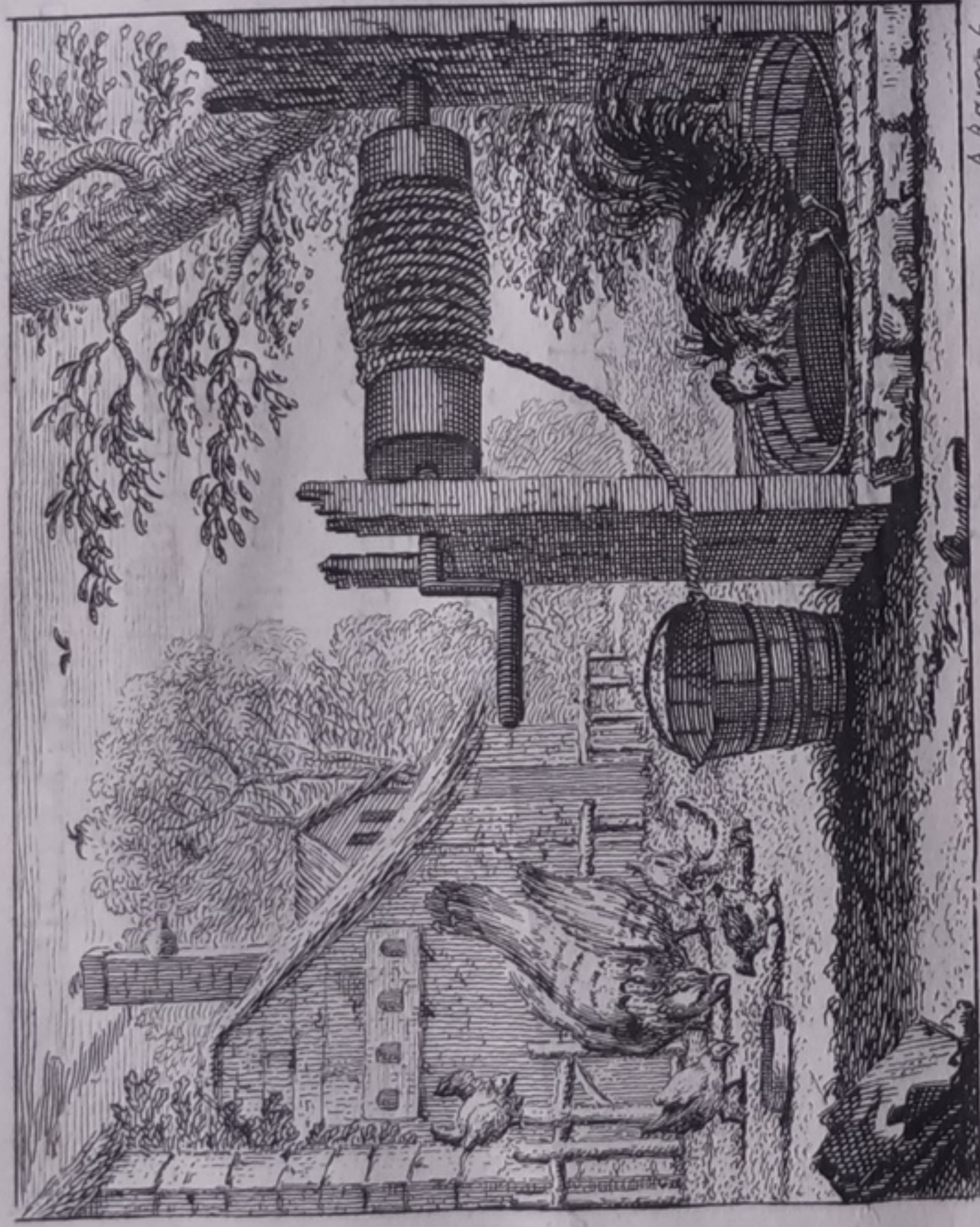




FABLE XX.

The Old Hen and the Cock.

Restrain your child; you'll soon believe
The text, which says, we sprung from Eve.

As an old Hen led forth her train,
And seem'd to peck to shew the grain;
She rak'd the chaff, she scratch'd the ground,
And glean'd the spacious yard around.
A giddy chick, to try her wings,
On the well's narrow margin springs,

L

And

And prone she drops. The mother's breast
All day with sorrow was possest.

A Cock she met; her son she knew,
And in her heart affection grew.

My son, says she, I grant your years
Have reach'd beyond a mother's cares;
I see you vig'rous, strong and bold,
I hear with joy your triumphs told;
'Tis not from cocks thy fate I dread:

But let thy ever-wary tread

Avoid yon well; that fatal place

Is sure perdition to our race.

Print this my counsel on thy breast;

To the just Gods I leave the rest.

He thank'd her care; yet day by day

His bosom burn'd to disobey,

And every time the well he saw

Scorn'd in his heart the foolish law;

Near and more near each day he drew,

And long'd to try the dang'rous view.

Why

Why was this idle charge? he cries:

Let courage female fears despise.

Or did the doubt my heart was brave,

And therefore this injunction gave?

Or does her harvest store the place,

A treasure for her younger race?

And would she thus my search prevent?

I stand resolv'd, and dare th' event.

Thus said. He mounts the margin's round,
And prys into the depth profound.

He stretch'd his neck; and from below

With stretching neck advanc'd a foe;

With wrath his ruffled plumes he rears,

The foe with ruffled plumes appears;

Threat answer'd threat, his fury grew,

Headlong to meet the war he flew;

But when the watry death he found,

He thus lamented, as he drown'd.

I ne'er had been in this condition

But for my mother's prohibition.