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THE

DIPLOMA

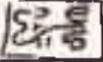
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THE PHANTAGRAPH

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Excerpt from an Ancient

Roger Bacon (1214--1292)

From DE SECRETIS OPERIBUS ARTIS ET
NATURAE

I will tell first, therefore, of the wonderful works of Art and Nature, in order to assign to them afterwards their causes and means; in these there is nothing of a magical nature. Hence it may be seen that ~~with~~ all magic power is inferior to these achievements and unworthy of them. And, first, let us consider the possibilities of unaided art. For first machines of navigation can be constructed, without rowers, as great ships for river or ocean, which are borne under the guidance of one man at a greater speed than if they were full of men. Also a chariot can be constructed that will move with incalculable speed without any draught animal, as we deem the scythed chariots moved, from which the ancients fought.

Also flying machines may be constructed so that a man may sit ~~in~~ in the midst of the machine turning a certain instrument, by means of which wings artificially constructed would beat the air, after the manner of a bird flying. Also a machine of small size may be made for raising and lowering weights of almost infinite amounts--a machine of the utmost utility. For by means of a machine three fingers in height and of the same, and of even a smaller bulk, a man may deliver himself and his companions from all danger of prison, and may rise on high and sink down again at will. A machine may easily be constructed whereby one man may forcibly draw to himself a thousand men, in spite of themselves; and other things may be attracted in just the same way. Machines may also be made for going in sea or river down to the bed without bodily danger. For Alexander the Great made use of these to behold the secrets of the sea; as is described by Ethicus the Astronomer. These machines were constructed in ancient times and also, as is certain, in our own times, all except the flying machine, which I have never seen, nor have I ever seen a man who has seen one; but I know a wise man who has figured out all the details of the invention. And there are countless other things which can be constructed; such as bridges over rivers without pillars or any such supports, and engineering feats and unheard-of contrivances.

