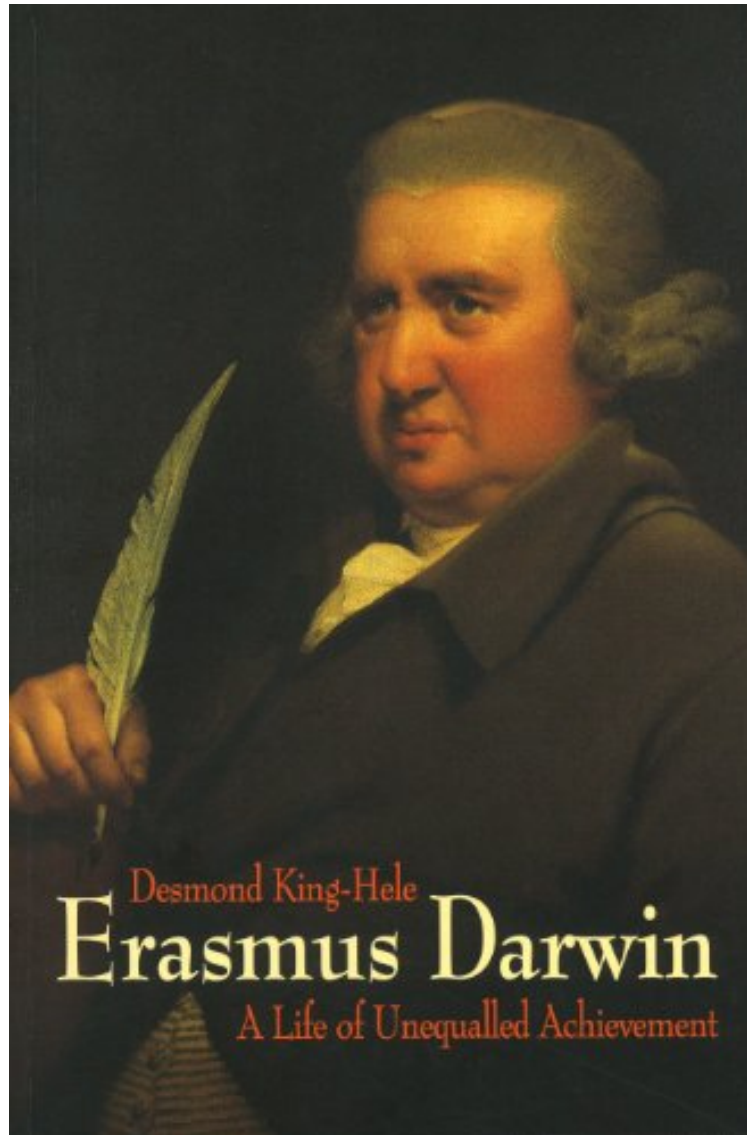


(Pdf free) Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement

## Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement

*Von Desmond King-Hele*

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**Von Desmond King-Hele : Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.  
Darwinism: a family tradition Von Cj Becker Charles Darwin was an indifferent divinity student when he was upbraided by Dr. Robert Grant for overlooking his family's tradition of evolutionary thought, presumably Charles had bespoke himself of some Genesis convention. Erasmus Darwin was one of the great English intellectuals of the past

1,000 years, far surpassing the achievements of his grandson. His ideas were suppressed during the paranoid period of the Napoleon Wars. King-Hele's book takes some of the myth out of Darwinism finding that the modern convention is actually closer to Erasmus's theory than Charles's theory. Charles wrote a biography of Erasmus giving him his due but this was edited by Charles's daughter Henrietta. A very interesting tale about a seminal issue in modern science. This book is the cornerstone for reaching an understanding that Darwinism is a social movement not an intellectual movement, and is not about to be overthrown by historical facts. This book will not likely do well in the market since the educated public loves the old stories and trash science like the Selfish Gene. It is also interesting to note that Freudism, equally out of date, is also impossible to eradicate, even though it is under general attack. Strange business this.

