

THE LIVES
OF
CELEBRATED ARCHITECTS,
ANCIENT AND MODERN:

WITH
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR
WORKS, AND ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ART.

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PAOLO GUIDOTTI, OF LUCCA,

(Born 1569, died 1629,)

WENT at an early period to Rome, where he applied himself to drawing, and became an excellent painter. He practised a great deal, and in almost all the edifices erected by Sixtus V.: the greater number of his works have been, by various accidents, either covered, spoiled, or demolished. He then studied sculpture; and in consequence of his executing a marble group of six figures, for the cardinal Scipione Borghese, pope Paul V. declared him Cavalier di Cristo, and allowed him to adopt the surname of Borghese, and made him conservator of the Campidoglio, which is the first magistrate of the Roman people. Guidotti filled his situation with the greatest credit; and at his desire a decree was issued, in pursuance

of which an inquiry was instituted into the conduct of all those painters who did not observe the constitutions and rules of the academy; and the fiscal of the senate was ordered to punish them according to their neglect of these rules. Such a decree must have affected all the professors of every art and science, and of every trade; and certainly there must have been some difficulty in enforcing its observance.

Guidotti was also considered a good architect. He was commissioned to make the magnificent preparations in the Vatican, in 1622, for the canonisation of the four saints, Isidoro Ignazio, Francesco Saverio, Filippo Neri, and Teresa. We are not acquainted with any other of his architectural works. Led on by an insatiable desire of knowledge, he studied mathematics, astrology, jurisprudence, and every species of music and poetry. He attempted an epic poem, entitled *Gerusalemme Distrutta*, obliging himself to conclude every eighth line with the same words as those of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, by Tasso. It is difficult to say whether this idea was much to be applauded. His anatomical curiosity was certainly more useful; but this he also carried to an excess. He was accustomed to go by night to the cemeteries, and dig up the newly buried bodies, and remove them to some distant place, in order to study whatever might be necessary for his drawing.

But his most extraordinary whim was that of flying. He contrived wings of whalebone in the most ingenious manner, which he covered with down, and giving them sufficient folds by means of springs, joined them under his arms; and having made a number of trials in private, determined at length to make a public exhibition. He ascended from one of the eminencies of Lucca, and was carried for about a quarter of a mile; but his wings not being able to support him any longer, he fell through a roof into a chamber, and broke his thigh. Giambatista Dante, of Perugia, had also the same whim, and the same fate.

Oliver of Malmesbury, an English Benedictine, and good mechanic, in 1060, Bacville, a Jesuit of Padua, a Teatino of Paris, and a number of others, have all been thus desirous of soaring into the regions of air, and have all been equally successful. This, however, cannot be properly termed flying, but only an easier and slower method of falling. A flight can only be applied to the feat of the Padre Andrea Grimaldi of Civitavecchia, who returned from the East Indies with a wonderful machine of his own invention, in the form of an eagle; seated across which he was borne from Calais to London, 1751, making seven leagues an hour, directing his flight either higher or lower, as he pleased. This fact is most seriously recorded in the "Modern History." It is possible that posterity may consider this invention much to our honour.

If Guidotti had not attached himself to so many things, he might have been a good artist. His countenance was fine, and his general manner animated; he was, it may be supposed, singular in his thoughts and reasoning.
