nosologist.

Plate 44 pictures some exceptionally fine-quality snuff boxes. Those in the top row, all being formed as ships, would, according to certain writers in the past, have been carried by sailors. Whilst, in many instances, it seems logical that there was a connection between the subject forming or depicted on a box and its owner's profession, I cannot believe that it applied to the particularly delicately carved ship boxes, which were often made from an exceptionally fragile material.

The box on the left, hollowed from a block of boxwood, depicts an early 19th century warship; the pivoted lid is not original. This box shows definite signs of wear and may have been carried in the pocket; its guns and the name on the stern are inlaid with silver; the name is almost indecipherable, but looks like RICHARD CUNDA. The other three ships are French, carved from coquilla nuts and fitted with silver hinges. They are much more fanciful in their treatment and, having many delicate projections, would not have stood up to rough treatment, even in boxwood, whilst in the extremely brittle coquilla nutshell from which they are made, they must always have been regarded essentially as table *bibelots*. The ship on the left is the CERES, with the full-length figure of the Goddess of Plenty, complete with cornucopia, depicted against pierced flower and foliage tracery on the lid. Next is the TRINITÉ, with the crowned Virgin and Child delicately carved beneath a pierced Gothic canopy. The bowsprit terminal is formed of three angel heads. Both these ship models date from *circa* 1810, but that on the right, which bears no name, is later and shows the Biedermeir influence of the second quarter of the 19th century.

As the existence of coquilla was almost forgotten until I carried out research on the subject some years ago, it may not be out of place to give brief details, particularly as the nut was used very largely for snuff boxes of many shapes and sizes. Until I published the results of my research, such boxes and 'eggs' were usually described as 'burr', 'root' or boxwood. Actually, they are made from the nut of the *Attalea funifera* palm, sometimes called the *Piassaba*, and they have been imported to Europe from South America, from the mid-16th

century or earlier. They are extremely hard and brittle, polish easily and are characterized by a handsome tortoiseshell mottle. Ever since their introduction to Europe they have been esteemed by carvers and turners for numerous ornamental and useful purposes, although their absence of long grain makes them fragile, whilst their oiliness, useful for keeping snuff moist without having to line the boxes, makes repairs difficult. If you have the misfortune to break a coquilla object, it will glue much better if you moisten the fractured edges with a strong solution of soda, to absorb the oil, and then dry before applying the adhesive. A coquilla nut is the size of a hen egg and when it was desired to make something longer than could come out of one nut—such as the ship boxes—the extensions were dowelled on with ivory, bone or brass dowels; in the case of certain suitable objects, such as ornamental vases and urns, the various sections were threaded into each other. Until the mid-19th century many coquilla objects, such as the ship boxes, were carved and polished by first-class craftsmen; but during the latter half of the 19th century coquilla work degenerated into the familiar pierced and varnished eggs, containing rosaries, which were sold outside the Madeleine in Paris and the Pantheon in Rome.

All the snuff boxes in Plate 45 are made of coquilla nut. Most of the grotesque figures are German or Dutch, the majority early 19th, but probably a few of them late 18th century. The standing figures all have hinged flaps behind them. The bodies represent a whole coquilla, the head and feet being dowelled on, the latter usually inserted into the natural 'eyes' of the nut. The first two boxes, left on the back shelf, are respectively Sicilian and Italian; they have silver hinges. Both are 18th century. The first shows a mythological subject, the second, Daniel in the lion's den. The two boxes on the right, carved with Romayne heads, were described by me in *Treen* as probably being made about 1559. Their style, crudeness of construction and extremely worn appearance made this attribution likely, not only in my opinion, but also in that of the various authorities on the period whom I consulted. I must now amend that conclusion, because I have since come across

another six of these boxes and several other objects constructed and decorated in the same manner; some of them are hardly worn at all and show features which, in my opinion, stamp them as mid-19th century romantic revival.

