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P T E R Y P L E G I A :

OR, THE ART OF
SHOOTING-FLYING.

A

P O E M.

By Mr. MARKLAND, A. B. late Fellow
of St. John's College in Oxford.

“Υψι δ' ὑπαὶ νεφέων ἴδελο τρήρωνα πέλειαυ,
Τὴν ῥ' ὄγε δινεύσασαν ἀπὸ πτέρυγος βάλε μέσσην,
Ἄνικρὺ δὲ διήλθε βέλος. Hom. Iliad.

THE THIRD EDITION.

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[Price One Shilling.]

TO ALL FAIR
SPORTSMEN.

GENTLEMEN,

GIVE me Leave to strengthen your Memories, and confirm your Experience, with a Sett of *Speculations*, newly drawn from Darknes and Confusion, into the Advantage of a clear Light and *regular System*. They contain many demonstrable Truths, which never before made any Figure abroad in *Terms of Art*, or were reduced to any *Shape* or *Expression*. On this Account I might here very reasonably plead the *Novelty* of the Subject, in Defence and Excuse of the Performance, having had no Path or Footsteps to guide me, but my own long Experience; and might, with less Vanity and more Propriety of Language than most Writers, take to myself the Title of an Author; were it not the utmost of my Ambition only to oblige and inform my Fellow-Sportsmen, and to communicate freely and honestly what

A 2 Know-

Knowledge I have treasured up in this, hitherto unexplained, and difficult Mystery.

Nevertheless, I am sensible, there is no becoming *Sportsmen* by Book. You may here find the Rules and proper Directions for that End; but Practice alone can make you *Masters*. *Bare Theory* may as soon stamp a *General*, as a *Marksmán*. No — You must sweat and be cold, must sweat again, and be cold again, before you can arrive at any Degree of Perfection in this Art. I have furnished you with all necessary Tools of the Trade, but it is Time and Experience must finish and accomplish the Workmen; and even after seven Years Industry, you will find but too many Occasions to prove you still deficient and imperfect. It is but too true; (and you must all of you bear me Witness to the Truth of this) that even the best Marksmen have their chronical Miscarriages. In some Hands, the ill Fortune of the first Shoot determines and influences the Success of all the rest: And one may take a certain Sort of Angury from the Escape and Flight of the first Mark. The natural Cause of this seems to proceed from a Disorder in the animal Spirits, occasioned by the original Disappointment, and which in some Men is irrecoverable for that whole Day. As, on the contrary, a prosperous Hit shall have the very opposite Effect, and induce such an easy Serenity and steady Assurance, as carry inevitable

vitable Death with them for many Hours after.

On this Occasion I have often wondered, why the *French*, of all Mankind, should alone be so expert at the GUN, I had almost said infallible. It is as rare for a professed Marksman of that Nation to miss a Bird, as for one of Ours to kill. But, as I have been since informed, they owe this Excellence to their Education. They are trained up to it so very young, that they are no more surprized or alarmed with a Pheasant, than a Rattle-mouse. The best Field-Philosophers living; for they are always there Masters of their Temper.

However, I have now, at last, broke the Ice, and put my young Countrymen in the Way to rival that *volatile Nation* in their peculiar Accomplishment.

I intended (according to Custom) an *Invocation* to *Apollo*, our great Exemplar in this Art, who shot *Icarus* Flying many hundred Years ago; but considering, upon second Thoughts, how many *Snites*, *Woodcocks*, *Partridges*, *Pheasants*, *Polts*, &c. I had lost upon his Occasion, and how often I had been glad of the prophane Opportunity of turning my Backside on his Godship; I concluded, I had little Reason to expect his Assistance.

The *Muses* having all of them Wings, as is evident from the *sublime Flights* they take, I had less Hopes of their Inspiration. Indeed

I sen-

I sensibly perceived I had disobliged them, and that they had withdrawn their Favours, upon Supposition, I suppose too, of some possible Danger they might be in by my Means. However, their Ladyships were mistaken, since they were no more concerned in this Subject, than Flying-Coaches, Flying-Posts, Flying-Clouds, Flying-Camps, Flying-Reports, or Flying-Bottles of Ale; with forty other material and immaterial Beings, to which the Poets have fastened Wings; as *Time, Fame, Money, Love, &c.* In short, Gentlemen, in Consideration of the Nature of the Subject, you must not expect a very fanciful or entertaining *Poem*; but, this I will be bold to say, that as to the Matter and Substance of it, if what you find here be well read, digested, and remembered, it will then prove *truly useful and very serviceable.*

PTERYPLEGIA:

OR, THE ART OF

SHOOTING-FLYING.

