Such an addition to the ranks of workers in pure science would not be disproportionate. The men engaged in pure research are already far too few, and the superior and more immediate rewards in applied science are constantly reducing the numbers of those who are on the quest for new facts without regard to their economic application. Mr. Hoover recently estimated the number of American workers in pure science to be three thousand, as against thirty thousand in applied science. And yet these thirty thousand are constantly deriving much valuable help from the basic work of the three thousand.

To conclude, our experience would indicate that at the present time an older man, duly qualified with respect to technical ability and personal attributes, is not handicapped by his age, in spite of the progress made in technical education in recent years, in addition to the other considerations which have been cited as causative of an age dead-line. We offer this view, not with the feeling that it represents the last word on this important subject, but rather with the object of encouraging a profitable discussion based upon experience.

WILLIAM A. HAMOR
LAWRENCE W. BASS

MELLON INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

DESCRIPTION OF AN ALLIGATOR NEST

WHILE I was in the marsh region of southern Louisiana, some ten miles south of Morgan City, my attention was directed to a nest of the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) by Mr. Billy Burke, a native of that region. Mr. Burke came upon the nest while hunting frogs along a narrow canal which extended back into the marsh some three miles from the main bayou. A well-worn runway or "run" led from the canal bank to the nest itself, which was about twenty feet back into the marsh.

On July 25, 1925, a party, including the author, visited the nest. Besides the "run" from the canal to the nest, several other "runs" were discovered which led off from the nest into the surrounding marsh. The vegetation immediately surrounding the nest had been either trampled down by the alligator or else removed for the building of the nest. The "runs" were clearly defined and were about a foot and a half wide.

The nest was made of bits of damp, rotting "paille-fine" grass (*Spartina patens juncea*) and "roseaux" (*Phragmites communis*) which had evidently been bitten off by the female alligator. The nest measured four feet in diameter by two feet high. In shape, it was rather square with rounded corners and a flat top. The whole nest was strikingly similar to a muskrat house except that it had a flat rather than a conical top. Also no mud was used in the construction of the nest.

In the center, about six inches below the surface of the top, was the nest proper. In it, covered with the warm, rotting vegetation, were twenty-four white, hard-shelled eggs, cylindrical in shape and rounded at the ends.

The following variations in weights and measurements were found:

Weights—		
Variation	59.96 gms	to 69.41 gms
Average	63.74 gms	
Measurements—		
Variations	70.4 mm by 37.7 mm	
	to 75.5 mm by 38.6 mm	
Average	72.3 mm by 38.07 mm	

The nest had been known by Mr. Burke for about three weeks before our visit, or since about June 14. How long the nest had been there before this time is not known. It may be possible that the nest was built some time previous to the egg-laying in order to give the nest material a chance to heat up for the incubation process.

The female alligator did not appear while we were examining the nest, although according to local accounts the female alligator is constantly on watch to protect her nest from all marauders.

ARTHUR SVIHLA

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

A STARFISH ATTEMPTS TO INGEST A MINNOW

THE starfish is known completely to ingest small mollusks, later extruding their shells. The most striking of its achievements is to attach firmly, by the tube feet of its rays, to an oyster or clam and exert a slow, steady pull until the mollusk is opened. Then the starfish protrudes its evertible cardiac stomach and digests the soft parts of the mollusks *in situ*. Protrusion of the stomach is facilitated by a pronounced humping of the disk of the starfish.

While at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, on the morning of July 5, 1929, the writer observed that a starfish (*Asterias forbesii*), with rays averaging eight centimeters in length, had attached to the glass side of an aquarium, and by its tube feet firmly held between two adjacent rays a full-grown Fundulus ten centimeters in length. The head of the fish was partly ingested, but the cardiac stomach protruded about two centimenters along the body. The starfish had a pronounced hump, roughly estimated at one and a half centimeters.

In the preliminary handling of the animals incident to preservation, the cardiac stomach was partly with-