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Dear Reader,

The world is beset by problems that don't respect national borders and that can't be solved without global cooperation among scientists. Climate change and pandemics are the most immediately obvious of these, but the list is long.

Top scientists are intensively competitive people, with big egos. It doesn't seem natural that they would be able to work together, across long stretches of geography and time, with little hope of individual recognition. What makes scientific cooperation work?

Lorraine Daston, one of the world's leading historians of science, takes on this question in *Rivals*. She does not treat it as a question to be answered by focusing only on the present. Thanks to extensive research using original documents stored in Paris, Geneva, and Uppsala, Sweden, she has created a fascinating, lively study of successful and unsuccessful scientific collaborations going back to the 18th century. Daston guides us through such major efforts as the French-led Carte du Ciel, a map of the stars, and the Cloud Atlas, a grand, long-running cataloguing of the shapes of clouds.

There are lessons here, which will serve us well now. Among them are that too much government involvement in scientific work imperils its independence, and therefore its usefulness, and that scientists work together most effectively when they take the trouble to gather regularly in person. *Rivals* is indispensable both as history and as guidance.

Best,

Nicholas Lemann