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tatives of the patent profession; the patent searches and industry.

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Searchers of US patent literature will be helped by the *Guide to United States patent and trademark literature* by Brenda M. Rimmer; The British Library, Science Reference Library, 1980. 24pp. ISBN 0-902914-52-9. (Revises and updates *A guide to United States patent and trademark literature* published by the Library in 1972.)

INDEXERS IN FICTION

This fourth extract in our series is taken from *The weight of the evidence*, by Michael Innes (Gollancz, 1944; Chapter XIII) quoted by kind permission of the author:

[Inspector Hobhouse] went on to seek [Professor] Hissey at his hotel. There he found the scholar in what was apparently his private sitting-room, peacefully arranging multi-coloured slips of pasteboard in a card index.

Hissey beamed upon his visitor. . . . 'If you will take the chair by the window, Inspector, I believe you will find it reasonably comfortable. And please forgive me if I go on with my job. It is almost purely mechanical and will not preoccupy me in the least. At the moment, as it happens, I have a good deal on hand.'

. . . Hissey worked with a good deal of concentration at his coloured cards, so that Hobhouse was inclined to doubt the quality of his interest in anything else whatever. 'What a pleasant day it has been.' Hissey craned his neck slightly in order to look out of the window, rather as one who would corroborate a random guess. 'One really longs to go out and stroll in the sun. But I am under some pressure of work at the moment, tiresomely enough.' And at this Hissey got to his feet and fell to rummaging among piles of papers on a large table; there was, Hobhouse noticed, a good deal of disorder in this more intimate retreat. 'Now, what can have become of that Roman villa at Gub-Gub? I always mix it up with Dab-Dab, I am sorry to say.' He shook his head, perplexed. 'Is it not Shakespeare who speaks of Memory, the warder of the brain? . . .'

. . . Hobhouse ate a whole muffin in silence—and this seemed to suit Mr Hissey very well. Mr Hissey coped with his tea with one hand and his card index with the other; Hobhouse, marking the smooth precision with which he worked, and guessing that the process had been going on uninterruptedly for hours, felt that he was at last gaining a convincing breath of that higher and rarefied air which academic persons are supposed wontedly to breathe.

. . . 'The thing?' Hissey was at his cards again; for a moment he looked up to glance over the tea table. 'Ah, yes. Now, what day would that be?'

'Monday.'

'And this is—?'

'Thursday.'

'To be sure.' Hissey smiled apologetically. 'One rather loses count of the days, you know, when one doesn't go to bed.'

'Doesn't go to bed!' Hobhouse was astonished. 'Don't you go to bed, sir?'

'Dear me, yes. I fear I am really becoming quite careless in my speech. I meant during the last few nights merely. It is my habit when real pressure of work comes along. I ought to add that your visit is really a most pleasant relief. . . .'

. . . Hissey picked up a piece of plum cake. 'I should imagine that such a discovery must constitute a decidedly favourable turn in the investigation—Ah, there is Dab-Dab at last.' And Hissey, his mind clearly half on his cards again, made a dive back to the piles of documents.

. . . 'How very odd.' Hissey, who had been moving his slice of plum cake approximately in the direction of his mouth, was so struck by this circumstance that he paused, looked at the cake in one hand and a pink card in the other, as if in some uncertainty as to which it would be reasonable to file. . . .

'I see.' Hissey had produced another file of cards and was still working tirelessly at his index. . . .

There was silence in Mr Hissey's room, but its owner was no longer absorbed in his learned labours. . . .

No doubt we have all worked under such pressure and with such concentration; but in this case the indexer has inadvertently killed a colleague and is hastening to complete his work before the retribution he knows must fall. May we of the Societies of Indexers never have to work to such a deadline.