SILENT and Grey the Morning's Dawn
appear'd;

No Sun was promis'd, and no Wind was heard.

The Archer-God shot forth no jealous Beam
To dazzle and confound the *Marksmans*'s Aim,

Nor friendly Blasts conceal'd the springing
Game.

My Friend and I, with hopeful Prospect rose,

And scorn'd the longer Scandal of Repose:

No

No dull Repast allow'd ; our Tackle all
 O'er Night prepar'd, the chearful Dogs we call ;
 In a close Pocket snuggs the cordial Dram,
 Youth to the Old, and Crutches to the Lame ;
 Low-leathern-heel'd our lacquer'd Boots are
 made,

Mounted on tott'ring Stilts raw Freshment tread ;
 Firm Footing an unshaken Level lends ;
 But Modish Heels are still the *Woodcock's*
 Friends.

Our Shot of sev'ral sorts, half round the Waste,
 In Ticking semicircularly plac'd,
 Embrac'd and poiz'd us well. Silent we go,
 As when *Apollo* from his Silver Bow
 Wrapp'd in a Cloud, the *Grecian* Camp dif-
 may'd,
 And unperceiv'd thro' Darknes struck 'em
 dead.

No

No flapping Sleeves our ready Arms controul;
 Short Cuffs alone prove fatal to the Fowl.
 Nor arm'd in warm Surtout, we vainly fear
 The Sky's Inclemency, or *Jove* severe:
 Active and free our Limbs and Muscles are,
 Whilst Exercise does glowing Warmth prepare.
 To such Examples You who dare not yield,
 Sneak to the Chimney-side, and quit the Field.

Our Sport almost at hand, we charge the
 Gun,

Whilst ev'ry well-bred Dog lies qui'tly down.
 Charge not before. If over-Night the Piece
 Stands loaded, in the Morn the Prime will
 hiss:

Nor Prime too full; else you will surely blame
 The hanging Fire, and lose the pointed Aim.

B

Shou'd

Shou'd I of This the obvious Reason tell,
 The caking Pressure does the Flame repel,
 And *Vulcan's* lam'd again by his own Steel. }

Yet cleanse the Touch-hole first : A Partridge
 Wing,

Most to the Field for that wise Purpose bring.

In Charging, next, good Workmen never fail

To ram the Powder well, but not the Ball :

One *Third* the well-turn'd Shot superior must

Arise, and overcome the nitrous Dust,

Which, dry'd and season'd in the Oven's Heat,

Has stood in close-mouth'd Jarr the dampless

Night.

Now search for Tow, and some old Saddle

pierce,

No Wadding lies so close, or drives so fierce.

And

And here be mindful constantly to Arm
 With Choice of Flints, a Turn-screw, and a
 Worm ;

The accidental Chances of the Field,
 Will for such Implements Occasion yield.

And now, our Pieces loaded, we divide
 The Rows between, each takes a diff'rent
 Side,

Careful, yet Unconcern'd ; not Idle, still
 Unbent, with Diligence enough to Kill.
 Learn'd to *Take Time*, the Chief and Only
 Rule,

First to be practis'd in the Marksman's School.
 Most Youths undisciplin'd, the Sport confound,
 By random Firing on improper Ground :
 For as in Flights of hasty Wit, the same
 Examin'd, will be Parallel in Game.

A *Stoick's* Temper shou'd the Sportsman
 crown,
 Th' Indifference of a Husband, nooz'd a
 Moon ;
 A Foot-Post's Heels ; with such quick lively
 Eyes,
 By which the piercing *Basilisk* descries ;
 And the Fatigue will the strong Sinews ask
 Of *Hercules*, proportion'd to the Task.
 Eager Pursuit still over-shoots Success,
 And timorous Distrust will *Under-miss*.
 A loit'ring Fool should no Forgiveness find ;
 Nor can I have scarce Pity for the Blind.
 The Weak and Crazy shou'd be kept at home,
 And fed with Jellies till their Strength is
 come.

Who-

Whoever fails in any single Part,
Can ne'er commence a Master of this Art.

See a Cock-Pheasant sprung ! He mounts,

— he's down,

Trust to your Dogs ; quick, quick — Re-
charge your Gun,

Before the Air gets in, and damps the Room.

