

Book review

The Chemist's English: by ROBERT SCHOENFIELD, VCH Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, D-6940 Weinheim, Federal Republic of Germany, 1985, xii + 168 pages + Subject Index, \$17.95.

This rather slim book, by the Managing Editor of the *Australian Journal of Chemistry*, is a collection (dedicated to Charles Hurd) of 35 of his relevant essays, termed Parts, together with a Subject Index. Parts 1-30 had previously been published in a succession of volumes of *Proc. R. Aust. Chem. Inst.* and its successor *Chem. Aust.*, and Parts 31-33 in *Chem. Technol.*

In an entertaining and yet informative Preface, the author explains that he decided to republish the essays in the form of a collection because of the inadequacy, as aids in writing a thesis, research paper, report, article, or book, of the available books on English grammar and style. The book constitutes an invaluable compendium, written in an often hilarious style that was employed in an attempt to still the fears of the neophyte author hesitating to commit to paper the reasons for, and results of, his researches, and to provide guidance to editors lacking extensive experience in their duties as guardians of the conventions and language employed in the scientific literature published in English. In reaching these goals, he succeeds admirably.

Although, at first glance, it would seem that the essays could be read at random, as with most collections of short stories, this proves to be inadvisable, because topics discussed in some of the later essays are connected to matters treated earlier. Moreover, because of the wide-ranging nature of each essay, and the multiplicity of topics, it is not possible to discuss in any detail the subject matter of each. This problem was encountered by the author in attempting to draw up a Subject Index; consequently, the keywords therein are meant only as memory-joggers, and some were "written with tongue-in-cheek".

This book, which may well be one of a kind, is an utter delight, and it covers just about every conceivable problem likely to be encountered by a prospective author or editor. In addition to the targeted readership already mentioned, it might well prove helpful to many well-known scientists who have been publishing for years but who remain blissfully unaware of their shortcomings in regard to some of the matters discussed. Not only are the problems accorded a witty examination, but the proffered solutions thereto are erudite, and replete with apt examples. Furthermore, although the title of the book indicates that it is directed to chemists, much of the information and advice that it contains is applicable in other scientific disciplines. It is strongly recommended that everyone contemplating the prepara-

tion of a scientific article should first purchase and study this splendid little book.

Kensington
Maryland 20895

R. STUART TIPSON