Charles Fredrick Chandler earned his reputation as one of the first outstanding industrial chemists of the United States. Born in 1836, he worked under Wohler at Gottingen and Heinrich Rose at Berlin, getting his doctorate degree in 1856. Returning to the US he established the school of mines in Columbia, where he was a professor for 36 years and dean for 33 years. He earned large fees as a chemical expert, but gave away a large sum of it to the poor and needy students. Dr. Chandler’s lectures were always filled with humor, witty stories and amusing anecdotes.

In one of his lectures on specific gravity he told the students that any substance lighter than water will not only float on it but will displace a volume of water equal to its buoying capacity. To drive home this point into the minds of the students, he narrated an amusing story. A Baptist minister was embarrassed, as he could not immerse completely in water an elderly and voluminous sister of the church. The church physician witnessing the awkward situation of the Baptist, called him and said, “Dear friend, I am the physician of the lady in question. I think you better not attempt the heroic feat with her because she gets buoyed up by the gas in her stomach and has a wooden leg!”

Chandler as a chemical expert had to attend lawsuits in connection with the technical disputes of industries. An overconfident and a rather obstinate lawyer was to cross-examine him. The lawyer said, “Whenever I grill the so-called chemical experts, I always make it a rule to eat something before breakfast.”

Retorted Chandler, “Dear lawyer, from your appearance it goes without saying that it is the reason why you have more brains in your stomach than in your head.”

An American senator, who by profession was a lawyer, had the habit of putting his hands in his pockets while talking. In a public meeting, he jokingly introduced Chandler as a doctor who takes his own medicine. After a while, when it was the turn of Chandler to speak, he said, “The senator who introduced me is the eighth wonder of the world—a lawyer with his hands in his own pockets!”

Justus Leibig and Fredrich Wohler, the two stalwarts of organic chemistry, were great friends, true to the meaning of the word. But this serves as an antithesis to the temperaments of these two great men of science. Leibig running over with enthusiasm, hot tempered, keen for conflict, always involved in long disputes. Wohler on the other hand was gentle, cautiously avoiding overstatement and yet artfully pacified the emotions of his friend. The following letter from Wohler exemplifies an effort to refrain Leibig...
**Anecdotes**

Freidrich Wohler, the great organic chemist, while taking one of his usual rounds in the laboratory noticed a student leaning on his elbow and gazing intently at a solution on his table.

“What are you doing?” asked Wohler.

“Oh, I am crystallizing,” answered the student somewhat over enthusiastically.

“In that case, I would suggest you not to move an inch, else, the crystallization will stop!” was the humorous reply from Wohler.

Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, one of the greatest chemical revolutionaries, ironically was one of the victims of the French revolution in the last decade of the eighteenth century. This was one of the most heinous acts in the history of mankind. In 1794, he was arrested by the revolutionary tribunal, on false grounds, with the charge that he had amassed wealth through revenue that belonged to the state. In spite of his selfless devotion to his country, he was sentenced to death on the guillotine.

The day before his conviction, Lavoisier wrote to his cousin, “I have enjoyed a reasonably long and a happy life. I trust that I will be remembered with some regret and perhaps some honour. What more could I ask for? I will be spared of the troubles of old age and shall die with all my senses fully receptive. These are probably the last words through my pen!”

The great mathematician Lagrange, a contemporary of Lavoisier, said: “It took but a moment to cut off that head, though a hundred years perhaps will be required to produce another like it.”

The name of Morrison and Boyd invariably sparks the popular canvas achieved by their textbook of organic chemistry. This has been one of the top-rated books sold for generations together. Through its sixth edition, millions of copies of the book have been sold out throughout the world. In fact, the journal of the American chemical society has cited it as one the great books of chemistry. Dr. Boyd passed away in 2000 and Dr. Morrison in 2010. The popularity of the book was so great that the following anecdote floated through in the world of chemistry.

Once Dr. Morrison was to undergo surgery at a hospital. The surgeon on seeing Dr Morrison greeted him with the words, “Hello Professor Morrison. I was fortunate to be your student and I owe an enormous debt to your textbook that changed my life.”

Morrison, taken by surprise, said, “Yes. I think you are my student. Which was the grade achieved by you when you were my student?”

The surgeon said it was ‘A’ grade. To which Morrison replied gleefully, “If so, then you are qualified to conduct the surgery on me!”

Mr Ravindra Vaze is a Technical officer at Auchtel Products Limited in Ratnagiri (Maharashtra) and a visiting lecturer at Mumbai University Sub Centre at Ratnagiri. Address: Block No.108, Ratandeep Garden, Bunder Road, Ratnagiri-415612, Maharashtra.