Kurzbeschreibung It has been said of Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) that no one from his day to ours has ever rivalled him in his achievements in such a wide range of fields. He was a far-sighted scientific genius, fertile in theory and invention, and one of the foremost physicians of his time. His gift for friendship enabled him to recruit the members of the Lunar Society of Birmingham which is often seen as the main intellectual powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution in England. He was especially close to Franklin, Wedgwood, Boulton and Watt. Towards the end of his life he gained recognition as the leading English poet in the country, and he deeply influenced Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley. The most striking of Darwin's many talents was his extraordinary scientific insight in physics, chemistry, geology, meteorology and all aspects of biology -- his deepest insight being his evolutionary theory of life. Two of his books, the Zoonomia, which made him famous as the leading medical mind of the 1790s, and The Temple of Nature, a long poem, show that he believed life developed from microscopic specks in primeval seas through fishes and amphibians to 'humankind'. But he failed to convince the world about biological evolution: that was left to his grandson Charles. Erasmus was the first person to give a full description of how clouds form and of photosynthesis in plants. He was also an obsessive inventor of mechanical devices, among them a speaking machine, a copying machine and the steering technique used in modern cars. Substantial donations of Darwin family papers recently to the Cambridge University Library, including over 170 letters written by Erasmus Darwin himself, have made it possible for the author to tell much of the enthralling story of his life in Erasmus' own words. Desmond King-Hele, who is the leading authority on Erasmus Darwin having studied his life and work for three decades, is a mathematician and physicist who is an expert on space research by satellite, in particular on the Earth's gravity field and the upper atmosphere. W.F. Bynum in Nature: 'To most people who have heard of him, Erasmus Darwin was a successful doctor, bad poet and, most significantly, the grandfather of Charles Darwin. In this astonishing book, Desmond King-Hele seeks to reverse the judgement and argue that Charles should rather be remembered as Erasmus's grandson...[that] Erasmus was much the brighter spark, a genius of rare qualities...Few scientific lives have ever been so carefully and thoughtfully examined. There are no final words in history, but this is a biography for which the word definitive can be aptly applied. Patricia Fara in Times Higher Educational Supplement: 'Instead of being dismissed as the whimsical creator of a bizarre tale of gaudily dressed characters engrossed in various forms of polygamy, [he] is now recognized as an influential author and an important man of science who made vital contributions to the early stages of English industrialization...A moving and amply researched narrative of a man who for [the author] has acquired a heroic stature... Choice: ...King-Hele's splendid biography of Charles Darwin's grandfather...deA cheerful biography of a resolutely cheerful genius, Desmond King-Hele's Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement tells the astonishing story of the grandfather of the more famous Charles. Born in 1731, twice-married with an in-between mistress, the father of 12 children, doctor, poet, inventor and scientist, Erasmus Darwin was an extraordinary man. Known for his benevolence, good humour, terrific bedside manner, and almost uncannily accurate prognoses--for example, if Dr D. said you were going to die in two weeks, you did as you were told--he developed a theory of evolution a full 70 years before Charles turned his mind to it. A 19-line note at the end of King-Hele's book lists 86 inventions, discoveries and contributions to the history of life, the universe and everything that Erasmus made during his 71 years on this planet. These range from air travel to windmills, via geology, hereditary diseases, sewage farms and speaking machines. He also wrote bestselling poetry (The Botanic Garden, and a huge medical tome (Zoonomia) which despite seeming eccentric today, was hugely influential when published in the 1790s. Erasmus Darwin: A Life of Unequalled Achievement is gentlemanly, fun, highly readable, terrific on the scientific background to the Industrial Revolution, extremely well-indexed and guaranteed to make even the most hyperactive over-achiever feel inadequate. -- Lisa Gee Pressestimmen "W.F. Bynum in Nature: 'To most people who have heard of him, Erasmus Darwin was a successful doctor, bad poet and, most significantly, the grandfather of Charles Darwin. In this astonishing book, Desmond King-Hele seeks to reverse the judgement and argue that Charles should rather be remembered as Erasmus's grandson...[that] Erasmus was much the brighter spark, a genius of rare qualities...Few scientific lives have ever been so carefully and thoughtfully examined. There are no final words in history, but this is a biography for which the word definitive can be aptly applied.' Patricia Fara in Times Higher Educational Supplement:

'Instead of being dismissed as the whimsical creator of 'a bizarre tale of gaudily dressed characters engrossed in various forms of polygamy', [he] is now recognized as an influential author and an important man of science who made vital contributions to the early stages of English industrialization...A moving and amply researched narrative of a man who for [the author] has acquired a heroic stature...' Choice: '...King-Hele's splendid biography of Charles Darwin's grandfather...' Brian J. Ford in Notes and Records of the Royal Society: '...a book that is required reading for any historian of science, and which should be digested by present-day researchers if they wish to keep a hold on reality. It tells the tale of a full and productive life, rich in learning and good works, filled with experiences and overflowing with insights and wide-ranging innovation...[It is] set to become the standard work on a pioneering scientist about whom we all need to know more...As the polymath doctor reminds us, and as this book fittingly testifies, it is the individual enthusiast who embraces science to the fullest extent and helps create the future. It is when disciplines meld into a great overview of science that we see the greatest conceptual steps. Erasmus Darwin was a fine example and [the author], who has transgressed boundaries of his own to bring us this enthralling story, reminds us of the salient fact that great minds are not inhibited by disciplinary constraints. Rather, they are stimulated by overcoming them. There are lessons in this admirable book for the most futuristic young bioscientist, and timely instruction for the most recalcitrant of conformists.' Library Journal: '...what may be the definitive biography...[it] will appeal to both scholars and general readers. Highly recommended.' Roy Porter in Literary : '...for the past forty years, this distinguished physicist has devoted his spare time to rediscovering and rehabilitating one of the greatest intellectual all-rounders this country has ever produced...Is he truly a neglected genius? Does he live up to Coleridge's judgement of 1796: 'I think he is the first literary character in Europe, and the most original-minded man'? The short answer is yes...The non-stop bustling life of this giant is recounted here in a racy, chatty, relaxed style, just right for the subject. All praise to Desmond King-Hele for resurrecting one of the most appealing Englishmen.' The Scotsman, Book s: 'Charles Darwin's grandfather was just as brilliant a scientist, but he was also an inventor of genius, an outstanding poet and an acclaimed doctor. [This] biography does full justice to a man who emerges as one of the founding fathers of the modern age...On any definition, this is an amazing life...' .co.uk: '...highly readable, terrific on the scientific background to the Industrial Revolution and guaranteed to make even the most hyperactive over-achiever feel inadequate.' Publishers Weekly: '...This engaging, totally unstuffy biography of the prolific inventor, physician, poet and naturalist brings him out from the shadow of his more famous grandson, Charles Darwin, and should force a reappraisal of his place in history...This brilliant biography plunges us deep into the scientific, medical and industrial revolutions and the birth of the modern age.' Scotland on Sunday: 'A deist, a stutterer and conversationalist of such accomplishment that even Coleridge was impressed, Erasmus Darwin also came up with a theory of evolution some 70 years before his grandson Charles turned his mind to it...[His] other inventions, discoveries and contributions to the history of science are so numerous that a list of them comprises a 19-line footnote at the end...Artesian wells, copying machines, photosynthesis, electrotherapy? Rocket motors, submarines, telescopes, water as H<sub>2</sub>O? King-Hele admits to being astounded by the range, inventiveness and productivity of the Darwinian brain.'"