The announcement of the discovery or invention often is limited to a plain statement of claims without any explanation of how the new development has been obtained.

Notable examples in recent months include:

(1) The announcement of durium, the synthetic plastic of which the fifteen-cent "Hit of the Week" phonograph records are manufactured. The publicity on this development simply stated that a new and suitable plastic had been developed, and the materials used and the composition of the plastic were not revealed.

(2) The carbon monoxide removing attachment for automobiles developed by Dr. J. W. C. Frazer, of the Johns Hopkins University. What this device does was told in the announcement, but how it operates and the composition of the materials contained in the cannister were not made public.

(3) The development of a super-speed motion picture film by the Eastman Kodak Company. The benefits to be derived from the use of this film, soon to be placed on the market, were elaborated, but no technical information about the emulsion or the research that led to the development of this speedy emulsion could be obtained from the company even after it was pointed out that this information would be desirable.

Such instances will undoubtedly multiply in the coming months and years.

It is recognized that for the commercial protection of some of the companies supporting research there must be some instances in which it is impossible to reveal the technical details and steps of the scientific procedure that led to the discoveries and inventions being exploited commercially.

In many cases, however, lack of scientific detail is not due primarily to the fear of revelation of any material which would interfere with commercial exploitation or the obtaining of a patent. It seems to arise from the fact that many of the announcements are prepared and visaed by the sales, advertising and other purely commercial departments of the company supporting the research.

It is not proposed that the commercial side of an industry be relegated to a position of absolute subordination to the research laboratories and the scientists employed. But it is suggested that the progress of science and the understanding of science on the part of the general public will be accelerated if scientists in industrial work will insist, so far as possible, that publicity reports of their work be as carefully prepared and as revealing as reports intended for publication in scientific and engineering journals.

WATSON DAVIS

SCIENCE SERVICE

THE LIFE OF BOOKS

[Apropos of the reference to "Life of Books" in SCIENCE, Feb. 27.]

THIS has long been a subject of great concern to librarians, under our present system of heating, the most of which is unhygienic, as practicing physicians and others will confirm, from the time of Franklin.

The disintegration of bindings I find largely confined to leather, particularly the Russian leather type. There is, however, in my library a wonderfully preserved volume, bound in human skin, in 1861—the skin from a soldier who died in the Civil War. This has completely resisted the effect of both the steam and hot water system of heating, and is in as perfect condition to-day as when bound in '61.

In a voluminous scientific correspondence which covers the period 1838–1891, the only writing paper which shows disintegration in the whole series of letters is the blue paper used by the Smithsonian Institution, principally letters of Joseph Henry and Spencer F. Baird during the 50's and 60's of the last century.

JOSEPH LEIDY II

REPORTS

THE MILTON AND CLARK AWARDS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AWARDS amounting to more than $60,000 have been made from the Milton and Clark Funds to members of the teaching staff of Harvard University to enable them to carry on research during the academic year 1931–32. The following list contains the names of those to whom the awards in the physical and biological sciences have been made and a statement of the purposes for which the grants will be used.

Henry E. Bent, instructor in chemistry, for study of the electron affinity of a number of organic free radicals in order to obtain quantitative data relative to the valence of carbon.

Raoul Blanchard, professor of geography, for continued geographical exploration field-work along the north shore of the St. Lawrence estuary from Quebec to the Strait of Belleisle.

Nicholai A. Borodin, curator of fishes, for study of the "Anabiosis" or the phenomenon of resuscitation of fishes after being frozen.

Paul E. Boyle, instructor in operative dentistry, for study of the circulation of the dental pulp.

William J. Clench, lecturer on zoology, to collect