five chapters on the gathering, drying and keeping of simples and their juices, and a further 15 on the making and keeping of compounds. At the back of the book these chapters are listed under the heading, “Index to the art of making herbal medicine”, but are not presented alphabetically—this is, in fact, a contents list! The alphabetical list of herbs at the beginning of the book, as it stands, could not be regarded as dispensable, but might rather be looked upon as a politeness to the reader, to save him the effort of turning over more leaves than necessary.

However, turning over the leaves and browsing yields much pleasure. This is just as well, because the second index I want to mention, the brief “Index to coloured illustrations of herbs” has page references which correspond very little to the pages of our edition. The herbs are grouped in 12 pretty plates, nine or so to each plate, and a rough alphabetical order is imposed. I can only assume that the page numbers given must refer to a quite different edition.

The third index is by far the most interesting and useful. This is the “alphabetical list of all human diseases with the names of the herbs that will cure them and the number of the page upon which each herb can be found. The whole being a complete guide to Culpeper’s Herbal”. There is, of course, nothing like a list of ailments for claiming the reader’s attention, and this list is more entertaining than most. “Dullness of spirits”, for example—here is a condition which no indexer would wish to linger longer than necessary. We are referred to the herb Lang de Boeuf, on page 210, to find that it is “good to purge melancholy, and for that purpose the tops are put into wine and cool tankards”. Cool tankards, of course, might deal with the ailment without the herb, but no doubt Culpeper knew better.

“Blastings by lightning” is another heading which catches the eye. This is not an occupational hazard of indexers, but a similar condition might be induced by blastings by publisher. The reference is to Purslane, page 285; but here is disappointment. The herb is there, but the condition is not specifically mentioned. Purslane, we are told, will among other things stay pains in the head “proceeding from heat, want of sleep, or the frenzy” and furthermore “stays immoderate thirst”, so indexers may find it useful after all: but nowhere is lightning to be found.

There is a similar lack of co-ordination in other entries: sometimes the disease is mentioned specifically, sometimes not. But in all the cases that I have checked, the page references to the herbs concerned are unfailingly accurate.

Culpeper speaks out for himself in a vigorous style which deserves direct quotation. Indexers aching from poring over their work might wish to consult the Herbal for “back, easing pains, strengthening of the”—see Clary, page 92. The following passage might not help in relieving the condition, but might well divert their attention from their troubles:

“It is a usual course with many men, when they have got the running of the reins, or women the whites, to run to the bush of clary, exclaiming—Maid, bring hither the frying-pan, and fetch me some butter quickly. Then they will eat fried clary just as hogs eat acorns, and this they think will cure their disease, forsooth! Whereas, when they have devoured as much clary as will grow upon an acre of ground, their backs are as much the better as though they had never touched it—nay, perhaps, very much worse.

“We will grant that clary strengthens the back; but this we do deny, that the cause of the running of the reins in men, or the whites in women, lies in the back, though it be sometimes weakened by them; and therefore for medicine is as proper as for me, when my toe is sore, to lay plaster on my nose.”

Indexing Special Collections

Summaries of talks at the Fall Membership Meeting of the American Society of Indexers, 16 November, 1973.

Glorieux Rayburn Dougherty; freelance indexer, formerly Information Specialist, National Industrial Conference Board.

The major problem encountered in the preparation of the 1970 edition of the Cumulative index of the Conference Board (formerly the National Industrial Conference Board), was the problem of terminology. Because of space requirements, a limit of three headings per item was established, thus giving the headings some of the characteristics of subject headings, rather than of index
entries. Even at this, however, there was no subject authority list or thesaurus that was found of use when choosing terminology for headings. The most useful already-published source of terms was the Business periodicals index. The author's terminology was, of course, used wherever possible.

Soon after the Cumulative index was published, I had a baby and retired from full-time employment. I am now a freelance indexer, working at home, and I still find that choosing proper terminology is my biggest problem. I generally work from galley proofs, although many indexers feel this is unwise and indexing should be done only from page proofs. I copy edit as well as index, and I find that, even if the book I am indexing is dull, it always teaches me something.

Anne Pellowski; Director of the Children's Center on International Culture of the United States Committee for UNICEF.

The Children's Center on International Culture constitutes a reference collection of materials concerning the children of developing nations. I will talk about the problems involved in the indexing of the photographs, children's art, and slides in the collection.

This collection is used to provide information to educators, illustrators, writers, publishers, film makers, and UN personnel on subjects such as: What kind of footwear do school boys in Hong Kong wear? What do Kenya boy scout uniforms look like? We need a photograph of young children smoking cigarettes. We need pictures of methods of carrying children. What does children's art tell us of their concept of the sea?

The photographs, slides, and pictures in our collection are catalogued and provided with an identification number. It is then our task to index them for the retrieval of other aspects of the material. These aspects include things like hair styles, mood of subject, type of activity depicted, expressions on the faces of people pictured, type of clothing, artefacts, or objects in the picture, tribal groups pictures, etc.

One of the most useful things we have done, is to add to the identification number for each item, a two-letter code for the country of origin of the item, since many of our requests call for pictures from a particular country.

Our index is a card index. The cards are colour-coded for type of material (photographs, slides, children's art). Each card bears a subject entry at the top and the identification numbers of the items to which the entry has been assigned. An average of ten or eleven entries are made per item, although some items have been given as few as three entries, and some as many as twenty.

The index headings were originally derived from looking at files of past requests and looking at the materials themselves. There are more than 100 aspects to be considered when indexing each item, and each aspect may have many subdivisions. For example, the aspect that may be paraphrased as "expressions on children's faces" is subdivided into "children smiling broadly", "children smiling without showing teeth", etc.

We have not found any thesaurus or subject authority list or published index that was helpful to us in choosing terminology. We have a list of our own that we revise continually, and which we have been asked to publish. We do not think it is yet ready for publication.

We also have a collection of toys, games, and pre-school educational materials and playthings from developing nations. These are both hard to find and hard to index.

News of the Society

Members who examined the Society Information feature at the back of our last issue may have noticed a new entry—the announcement of an Honorary Solicitor. For some time it has been felt that changing legislation affecting societies and requests from members for guidance on matters connected with indexing where a knowledge of law is necessary for them to be satisfactorily answered, made it desirable for the Society to have ready access to a solicitor. There are several matters concerning the effective functioning of the Society which are under consideration at the present time.

About half a dozen applications for membership are considered at each meeting of the Council, and there is still a trickle of new members from Australia, due to the initiative of Mr. H. Godfrey Green, the Society's Corresponding Member there.

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