

Scottish table box, crudely carved from a solid sycamore block, including the hinges. The lid shows a man on horseback wearing a tam-o'-shanter and talking to a shepherd dressed in plaid. On the front edge are two sheep guarded by a sheep dog on each end. The fifth, the rather sharp oval box, is also carved from a solid block and is a ship's tobacco box. Below, the attractive eighteenth-century miniature wassail bowl of yew wood, $7\frac{3}{8}$ in. high, was probably made for a tobacco jar.

PIPE STOPS—These charming little trifles for pressing down tobacco in the pipe seem to have disappeared from fashion during the past century. Some writers before the 1914-18 war suggested that cheap tobacco had eliminated the need for stoppers to husband the last dregs of tobacco. This may be partially so, as tobacco then only cost $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $5d.$ per oz.; that reason certainly does not apply to-day! Moreover, the end of the pipeful is not the only time when a stopper may be required to adjust the "draw" by pressing down the tobacco.

Seventeenth- to nineteenth-century literature proves that pewter, silver, bronze and carved wood and bone pipe stoppers were commonly used and the last two provided scope for the skill and imagination of anyone handy with knife and chisel. Many metal but few treen specimens have survived, however, and the latter are now so rare that well-carved specimens, originally costing pennies, now fetch pounds. This applies particularly to those which were made to commemorate events or notabilities, such as the Duke of Wellington, a fanatical non-smoker, who made himself a notorious "pipe stopper" by an edict forbidding soldiers smoking in barracks.

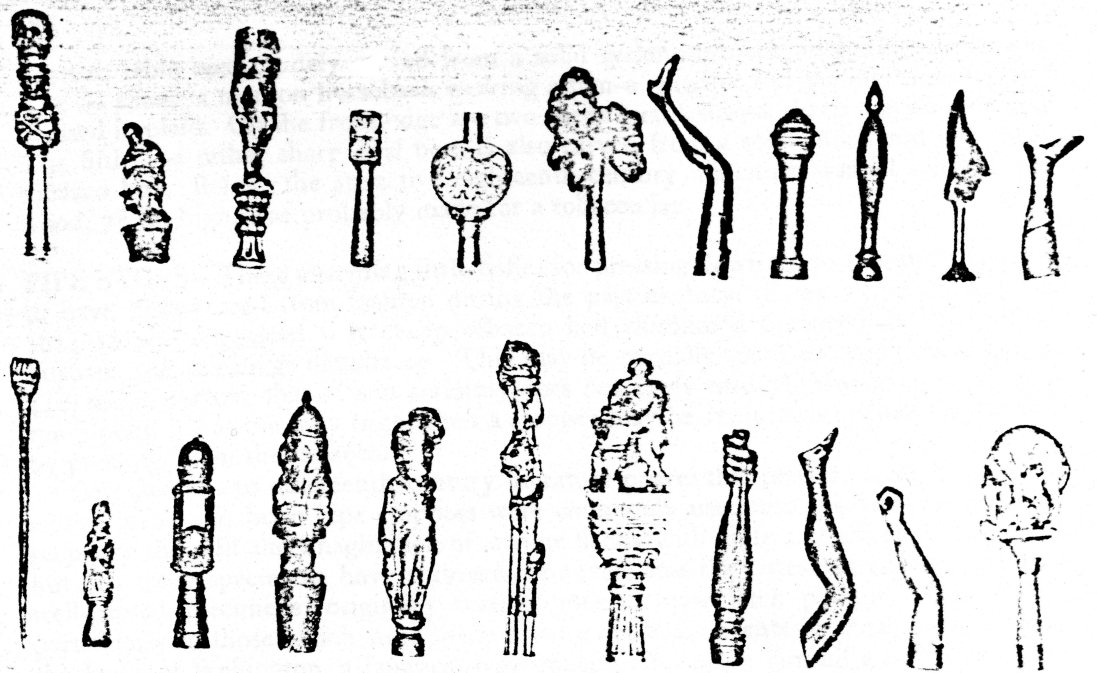
In PLATE 60 is an unusually large and varied selection of wooden specimens and it will be seen how popular were arm and leg motifs. Generally stoppers with small "stamps", like the first six (left to right of upper row), were early ones to suit the small bowled pipes.

