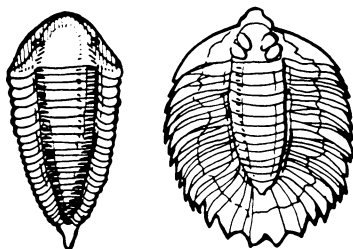




Trilobites



➤ ALTHOUGH the age of the earth is counted in billions of years, let us imagine it to be 100 years old. On this scale man has existed on the earth less than one year. Mammals of any kind—the group of warm-blooded animals of which man is a relatively recent development—have existed only during the last ten years.

The first 73 years of the earth's history was a steamy epoch during which, at some point, a variety of one-celled creatures like sponges, algae, and radiolaria developed, and had the whole globe to themselves. Around the end of this span more complicated forms of life began to evolve. One of the most successful of these was the trilobites.

On our 100-year time scale, the trilobites were the dominant form of life for almost eight years. To revert to conventional time language, the reign of the trilobites took place about 500,000,000 years ago and lasted for roughly 200,000,000 years.

Trilobites continued to exist long after their heyday was over, and it was not until just before the earliest mammals emerged, about 200,000,000 years ago, that they disappeared completely. It is from fossil remains in rocks and sediment deposits that paleontologists are able to reconstruct the

ancient history of the rise and fall of the trilobites.

Although of a hoary age, the trilobite remains are sufficiently numerous and well preserved to enable scientists to reconstruct the family tree with great accuracy. Trilobites form a separate class of the great arthropod phylum which includes the insects, the spiders, and the crustaceans (lobsters, crabs, shrimp, etc.).

They get their name from the two long furrows which run down the back, forming three lobes. The earliest of the three-lobed creatures, or trilobites, were very tiny, although in the course of their evolution they reached an average size of one to four inches in length. There were more than 1,000 different species of trilobite and the size range varied considerably, but the largest was only about 18 inches long.

During the period when trilobites were the lords of the earth, they made up at least 60% of the total animal population. They were marine animals which preyed on smaller creatures. Although they are now extinct, it is thought that today's shrimp, crabs, and lobsters are the direct evolutionary descendants of the ancient trilobites.

From an evolutionary point of view trilobites got in on the ground floor. They dominated every other form of life for 200,000,000 years. There was every reason to think that they had a permanent lease. But things turned out otherwise.

Today man eats broiled lobster, and studies fossils. He rarely stops to wonder: Who will be top dog 200,000,000 years from now?

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

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A.S.T.M. STANDARDS ON ADHESIVES—*American Society for Testing Materials*, approx. 58 p., illus., paper, \$1.25.

CANNING TECHNOLOGY—A. J. Howard—*Sherwood Press*, 287 p., illus., \$8.00. An account of various processes connected with food canning. Of British origin.

A CENTURY OF ASTRONOMY—Angus Armitage—*Macdonald*, 256 p., illus., \$2.20. A guide for the layman to the prodigious expansion of astronomical knowledge which has taken place in the last 100 years.

CHILD OF DESTINY: The Life Story of the First Woman Doctor—Ishbel Ross—*Harper*, 309 p., \$3.50. The life of Elizabeth Blackwell as told by the author.

COURSES ON LATIN AMERICA: In Institutions of Higher Education in the United States 1948-1949—Estelita Hart, Compiler—*Pan American Union*, 291 p., \$1.50.

CREATIVE PERSONALITY: The Next Step in Evolution—Charles Francis Potter—*Funk & Wagnalls*, 215 p., \$2.50. The author urges us to go forward and find our inspiration in evolutionary life itself rather than retreat from the momentous problems of today.

DIRECTORY OF INVENTOR AIDS: Supplemental to Professional Services of the Patent Bar 1950 Edition—*Directory of Inventor Aids*, 64 p., paper, \$2.00. A compilation of information regarding the various non-legal services available to inventors.

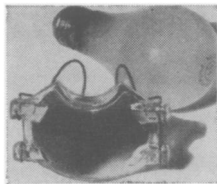
THE FLORIDA INDIAN AND HIS NEIGHBORS: Papers Delivered at an Anthropological Conference Held at Rollins College, April 9 and 10, 1949—John W. Griffin, Ed.—*Rollins College*, 168 p., illus., paper, \$1.00.

FOUR NEW SUBSPECIES OF THE GENUS CICINDELA (COLEOPTERA, CICINDELIDAE)—Patricia Vaurie—*American Museum of Natural History*, 6 p., paper, 25 cents.

GENERALIZED TYPES OF FARMING IN THE UNITED STATES: Including a list of counties in type-of-farming regions and subregions—Bureau

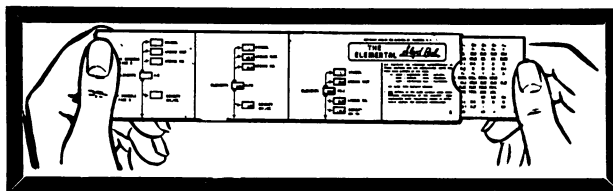
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