

argument being that it was better that he cultivate an enthusiasm for science in them rather than promote mechanical learning by rote. I was also struck by certain insightful observations that the authors make. A notable example of this is their evaluation that Mendel was ahead of his time not so much in his ideas but more in his absorption of the painstakingly accurate methods of experimental physics into botany. Enlightening ideas, entertaining books.

My only reservation about the biographies, however, is that they focus more on the lives of the scientists than their academic achievements. In all fairness to the authors, this may have been intentional. It would also not have been possible to maintain the easy accessibility of these books if they were to describe scientific work in any great detail. They should thus be considered more as easy

introductions into the lives and times of these great thinkers.

John and Mary Gribbin have contributed immensely to the popularization of science. In a scientific world that is becoming increasingly technical, jargon-filled and apparently out-of-reach, this scientist-teacher-writer couple has encouraged the interested lay majority not to be unfairly left behind. Their writings in pursuit of the marvellously contorted paths of scientific endeavour have encompassed a search for Schrödinger's cat and a journey down a DNA double helix; they have written about clouds, about comets, and provided glimpses into the life of Richard Feynman. Let me, therefore, express my admiration for their versatility and my appreciation of their work, an appreciation that deepens from the embarrassing recognition that many of us, so-called working scientists, have

never bothered to undertake a similar exercise—a debt that we also probably owe society.

A word of thanks also to the Universities Press who have provided us with this excellent series of biographies at very reasonable cost in an increasingly expensive world. I could also find only a single typographical error pointing to the painstaking effort that must have been put into the publications. It can only be hoped that our schools and colleges will avail of them and thus provide an inspiring glimpse to our students of how our lives came to be what they are today. I am sure the Gribbins would approve.

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