The following are particularly noteworthy. Left to right, top row, the first, of silver-mounted boxwood, shows a skull above an hour glass, inscribed "Memento Mori"; the cube below is carved on its four sides with a coffin, cross bones, crossed spade and mattock and initials "I.I.G." and date 1715. The second, the boxwood statuette of a Stuart flower girl, shows signs of burning and use, but it is doubtful if it were designed as a stopper. The third is a highly skilled boxwood carving, dated 1720 and interesting as a costume piece of the reign of George I. The fifth, the silver-mounted bellows, is an eighteenth-century unusual form. Next is a root formation, pewter-mounted.

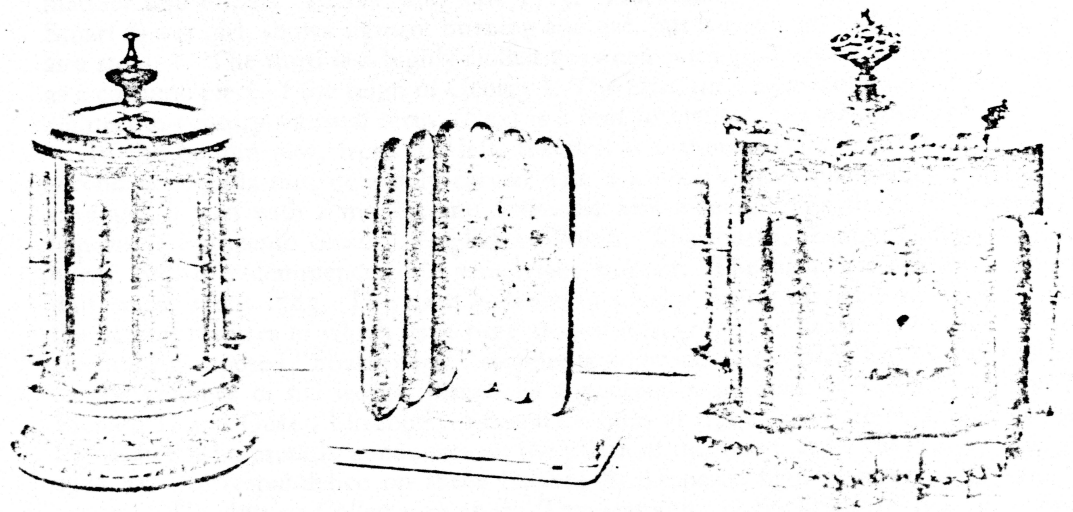
In the bottom row, from the left, the first is a thornwood tobacco pricker. The second is coquilla nut, delicately carved with a woman's head surmounting figures of an angel, a man with a musket and a woman with a book. The third, with ball and lantern, is eighteenth century, English or Welsh. The fourth, Bismarck, though much burnt, probably commenced life as a bottle stopper. The fifth, the soldier, portrays uniform of about 1785. The sixth is probably unique, being carved from a vine stem, the natural features of which have been shaped into grotesque beasts and heads. Next, the finely composed "Shakespeare" stopper is boxwood and depicts the Master leaning on the volumes of his works, placed on a pedestal supported by busts of Henry V, Richard II and Queen Elizabeth. Several versions of this subject are extant, all carved by Salsbee, who proudly announces on the plinth of this one that he cut it in 1774 when aged 71. Correspondence on these Salsbee Shakespeare figures occurred in various issues of *The Antique Collector* in 1943. Two statuettes of Shakespeare, not pipe stops, were illustrated and I know of three Shakespeare pipe stops including my own, so evidently this particular figure was the *chef d'œuvre* of old Salsbee. All these statuettes are based on the standing figure of Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey by Peter

Scheemakers (1691–1770). Despite being copies, each reproduction has some quaint variation and individuality imparted by the carver. Unfortunately the correspondence has not produced any personal details of Salsbee. Extreme right is a silver-mounted boxwood greyhound coursing a hare, a popular eighteenth-century subject. Others which are found occasionally include hearts, anvils, bottles and glasses, monkeys with coconuts and squirrels with nuts. The Shakespeare, ball and lantern, silver-mounted arm and leg and root stoppers were formerly in the Owen Evan-Thomas collection.

Whilst there must have been a regular industry in pipe stoppers, a number of the most fascinating were undoubtedly carved by gifted amateurs and frequent references to this hobby occur in contemporary fiction. Dickens, in *Great Expectations*, makes mention of several tobacco stoppers carved by Wemmick's deaf and "Aged Parent". Addison also, in the original *Spectator*, refers to Sir Roger de Coverley's friend, Will Wimble, and his habit of turning out great quantities of tobacco stoppers during the winter months, for presentation to his friends "who had good principles and smoked"!



60 A selection of wooden pipe stoppers



61 Cheroot holders and burr cigar and cigarette cases