WHEATLEY HENRY BENJAMIN

HOW TO MAKE AN INDEX

Henry Wheatley

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Содержание

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PREFACE

N 1878 I wrote for the Index Society, as its first publication, a pamphlet entitled "What is an Index?" The present little book is compiled on somewhat similar lines; but, as its title suggests, it is drawn up with a more practical object. The first four chapters are "Historical," and the other four are "Practical"; but the historical portion is intended to lead up to the practical portion by showing what to imitate and what to avoid.

There has been of late years a considerable change in public opinion with respect to the difficulties attending the making of both indexes and catalogues. It was once a common opinion that anyone without preparatory knowledge or experience could make an index. That that opinion is not true is amply proved, I hope, in the chapter on the "Bad Indexer."

I have attempted to describe the best way of setting to work on an index. To do this with any hope of success it is necessary to give details that may to some seem puerile, but I have ventured on particulars for which I hope I may not be condemned.

I must also ask the forbearance of my readers for the constant use of the personal pronoun. If I could have left it out, I would gladly have done so; but to a great extent this book relates to the experiences of an old indexer. They must be taken for what they are worth, and I hope forgiveness will be extended to me for the form in which these experiences are related.

H. B. W.

CHAPTER I.
Introduction

> "I for my part venerate the inventor of Indexes; and I know not to whom to yield the preference, either to Hippocrates, who was the great anatomiser of the human body, or to that unknown labourer in literature who first laid open the nerves and arteries of a book."
> *—Isaac Disraeli, Literary Miscellanies.*

IT is generally agreed that that only is true knowledge which consists of information assimilated by our own minds. Mere disjointed facts kept in our memories have no right to be described as knowledge. It is this understanding that has made many writers jeer at so-called index-learning. Thus, in the seventeenth century, Joseph Glanville, writing in his *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, says: "Methinks 'tis a pitiful piece of knowledge that can be learnt from an index, and a poor ambition to be rich in the inventory of another's treasure." Dr. Watts alluded to those whose "learning reaches no farther than the tables of contents"; but then he added a sentence which quite takes the sting from what he had said before, and shows how absolutely needful an index is. He says: "If a book has no index or table of contents, 'tis very useful to make one as you are reading it."

Swift had his say on index-learning, too. In the *Tale of a Tub* (Section VII.) he wrote: "The most accomplisht way of using books at present is twofold: Either serve them as some men do Lords, learn their titles exactly, and then brag of their acquaintance. Or secondly, which indeed is the choicer, the profounder and politer method, to get a thorough insight into the Index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail. For to enter the palace of Learning at the great gate, requires an expense of time and forms; therefore men of much haste and little ceremony are content to get in by the back-door. For, the Arts are all in a flying march, and therefore more easily subdued by attacking them in the rear.... Thus men catch Knowledge by throwing their wit on the posteriors of a book, as boys do sparrows with flinging salt upon their tails. Thus human life is best understood by the wise man's Rule of regarding the end. Thus are the Sciences found like Hercules' oxen, by tracing them backwards. Thus are old Sciences unravelled like old stockings, by beginning at the foot."

Thomas Fuller, with his usual common-sense, wisely argues that the diligent man should not be deprived of a tool because the idler may misuse it. He writes: "An Index is a necessary implement and no impediment of a book except in the same sense wherein the carriages [*i.e.* things carried] of an army are termed *impedimenta*. Without this a large author is but a labyrinth without a clue to direct the reader therein. I confess there is a lazy kind of learning which is only indical, when scholars (like adders which only bite the horses' heels) nibble but at the tables, which are calces librorum, neglecting the body of the book. But though the idle deserve no crutches (let not a staff be used by them but on them), pity it is the weary should be denied the benefit thereof, and industrious scholars prohibited the accommodation of an index, most used by those who most pretend to contemn it."

The same objection to "indical" learning is urged to-day, but it is really a futile one. No man can know everything; he may possess much true knowledge, but there is a mass of matter that the learned man knows he can never master completely. He does not care to burden his mind with what might be to him useless lumber. In this case his object is only to know where he can find the information when he wants it. Indexes are of the greatest help to these men, and for their purposes the indexes ought to be well made. But it is needless to labour this point, for has not Johnson, in his clear and virile language, said the last word on the matter?—"Knowledge is of two kinds; we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues and the backs of books."

Before going further, it would be well for author and reader to come to an agreement as to what an index really is. An index may, in certain circumstances, be arranged in the order of the book, like a table of contents, or it may be classified or chronological; but the index to a book such as we all think of when we speak of an index should be alphabetical. The other arrangements must be exceptional, because the books indexed are exceptional.

It is strange, however, to find how long the world was in coming to this very natural conclusion. The first attempt at indexing a book was in the form of an abstract of contents in the order of the book itself. Seneca, in sending certain volumes to his friend Lucilius, accompanied them with notes of particular passages, so that he "who only aimed at the useful might be spared the trouble of examining them entire." Cicero used the word "index" to express the table of contents of a book, and he asked his friend Atticus to send him two library clerks to repair his books. He added that he wished them to bring with them some parchment to make indexes upon.

Many old manuscripts have useful tables of contents, and in Dan Michel's *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (1340) there is a very full table with the heading: "Thise byeth the capiteles of the boc volȝinde."

It was only a step to arrange this table of contents in the order of the alphabet, and thus form a true index; but it took a long time to take this step. Alphabetical indexes of names are to be found in some old manuscript books, but it may be said that the general use of the alphabetical arrangement is one of those labour-saving expedients which came into use with the invention of printing.

Erasmus supplied alphabetical indexes to many of his books; but even in his time arrangement in alphabetical order was by no means considered indispensable in an index, and the practice came into general use very slowly.

