Elsevier Dictionary of Chemistry including terms from Biochemistry, in English, French, Spanish, Italian and German; by A.F. Dorian. Elsevier, Amsterdam etc., 1983, vi + 686 pages, U.S. $121.25 (in U.S.A. and Canada), Dfl. 295.00 (rest of the world).*

This dictionary contains 9013 words or phrases so organized that each entry can be looked up in any language and provides the correct form in all four other languages. The information required is easily found and is very clearly presented (some might regard the use of space as rather lavish), and it should be of value to a large number of readers and contributors to this journal. (It will also be of value to this Regional Editor of the journal, faced, as he not uncommonly is, with the appearance of foreign words in papers written mainly in English submitted by continental European authors.)

Inevitably the choice of entries by the author must be subjective, and limitation to about 9000 entries means that organometallic chemists seeking guidance will sometimes be disappointed, especially since the scope of chemistry and biochemistry is drawn so widely that, for example, the entries, 'rack', 'racking cock', 'racking hose', 'racking room', and 'racking square' take up five places. I myself would mainly criticize the inclusion of phrases made up in a very direct way from separate entries for the components of the phrase; e.g. since 'radioactive' and 'paint' are listed, it seems to me wasteful to include 'radioactive paint' (peinture radioactive, pintura radioactiva, vernice radioattiva, and radioactive Farbe). A similar comment can be made about "intramolecular force", the inclusion of which is all the more puzzling because "intermolecular force" does not appear. Sometimes a phrase is listed whereas the components are not, thus 'radiolysis of solvents' appears, but 'radiolysis' does not.

On special points, I was sorry to find no mention of the verb 'sublime', since I frequently receive papers from continental European authors in which "sublimate" is used as a verb. (This is, in fact, the historically correct form, and is included, often as the preferred version, in standard dictionaries of the English language, but it has long disappeared from chemical usage.) Again in the light of my experience of papers submitted in English by foreign authors, I was similarly disappointed that the distinction in the English language, in a chemical context, between 'homologue' and 'analogue' is not noted (indeed, 'analogue' is not even listed); in English 'homologue' has acquired a special meaning in chemistry which precludes its use as a synonym for 'analogue', although in normal literary practice the words are effectively interchangeable. These are personal complaints, however, about what the dictionary does not include; the considerable amount of information it does include will be of great value to a wide range of scientists.

The book is very well produced, is stoutly and attractively bound, and on current standards is reasonably priced.

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*In the U.S.A. and Canada the book is available from Elsevier Science Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 1663, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.