Now for some details of the boxes in the front row of Plate 44. The D-shaped box, on the left, is not of the first quality, but is unusual in its shape and in having free-standing pillars carved at the corners; the rebated lid is detachable. The next two boxes, although almost devoid of man-made ornament, are absolutely in the top grade and show that perfection of simplicity and good proportion which requires great skill to attain. Each is made from carefully selected burr maple, with particularly handsome markings. Both have silver hinges; that on the circular box is scrolled and connected to a silver rim which encircles the lid and encases the thumbpiece. The oblong box, with the bombé sides, hollow-canted corners, and shallow-domed lid, with incorporated thumb lift, exactly follows the outline of certain mid-18th century boxes made in enamel, gold and silver. Both of them were probably made about that time.

The two boxes on the right have several points in common. Both date from *circa* 1800; both are cut from a solid burr of birch or something closely resembling it—burrs are notoriously difficult to identify. Both have the integral wood hinge, usually associated with Scotland and Scandinavia—especially Finland. Both are curved to fit the pocket, a feature common enough in metal, but difficult and, therefore, costly in time, to make in wood. The pointed box, with its all-over scrolled acanthus ornament, could easily be Scandinavian or Scottish. Its neighbour, on the right, which seems to bear something in the nature of an armorial device, would, I expect, if identified, turn out to be Scottish.

In case any readers are mystified by the term burr (in the U.S.A. known as burl), here is a brief explanation. Burrs are wart-like excrescences on the trunks of trees, formed by growth round a wound, or clusters of dormant buds—actually they are small knots—which never quite develop into branches. These clusters gradually form solid, shallow protuberances;

they are often of considerable diameter, particularly where they occur on the 'butt'—that is, the junction of trunk and root. Sometimes burrs are induced artificially by felling trees, the stumps of which then 'stool'—that is, they emit clusters of new twigs, which are broken off and, when grown over, form burrs. Some trees are more prone to grow burrs than others. Walnut, elm, yew, mulberry, birch and maple are all high up in this category and their burrs are much prized for cutting into veneers; but the last two are the most likely to be found in sufficiently sound condition to hollow out, to form boxes or bowls.

Apart from the handsome markings, burr wood is eminently suited for bowls which are to be silver mounted and, therefore, must not distort, and also for small boxes which must not warp or shrink unevenly, otherwise their lids would not fit. Burrs meet the case, because they have no distinct long fibres in one direction and, therefore, none of the 'width only' shrinkage, which characterizes normal wood. Their tangled, interwoven structure makes them unusually stable for small, hollow receptacles.

A provincial paper says, that a gentleman in Devonshire has invented what he calls a snuff-pistol; it has two barrels, and being applied to the nose, upon touching a spring under them with the fore-finger, both nostrils are instantly filled, and a sufficient quantity driven up the head to last the whole day.

The London Journal (*circa* 1830)

CHAPTER NINE

SNUFF BOXES IN GREAT VARIETY

Amongst circular wooden snuff boxes is a well-known French group, usually described as Napoleonic, although the themes which they depict are much wider than that title suggests. They are all made from maple or birch burr, and to a universally high standard, with linings of tortoiseshell. Judging by their subjects, of which there are probably a hundred or more, the majority were made between 1800 and 1810. They usually measure between 3¼ in. and 3½ in. in diameter. A few boxes of similar type, but only about 3 in. in diameter, appear to date from the second half of the 18th century; their subjects include some in the Chinese taste and also one, at least, showing Prince Charles Edward.

All these boxes were made in the same manner: first 'turned' to a solid block of the required diameter and thickness, they were then submitted to steam treatment and, whilst relatively soft, scenes or other subjects were impressed on the tops with medal dies. Sometimes another die, simulating engine turning, was impressed on the bottom. After hardening up, a fine horizontal saw-cut was made through the block and the two layers were recessed to form box and lid, and then lined with tortoiseshell. A few of these boxes have secret compartments concealed in the base. These may contain a profile of Napoleon or an erotic picture.

Some representative examples are illustrated in Plate 46.

Top row, left, is based on the famous Rubens painting 'Cimon and Pera', here called '*La piete filiale*'. Next is a satire on England, entitled '*Allegorie sur la bataille des 3 Empereurs*'. Round the border is the inscription '*Il a vu sans effroi leur violens efforts*'. The scene, illuminated by a garlanded sun-head, shows a crowned French eagle, perched on a prostrate double-headed German eagle; the French eagle has seized a Russian double-headed eagle by one claw, has knocked off his crown and is proceeding to pull the feathers out of his wings. On the left a Prussian lion is slinking off, tail between legs. Across the channel England, in the form of a complacent bulldog, sits watching, with fleet before and the Tower of London behind him; there is a Napoleonic secret compartment in the base. The last box in this row is '*Susanne surprise au bain*'.

