isting trees approach the age of two thousand years.

LOCAL DESCRIPTIVE FLORAS.

It is a good sign of the progress of systematic botany in North America that there is an increase in the number of floras of restricted regions in preparation by local botanists. Of course the authors of such floras usually succeed in adding something to the burden of botanical synonymy, but this is more than balanced by the additions made to our knowledge of the particular distribution of the species, and the geographical variations which some of them show. The 'Flora of Northwest America,' by Thomas Howell, and the 'Manual of the Flowering Plants of Iowa,' by T. J. Fitzpatrick, now publishing in parts, are good illustrations of systematic work. Of the former three parts, and of the latter two parts have appeared.

Mr. Howell's publication is more radical in its treatment of species, many being recognized as distinct which are usually not separated by botanists. In his preface he says: "Believing that if a plant has one constant character that is different from any of its congeners it is sufficient for a species; and if that plant is sufficiently distinct from others to deserve a name it is better to have it described as a distinct species than as a variety of some other species. I have, therefore, raised nearly all published varieties of the region embraced in this work to specific rank."

Mr. Fitzpatrick is more conservative, and follows more closely the common usage in this regard. In one particular he is quite abreast of the most radical of botanical writers, namely, in decapitalizing all specific names, and the omission of the comma before the authority.

In both books the descriptions are well drawn, and good keys serve to guide the student. One or two more parts of each should finish these useful books.

THE MRS. CURTISS MEMORIAL.

MANY botanists remember with pleasure the dainty specimens of marine algæ collected by Mrs. Floretta A. Curtiss, for many years a resident of Jacksonville, Florida. Year after year the little fascicles of exquisitely prepared

specimens were offered to those who were interested in algæ, and who wished them for their herbaria. On March 3, 1899, she died in the seventy-seventh year of her life. Her son, A. H. Curtiss, the well-known botanical collector, has prepared a memorial, including a biographical sketch, and an index to her collections of algæ. This is in the form of a twenty-page folio pamphlet printed on heavy paper and illustrated with half-tone reproductions of photographs of the places where she lived while in pursuit of her favorite plants.

Mrs. Curtiss was born in 1822, in what was then the wilderness of central New York, not far from the present city of Syracuse. She came from New England stock, both parents being natives of Massachusetts. Immediately after the Civil War she removed with her husband to Virginia, and in 1875 with her son she took up her residence in Florida. Here she soon began the work of collecting algæ,—which she continued to the close of her life. Science owes her a debt of gratitude for the years of painstaking labor which she gave to the gathering and preservation of specimens, which have enriched the botanical collections of the World's great herbaria.

CHARLES E. BESSEY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA.

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION.

THIS Association will meet at Indianapolis from October 22d to 26th, under the presidency of Dr. Peter H. Bryce. There is a special section of bacteriology and chemistry, of which Professor Theobald Smith is Chairman. The subjects on which special committees have been appointed to make reports are:

1. 'The Pollution of Public Water Supplies';
2. 'The Disposal of Refuse Material';
3. Animal Diseases and Animal Food';
4. 'Car Sanitation';
5. 'Etiology of Yellow Fever';
6. 'Steamship and Steamboat Sanitation';
7. 'Relation of Forestry to the Public Health';
8. 'Demography and Statistics in their Sanitary Relation';
9. 'Cause and Prevention of Infectious Diseases';
10. Public Health Legislation';
11. The Duration of Infectious Diseases';
12. 'Cause and Prevention of Infant Mortality';
13. 'Disinfectants';
14. 'Municipal Sanitary Adminis-