The word "index" had a hard fight with such synonyms as "calendar," "catalogue," "inventory," "register," "summary," "syllabus." In time it beat all its companions in the race, although it had the longest struggle with the word "table."[1]

Cicero used the word "index," and explained it by the word "syllabus." Index was not generally acknowledged as an English word until late in the seventeenth century.

North's racy translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, the book so diligently used by Shakespeare in the production of his Roman histories, contains an alphabetical index at the end, but it is called a table. On the title-page of Baret's *Alvearie* (1573), one of the early English dictionaries, mention is made of "two *Tables* in the ende of this booke"; but the tables themselves, which were compiled by Abraham Fleming, being lists of the Latin and French words, are headed "Index." Between these two tables, in the edition of 1580, is "an Abecedarie, Index or Table" of Proverbs. The word "index" is not included in the body of the dictionary, where, however, "Table" and "Regester" are inserted. "Table" is defined as "a booke or regester for memorie of thinges," and "regester" as "a reckeninge booke wherein thinges dayly done be written." By this it is clear that Baret did not consider index to be an English word.

At the end of Johnson's edition of Gerarde's *Herbal* (1636) is an "Index Latinus," followed by a "Table of English names," although a few years previously Minsheu had given "index" a sort of half-hearted welcome into his dictionary. Under that word in the *Guide into Tongues* (1617) is the entry, "vide Table in Booke, in litera T.," where we read, "a Table in a booke or Index." Even when acknowledged as an English word, it was frequently differentiated from the analytical table: for instance, Dugdale's *Warwickshire* contains an "Index of Towns and Places," and a "Table of men's names and matters of most note"; and Scobell's *Acts and Ordinances of Parliament* (1640-1656), published 1658, has "An Alphabetical Table of the most material contents of the whole book,"

[1] All these words are fairly common; but there is another which was used only occasionally in the sixteenth century. This is "pye," supposed to be derived from the Greek πίναξ, among the meanings of which, as given in Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, is, "A register, or list." The late Sir T. Duffus Hardy, in some observations on the derivation of the word "Pye-Book," remarks that the earliest use he had noted of pye in this sense is dated 1547: "A Pye of all the names of such Balives as been to accompte pro anno regni regis Edwardi Sexti primo."—*Appendix to the "35th Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records,"* p. 195.

preceded by "An Index of the general titles comprized in the ensuing Table." There are a few exceptions to the rule here set forth: for instance, Plinie's *Natural Historie of the World*, translated by Philemon Holland (1601), has at the beginning, "The Inventorie or Index containing the contents of 37 bookes," and at the end, "An Index pointing to the principal matters." In Speed's *History of Great Britaine* (1611) there is an "Index or Alphabetical Table containing the principal matters in this history."

The introduction of the word "index" into English from the Latin word in the nominative shows that it dates from a comparatively recent period, and came into the language through literature and not through speech. In earlier times it was the custom to derive our words from the Latin accusative. The Italian word *indice* was from the accusative, and this word was used by Ben Jonson when he wrote, "too much talking is ever the indice of a fool" (*Discoveries*, ed. 1640, p. 93). The French word *indice* has a different meaning from the Italian *indice*, and according to Littré is not derived from *index*, but from *indicium*. It is possible that Jonson's "indice" is the French, and not the Italian, word.

Drayton uses "index" as an indicator:

> "Lest when my lisping guiltie tongue should hault,
> My lookes might prove the index to my fault."

—*Rosamond's Epistle*, lines 103-104.

Shakespeare uses the word as a table of contents at the beginning of a book rather than as an alphabetical list at the end: for instance, Nestor says:

> "Our imputation shall be oddly poised
> In this wild action: for the success,
> Although particular, shall give a scantling
> Of good or bad unto the general;
> And in such *indexes*, although small pricks
> To their *subsequent volumes*, there is seen
> The baby figure of the giant mass
> Of things to come at large."
>
> —*Troilus and Cressida, I. 3.*

Buckingham threatens:

> "I'll sort occasion,
> As *index* to the story we late talk'd of,
> To part the queen's proud kindred from the king."
>
> —*Richard III., II. 2.*

And Iago refers to "an *index* and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts" (*Othello*, II. 1). It may be remarked in the quotation from *Troilus and Cressida* that Shakespeare uses the proper plural—"indexes"—instead of "indices," which even now some writers insist on using. No word can be considered as thoroughly naturalised that is allowed to take the plural form of the language from which it is obtained. The same remark applies to the word "appendix," the plural of which some write as "appendices" instead of "appendixes." In the case of "indices," this word is correctly appropriated to another use.

Indexes need not necessarily be dry; and some of the old ones are full of quaint touches which make them by no means the least interesting portion of the books they adorn. John Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays* contains "An Index or Table directing to many of the principal matters and

personages mentioned in this Booke," which is full of curious entries and odd cross references. The entries are not in perfect alphabetical order. A few of the headings will give a good idea of the whole:

"Action better than speach."
"Action to some is rest."
"Beasts are Physitians, Logitians, Musitians, Artists, Students, Politikes, Docible, Capable of Military Order, of Affections, of Justice, of Friendship, of Husbandry, of thankefulnesse and of compassion," etc.
"Bookes and Bookishnesse."
"Bookes not so profitable as Conference—as deare as children."
"Bruit creatures have imagination."
"Cloysters not without cares."
"Good fortune not to be despised altogether."
"Societie of bookes."

Here are some of the cross references:

"Alteration *vide* Inconstancy."
"Amitie *vide* Friendship."
"Ant *vide* Emmets."
"Apprehension *vide* Imagination."
"Balladmakers *vide* Rymers."
"Boasting *vide* Vaunting."
"Chance *vide* Fortune."
"Common People *vide* the Vulgar."
"Disparity *vide* Equality."
"Emperickes *vide* Physitians."