The *Chamber* hot, will to the Powder give
A Benefit, and will the same receive :

The open Touch-hole too, if haste you make,
Its little fatal Train will freelier take.

Oft have I seen th' undocumented Swain
Feath'ring the Parts, and cleansing of the
Pan,

Until the cooling Piece grew moist again.

The

The tardy Charge wip'd that *cold Sweat* away,
 And grew itself half *Wild-fire* by the way.

Besides, suppose that Bird, but slightly
 touch'd
 I'th' Body, mazy there sits flyly couch'd,
 When with your Gun discharg'd, you come
 to take

Him up, he shall a second Effort make ;
 With unrecover'd Flight shall mount away,
 While you in vain lament th' escaping Prey ;
 In some close Covert, he unfound shall lie,
 And, subtle in his Diffolution, die.

Wood-

Woodcocks, and Snites and Partridge
rarely run

When crippled in the Wing, and fairly down,
But Pheasants seldom lie : Oft'times in vain
I've sought the headlong Fowl, concluded slain.

There sprung a single Partridge—ha ! she's
gone !

Oh ! Sir, you'd Time enough, you shot too
soon ;

Scarce twenty Yards in open Sight ! —— for
Shame !

Y'had shatter'd her to Pieces with right Aim !

Full forty Yards permit the Bird to go,

The spreading Gun will surer Mischief sow ;

But, when too near the flying Object is,

You certainly will mangle it, or miss ;

And

And if too far, you may so flightly wound,
 To kill the Bird, and yet not bring to
 Ground.

As Virtue 'twixt two Vices does consist,
 The same in Shooting justly is confest ;
 But when the Trees diversify the Scene,
 No Mortal there can keep the Golden Mean ;
 Spite of the Rules of Art he must let fly
 In one of the Extremes, too far, or nigh,
 Must nimbly take Advantage of what Leave,
 The Opens, Glades and Interstices give.
 Where Woodcocks dodge, there Distance
 knows no Laws ;
 Necessity admits no room for Pause.

But

But in the Ersh of Barley, Oats, or Wheat,
 Where Quails delicious, and sweet Partridge
 fit,

Or, in the Springs, where bores the charm-
 ing Snite ;

Or, where the glorious Polt in open Heath
 Moves sweetly in an even Line from Death ;
 There, if the Goodness of the Piece be prov'd,
 Pursue not the fair Mark till far remov'd ;
 Raife the Mouth gently from below the Game,
 And readily let fly at the first Aim.

But without Aim admit no random Shoot ;
 'Tis just to judge before you execute.

C

The

The wabbling Cock is indirect in Flight,
 Like painted Lightning flies th'evading Snite,
 Till Distance makes secure, and heals the
 Fright ;

Then gently in a level Course they fly,
 And each ev'n by the slightest Stroke will die.
 By Length and Motion of the Wings betray'd,
 Twenty shall tumble maim'd, for One shot
 dead.

Soon as the Snite receives a mortal Wound,
 With open Wings unmov'd, she skirms around,
 And where she falls, lies dead upon the
 Ground ;

With

With Pinions wide expanded, like the Kite,
 She smoothly swims, then dies, quite spent
 in Flight.

Five gen'ral sorts of *Flying Marks* there are,
 The *Lineals* two, *Traverse* and *Circular* ;
 The Fifth *Oblique*, which I may vainly teach ;
 But Practice only perfectly can reach.

When a Bird comes directly to your Face,
 Contain your Fire a while, and let her pass,
 Unless some Trees behind you change the
 Case.

If so, a little Space above her Head
 Advance the Muzzle, and you strike her dead.

Ever let Shot pursue where there is room ;
 Marks, hard before, thus easy will become.

But, when the Bird flies from you in a Line,
 With little Care, I may pronounce her thine.
 Observe the Rule before, and neatly raise
 Your Piece, till there's no *Open under-space*
 Betwixt the Object and the *Silver Sight* ;
 Then send away, and timely stop the Flight.

Th' unlucky *Cross Mark*, or the *Traverse*
Shoot,

By some thought easy ; yet admits Dispute,
 As the most common Practice is, to Fire
 Before the Bird, will nicest Time require :

For,

For, too much Space allow'd, the Shot will
fly

All innocent, and pass too nimbly by ;
Too little Space, the Partridge, swift as Wind,
Will dart athwart, and bilk her Death behind.

This makes the Point so difficult to guess ;
'Cause you must be exact in Time, or miss.

