

tion is subjoined. The sample examined fell on board of the *Alesandro del Bueno*, a vessel distant at the time about one hundred miles from the scene of the disaster at St. Pierre.

Silica	53.34%
Sesqui-oxides of iron and alumin- ium	30.68 "
Calcium oxide	10.47 "
Magnesium oxide	4.12 "
Sulphur	0.17 "
Phosphorus	trace

The powder is highly magnetic; in all probability some of the iron present is magnetite.

F. G. WIECHMANN.

THE SUBDERMAL MITE OCCURRING AMONG BIRDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: The interesting observations of Mr. Beebe (SCIENCE, May 9, 1902) require some additions, since the only author to whom he has referred gives by no means a complete statement regarding the character or occurrence of the mite. A form very similar if not identical with this has been reported a number of times: H. Garman, 1884, Leidy, 1890, and Kellicott, 1892, have noted its occurrence in various hosts in America, and it has been studied carefully by several investigators in Europe. In a paper published in *Psyche* (Volume VIII, pp. 95-100) I have given a discussion of the genus and its life history, together with a full bibliography up to that date.

It is probable that the mites found by Mr. Beebe are simply stages in the life history of some of the plumicolous sarcoptids. It may be seriously doubted whether the inferences drawn from Mr. Beebe's observations, that these mites were the cause of death of the birds noted are sufficiently well grounded. Certainly similar stages occur frequently in pigeons without apparently affecting their vitality and I should also doubt that the treatment advocated by Mr. Beebe would be likely to yield the results desired. It is altogether probable that a reduction in the number of feather mites would be accompanied by a reduction in the number of these subdermal

larvæ, but the view of Mégnin is well known whereby the plumicolous sarcoptids are to be grouped as symbionts rather than as parasites by virtue of the assistance they afford to the host in keeping the surface of the skin and feathers free from débris.

HENRY B. WARD.

AN INTERESTING INVITATION.

It is not long ago that there were people who maintained very stoutly that there existed an irrepressible conflict between religion and science. Undoubtedly there have been and there will continue to be conflicts between sciolism and religiosity. Men who are possessed of scientific truth, but lack religious or theological information of high order, may in time to come, as they have in times past, imagine that their views are antagonistic to religion; and conversely men possessed of religious truth or half truths will no doubt arise in the future, as they have in the past, who will aver that the knowledge which they have is in conflict with scientific propositions held by others. People who see only one side of a subject are given to logomachy, and if they are Scotch, or Scotch-Irish, to heated controversy. They cannot help it. In the end neither religion nor science suffer much from the squabbles which their disputatious tempers create.

It is a pleasing incident in connection with the coming meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, that on March 24, 1902, the Federation of Churches of Pittsburgh, Allegheny and vicinity, held a meeting and adopted unanimously the following resolutions:

"Inasmuch as all truth is one and is divine and inasmuch as all organizations for its conservation and propagation are kindred, the Federation of Churches of Pittsburgh, Allegheny and vicinity records its pleasure in the fact that the A. A. A. S. is to hold its anniversary in Pittsburgh this year.

"In behalf of the Churches we desire a large and representative meeting here of the Seers and Prophets of Science.

"In behalf of those interested in the ad-