An instance of how loosely the word "index" has been used will be found in Robert Boyle's *Some Considerations touching the Usefulnesse of Experimental Natural Philosophy* (Oxford, 1663). This book is divided into two parts, and at the end of each part is "The Index." This so-called index is arranged in order of the pages, and is really only a full table of contents.

Indexes did not become at all common till the sixteenth century, and Mr. Cornelius Walford asked in *Notes and Queries* what was the earliest index. Mr. Edward Solly answered: "Polydore Vergil in *Anglicæ Historiæ* (1556), has what may fairly be called a good index—thirty-seven pages. This may be taken as a starting-point as to date; and we may ask for earlier examples" (6th S. xi. 155). Another contributor referred to an earlier edition of Polydore Vergil (1546), and still another one cited Lyndewood's *Provinciale* (1525), which has several indexes.

One old index may be singled out as having caused its author serious misfortune. William Prynne concocted a most wonderful attack upon the "stage" under the title of *Histrio-Mastix* (1633), which is absolutely unreadable by reason of the vast mass of authorities gathered from every century and every nation, to prove the wickedness of play-acting. Carlyle refers to the *Histrio-Mastix* as "a book still extant, but never more to be read by mortal."

If Prynne had sent his child out into the world without an index, he might have escaped from persecution, as no one would have found out the enormities which were supposed to lurk within the pages of the book. But he was unwise enough to add a most elaborate index, in which all the attacks upon a calling that received the sanction of the Court were arranged in a convenient form for reference. Attorney-General Noy found that the author himself had forged the weapons which he (the prosecutor) could use in the attack. This is proved by a passage in Noy's speech at Prynne's trial, where he points out that the accused "says Christ was a Puritan, in his Index." Noy calls it an index,

but Prynne himself describes it as "A Table (with some brief additions) of the chiefest passages in this treatise."[2]

The entries in the index are so curious and one-sided in their accusations that it is worth while to quote some of them rather fully:

> "Actors of popular or private enterludes for gaine or pleasure, infamous, unlawfull and that as well in Princes, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Schollers, Divines or Common Actors."
>
> "*Æ*schylus, one of the first inventors of Tragedies—his strange and sudden death."
>
> "Christ wept oft, but never laughed—a puritan—dishonoured and offended with Stage playes."
>
> "Crossing of the face when men go to plays shuts in the Devil."
>
> "Devils, inventors and fomentors of stage plays and dancing. Have stage plays in hell every Lord's day night."
>
> "Heaven—no stage plays there."
>
> "Herod Agrippa smitten in theater by an angel and so died."
>
> "Herod the great, the first erecter of a theater among the Jews who thereupon conspire his death."
>
> "King James his statute against prophaning scripture and God's name in Playes —his Statutes make Players rogues and Playes unlawfull pastimes."
>
> "Kings—infamous for them to act or frequent Playes or favour Players."
>
> "Plagues occasioned by stage plays. All the Roman actors consumed by a plague."
>
> "Play-bookes see Bookes."
>
> "Players infamous …
>
> — many of them Papists and most desperate wicked wretches."
>
> "Play haunters the worst and lewdest persons for the most part...."
>
> "Play haunting unlawfull...."
>
> "Play-houses stiled by the Fathers and others, the Devil's temples, Chappels and synagogues...."
>
> "Play-poets examples of God's judgements on the chiefest of them...."
>
> "Puritans, condemners of Stage-playes and other corruptions stiled so— The very best and holiest Christians called so....—Christ, his prophets, apostles, the Fathers and Primitive christians Puritans as men now judged—hated and condemned onely for their grace yea holinesse of life—Accused of hypocrisie and sedition, and why."
>
> "Puritan, an honourable nickname of Christianity and grace."
>
> "Theaters overturned by tempests."

It was the strong terms in which women actors are denounced that gave such offence at Court, where the Queen and her ladies were specially attracted to the stage. Prynne's book was published six weeks before Henrietta Maria acted in a pastoral at Somerset House, so that the following passage could not have been intended to allude to the Queen:[3]

"Women actors notorious whores … and dare then any Christian women be so more than whorishly impudent as to act, to speake publikely on a stage perchance in man's apparell and cut

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[2] There is a note to the table which shows that the book grew in size during the printing—"p. signifying the page, f. the folioes from pag. 513 to 545 (which exceeded the Printer's computation), m. the marginall notes: if you finde f. before any pages from 545 to 568, then looke the folioes which are overcast; if p. then the page following."

[3] See Cobbett's *State Trials*, vol. 3, coll. 561-586.

haire here proved sinfull and abominable in the presence of sundry men and women?… O let such presidents of impudency, of impiety be never heard of or suffered among Christians."

There are some interesting letters in Ellis's *Original Letters* (2nd Series, vol. 3) which illustrate the effect on the Court of these violent expressions of opinion. Jo. Pory wrote to Sir Thomas Puckering on September 20th, 1632: "That which the Queen's Majesty, some of her ladies and all her maides of honour are now practicing upon is a Pastorall penned by Mr. Walter Montague, wherein her Majesty is pleased to acte a parte, as well for her recreation as for the exercise of her Englishe."

George Gresley wrote to the same Puckering on the following 31st of January: "Mr. Prinne an Utter Barrister of Lincoln's Inne is brought into the High Commission Court and Star Chamber, for publishing a Booke (a little before the Queene's acting of her play) of the unlawfullness of Plaies wherein in the Table of his Booke and his brief additions thereunto he hath these words [the extracts given above are here printed], which wordes it is thought by some will cost him his eares, or heavily punnisht and deepely fined."

