has been a continuing infestation in the main buildings and outbuildings of the Rocky Mountain Laboratory of the United States Public Health Service at Hamilton, and the spiders have been occasionally found in residences within the city. However, they have been most frequently met with in the burrows of the Columbian ground squirrel, *Citellus columbianus*.

During the spring and summer the spiders are found in or at the margin of irregular webs stretched across the openings of the ground squirrel burrows, especially of those which are deserted. When disturbed they retreat to the walls some distance back from the opening. This habitat is favorable because of rather plentiful and constant insect fauna which is associated with the underground tunnels and nests.

The underground conditions are also well suited for successful hibernation, since the burrows extend below the usual frost line. During the excavating of squirrel nests in November and December, 1932, after the surface soil was frozen, spiders were found deep in the burrows. Immature specimens, as well as males and females, were found in the tunnels and nests.

This spider has also been encountered in abundance in the semi-arid, unirrigated bench lands of the Yakima Valley in Washington, where characteristic webs, egg cases, spiderlings and females were found in the openings of abandoned warrens of cottontail rabbits.

These observations suggest that rodent burrows form an important natural habitat for the breeding and hibernation of *Latrodectus mactans* in the northwestern states.

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A NEW SOUTH DAKOTA METEORITE

THE South Dakota State School of Mines recently came into possession of an iron meteorite found in the spring of 1934 on the W. L. Dale ranch located at the head of Black Pipe Creek in northeastern Bennett County, South Dakota. The specimen was unearthed by a farm helper while disking a field in planting corn. The field had been cultivated for several years, and nothing unusual had been observed. The disk struck the meteorite, the impact producing a peculiar sound and this led to investigation, including some digging. The conditions were much as might be expected in connection with any field stone, and there were no observable signs of the meteorite having fallen recently. The specimen was found in the northeast corner of the southeast quarter of section 32, township 33, range 39. This is approximately 35 miles northeast of Martin, the county seat of Bennett County, and 10 miles south and 3 miles west of the post office of Norris.

The meteorite, designated as the Bennett County meteorite, is a smooth, compact, irregular saddle-shaped mass 16 inches (407 mm) long; 12 2/3 inches (321 mm) wide; and 10 1/2 inches (267 mm) high in the highest part, measured perpendicular to the somewhat flat base. Its weight as found was 195 pounds 11 ounces. Much of the surface is pitted. A considerable part of it has a smooth, somewhat shiny and nearly black surface, while other parts, particularly the base, is largely covered with a brownish-yellow oxidized coating. An analysis of unoxidized drillings shows the contents as follows: iron, 94.26 per cent.; nickel, 5.25 per cent.; cobalt, 0.46 per cent.; sulphur, 0.04 per cent. The analysis does not indicate carbon, but microscopic examination discloses occasional small particles of graphite. In addition to the nickel-iron alloys polished surfaces reveal numerous small inclusions of triolite. Some of the triolite is in the form of nodular inclusions and some of it in thin veins. Polishing and etching reveal coarse Widmanstatten figures, but further study of the structure is necessary before the meteorite can be definitely classified as to type.

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GROUND WATER AND FOREST BELT

PROFESSOR H. J. LUTZ, of the School of Forestry, Yale University, has kindly called my attention to an error in the statement of one of the illustrations used to emphasize the importance of a sound basis of scientific knowledge as prerequisite to any proper program of national planning in respect to natural resources.

On page 390 in SCIENCE for November 2, 1934, I stated:

> Again, scientific study has recently shown that, if the number of trees per acre is reduced below a certain minimum in the yellow pine belt just east of the Cascade Mountains, then the ground water level drops and the country becomes a desert.

It is well known that the ground water level is lower beneath a forest than it is under most other types of vegetation. The effect of cutting a forest is not in general to lower but to raise the water table. I am informed that the natural spread of the forest belt east of the Cascades in central Oregon is initially promoted not by a favorable change in the ground water but because of an irregularly recurrent increase in surface moisture which provides both seeds and seedlings especially favorable opportunities for growth.

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