In other Marks there's a less desp'rate Stake,
Where the swift Shot will surely *Overtake* ;
Nor need the Sportsman such strict *Méa-*
sures make :

And better will the *Lineal Aim* allow
A Hundred Inches, than the *Cross-mark* Two.
Full forty Yards, or more to th' Left or Right,
The Partridge then *Obliquely* takes her Flight.
You've there th' Advantage of a *Sideling Line*,
Be careful, nor her inward Side decline :

Else

Else just behind the Bird the Shot will glance :
Nor have you any Hopes from *Flying Chance*.

Thus in the Mark which is stil'd *Circular*,
There's nothing more required, but steady
Care

T' attend the Motion of the Bird, and gain
The best and farthest *Lineal Point* you can ;
Carrying your Piece around, have Patience till
The Mark's at best Extent, then fire and kill.

See, *Jewell* stands a Point :——A Covey!

——Stay,

And take this sober Caution by the way :
When in a Cloud the scatt'ring Birds arise,
And various Marks distract the choos'ing Eyes,
That Choice confine to One Particular ;
Most who confide in fooling Fortune, err.

Young

Young greedy Novices, who often hope
 By random Fate to pick a Number up,
 Amaz'd, behold none bounding on the Ground,
 Whilst many a Bird drags off her mortal
 Wound.

Experienc'd Sportsmen will of one make sure,
 Rest honestly content of one secure ;
 The scatter'd Covey will no longer wait
 The Nets ; but may be theirs by future *Fate*.

But hold, my Spirits fail ! a Dram, a
 Dram,
 A Sup of Vigour to pursue the Game.
 Enough, enough — A Gulp too much is
 worse
 Than none at all, like one help'd over his
 Horse.

Sportf-

Sportsmen, beware; for the superfluous

Glas

Will blunt the Sight, and ev'ry Object glaze,

Whilst all Things seem around one undif-
tinguish'd Mas.

Th' unpointed Eye once dull'd, farewell the
Game :

A Morning Sot may shoot, but never aim ;

Marksmen and Rope-dancers with equal Care,

Th' insidious fasting Bottle shou'd forbear.

Else each, who does the Glas unwisely take,

E'er Noon a false and fatal Step will make ;

The first will *Turkeys* slay, and make *Pigs*
squeak,

The latter, ten to one, will break his Neck.

Yet,

Yet, how my Blood's on fire ! oh ! how I
 hate
 I sh' midst of Sport to see a Glutton eat,
 When Pheasants mount, and the Gay Birds
 arise,
 To see a Coxcomb paring of his Cheese !
 Scourge, Beadle, from the Field, that cram-
 ming Fool,
 Or pack the Mouncher back again to School,
 All that he chews to me proves pois'nous
 Food,
 And does Me much more Mischief than Him
 Good.

D

Halloo

Halloo — Halloo — See, see from yonder
Furze

The Lurchers have alarm'd and started Puffs!
Hold! What d'ye do? Sure you don't mean
to Fire!

Constrain that base, ungenerous Desire,
And let the Courser and the Huntsman share
Their just and proper Title to the Hare.
Let the poor Creature pass, and have fair Play,
And fight the Prize of Life out her own Way.
The tracing Hound by Nature was design'd
Both for the Use and Pleasure of Mankind;
Form'd for the Hare, the Hare too for the
Hound:

In Enmity each to each other bound:

Then

Then he who dares by diff'rent Means destroy
 Than Nature meant, offends 'gainst *Nature's*
Law.

Come on — 'Tis *Basking Time*, the Sultry
 Morn
 Draws forth the Coveys from the leaning
 Corn,
 Or round the Wheat they sit and taste the Sun,
 Or Clucking to the neighb'ring Coppice run,
 And there they spurn the Dust and waste
 the Noon.
 Away; some let us kill, and some disperse,
 And laugh, and eat our Gains, while Setters
 curse.

D 2

And

And now the golden Harvest cracks the Barn,
 Whilst at the Door stout Flail-men bang the
 Corn :

The Leazers now have giv'n their Gleaning
 o'er,

The Netters too have plentifully swore,

When the shy Birds, rais'd at the Sound of
 Down,

Clapp'd their loud Wings, and mock'd the
 Horseman's Frown.

Y'th' Ev'ning's Close, soon after *Phæbus* fall,
 Watchful attend the Partridge skreaking Call.

The

The Coveys for their Roosting Place prepare,
 The Old ones send their Summons from afar,
 And to their scatter'd Young give Signals
 of their Care.