Those who thought thus were amply justified in their opinion. Mr. Hill Burton observes that it was a very odd compliment to Queen Henrietta Maria to presume that these words refer to her, and he adds that the supposition reminds him of Victor Hugo's sarcasm respecting Napoleon III., that when the Parisian police overheard any one use the terms "ruffian" and "scoundrel," they said, "You must be speaking of the Emperor!"

Prynne is so full in his particulars that he might have given us much information respecting the stage in his own day, which we should have welcomed; but, instead, he is ever more ready to draw his examples from Greek and Latin authorities.

In the eighteenth century a practice arose of drawing up indexes of sentiments and opinions as distinguished from facts. Such indexes required a special skill in the indexer, who was usually the original author. There is a curious poetical index to the Iliad in Pope's *Homer*, referring to all the places in which similes are used.

Samuel Johnson was very anxious that Richardson should produce such an index to his novels. In the *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson* (vol. v., p. 282) is a letter from Johnson to the novelist, in which he writes: "I wish you would add an *index rerum*, that when the reader recollects any incident, he may easily find it, which at present he cannot do, unless he knows in which volume it is told; for Clarissa is not a performance to be read with eagerness, and laid aside for ever; but will be occasionally consulted by the busy, the aged and the studious; and therefore I beg that this edition, by which I suppose posterity is to abide, may want nothing that can facilitate its use."

At the end of each volume of *Clarissa Harlowe* Richardson added a sort of table of all the passages best worth remembering, and as he was the judge himself, it naturally extended to a considerable length. In September, 1753, Johnson again wrote to Richardson suggesting the propriety of making an index to his three works, but he added: "While I am writing an objection arises; such an index to the three would look like the preclusion of a fourth, to which I will never contribute; for if I cannot benefit mankind I hope never to injure them."

Richardson took the hint of his friend, and in 1755 appeared a volume of four hundred and ten pages, entitled, *A Collection of the moral and instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions, and Reflexions contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison, digested under proper heads*.

The tables of sentiments are arranged in separate alphabets for each novel. The production of this book was a labour of love to its author, who, moreover, was skilled in the mechanical work of indexing, and in the early part of his career had filled up his leisure hours by compiling indexes for the booksellers and writing prefaces and dedications. At the end of his "collection" are two letters from the author to two of his admirers; one was to a lady who was solicitous for an additional volume to *Sir Charles Grandison*, supposing that work ended too abruptly.

David Hume is to be added to the list of celebrated men who have been indexers, although he does not appear to have liked the work. In referring to the fourth edition of his *Essays* he wrote: "I

intend to make an index to it." Two years later he is grateful that the work of indexing another book is to be done for him; writing to Millar (December 18th, 1759), he says: "I think that an Index will be very proper, and am glad that you free me from the trouble of undertaking that task, for which I know myself to be very unfit."[4]

Sir James Paget, the great surgeon, not only made indexes, but delighted in the task. He told Dr. Goodhart, *apropos* of the Hunterian Museum Catalogues, College of Surgeons, that "it had always been a pleasure to him to make an index."[5]

At the end of this chapter I must refer to an excellent blunder, because it would not be fair to introduce it with the work of the bad indexer, as it is an instance not exactly of ignorance, but of too great cleverness.

Of the Fétis Musical Library, bought by the Belgian Government at his death for 152,000 francs, an excellent catalogue was compiled and printed. In the index are references to Dumas (Alexandre) *père*, and Dumas (Alexandre) *fils*. The musician who consults the work will be surprised at this unexpected development of these two famous authors' powers, but will be disappointed on referring to the numbers cited to find that they are reports of some legal proceedings brought by the firm of Alexandre *père et fils*, the well-known harmonium-makers, against a rival firm. The indexer's better acquaintance with *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *La Dame aux Camélias* led him astray.

My friend Mr. J. E. Matthew, who communicated this to me, adds: "After many years of constant use of the catalogue, this is the only mistake, beyond a literal, that I ever found."

[4] Letters of David Hume to William Strahan, edited by G. Birkbeck Hill, D.C.L. Oxford, 1888.

[5] Paget's *Life*, p. 350.

CHAPTER II.
Amusing and Satirical Indexes

> "It will thus often happen that the controversialist states his case first in the title-page; he then gives it at greater length in the introduction; again perhaps in a preface; a third time in an analytical form through means of a table of contents; after all this skirmishing he brings up his heavy columns in the body of the book; and if he be very skilfull he may let fly a few Parthian arrows from the index."—J. Hill Burton's *Book-Hunter*.

ONE of the last things the genuine indexer thinks of is to make his work amusing; but some wits have been very successful in producing humorous indexes, and others have seen their way to make an author ridiculous by satirically perverting his meaning in the form of an ordinary index. We can find specimens of each of these classes.

Leigh Hunt has a charming little paper, "A Word upon Indexes," in his *Indicator*. He writes: "Index-making has been held to be the driest as well as lowest species of writing. We shall not dispute the humbleness of it; but since we have had to make an index ourselves,[6] we have discovered that the task need not be so very dry. Calling to mind indexes in general, we found them presenting us a variety of pleasant memories and contrasts. We thought of those to the Spectator, which we used to look at so often at school, for the sake of choosing a paper to abridge. We thought of the index to the Pantheon of Fabulous Histories of the Heathen Gods, which we used to look at oftener. We remember how we imagined we should feel some day, if ever our name should appear in the list of Hs; as thus, Home, Howard, Hume, Huniades, –. The poets would have been better, but then the names, though perhaps less unfitting, were not so flattering; as for instance Halifax, Hammond, Harte, Hughes, –. We did not like to come after Hughes."

