oratory, may take a while. But it now appears that we've begun. The most striking experiment, which has produced crude cell-like spheres that maintain their identity and are capable of dividing themselves, is truly fantastic and has taken us a giant step along the pathway toward understanding the origin of life.

Again, the experiment was run by Dr. Fox. To reconfirm his laboratory findings, he climbed up the broad slope of a cinder cone in Hawaii, looking for spots where conditions might have permitted primitive proteins to form in the pre-life world. He was surprised to discover that large areas of the cone were oven-hot just beneath the surface. Might not this warm primitive earth have been the womb for the molecules of life—where they could bake and boil, before being washed through the loose lava by a cloudburst and so into the sea? What would this have done to the elemental amino acids?

Dr. Fox took hunks of lava back to the laboratory and placed on them amino acids coined from methane, ammonia and water. With everything sterilized to avoid contamination, he baked this concoction for a few hours in a glass oven at 338° F., the temperature he found four inches under the surface of the cinder cone. When the materials cooled, a brown, sticky residue was left clinging to the lava. He then deluged the lava with sterile water, and a brown soupy liquid resulted.

This unpromising stuff turned