Look narrowly thro' the Remains of Day,
 You'll see the packing Kinsfolk skirm away;
 Mark well the Place, the Morning will afford
 An early Banquet for the next Day's Board.
 But in the high Meridian of the Day
 The scraping Baskers in the Hedges lay,
 Full in the Sun's bright Eye: No Noise
 permit;
 Noise makes the Birds their dusty Mansions
 quit,
 Or nimbly run, or use the Wings in Flight.

Not

Not so the fullen Quail, who lies so close,
 That she almost abides the Lurcher's Nose ;
 With Patience hunt : The dear delicious Prey
 Will doubly for the cheap Attendance pay.
 Short Flights she takes, and you can hardly
 fail
 To spring her twice, if you observe her Fall.

But see, the stiffen'd Earth by Frost is bound,
 The flocking Larks bestrew and peck the
 Ground
 (A feather'd Harvest) with mysterious Treat
 Best nourish'd, when they little have to eat.
 The ambient Air their closing Pores constrains,
 And friendly Cold shuts up the breathing Veins ;
 From hence th'imprison'd Nutriment proceeds,
 And ev'ry Grain its Weight in Fatness breeds ;

But

But in the Compass of one melting Day,
That Richness all perspires, and flies away.

Now let the Sportsman so dispose his Charge,
As may dispense the circling Shot at large ;
The Shot and Powder well proportion'd be,
Neither exceeding in the Quantity ;
Destruction thus shall a wide Compass take,
And many little bleeding Victims make.

And now proceed, not by Approach, but
Storm ;
Run, briskly fire amidst the rising Swarm,
And you will treble Slaughter thus perform.

When

When each Bird moves expansive in the Air,
 And the whole Mark lies open, rais'd and fair,
 For one o'th' Ground, you have ten Chances
 there.

Down, down, a Mallard comes; contain your
 Arm,
 His Breast with Feathers arm'd no Shot can
 harm.

Affault him from behind, where less secure,
 He can the piercing Message less endure.

The Weather's chang'd—The Winds more
 briskly blow,

The Snites against the Wind will move but slow,
 Thin cover'd Snites ne'er travel down the Wind,
 Wise to maintain their Garments close behind.

The

The flirting Woodcocks now short Flights
will take,

And pearching Pheasants to the Trees will make.

Turn the *wild Poultry* from the Bough-- Away }
For shame, ne'er let that bawling Lurcher bay, }
Poachers alone surprize the gazing Prey. }

Jove! Lay these ratt'ling Gusts, and smooth
the Skies ;

We cannot hear the whirring Partridge rise,

The flashing Prime too in our Faces drives,

And now it mizzles---the damp Powder gives.

We cannot keep our Fire-locks dry---Away,

Our sport is over, 'tis in vain to stay.

Now that the pushing Winds distort the Aim,

And warp the palsy'd Barrels from the Game :

E

O'er

O'er Bowl of Punch suppos'd, or Tub of Ale
 Let us relate an useful *Winter-Tale*.

Matters of Fact, and modern Fates my Verse
 Shall with exact Integrity rehearse.

The strong Impressions may rash Youth prepare
 Safely to use the dang'rous Gun with Care.

Ye Parents, let your Sons these Stories know,
 And thus you may prevent the distant Woe.

A blooming Youth, who had just past the
 Boy,

The Father's only Child and only Joy,
 As he intent design'd the Larks his Prey,
 Himself as sweet and innocent as They,
 The fatal Powder in the Porch of Death,
 Having in vain discharg'd its Flash of Breath,

The

The tender Reas'ner, curious to know,
 Whether the Piece were really charg'd, or no,
 With Mouth to Mouth apply'd, began to
 blow.

A dreadful Kiss! For now the silent Bane
 Had bor'd a Passage thro' the whizzing Train,
 The Shot all rent his Skull, and dash'd a-
 round his Brain!

Unguarded Swains! oh! still remember
 this,
 And to your Shoulders close constrain the
 Piece,
 For *lurking Seeds of Death* unheard may hiss.
 The Gun remov'd, may in the firing fly,
 Wrench from your Hands, and wound the
 Standers-by.

Once more let me instruct th' uncaution'd
Youth ;

Be *Magd'line's* College Witness of the Truth :
For there th' unhappy careless Sacrifice
Under th' Inscription of the Story lies ;
Which, tho' not in Particulars express'd,
May by the gen'ral Meaning thus be guess'd.
As thro' the Brambles or th'intangling Brake,
The heedless *Strepbon* did his Passage make,
Th' unguarded Cock beneath himself he drew
Against some Sprig, and thus himself he flew !