The indexes to the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* are full of piquancy, and possess that admirable quality of making the consulter wish to read the book itself. The entries are so enticing that they lead you on to devour the whole book. Hunt writes of them: "We have just been looking at the indexes to the Tatler and Spectator, and never were more forcibly struck with the feeling we formerly expressed about a man's being better pleased with other writers than with himself. Our index seemed the poorest and most second-hand in the world after theirs: but let any one read theirs, and then call an index a dry thing if he can. As there 'is a soul of goodness in things evil' so there is a soul of humour in things dry, and in things dry by profession. Lawyers know this, as well as index-makers, or they would die of sheer thirst and aridity. But as grapes, ready to burst with wine, issue out of the most stony places, like jolly fellows bringing burgundy out of a cellar; so an Index, like the *Tatler's*, often gives us a taste of the quintessence of his humour." The very title gives good promise of what is to be found in the book: "A faithful Index of the dull as well as the ingenious passages in the Tatlers."

Here are a few entries chosen at random:

> Vol. 1—
> "Bachelor's scheme to govern a wife."
> "Knaves prove fools."
>
> Vol. 2—
> "Actors censured for adding words of their own in their parts."

[6] To the original edition of the *Indicator*; the reprint (2 vols. 8vo, 1834) has no index.

"Dead men, who."
"Dead persons heard, judged and censured.
—— Allegations laid against them, their pleas."
"Love letters before and after marriage, found in a grave."
"Mathematical sieve to sift impertinences in writing and discourse."
"News, Old People die in France."

Vol. 3—
"Flattery of women, its ill consequences."
"Maids of Honour, their allowance
of Beef for their Breakfast in Queen Elizabeth's time."
"Silence, significant on many occasions.
—— Instances of it."

Vol. 4—
"Blockheads apt to admire one another."
"Female Library proposed for the Improvement of the Sex."
"Night, longer formerly in this Island than at present."

In 1757 *A General Index to the Spectators, Tatlers, and Guardians* was published, and in 1760 the same work was re-issued with a new title-page. Certain supposed blots in the original indexes were here corrected and the following explanation made in the preface: "Notwithstanding the learning and care of the compilers of the first Indexes to these volumes, some slight inaccuracies have passed, and where observed they are altered. Few readers who desire to know Mr. Bickerstaff's Opinion of the Comedy called the Country Wife, or the character of Mrs. Bickerstaff as an actress, would consult the Index under the word *Acts*." This seems to refer to an entry in the index to the first volume of the *Tatler*:

"Acts the Country-Wife: (Mrs. Bignel)."

The index to the original edition of the *Spectator* is equally good with that of the *Tatler*, but the entries are longer and more elaborate than those in the latter. The references are not made to the pages, as is the case with the *Tatler*, but to the numbers of the papers. The following entries are worthy of quotation:

Vol. 2—
"Gentry of England generally speaking in debt."
"Great men not truly known till some years after their deaths."
"Women, the English excel all other nations in beauty.
—— Signs of their improvement under the Spectator's hands.
—— Their pains in all ages to adorn the outside of their heads."

A precursor of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* was the curious *Athenian Oracle*, of the eccentric John Dunton, each volume of which contained "An Alphabetical Table for the speedy finding of any questions, by a member of the Athenian Society," from which the following amusing entries are taken:

"Ark, what became of it after the Flood?"
"Bees, a swarm lit upon the Crown and Scepter in Cheapside, what do they portend?"
"Hawthorn-tree at Glassenbury, what think you of it?"
"Noah's flood, whither went the waters?"

"Pied Piper, was he a man or dæmon?"
"Triumphant Arch erected in Cheapside 1691, described."

A selection from this curious seventeenth-century miscellany was made by Mr. J. Underhill, and published by Walter Scott a few years ago.

Shenstone's *Schoolmistress* is one of the works of genius which is little known in the present day, but well repays perusal. A humorous table of contents was prepared by the author, which he styled an index. He wrote: "I have added a ludicrous index purely to show (fools) that I am in jest." This was afterwards omitted, but D'Israeli reprinted it in his *Curiosities of Literature*. It contains an amusing *précis* of the chief points of the poem; the whole is short, and a few extracts will give an idea of its plan:

"A circumstance in the situation of the mansion of early Discipline, discovering the surprising influence of the connexion of ideas."
"Some peculiarities indicative of a country school, with a short sketch of the sovereign presiding over it."
"Some account of her night-cap, apron and a tremendous description of her birchen sceptre."
"Her titles and punctilious nicety in the ceremonious assertion of them."
"A view of this rural potentate as seated in her chair of state, conferring honours distributing bounties and dispensing proclamations."

Gay composed a full and humorous index for his interesting picture of eighteenth-century London—*Trivia*. The poet added a few entries to the index in the quarto edition of his *Poems* (1720). The following selected references will show the character of the index:

"Asses, their arrogance."
"Autumn, what cries then in use."
"Bully, his insolence to be corrected."
"Chairs and chariots prejudicial to health."
"Cellar, the misfortune of falling into one."
"Coach fallen into a hole described."
"Glazier, his skill at football."
"London, its happiness before the invention of Coaches and Chairs."
"Periwigs, how stolen off the head."
"Quarrels for the wall to be avoided."
"Schoolboys, mischievous in frosty weather."
"Wall, to whom to be given.
— to whom to be denied."
"Women, the ill consequence of gazing on them."

Of modern examples of the amusing index, by far the best is that added to the inimitable *Biglow Papers* by the accomplished author, James Russell Lowell. Here are some extracts from the index to the First Series:

"Adam, eldest son of, respected."
"Babel, probably the first congress."
"Birch, virtue of, in instilling certain of the dead languages."
"Cæsar, a tribute to. His *Veni, Vidi, Vici* censured for undue prolixity."
"Castles, Spanish, comfortable accommodation in."
"Eating Words, habit of, convenient in time of famine."
"Longinus recommends swearing (Fuseli did the same thing)."
"No, a monosyllable. Hard to utter."

"Noah enclosed letter in bottle, probably."

