long indexes, Lord Beveridge's autobiography *Power and influence* (9.7%), and Mrs. Battiscombe's life of Mrs. Gladstone (9.5%).

The length of indexing in geographical books is very variable. Discursive books describing travel, or a particular district (e.g. Hale's County Books), mostly have indexes in the 2% to 5% range. Scoresby's *Arctic regions*, published in 1820, falls into this range with a 2.3% index. Two large university textbooks of geography were found to have indexes of only 2% and 3.7%. Those of two histories of exploration reached 5.3% and 6.2%, and that of *The Domesday geography of S.E. England* 8%. Muirhead's Blue Guides have 6% to 9% indexes, in three columns. For the present purpose, these were reckoned in the same way as two-column indexes, as if in continuous lines across the page, but calculations for three-column indexes ought perhaps to include a small weighting for increased number of entries, making the results rather higher. Doughty's *Arabia deserta* has a combined index and glossary of Arabic words amounting to 13.5% of the text.

The length of indexes in books on science is more clearly related to the standard of difficulty of the text. Books for general readers, and for sixth formers and first-year undergraduates, mostly have 3% to 5% indexes. For more advanced textbooks, 6% to 8% indexes are usual, often in three columns in books on medicine and chemistry. At the top of the scale are some very large, highly specialized books, with two-column indexes as long as 15% of the text. Some of the annual reviews of the sciences also have (three-column) author and subject indexes amounting together to 15%.

These observations might be continued, but enough has been said to show some general trends. To pursue the subject in a worth-while way would require much more extensive sampling, and better mathematics. One thing that has not been touched on is the relation between the length and the usefulness of an index.

### A 19th CENTURY INDEXER

**M. Beryl Bailey**

A letter written in 1838 will seem very familiar to present-day indexers.

The letter reads as follows:—

April 23rd, 1838.

My dear Friend,

Here is some more work for you. The Index is now wanted by the Printer. I am ashamed to hurry you, but it will be a convenience to have it as soon as you can send it. I hope you will like the selection of the letters.

With invariable gratitude and esteem. 

Ever your faithful friend,

J. Baron.

The author of the letter was John Baron, M.D., 1786-1851, and the selection of letters that needed indexing in the usual hurry was his edition of Edward Jenner's letters, which comprised the second volume of his life of Jenner.

Volume I, the biography, was published in 1827, and Volume II, the letters, was published in 1838.

Baron got to know Jenner as a fellow medical man in 1809, as Jenner's home and practice were in the Vale of Berkeley,
only 16 miles from Baron's home town of Gloucester. When Jenner died in 1823 all
the well preserved biographical material was made available to Baron.

The *Dictionary of national biography* says of the resulting book that it 'is not
only a serviceable history of the vaccination movement throughout the world, but
is full of human interest of the more homely kind . . .'.

Modern opinion of Baron's work is somewhat different, as a recent biographer
of Jenner refers to the fulsome adulation expressed in the book.

A short quotation from the index to Volume II might be of interest:—

'... Linnaeus, pious expression of, 316. Lisle, Mr., 332.

Liver disease in animals, 380. Lohenwein, professor of anatomy
at Wilna, 52. Love to God, 448 . . .'

'Love to God' appears to refer to a quotation from Jenner's notebooks on p.
447 when Jenner is speaking of 'our love of the Divine Being'.

The letter, as can be seen, is addressed to an unnamed dear friend, there is no
mention of the indexer in the book, so, therefore, our harried predecessor must
remain, as do his successors all too frequently, anonymous.

The MS letter is in the Royal Veterinary College Library. I am grateful to Mr.
R. Catton, Librarian, for permission to publish it.

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**CITATION INDEXING**

*John Martyn*

American law, like English law, is to a large extent based on precedent. Since
1873 the American legal profession has enjoyed the use of a publication called
Shepard's Citations, which has to a very great extent facilitated the location of
legal precedents relevant to a particular case in law. It consists of a listing of in-
dividual American court cases accompanied by a note of all subsequent cases
which have cited it as authority and whether subsequent cases have reversed
or overruled or in any way modified the authority of the decision in the original
case.

In 1949 a note in the *Journal of the Patent Office Society* by Arthur H. Seidal
referred to Shepard's Citations and suggested that something of the same system
might be applied in the American Patent Office. 'Thus every patent could be given
a separate index card and a notation made upon this index card whenever it was
cited by the Patent Office as a reference against a later issued patent. Through
the use of this card one could readily ascertain later correlated patents . . . By
the use of this method a searcher, who had found a patent closely paralleling the
disclosure which he was searching, could rapidly determine the state of the art both
before and after the patent, and thereby accelerate his search.'

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* A paper read at a Discussion Meeting on January 20th, 1966.