scholarship for which its compiler was distinguished. The text of the volume, comprising Dickens's letters of 1840 and 1841, with very full annotation, runs to just over 500 pages, and the Index occupies another 47. Formally it is confined to proper names (persons, places and publications), since a general index is reserved for the final volume of the series. But within these limits (more or less), the compiler has spared no pains, and deployed considerable ingenuity, to ensure the most exhaustive retrieval of information.

One or two features may be mentioned. Publications are indexed under the name of the author, and the entry for Charles Dickens himself, apart from a section listing the addresses from which his letters were sent, consists entirely of references to his published works; the sections relating to his principal books at this period being each subdivided under the headings: 'CD at work on'; 'Illustrations'; 'Publication of'; 'Other references'; 'Characters'. References to 'CD' himself are distributed throughout the index, especially under the names of other persons (sometimes grouped under the sub-heading, 'CD, relations with'), but also in some less obvious places; e.g. under 'Parliament' there are references not only to 'Bills, Acts, etc.' and other proceedings in that place, but also to Dickens's expression of political views in 1841 ('CD getting more radical'). Buildings, streets, etc., are indexed under the town to which they belong, with cross-references to separate entries for buildings frequently mentioned. It is a measure of the thoroughness of the coverage that the entry for 'London' contains references to, apparently, every street mentioned as the address of any person referred to in the text or the notes.

I think it is possible to have some reservations about the style of presentation, which, to my mind, has a tendency to pursue the perfection of analysis sometimes at the expense of clarity. As a general rule, the sub-headings and modifications are arranged alphabetically, with inversions of phrase to point the alphabetical order, e.g.

Macready, William Charles . . .

CD, relations with: advertisement about CD's father, on 224n; book, his present of (to CD) 115 & n . . .

There is also pretty frequent use of an 'identifying' word or phrase, often a quoted phrase, in parentheses following a page reference (a device discussed in The Indexer article referred to above). As a result, the longer paragraphs have an intricacy which does not make for easy reference or a rapid conspectus of the material. But this, I repeat, is merely a personal impression; more to the point would be the opinions of bona fide users of the book (if only a poll of these were ever possible!). In any case it may seem a small matter in relation to the great and admirable helpfulness of the index as a whole.

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THE PROBLEM OF COPYRIGHT—AN INDEXER'S TRIUMPH

Not many indexers seem to be aware that the copyright in their indexes belongs to them, unless and until they have expressly assigned it. In certain circumstances it may prove a property of some value.

Under the Copyright Acts of 1911 and 1956—there are doubtless similar enactments in the United States—a literary copyright is defined as 'the sole right to produce or reproduce an original literary work'. There
must be some originality in the work—originality either in expression or arrangement—for it to enjoy the benefits of copyright. The expression ‘literary’ does not involve any qualification of style—a directory or railway guide, or even a list of football fixtures, can be the subject of copyright—but covers any work expressed in print or writing, so long as it is substantial enough to involve some literary skill and labour of composition. Normally the author is the first owner of the copyright, the author being the person who actually ‘writes or compiles’ the work.

A book or periodical index satisfies all the above conditions. Possession of the copyright in it is often of only academic interest, since clearly the original publisher has paid for the right to produce the index. But the practice is spreading of a British publisher’s selling the right of reproducing some particular work in some territory overseas (probably the United States or some Commonwealth country) to a quite separate publishing house in that territory.* In this case, of course, the indexer is under no contract with the new publisher and if the latter decides to use the original index he should expect to pay a small copyright fee.

Just such an instance occurred recently in my own experience. Half-way through indexing an important biography for a prominent publisher I learnt (quite by chance) that the American rights had been sold to a New York publisher, who intended to use my index. I thereupon stated on my bill: ‘Please note that this sum does not cover assignment of my copyright in the index’, and received a written reply: ‘Your statement is noted’. Later I was rung up by the publisher’s editor to ask what exactly I had meant. I explained patiently, as at the end of last paragraph, and said I intended to charge the American publisher for copyright fee. I was implored not to do that, so proposed assigning my copyright to the London publisher.

‘How much?’

I replied that I should be satisfied with a token fee of £10 to ‘establish the principle’. When I was told that such a proposal was unheard of and was quite out of the question, I suggested starting a friendly test action in the courts. This won the day. The publisher gracefully gave way and I was paid what I had asked, in addition to my indexing fee. (It was a slight disappointment not to have the chance of suing, for I feel certain I should have won and the action might have provided excellent publicity for the Society of Indexers.)

My one fear is lest the extra ten pounds may be foisted upon the unfortunate author, who was already liable to pay the normal indexing charge. But, as an author is rarely consulted about the transfer of publishing rights abroad, it seems to me that he should not be liable for any cost arising therefrom.

The expression ‘small copyright fee’ has been used above. Any indexer who decides to follow my example and ‘have a go’ is warned not to set his (or her) sights too high. It is suggested that he should tell the publisher of his views on assigning the copyright when he starts his original negotiations and should ask for a modest sum not exceeding ten per cent of his total indexing fee. (In my quoted case the percentage was somewhat smaller.) Any attempt at greed may defeat its own ends.

One thing remains to be said. The use of the original index in books published abroad rarely applies to translated books. This is because the whole of the alphabetical order will have to be upset, since (to take one example) the French for ‘horse-power’ would come under C for ‘cheval vapeur’, and so the foreign publisher would quite likely choose to start afresh with a new index. A French publisher would probably decide to have no index at all. That, at any rate, is my impression of the majority of French books.

G.N.K.