Such shear concept Hess, now, and the present author earlier, hold to be fundamentally and completely erroneous.

O. D. VON ENGELN
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

ON THE GREAT ABUNDANCE OF THE BLACK WIDOW SPIDER

DURING this past summer, I have found the black widow spider (*Latrodectus mactans* Fabricius) quite common in the cities of Denver and of Boulder, and I have had reports that this species was quite abundant this year in Kansas, New Mexico and in Texas. In previous years, I have found these spiders in no small numbers under rocks and in protected sand banks in the prairies around Boulder and Fort Collins and in garages and basements in the outskirts of Denver. However, this is the first year that I have taken black widows in the center of the city of Denver, except on one instance when I captured a male in a centrally located high school on November 26, 1932.

While it is true that black widow spiders are more frequently observed this year because of wide-spread newspaper reports of their existence, I am convinced that the mild winter and very dry summer here in Colorado and elsewhere have favored their development and survival, since I find them more abundant in their natural habitat as well as in the city. Perhaps, one may account for their abundance in the city by the fact that they have come in to obtain moisture and to escape the drouth. In three blocks of the downtown district in Denver, I counted thirty-two black widow webs that were constructed, for the most part, in the corners of exposed walls of stores that were adjacent to the sidewalks. Contrary to popular opinion, I found most of the webs on the sunny side of the street.

This year I have found their webs in all sorts of situations. Some were constructed in sand banks that were exposed to the sun, others in the corners of chicken coops and rabbit pens, and still others on the undersides of plant tables in greenhouses. However, the majority of the webs were in basements and in garages. I found the most frequent prey to be grasshoppers, especially *Melanoplus bivittatus* Say. In fact, I counted the remains of eleven adults in one web that was constructed in a large trash receptacle. I have also noticed a marked decrease of other Theridiidae this year in the city. Possibly *L. mactans* is beginning to get the upper hand in the great struggle for existence.

ALBERT MILZER
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

FRESHWATER MEDUSAE NEAR BUFFALO

FRESH-WATER Medusae were noticed for the first time in western New York on August 1, 1934. They occurred in a pond a few hundred feet from the shore of Lake Erie at Bay View, Lackawanna, a suburb of Buffalo, New York. They have been collected at intervals since from the same locality. The last date was August 28 when a few were taken all of which were of large size. About thirty, collected on August 17, were kept in an aquarium at the Buffalo Museum of Science for two weeks. At the end of this time they had all disappeared. The aquarium has been left undisturbed in the hope that eventually the hydroid form may develop.

IMOGENE C. ROBERTSON

GRANTS IN AID OF RESEARCH FOR 1935

AT the October meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Association for the Advancement of Science the customary allotment of $3,000 for the grants in aid of research was approved. All applications for consideration this year must be received by the Washington office before Thanksgiving. At the Boston meeting the recommendations of the Committee on Grants were approved. These provided for continuing the practise of previous years in giving small grants for the completion of important projects already initiated or supplying apparatus or facilities where adequate funds are not otherwise available.

The official year of the association extends from October 1 to the following September 30. All grants not utilized within the year revert to the treasury on October 1. Individual grants have regularly been limited to a sum less than $500, but the small sums have been useful in meeting emergency needs or such as are not covered by other agencies.

Applications are filed on special blanks furnished by the permanent secretary's office and considered only once annually. Applications should be supported by letters from at least two sponsors personally acquainted both with the applicant and with the project. These applications are handled by the committee of which the membership for the current year is as follows: Arthur H. Compton (1937) (for Physics), *chairman,* University of Chicago; Edward W. Berry (1936) (for Geology), Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.; William Crocker (1935) (for Botany), Boyce Thompson Institute, Yonkers, N. Y.; Philip Fox (1935) (for Astronomy), Adler Planetarium, Chicago, Ill.; Carl E. Guthe (1934) (for Anthropology), University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Samuel Colville Lind (1934) (for Chemistry), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; C. C. Little (1937) (for Zoology), Jackson Memorial Laboratory, Bar Harbor, Me.; Walter R. Miles (1936) (for Psychology), Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

The report of the committee is made annually to the council, which votes the allotments in December.