In the second row we have '*Retour de Chasse de Henri IV*'. In the centre is a handsome box with an ivory relief carving behind glass. Sometimes, as an alternative, gilt commemorative medals are centred behind glass panels in boxes of this type. The box on the right, showing Wellington in profile, appears, at first sight, to be wood, but is really made from one of the sawdust-based plastics which were invented in the mid-19th century.

The bottom row contains three very interesting boxes. The two on the left depict the principles of craniology. The first shows events in the life of Dr. Gall. The second is impressed with three views of a skull with the 'bumps' numbered; on the bottom of the box is a key to the 'bumps'. The box on the right is one of the rare 'double head' types. Turn the picture round and you will see entirely different faces; the man turns into a horse. Another example of this type, not illustrated, shows a smiling face which, when the box is turned round, becomes a picture of misery. Occasionally, when these pressed boxes show simply the head of a notability in profile, the pressing has been sharpened up by a slight amount of carving.

Another large group of boxes, said to have been particularly popular with students and bibliophiles, are the 'books', Plate 47. Except where they have dates inscribed on them, it is

impossible to gauge their age accurately, but they appear to have enjoyed popularity both in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are almost invariably carved out of a solid block and a lot of work went into simulating the book-binding. Some are very charming, with inlaid or chip-carved covers and gilt or boxwood leaves. Sometimes the owner's name, or initial, is substituted for the title of the volume and a heart is inlaid on the spine. Most of the geometric chip-carved boxes are Welsh. The majority of book boxes have sliding lids, but one shown here is pivoted. They vary from crude to fine quality. Two of the crudest have slot-screwed spines, which 'lock' their sliding lids. Two lignum vitae snuff spoons and a snuff mallet are also shown in this picture.

The two snuff boxes, on the left, back row, Plate 48, and the three in front of them, are all Scottish, with the integral wood hinge. All are tortoiseshell lined, and each is hollowed out of a block of amboyna. The one at the back has two compartments, with separate lids. On the shelf in front of it is one of the well-known cushion type, which were also produced as miniature boxes less than 1 in. long, but complete with tortoiseshell linings. Below is a reeded oval section box, a reeded cylindric box and a box curved to fit the pocket. These Scottish boxes are so well made that many of them serve as 'shag' tobacco boxes today, although they were made anything from 100 to 160 years ago. In the Moot Hall, Aldeburgh, is an amboyna cushion snuff box which belonged to the poet George Crabbe, 1754–1832.

The box standing on end, centre, crudely decorated with a heart in fret-cut bone and a rather naïve picture of a girl, is a Welsh 19th century love token. The diamond-shaped box in front of it suggests good cheer, with its inlaid punch bowl, goblets and clay pipe. Below, the novel twin-barrelled pistol, of walnut, contains a snuff cavity, with sliding lid on the underside.

Right, back, is an oval trick box, of which quite a few were made. When the pivoted lid is swung round, another lid is found beneath it: the puzzle is how to open the second lid. In front of it is a rather crude Welsh (?) box, inlaid in bone

and some dark wood, with a snake on its sliding lid. Below is a Welsh chip-carved circular box, probably 18th century, and next to it is another circular box of a type of which few survive: the lid is on a centre pivot and when swung round admits the finger and thumb. The other three boxes in this illustration merit inclusion because they are somewhat unusual in their shape, carving or inlay, but none of them is of particularly good quality.

Circular wooden snuff boxes still exist in large quantities; often they are quite decorative because of the choice of wood, although the majority of them are perfectly plain or very simply turned; some of the ring-turned and ornamental-turned specimens are quite interesting. If you ever come across a plain circular box containing traces of a red powder it is a snuff box which contained Spanish Sabillia, a brick-red snuff powder, much esteemed round about 1800 as a tooth powder. It cost 16*s*. per lb. and had a reputation for keeping the gums healthy.

