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Source: BioScience, 61(1) : 81

Published By: American Institute of Biological Sciences

URL: https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2011.61.1.17

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Hillaire must have felt being outdone in public debate by a slicker, sharper Cuvier (a man he himself had pulled out of poverty and into scientific fame, who then turned on him, ridiculing his championing of evolution)—these are integral, priceless slices of the scientific enterprise and its vicissitudes. They inspire, no less than the beautiful truth that force equals mass times acceleration. Science is done and made by people, and this is what provides its majesty, alongside its wonder and intellectual flair. Perhaps then a reader will be found in possession of a veritable sweet tooth and be rewarded by these tiny spoonfuls of history. If so, he should thank the author before diving into deeper, more glorious waters still.

OREN HARMAN

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doi:10.1525/bio.2011.61.1.17

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