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0521836379 - Science in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical: Reading the Magazine of Nature

Geoffrey Cantor, Gowan Dawson, Graeme Gooday, Richard Noakes, Sally Shuttleworth, and Jonathan R. Topham

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SCIENCE IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY PERIODICAL

Reading the Magazine of Nature

For the Victorian reading public, periodicals played a far greater role than books in shaping their understanding of new discoveries and theories in science, technology, and medicine. Such understandings were formed not merely by serious scientific articles, but also by glancing asides in political reports, fictional representations, or humorous attacks in comic magazines. Ranging across diverse forms of periodicals, from top-selling religious and juvenile magazines through to popular fiction-based periodicals, and from the campaigning 'new journalism' of the late century to the comic satire of *Punch*, this book explores the ways in which scientific ideas and developments were presented to a variety of Victorian audiences. In addition, it offers three case studies of the representation of particular areas of science: 'baby science', scientific biography, and electricity. This innovative collaborative volume sheds new light on issues relating to history and history of science, literature, book history, and cultural and media studies.

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Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, politics, social organization, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as “background,” feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field.

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A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.

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Preface

The chapters in this volume were written as part of the SciPer (Science in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical) project pursued at the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield, under the direction of Geoffrey Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth. The project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, the Leverhulme Trust, and the Modern Humanities Research Association. We would like to record our gratitude to all these bodies for making the project possible.

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For details of the overall Project and Electronic Index see <<http://www.sciper.leeds.ac.uk>>.