

or "oceras"; but Geyerina is left as a mystifying exception, which is just as likely to refer to a brachiopod as to a cephalopod. Seven are modifications of the name of the species chosen as the type; thus Bifericeras has biferus for its type. The remainder are not so happily devised. Euhoploceras has *A. acanthodes* for its type. Would not Acanthodicerias have conveyed practically the same meaning, and been much more easily assimilated? *A. luridus* is the type for Beaniceras. What is the objection to Luridiceras?

Among the morphological terms introduced those relating to homeomorphy crystallise our knowledge of this phenomenon and will be valuable for the discussion of other groups of fossils; but the series of terms of which "angustumbilicate" is a sample is more cumbersome and confusing than the descriptive phrases it displaces. The use of a formula to express the relative dimensions of the ammonite and its whorls cannot be excelled for conciseness and accuracy; but the omnibus terms devised to convey the same information have an average range of error of 8 per cent., and their use will render ammonite literature still more unintelligible to the average worker.

Taken as a whole, this work is a most valuable contribution to the science of palæontology.

H. H. S.

*Naturforskeren Pehr Forsskål*. Af Carl Christensen. Pp. 172. (Köbenhavn: H. Hagerup's Forlag, 1918.) Price 8.00 krone=9s.

THE author of this interesting volume is well known to botanists by his valuable bibliographic work, especially his work on ferns. We have now to thank him for a welcome sketch of the naturalist of the ill-fated expedition to Arabia in 1761 to 1767, which was conducted at the expense of Frederick V. of Denmark.

The volume begins with an account of the expedition and the story of the gradual reduction of the six members to one, Christen Niebuhr being the only survivor. Pehr Forsskål was a Swede, born at Helsingfors in 1732. He was inscribed as a student at Upsala University, where he attended the lectures of Linnæus, but showed so strong a bent towards Oriental languages that in 1753 he migrated to Göttingen, where the celebrated J. D. Michaelis was professor. He was thus equipped both as naturalist and interpreter.

The results of his labours in this capacity are well known, as they were published by Niebuhr on his return to Copenhagen, practically unaltered from the original papers. We have accounts of plants observed in the South of France, Malta, Constantinople, Egypt, and Arabia Felix, until Forsskål's death at Jerim on July 11, 1763, in the thirty-second year of his age.

The text of the present volume is in Danish, but the Appendix of letters from the State Archives is more accessible to most readers because thirty-six letters are in German and the remaining four in French.

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#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

#### Weeping Forms of Elm.

A REMARKABLE elm of the variety known as *Ulmus serpentina*, apparently about sixty years old, is now vigorously growing in a Croydon garden. It has this peculiarity, that all its permanent branches are curiously contorted and reflexed, while all the shoots from one to three years old are pendulous rods, which, with the beautiful foliage, form an exterior covering reaching to the ground.

To my knowledge no pruning has been done for the last four years by human agency, and it is highly probable that the tree from its beginning as a graft on a stock of *Ulmus montana* has been allowed always to develop itself without human guidance.

Will someone kindly explain how this tree has been able for many years to maintain its contorted character, seeing that all its young shoots, year after year, are not crooked?

I may add that much dead wood of recent growth falls from the tree every winter, and I have seen that more of the same kind remains entangled in the convolutions of the upper branches.

W. H. SHRUBSOLE.

15 Chatsworth Road, Croydon.

WE are informed that there is an interesting reference by the late Prof. Meehan, of Philadelphia, to a weeping form of *Ulmus americana* in Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philad., 1901, p. 356. Like Mr. Shrubsole, however, Prof. Meehan confines himself to describing facts; he does not give any explanation of them.—ED., NATURE.

#### "HABITAT GROUPS" IN AMERICAN MUSEUMS.

DR. B. W. EVERMANN, Director of the Museum of the California Academy of Sciences, gives an account, in the *Scientific Monthly* (New York) for January last, of some of the "habitat" or ecological exhibits of mammals and birds which have recently been installed in the museum under his charge, and explains his views with regard to the educational functions of museums. With the latter part of his subject we are not at the moment concerned; but as it is possible, owing to the kindness of the publishers of the *Scientific Monthly*, to reproduce here several of the illustrations which accompany Dr. Evermann's paper, advantage may be taken of this opportunity to direct attention to some of the beautiful results which have been achieved in the United States in exhibiting animals in their natural surroundings. Each illustration has had to have its width cut away by about an inch in order to bring it within the width of a page of NATURE, but even with this reduction the mere inspection of the illustrations in question is sufficient to induce a feeling of unqualified admiration for these efforts; and, from my own personal experiences in the United States, I am able to go