"Ulysses, husband of Penelope. Borrows money. (For full particulars see *Homer* and *Dante*.)"

"Wrong, abstract, safe to oppose."

The following are from the Second Series:

"Antony of Padua, Saint, happy in his hearers."
"Applause, popular, the *summum bonum*."
"'Atlantic,' editors of, See *Neptune*. [There is no entry under Neptune.]"
"Belmont. See *Woods*."
"Bible, not composed for use of coloured persons."
"Charles I, accident to his neck."
"Ezekiel would make a poor figure at a Caucus."
"Facts, their unamiability. Compared to an old fashioned stage-coach."
"Family trees, a primitive forest of."
"Jeremiah hardly the best guide in modern politics."
"Missionaries, useful to alligators. Culinary liabilities of."
"Rum and water combine kindly."
"Shoddy, poor covering for outer or inner man."
"'They'll say,' a notable bully."
"Woods, the, See *Belmont*."
"World, this, its unhappy temper."
"Writing, dangerous to reputation."

The witty Dr. William King, student of Christ Church, Oxford, and afterwards Judge of the Irish Court of Admiralty, presented an example of the skilled controversialist spoken of by Hill Burton as letting fly "a few Parthian arrows from the Index." He was dubbed by Isaac D'Israeli the inventor of satirical indexes, and he certainly succeeded in producing several ill-natured ones.

When the wits of Christ Church produced under the name of the Hon. Charles Boyle the clever volume with which they thought to annihilate the great Dr. Bentley, Dr. King was the one who assisted by producing a bitter index.

The first edition of *Dr. Bentley's Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Esop examin'd* (1698) has no index; but Dr. King's work was added to the second edition published in the same year. It was styled, *A short account of Dr. Bentley by way of Index*. Then follows:

"Dr. Bentley's true story of the MS. prov'd false by the testimonies of
— Mr. Bennet, p. 6.
— Mr. Gibson, p. 7.
— Dr. King, p. 8.
— Dr. Bentley, p. 19."
"Dr. Bentley's civil usage of Mr. Boyle.
"His civil language to
— Mr. Boyle.
— Sir W. Temple.
"His singular humanity to
— Mr. Boyle.
— Sir Edward Sherburne.
humanity to Foreigners.
"His Ingenuity in
— relating matters of fact.
— citing authors.

— transcribing and plundering
notes and prefaces of
— Mr. Boyle.
— Vizzanius.
— Nevelet.
— Camerarius.
— Editor of Hesychius.
— Salmasius.
— Dr. Bentley.
"His appeal to Foreigners.
— a suspicious plan.
— a false one.
"His modesty and decency in contradicting great men.
"(Long list from Plato to Every body).
"His happiness in confident assertions for want
— of Reading.
— of Judgment.
— of Sincerity.
"His profound skill in Criticism
From beginning to
The End."

This is certainly more vindictive than witty.

All the wits rushed madly into the fray, and Swift, in his "Battel fought last Friday between the Antient and Modern Books in St. James's Library," committed himself irretrievably to the wrong side in this way: "A captain whose name was B-ntl-y, in person the most deformed of all the moderns; tall but without shape or comeliness, large but without strength or proportion. His armour was patched up of a thousand incoherent pieces...."

Then look at the leader of the opposing host: "Boyl clad in a suit of armor which had been given him by all the gods immediately advanced against the trembling foe, who now fled before him."

It is amazing that such a perverted judgment should have been given by some of our greatest writers, but all is to be traced to Bentley's defects of temper, so that Dr. King was not altogether wrong in his index.

Sir George Trevelyan in his *Life of Macaulay* refers to Bentley's famous maxim (which in print and talk alike he dearly loved to quote), that no man was ever written down except by himself, and quotes what the historian wrote after perhaps his tenth perusal of Bishop Monk's life of the great critic: "Bentley seems to me an eminent instance of the extent to which intellectual powers of a most rare and admirable kind may be impaired by moral defects."

Charles Boyle's book went through four editions, and still there was silence; but at last appeared the "immortal" *Dissertation*, as Porson calls it, which not only defeated his enemies, but routed them completely. Bentley's *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, with an answer to the objections of the Hon. C. Boyle, Esq., first appeared in 1699. De Quincey described it as one of the three most triumphant dissertations existing upon the class of historico-critical problems, "All three are loaded with a superfetation of evidence, and conclusive beyond what the mind altogether wishes."[7]

In another place De Quincey points out the line of argument followed by Bentley: "It was by anachronisms of this character that Bentley detected the spuriousness of the letters ascribed to Phalaris. Sicilian towns, &c., were in those letters called by names that did not arise until that prince had been dead for centuries. Manufactures were mentioned that were of much later invention. As

[7] *Rosicrucians and Free-Masons* (De Quincey's *Works*, vol. 13, p. 388).

handles for this exposure of a systematic forgery, which oftentimes had a moral significance, these indications were valuable, and gave excessive brilliancy to that immortal dissertation of Bentley's."[8]

The fate which the wits thought to bring upon Bentley fell upon them, and they quarrelled among themselves. It was believed that Charles Boyle, when credit was to be obtained, looked upon himself as author of the book; but afterwards, when it was discredited, he only awaited the public trial of the conspirators to wash his hands of the whole affair. Atterbury, who had much to do with the production of the volume, was particularly annoyed by Boyle's conduct. He wrote to Boyle: "In laying the design of the book, in writing above half of it, in reviewing [revising] a great part of the rest, in transcribing the whole and attending the press, half a year of my life went away. What I promised myself from hence was that some service would be done to your reputation, and that you would think so. In the first of these I was not mistaken—in the latter I am. When you were abroad, sir, the highest you could prevail with yourself to go in your opinion of the book was, that you hoped it would do you no harm. When you returned I supposed you would have seen that it had been far from hurting you. However, you have not thought fit to let me know your mind on this matter; for since you came to England, no one expression, that I know of, has dropped from you that could give me reason to believe you had any opinion of what I had done, or even took it kindly from me."[9]

In the same year (1698) King turned his attention to a less formidable antagonist than the great Bentley. His *Journey to London* is a very ingenious parody of Dr. Martin Lister's *Journey to Paris*, and, the pages of the original being referred to, it forms an index to that book.