Forgive me, if I longer must detain
And tire thy Patience with this tragic Strain, }
Since mine the Labour is, but thine may }
be the Gain.

Varied

Varied and frequent is the Accident
 Which ev'ry where attends the *Hammer'd Flint*.
 The neighb'ring Sparks into the Pan may fall,
 And the loose Piece with Mischief may recoil.
 Th' unheeded Muzzle pointed at a Friend,
 May instantly unthought Destruction send.
 Sometimes the Cock may at half-bent go down,
 True Sportsmen therefore always mount the
 Gun.

They walk with Flint by Guardian Thumb
 restrain'd,
 With Piece well handl'd, ready at Command,
 Nor need their jeopardiz'd Companions dread
 Their tripping Heels, or the strain'd Ankles
 tread,

Such

Such sad Events in ev'ry Place have been,
 Such fatal Ends have darken'd ev'ry Scene,
 That the good-natur'd *Muse* cou'd not forbear
 T' awake your Caution, and alarm your Care,
 Shepherds, farewell : Go, and her Words
 preserve ;
 The *Muse* at least will your best Thanks de-
 serve.

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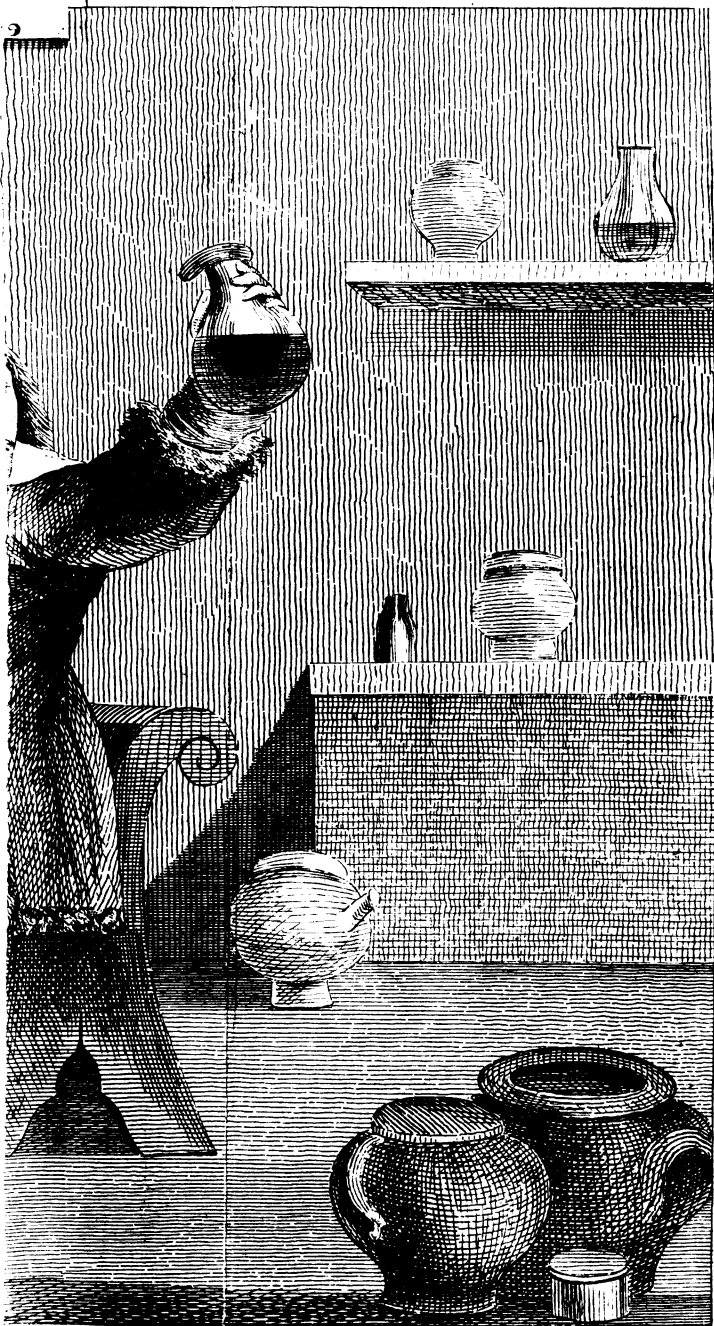
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