almost universally been regarded as a case, unique among birds, of intentional self-mutilation, presumably for the purpose of ornamentation. Furthermore, as the rectrices exhibit a narrowing of the vane at the point where later denuded, this has been used by those who believe in the inheritability of acquired characters as evidence in support of their views.

As far back as 1885 Dr. Stejneger figured the tail of a specimen that had the middle feathers partly bare although the tail was only half grown. In his remarks he came very near the true solution of the problem, but his surmises were not quite correct in detail.

Mr. Beebe's conclusions are based on the study of a live specimen of *Momotus lessoni* and on the examination of skins of various species.

In the captive bird, on one occasion, the growing rectrices were found to be already denuded while yet enclosed in the sheath; in this case, therefore, any trimming by the bird, intentional or otherwise, was wholly precluded. While in this particular instance, the denudation was premature, due probably to the birds' low vitality, yet this condition is approached by another species, *Eumomota superciliaris*, in which the shaft is stripped for a greater distance than in its allies. Here the dropping of the very short barbs occurs almost as soon as the growing feather is free from the sheath and long before it has reached its full length.

Upon close examination of the tail feathers of *Momotus mexicanus* and other species it was found that in the freshly grown feather the portion later denuded differs from the normal part of the vane in having the basal part of the barbs almost free from barbules and the barbs themselves slightly weaker than usual. This naturally renders the barbs liable to break away from the shaft at the point of connection.

Mr. Beebe concludes that the trimming of the feathers is not intentional on the bird's part, but is merely incidental to the ordinary preening of the plumage, and that no inheritance of acquired characters is necessary to explain the constriction of the vane, both this feature and the basal degeneration of the vane being congenital and due to some wholly unknown cause.— W. De W. M.

'Cassinia.'— 'Cassinia, A Bird Annual,' has again promptly made its appearance, this being the tenth issue of the 'Proceedings' of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club of Philadelphia under this title, and forming No. XIII of the Proceedings of this active organization, which on January 6 of the present year celebrated its twentieth anniversary. As usual, it sticks to its text, the "Ornithology of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware," but, under the continuous editorship of Mr. Stone, contains, also as usual, matter of wide interest. The editor contributes another of his happy sketches of early Philadelphia ornithologists, this time dealing with the late Dr. Thomas B. Wilson, so well known as the liberal patron of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, to whose gifts the Academy owes its almost unrivalled natural history library and the Rivoli, Gould, and other notable collections of foreign birds, purchased

and presented to the Academy some fifty to sixty-five years ago. Although an investigator of marked ability in several fields of scientific research, he published almost nothing, but imparted freely his discoveries to others for publication. While his name is thus missing from the list of eminent naturalists, it stands high on the roll of the patrons of science.

Other papers in the present number of 'Cassinia' are: 'The D. V. O. C. and its Twentieth Anniversary,' by George Spencer Morris; 'Duck Shooting on the Coast Marshes of New Jersey,' by I. Norris De Haven, with supplementary matter by Mr. Stone; 'Cruising through the New Jersey Pine Barrens,' by J. Fletcher Street; 'On the Nesting of the Broad-winged Hawk and Goshawk in Pennsylvania' (with two half-tone plates), by Robert P. Sharples; 'Breeding Birds of Passaic and Sussex Counties, New Jersey,' by William L. Baily (an annotated list of 94 species); 'Report on the Spring Migration of 1909,' compiled by Witmer Stone; 'Abstract of Proceeding of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, 1909'; 'Bibliography for 1909,' comprising titles of papers relating to the birds of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, and of other ornithological papers by members of the Club; and a list of the officers and members of the Club. (For further notice of the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Club, and a list of the officers of the Club for 1910, officially communicated, see below under 'Notes and News.')— J. A. A.

J. Grinnell on the Birds of the Prince William Sound Region, Alaska.[1]— This is a report on the birds collected by Miss Annie M. Alexander's third expedition to Alaska, made in the summer of 1908, the party being composed, in addition to Miss Alexander, of Joseph Dixon, Edmund Heller, A. E. Hasselborg, and Miss Louise Kellogg. The material obtained, on which the present report is based, consists of the note-books of the collectors, 500 bird skins, ten sets of eggs and a few nests, now in the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy, as a gift from Miss Alexander. This report is preceded by a similar one by Mr. Edmund Heller on the mammals, in which the itinerary, collecting stations, and the physiography of the region are described in detail, including the islands in Prince William Sound and the adjoining mainland coast. The life zones represented in this district are the Hudsonian and the Arctic-Alpine. The fauna is naturally scanty, the mammals obtained numbering only 16 species, and the birds collected or noted, 89 species, specimens of 86 of which were taken.

The introduction to Mr. Grinnell's paper on the birds contains a numbered 'Check-list of the Species Observed,' followed by the very fully annotated "general account," a discussion of the composition and origin of the avifauna of the Prince William Sound district, and of "melanism in the

[1] Birds of the 1908 Alexander Alaska Expedition, with a note on the Avifaunal Relationships of the Prince William Sound District. By Joseph Grinnell. University of California Publ., Zoölogy, Vol. V, No. 12, pp. 361–428, pll. xxxii–xxxiv, 9 text figures. March 5, 1910.