

# **A SHORT HISTORY OF BALLOONS AND FLYING MACHINES**

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A Short History of Balloons and Flying Machines by Lord Montagu & B. Baden-Powell

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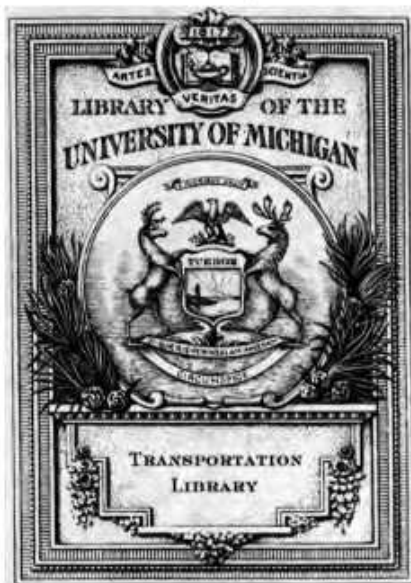
**LORD MONTAGU & B. BADEN-POWELL**

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LORD MONTAGU.

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## FLYING MACHINES.

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"O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest."—*King David.*

"'Tis easier sport than the balloon."—*Heywood.*

THE earliest mention of flying seems to be that of Dædalus, a figure in Greek mythology who personified the beginning of the Arts of Sculpture and Architecture. He was of the old Athenian royal race of the Erechtheidæ. Having killed his nephew and pupil in envy at his growing skill, he had to flee to Crete, where he made the well-known cow for Queen Pasiphaë.

The romantic tradition concerning Dædalus is as follows:—Having committed this great crime, he fled from Athens to Crete, taking with him his son Icarus. He there constructed for Minos, King of that island, the famous labyrinth, with which every one is familiar; but, having incurred the King's displeasure, he was himself confined therein. In order to effect his escape he made wings of feathers and wax for himself

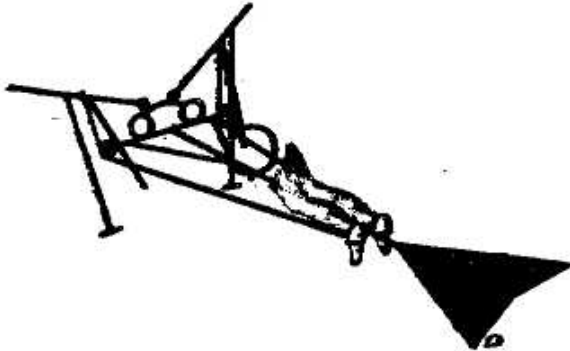
and his son, and with these attempted to fly away; but Icarus soared so high that the sun melted the wax by which his wings were fastened, and he fell into that part of the sea which, by way of testimony, bore his name for hundreds of years afterwards.

Dædalus, however, more careful, arrived safely in Sicily.

1260.—At this date Roger Bacon is the first English philosopher who asserts the existence of a machine for flying; but he says, "Not that he himself had seen it, or was acquainted with any person who had done so, but he knew an ingenious person who had contrived one."

1338.—At this date lived Froissart, the great historian; he speaks of an apprentice of Valenciennes who made himself a pair of wings six feet and a half high, and requested the Count of Flanders to be allowed to try them in his presence. Of course the Count assented, and, in some curiosity, came out with his whole Court to see the sight; but the performance was exceedingly meagre.

After tying his wings to his shoulders, the apprentice was taken up to an embrasure that overlooked the castle drawbridge, and he was just on the point of leaping forward, when the Countess became nervous, and ordered him to an embrasure that crowned the moat, so that in case of accident he should only get a ducking. This turned out to be a good precaution, for, upon jumping from the battlements, the venture-some lad tumbled head foremost into the water.



THE INVENTION OF LEONARD DE VINCI, ABOUT 1500.

1510.—The first *historical* flying experiment was made this year in Scotland by an Italian Friar, whom King James IV. had made Prior of Tongland.

This man was a great favourite, from his supposed successes in alchemy; in fact, he was said to be in league with "*Auld Hornie*"; and thinking he had discovered a method of flying, the Prior appointed a day for a flight, and invited the King and his Court to witness the feat. At the appointed time the Italian, with an enormous pair of wings, ascended one of the battlements of Stirling Castle, and in the presence of James and his Court spread his wings and vaulted into the air.

Unfortunately, the experiment was a complete failure; he came down anyhow, and tumbled on to a manure heap, which saved his neck; but he broke his thigh bone.