The Royal Society in its early years had to pass through a long period of ridicule and misrepresentation. The author of *Hudibras* commenced the crusade, but the gibes of Butler were easier to bear than those of Dr. William King, who was particularly savage against Sir Hans Sloane. *The Transactioneer* (1700) and *Useful Transactions in Philosophy* (1708-1709) were very galling to the distinguished naturalist, and annoyed the Royal Society, whose *Philosophical Transactions* were unmercifully laughed at. To both the tracts referred to were prefixed satirical tables of contents, and what made them the more annoying was that the author's own words were very ingeniously used and turned against him. King writes: "The bulls and blunders which Sloane and his friends so naturally pour forth cannot be misrepresented, so careful I am in producing them."

Here is a specimen of the contents of *The Transactioneer*:

"The Tatler's Opinion of a Virtuoso."
"Some Account of Sir Hans Sloane.
— of Dr. Salmon.
— of Mr. Oldenburg.
— of Dr. Plot."
"The Compiling of the Philosophical Transactions the work of a single person.
— the excellence of his style.
— his clearness and perspicacity.
— Genius to Poetry.
— Verses on Jamaica Pepper.
— Politicks in Gardening.
— Skill in Botanicks."

The following appear in the contents of the "Voyage to Cajamai" in *Useful Transactions*:

Preface of the author—
"Knew a white bramble in a dark room."
Author's introduction—

[8] *Memorial Chronology* (De Quincey's *Works*, vol. 14, p. 309).

[9] *Memoirs of Bishop Atterbury*, compiled by Folkestone Williams, vol. i. (1869), p. 42.

"Mountains higher than hills."
"Hay good for horses."

The most important of King's indexes was that added to Bromley's *Travels*, because it had the effect of balking a distinguished political character of his ambition of filling the office of Speaker of the House of Commons.

William Bromley (1664-1732), after leaving Christ Church, Oxford, spent several years in travelling on the Continent. He was elected a Member of Parliament in 1689, and soon occupied a prominent position among the non-jurors. In 1692 he published "*Remarks in the Grande Tour of France and Italy, lately performed by a Person of quality.* London. Printed by E. H. for Tho. Basset at the George in Fleet Street, 1692." A second edition appeared in the following year: "*Remarks made in Travels through France and Italy, with many Publick Inscriptions. Lately taken by a Person of Quality*. London (Thomas Basset) 1693."

In March, 1701-1702, Bromley was elected Member of Parliament for the University of Oxford, which he continued to represent during the remainder of his life. In 1702 he published another volume of travels: "*Several Years' Travels through Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark and the United Provinces performed by a Gentleman*."

In 1705 Bromley was supposed to have pre-eminent claims to the Speakership, which office was then vacant; but what was supposed to be a certainty was turned into failure by the action of his opponents. They took the opportunity of reprinting his *Remarks*, with the addition of a satirical index, as an electioneering squib. This reprint appeared as "*Remarks in the Grand Tour … performed by a Person of Quality in the year 1691*. The second edition to which is added a table of the principal matters. London. Printed for John Nutt near Stationers' Hall, 1705." This was really the third edition, but probably the reprinters overlooked the edition of 1693. It was reprinted with the original licence of "Rob. Midgley, Feb. 20th, 1691-2."

In the Bodleian copy of this book there is a manuscript note by Dr. Rawlinson to the effect that this index was drawn up by Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford; but this was probably only a party rumour. Dr. Parr possessed Bromley's own copy of the reprint with the following manuscript note by the author:

"This edition of these travels is a specimen of the good nature and good manners of the Whigs, and I have reason to believe of one of the ministry (very conversant in this sort of calumny) for the sake of publishing '*the Table of the principal matters &c*' to expose me whom the gentlemen of the Church of England designed to be Speaker of the House of Commons, in the Parliament, that met Oct. 25 1705. When notwithstanding the Whigs and Court joining to keep me out of the chair, and the greatest violence towards the Members, turning out some, and threatening others, to influence their votes, I had the honour (and I shall ever esteem it a greater honour than my competitor's success) to have the suffrages of 205 disinterested gentlemen for me: such a number as never lost such a question before; and such as, with the addition of those that by force, and contrary to their inclination, with the greatest reluctance voted against me, must have prevailed for me.

"This was a very malicious proceeding; my words and meaning plainly perverted in several places; which if they had been improper, and any observations trifling or impertinent, an allowance was due for my being very young, when they were made. But the performances of others, not entitled to such allowance may be in this manner exposed, as appears by the like Tables published for the Travels of Bp. Burnet and Mr. Addison. *Wm. Bromley.*"

Dr. Parr took this all very seriously, and set great value upon the book. He added a note to that written by Bromley, in which he said:

> "Mr. Bromley was very much galled with the republication, and the ridiculous, but not untrue, representation of the contents. Such a work would unavoidably expose the author to derision: instead therefore of suffering it to be sold after my

> death, and to become a subject of contemptuous gossip, or an instrument of party annoyance, I think it a proper act of respect and kindness for the Bromley family, for me to put it in possession of the Rev. Mr. Davenport Bromley, upon the express condition that he never sells it nor gives it away, that, after reading it, he seals it up carefully and places it where no busy eye, nor thievish hand can reach it.
> *"S. P."*

This note was written in 1823, and the precautions taken by Parr seem rather belated. Even the family were little likely to mind the public seeing a political skit more than a century old, which did no dishonour to their ancestor's character.