Animal snuff boxes are very eagerly sought by collectors. A selection is in Plate 49. It includes three toads—the one on the perspex stand is a particularly good one of burr maple, with silver inlay and hinges—also a reclining dog and a horse head; these have snuff cavities inside them and hinged or sliding lids beneath them. The squatting monkey, the two monkey heads, the bulldog head, the boar head and the hunchback, are similarly hollowed out and have lids at the back. The bulldog head is not photogenic: actually it is a very good quality, 18th century, boxwood box, silver lined and with silver lid. The snuff spoons, shown alongside, are bone.

With Plate 50 we come to our last selection of snuff boxes. Bellows occur in tobacco stoppers and even in pipes, and one can see the implication of blowing up the embers. With bellows snuff boxes, presumably the allusion is to blowing away the dust—anyway they are rather pleasant.

So, too, are the 'hands', taking a pinch 'twixt finger and thumb. One would have expected that such apt snuff boxes would have been made in large quantities, but this does not appear to be so. They are both scarce and expensive. The box-

wood example has a hinged thumb; the rosewood specimen has its lid at the wrist line.

The two planes were probably woodworkers' charming fancies. As mentioned earlier, woodworkers, because of fire hazards, were notorious snuff takers until recently. The planes are the type known as Bismarcks, or German planes, about ninety years ago. It does not follow, however, that the boxes were necessarily German, for these planes were used in England too. The wedge in front of the 'plane box' lifts out of a dovetail groove and then the lid, with the 'iron' and wedge on it, slides forward.

Behind the planes, you can take your choice of snuffy headgear. Right, is a tortoiseshell-lined, Napoleonic hat, early 19th century, and next to it, a peaked cap, later still, and made from figured birch. The well-patinated helmet is much earlier. It is Italian and may be 17th or 18th century; it is inlaid with various woods and tortoiseshell, with brass piqué lines between the inlays.

On the left are some of our ancestors' macabre jokes—a death head and three coffins. The first is an 18th century box, hinged at the back. Two of the 'coffins' may be 18th or early 19th century; the one lying down has a trick lid, similar to that on the oval box, right of Plate 48. Mostly, these coffins are based on the allusion to dust; some of them have inscriptions on them, such as 'Sacred to the dust of Virginia', but the coffin box on the left appears to be a genuine *memento mori*. It is hollowed out of kingwood and has a bronze lid, neatly engraved: 'Mr. Charles Russell Wyatt died 18th May, 1825. Aged 34 years.' I have never been able to ascertain anything about its history, but in an endeavour to do so I sent an illustration of it to a widely read journal. This did not produce any information; some time later, however, I had a letter from America, from a gentleman who very much wanted to purchase it. I replied that it was not for sale. There followed another letter asking if I could not find another one for him. I explained that my wife and I were collectors, not dealers, but that it happened that we had a duplicate 'coffin', which he could have, if he were prepared to arrange with his London agent to

pack, ship, deal with declarations, etc., as we did not know anything about the regulations and did not want the bother of finding out. A cheque for the price named came to hand immediately and a few days later my wife received a 'phone call from a London firm of export packers to know whether two men would be enough to send to collect the coffin! Mrs. Pinto replied that she would put it in a ten-cigarette packet and post it to them!

For our farewell to bygones of bygone snuff takers let us conclude with the last rites of Mrs. Margaret Thompson of Boyle Street, off Savile Row, London, who died in 1776. She stipulated in her will that all her unwashed handkerchiefs and enough snuff to cover her body were to be put in her coffin, that six snuff-taking maidens were to be her pall-bearers, and that her servant was to walk ahead of the coffin, scattering snuff over the crowd.

SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Most of the writing in this book stems from research on old documents, sifting of hearsay, investigation and analysis of ancient customs and phrases, and, above all, long-term examination of the old-time devices associated with the use of tobacco. This examination has been extended far beyond my wife's and my collection and has embraced objects in many public and private collections in various parts of the world. It has also included the inestimable benefit of interchange of opinion with other collectors and students of social history.

To those readers who desire further general information on the tobacco habit, or particular aspects of it, I recommend the following:

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