their solutions being near completion. Both at the Universities and elsewhere, the work will still continue to occupy the high position which it has held among treatises of its kind. W.

The Threshold of Science. By C. R. Alder Wright, F.R.S. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. (London: Charles Griffin and Co., 1892.)

THE primary aim of this book is to interest young readers in various simple and amusing experiments, illustrating some of the chief physical and chemical properties of surrounding objects, and the effects upon them of light and heat. In the present edition the author has made no change which is likely to interfere with this object, but he has added various scientific appendices, and an excellent chapter on the systematic order in which class experiments should be carried out for educational purposes. These additions will be of great service to all who may wish to use the volume not merely as a "play-book," but as an instrument for the training of the mental faculties. Any one who may still have doubts regarding the value of elementary science as an organ of education, will speedily have his doubts dispelled if he takes the trouble to understand the methods recommended by Dr. Alder Wright. The majority of the experiments he has selected must not, of course, be studied merely in his exposition. It is intended that each reader shall make them himself. If that is done, they cannot fail to quicken the intelligence even of "the average boy."

Key to J. B. Lock's Elementary Dynamics. By G. H. Lock, M.A. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1892.)

THIS key will be found most useful both to beginners and teachers alike. The examples are all carefully worked out, many of the more difficult problems being treated at greater length with the view of helping those who are studying without the aid of a teacher. By an intelligent use of this book, a student should acquire a good knowledge of the method of working out problems as well as the important factor of attacking them in the right way. W.

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.*]

Ice in the South Atlantic.

THE following account of ice met with in the South Atlantic at the commencement of last April, which has been supplied to the Meteorological Office by Captain Froud, of the Shipmasters' Society, may be of interest to your readers.

ROBERT H. SCOTT,
June 17. Secretary, Meteorological Office.

Ship *Cromdale*, London.

SIR,—I now send you a short account of my unusual encounter with ice in the above ship on our homeward passage from Sydney.

We left Sydney on March 1, and having run our easting down on the parallel of 49° to 50° S., rounded the Horn on March 30 without having seen ice, the average temperature of the water being 43° during the whole run across.

At midnight on April 1, lat. 56° S., long. 58° 32′ W., the temperature fell to 37°·5, this being the lowest for the voyage, but no ice was seen, although there was a suspicious glare to the southward.

At 4 a.m., April 6, lat. 46° S., long. 36° W., a large berg was reported right ahead, just giving us time to clear it. At 4.30, with the first sign of daybreak, several could be distinctly seen to the windward, the wind being north-west, and the ship steering north east about nine knots. At daylight (5.20) the whole horizon to the windward was a complete mass of bergs of enormous size, with an unbroken wall at the back; there were also many to the leeward. I now called all hands, and after reducing speed to seven knots, sent the hands to their stations and stood on. At 7 a.m. there was a wall extending from a point on the lee bow to about four points on the quarter, and at 7.30 both walls joined ahead. I sent the chief mate aloft with a pair of glasses to find a passage out, but he reported from the topgallant yard that the ice was unbroken ahead. Finding myself embayed, and closely beset with innumerable bergs of all shapes and sizes, I decided to tack and try to get out the way I had come into the bay. The cliffs were now truly grand, rising up 300 feet on either side of us, and as square and true at the edge as if just out of a joiners' shop, with the sea breaking right over the southern cliff and whirling away in a cloud of spray. Tacked ship at 7.30, finding the utmost difficulty in keeping clear of the huge pieces strewn so thickly in the water, and having in several cases to scrape her along one to get clear of the next. We stood on in this way till 11 a.m., when to my horror the wind started to veer with every squall, till I drew quite close to the southern barrier, having the extreme point a little on my lee bow. I felt sure we must go ashore without a chance of saving ourselves. Just about 11.30 the wind shifted to the south-west with a strong squall, so we squared away to the north-west, and came past the same bergs we had seen at daybreak, the largest being about 1000 feet high, anvil-shaped, and at 2 p.m. got on the north-west side of the northern arm of the horse-shoe shaped mass. It then reached from four points on my lee bow to as far as could be seen astern, in one unbroken line. A fact worthy of note was that at least fifty of the bergs in the bay were perfectly black, which was to be accounted for by the temperature of the water being 51°, which had turned many over. I also think that had there been even a small outlet at the eastern side of this mass the water between the barriers would not have been so thickly strewn with bergs, as the prevailing westerly gales would have driven them through and separated them.

I have frequently seen ice down south, but never anything like even the smaller bergs in this group. I also had precisely the same experience with regard to the temperature of the water in our homeward passage in the ship *Derwent* three years ago, as we dipped up a bucket of water within half a mile of a huge berg and found no change in the temperature.

I trust you will warn, as far as possible, those about to sail for the Cape, as these bergs must soon reach that part.

I remain, yours truly,
(Signed) EDGAR H. ANDREW, Master.
June 12.

Land and Freshwater Shells peculiar to the British Isles.

MR. COCKERELL, in his article in NATURE of May 26 (p. 76), draws attention to a list of land and freshwater shells peculiar to the British Islands in Dr. Wallace's new edition of "Island Life." This work is of such very great importance to every one engaged in the study of the geographical distribution of animals, that it is regrettable the author should have repeated an error made in the first edition. *Geomalacus maculosus*, as is mentioned in Mr. Cockerell's article, is not peculiar to the British Islands. A specimen was discovered in Northern Spain as far back as 1868 by Mr. von Heyden, and recorded in the *Nachrichtsblatt d. deutschen Malakozool. Gesellschaft* by Heynemann in 1869. The allied species, supposed to have been found in France, has been proved to be an Arion; but several species of the interesting genus Geomalacus have been recently described by Simroth from Portugal.

Mr. Cockerell also states that several varieties in the list of peculiar British forms may have to be eventually struck out; and this is certainly the case, as the variety *albolateralis* of *Arion ater*, mentioned as "very distinct," was found near Bremen, in Germany, and is described in Simroth's "Naturgeschichte der deutschen Nacktschnecken" (*Zeitschr. f. wiss. Zoologie*, vol. 42, 1885). R. F. SCHARFF.
22 Leeson Park, Dublin, June 13.

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.

THE Imperial Institute is no longer a castle in the air, an abstraction the meaning of which is to be guessed at through a veil of mist, but a solid and hand-