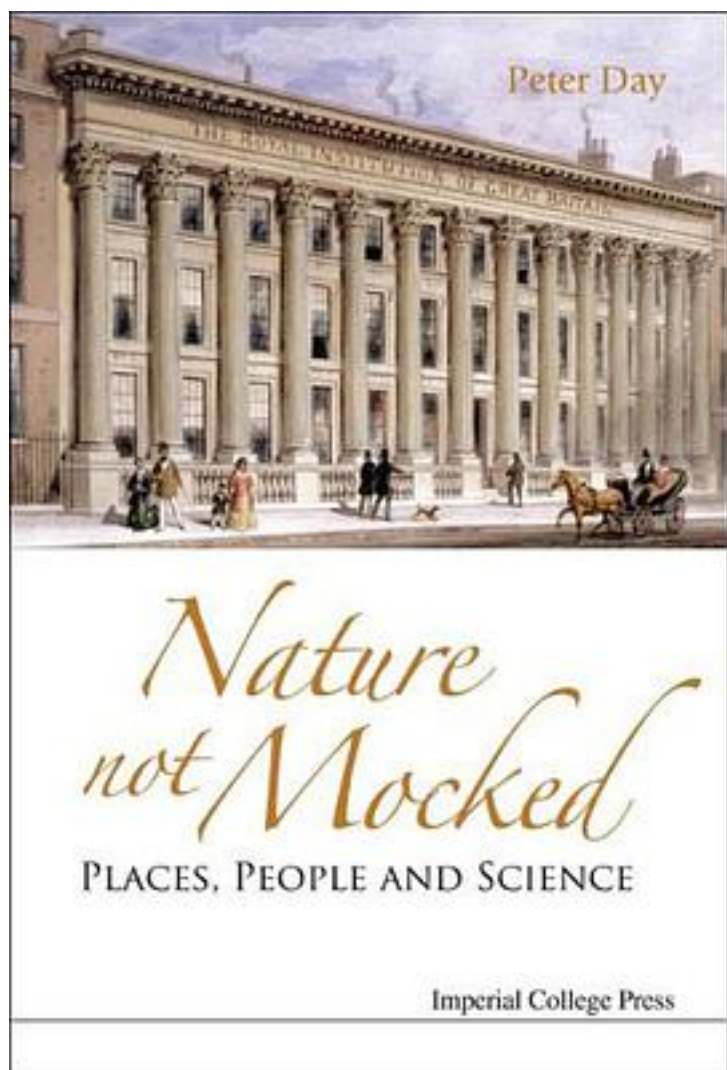


Nature Not Mocked



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著者:Peter Day

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We often forget that the science underpinning our contemporary civilization is not a marmoreal edifice. On the contrary, at each moment in its development over past centuries, it grew and advanced through the efforts of individuals and the institutions they created. As Director of the Royal Institution and its Davy Faraday Research Laboratory throughout the 1990s, the author had a unique vantage point to observe how places and people condition the way science has been shaped in the past and continues to be today. The author's background as a practicing solid state chemist, with a lively concern for issues engaging public awareness of science, have led him to recognize and celebrate, not just the remarkable contributions and unusual lives of past scientific heroes like Rumford and Faraday, but also their present day successors. Over the years, this insight has resulted in a wide variety of articles and essays, spread through many publications; a selection of these is collected in this book.

The tapestry of science does not just consist of facts uncovered about the natural world and the laws that connect them. As perhaps the finest product of the human mind, its substance and direction are strongly conditioned (some might even say determined) by the people drawn to take part in it and the environments in which they work. This book is an edited collection of essays on aspects of the lives of some famous (as well as less well-known) scientists and places where science is carried out, combined with popular accounts of some of the science the author himself has been involved in. Although it focuses on the Royal Institution and some of those associated with it, it ranges more widely to embrace some contemporary scientists known personally to the author, each of whom had an unusual and distinctive career. At the same time, the science itself, while at the cutting edge, is placed firmly in its historical perspective. The essays are collected into themes, each of which is prefaced and put in context by a short introduction.

作者介绍:

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