

seem to have been lost and with them some designs relating to flying which Sir Christopher Wren made and promised to submit to the Royal Society.

While these experiments at once suggested to us the aeroplane principle of flight, it is doubtful if the men of this time had in mind anything but wing-flapping devices. These were more or less hopeless without the aid of mechanical power and the theory was prevalent that man was not ordained by God to fly. As broken bones invariably accompanied these heavenward aspirations, there was abundant proof that this view was correct.

But while the superstition of the time did much to retard progress, by far the greatest setback Aviation received was the invention of the balloon in 1783 by the Montgolfier Brothers. This statement may seem paradoxical but nevertheless it is true. Public Attention was diverted from the efforts of the old school who still pinned their faith on heavier-than-air flight. The struggle to compete with the birds was given up until 1842. In this year Henson created a stir by patenting a machine which was in every way remarkable. It really looked as though it would fly, and the greatest interest was taken in his experiments.

Here we have the first attempt to imitate the soaring bird instead of the flapping bird, and this in itself was a big step in the right direction.

Henson's idea was to obtain support from a large aeroplane propelled by two aerial propellers of large diameter resembling small wind-mills. The power was to be supplied by