than two hundred million years old; the combined age of the six is almost two billion years.

Each specimen in the kit is a relic of the earth's ancient past. It is the original skeleton or shell of an animal that lived in sea water when the earth was younger. It represents a form of life that is extinct today.

These fossils tell of life in the Paleozoic era, which began about half a billion years ago. During this age the land began to be covered with plants and lung-fishes first came out of the water to live on land. The era ended about two hundred million years ago, when amphibians and primitive reptiles ruled the earth.

The specimens were all collected on the North American continent. They were found in Ontario, Texas, Ohio, and one even came from within the city of Cincinnati. A wide variety of people, young and old, cooperated to complete this collection.

One specimen represents the lowest, primary subdivision of the animal kingdom; another is a sponge type that no longer grows in the sea. One is the "apartment house" in which a whole colony of prehistoric creatures once lived; another shows how tiny sea shells that lived almost four hundred million years ago can be cemented together with limestone.

This fossil collection, designed to give you some idea of the kind of animals that lived in the sea over two hundred million years ago, is available for the nominal cost of 75 cents each. Just write SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for the fossil kit.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

BIOCHEMISTRY

Tung Nut Fat Used Tracing Fat Absorption

➤ ELEOSTEARIC ACID, a substance obtained from tung nuts grown in China, can be used as a tracer to follow the absorption of fat by the blood.

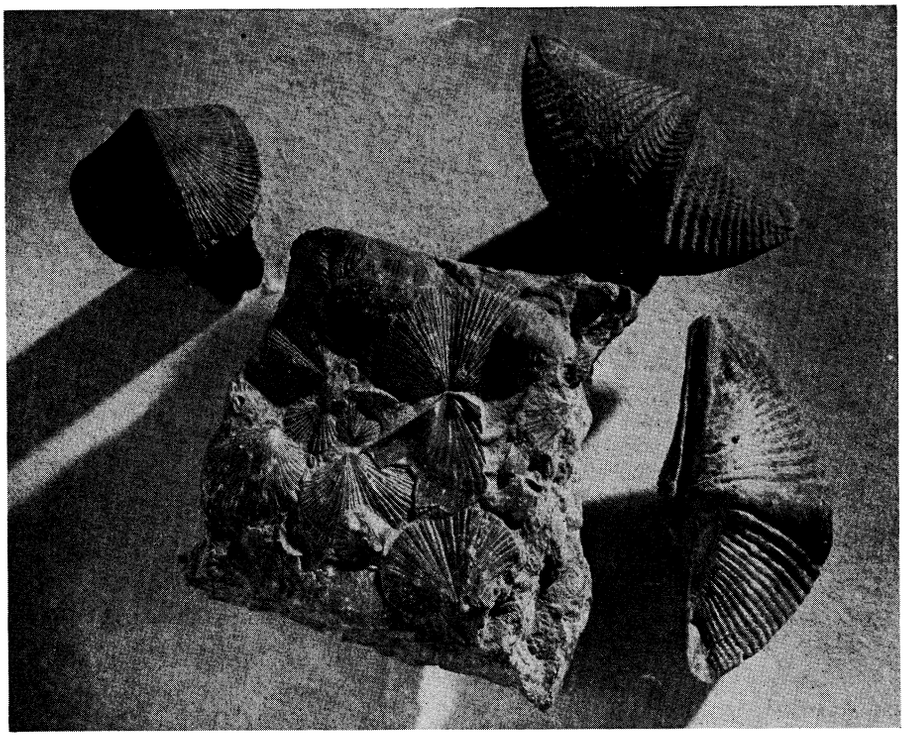
A new, rapid method of tracing fat absorption, announced by Dr. James F. Mead, chief of the biochemistry division of the Atomic Energy Project at the University of California at Los Angeles, may contribute to a better understanding of such diseases as sprue, jaundice, liver diseases and atherosclerosis.

A small blood sample can be drawn and studied in a spectrophotometer, which will record the amount of eleostearic acid in the blood. Previously, it had been necessary to remove entire intestines of animals to study their fat absorption.

The fatty acid is fed to the experimental subject with a fatty meal. At regular intervals following the meal, blood samples are taken and analyzed for eleostearic acid content.

Working with Dr. Mead were Mrs. Dorothy Long, laboratory technician, and Dr. Raymond D. Goodman, U.C.L.A. clinical instructor in medicine.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952



AMERICA'S PAST—These sea shells, found far inland, are all over three hundred million years old. They were collected on the North American continent and throw light on the ancient past.

GENERAL SCIENCE

Research Survey Begun

➤ AN INVESTIGATION into the nation's scientific research endeavors—in government, industry and colleges—will begin shortly. The National Science Foundation will conduct the investigation, a preliminary step to devising a national science policy.

The Foundation will try to discover how we are spending our research dollars, whether we are overemphasizing some fields at the expense of others, how our scarce resources of scientific manpower are being used.

Beginning of the work, one of the reasons for which the National Science Foundation was created, was made possible by an increase this year in the organization's appropriation. Congress came through with $4,750,000, which was $1,250,000 more than was appropriated last year.

In addition to the survey of the nation's scientific effort, the Foundation will continue supporting the fellowship program begun last year and will continue giving grants for basic research.

To conduct the survey, the Foundation will have to examine the research activities of all branches of the government—the Defense Department, the Bureau of Standards, Agriculture and others. In addition, industrial research and work being done in college and university laboratories will come in for appraisal. A study will be made of how government contracts to universities affect their overall science programs.

As a first step, the Foundation has let a pilot contract to the American Physiological Society to make a study along these lines of its branch of science. If the contract works out, other such agreements will be made. The Foundation plans to go to the scientists themselves to appraise the scientific effort of the nation.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

Sleeping bags filled with processed chicken feathers yield twice the warmth of wool bags.