

A DEMONSTRATION, NOW IT IS PRACTICALLY POSSIBLE TO MAKE A SHIP, WHICH SHALL BE SUSTAINED BY THE AIR, AND MAY BE MOVED EITHER BY SAILS OR OARS.

(A translation of the 6th Chapter of Vather Lana's book, "Prodromo dell' Arte Maestra," Brescia, 1670, by Dr. Robert Hooke, read before the Royal Society of England May 29, 1679, and published in Dr. Hooke's Tracts and Collections 1674-1679).

The Curiosity and Ardor of Humane Wit hath not been so bounded by proceeding Inventions, as not to be yet further inquisitive after some other waies how men themselves may, like birds, Fly in the Air. Nor is it, perhaps, a meer Fable which is recorded of Daedalus and Icarus, since 'tis reported for a truth, that even in our times, a certain Person whose name I know not, did by some such artifice of Flying, pass over the Perusina Lake; though afterwards, his descending to light upon the Earth, being too quick, he fell down, with the loss of his life. But no one yet thought it possible to make a ship which should pass through the Air, as if it were sustained by the Water, because they have judged it impossible to make an Engine which should be lighter than the Air, which is, nevertheless, necessary to be done in order to produce this effect.

But I, whose Genius and desire hath alwaies prompted me to endeavour, to my utmost, to find out difficult Inventions, do hope, at length, I have light upon a way of making such an Engine as shall not only by its being lighter than the Air, raise itself in the Air, but together, with itself, Buoy up and carry into the Air Men, or any other weight. Nor do I believe I deceive myself, since I confirm the thing both