It is very probable that Harley was at the expense of reprinting the book, as it is reported that every one who came to his house was asked if he had seen Mr. Bromley's *Travels*; and when the answer was in the negative, Harley at once fetched a copy, which he presented to his visitor. There is no doubt, however, that the index was drawn up by Dr. King.

The index is neither particularly amusing nor clever, but it is very ill-natured. Dr. Parr infers that the book is not misrepresented, but there can be little doubt that the index is in most instances very unfair. Thus the first entry in the table is:

> "Chatham, where and how situated, viz. on the other side of Rochester bridge, though commonly reported to be on this side, p. 1."

The passage indexed is quite clear, and contains the natural statement of a fact.

> "Lodged at Rochester, an episcopal seat in the same county [Kent]. The cathedral church is plain and decent, and the city appears well peopled. When I left it and passed the Bridge I was at Chatham, the famous Dock, where so many of our great ships are built."

The following are some further entries from the index:

> "Dover and Calais neither of them places of Strength tho' frontier towns, p. 2."
> "Boulogne the first city on the French shore, lies on the coast, p. 2." [These are the same words as in the book.]
> "Crosses and Crucifixes on the Roads in France prove it not England, p. 3."

The passage here indexed is as follows:

> "Crosses and Crucifixes are so plentiful every where on this road, that from them alone an Englishman will be satisfied he is out of his own country; besides the Roads are much better than ours."
> "Eight pictures take up less room than sixteen of the same size, p. 14."

This is founded on the following:

> "They contain the Histories of the Old and New Testaments, and are placed in two rows one above the other; those that represent the Old Testament are in the uppermost reaching round the room and are sixteen. Those of the new are under them, but being only eight reach not so far as the former, and where no pictures are be the doors to the presses where the sacred vestments are kept."
> "Travelling by night not proper to take a view of the adjacent countries, p. 223."

This is a version of the following:

> "The heat of the weather made travelling in the night most desirable and we chose it between Sienna and Florence.... By this means I could see little of the country."

> "The Duchess dowager of Savoy who was grandmother to the present Duke was mother to his father, p. 243."

This is a perversion of the following perfectly natural observation:

> "This was designed by the Dutchess Christina grandmother of this Duke in the minority of her son (his father) in 1660."

The entry, "Jews at Legorn not obliged to wear red hats, p. 223," contains nothing absurd, but rather is an interesting piece of information, because the Jews were obliged to wear these hats in other parts of Italy, and it was the knowledge of this fact that induced Macklin to wear a red hat when acting Shylock, a personation which induced an admirer to exclaim:

> "This is the Jew
> That Shakespeare drew."

Such perversions as these could have done Bromley, one would think, little harm; but the real harm done consisted in bringing to light and insisting upon the author's political attitude when he referred to King William and Queen Mary as "the Prince and Princess of Orange." The passage is as follows:

> "A gallery, where among the pictures of Christian Princes are those of King Charles the Second and his Queen, King James the Second and his Queen and the Prince and Princess of Orange."

It would indeed seem strange that one who had thus referred to his King and Queen should occupy so important a public office as Speaker of the House of Commons. Another ground of offence was that when in Rome he kissed the Pope's slipper.

Although Bromley was disappointed in 1705, his time came; and after the Tory reaction consequent on the trial of Sacheverell he was in 1710 chosen Speaker without opposition. There is a portrait of Bromley in the University Picture Gallery in the Bodleian at Oxford.

CHAPTER III.
The Bad Indexer

> "At the laundress's at the Hole in the Wall in Cursitor's Alley up three pair of stairs, the author of my Church history—you may also speak to the gentleman who lies by him in the flock bed, my index maker."—Swift's *Account of the Condition of Edmund Curll* (Instructions to a porter how to find Mr. Curll's authors).

BAD indexers are everywhere, and what is most singular is that each one makes the same sort of blunders—blunders which it would seem impossible that any one could make, until we find these same blunders over and over again in black and white. One of the commonest is to place the references under unimportant words, for which no one would think of looking, such as A and The. The worst indexes of this class are often added to journals and newspapers. A good instance of confusion will be found in the index to a volume of *The Freemason* which is before me; but this is by no means singular, and certainly not the worst of its class. Under A we find the following entries:

"Afternoon Outing of the Skelmersdale Lodge."
"An Oration delivered," etc.
"Annual Outing of the Queen Victoria Lodge."
"Another Masonic MS."

Under B:

"Bro. Bain's Masonic Library."

Under F:

"First Ball of the Fellowship Lodge.
"First Ladies' Night."

Under I:

"Interesting Extract from an 'Old Masonian's' Letter."

Under L:

"Ladies' Banquet."
"Ladies' Night."
"Ladies' Summer Outing."
"Late Bro. Sir B. W. Richardson."

Under N:

"New Grand Officers."
"New Home for Keighley Freemasons."
"New Masonic Hall."

Under O:

"Our Portrait Gallery."

Under R:

"Recent Festival."

Under S:

"Send-off dinner."
"Summer Festival."

"Summer Outing."

Under T:

"Third Ladies' Night."

Under Y:

"Ye olde Masonians."

There are many other absurd headings, but these are the worst instances. They show the confusion of not only placing references where they would never be looked for, but of giving similar entries all over the index under whatever heading came first to the mind of the indexer. For instance, there is one *Afternoon* Outing, one *Annual* Outing, one *Ladies'* Outing, one *Summer* Outing, and three other Outings under O. None of these have any references the one from the other.

There are a large number of indexes in which not only the best heading is not chosen, but the very worst is. Thus, choosing at random, we find such an order as the following in an old volume of the *Canadian Journal*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.