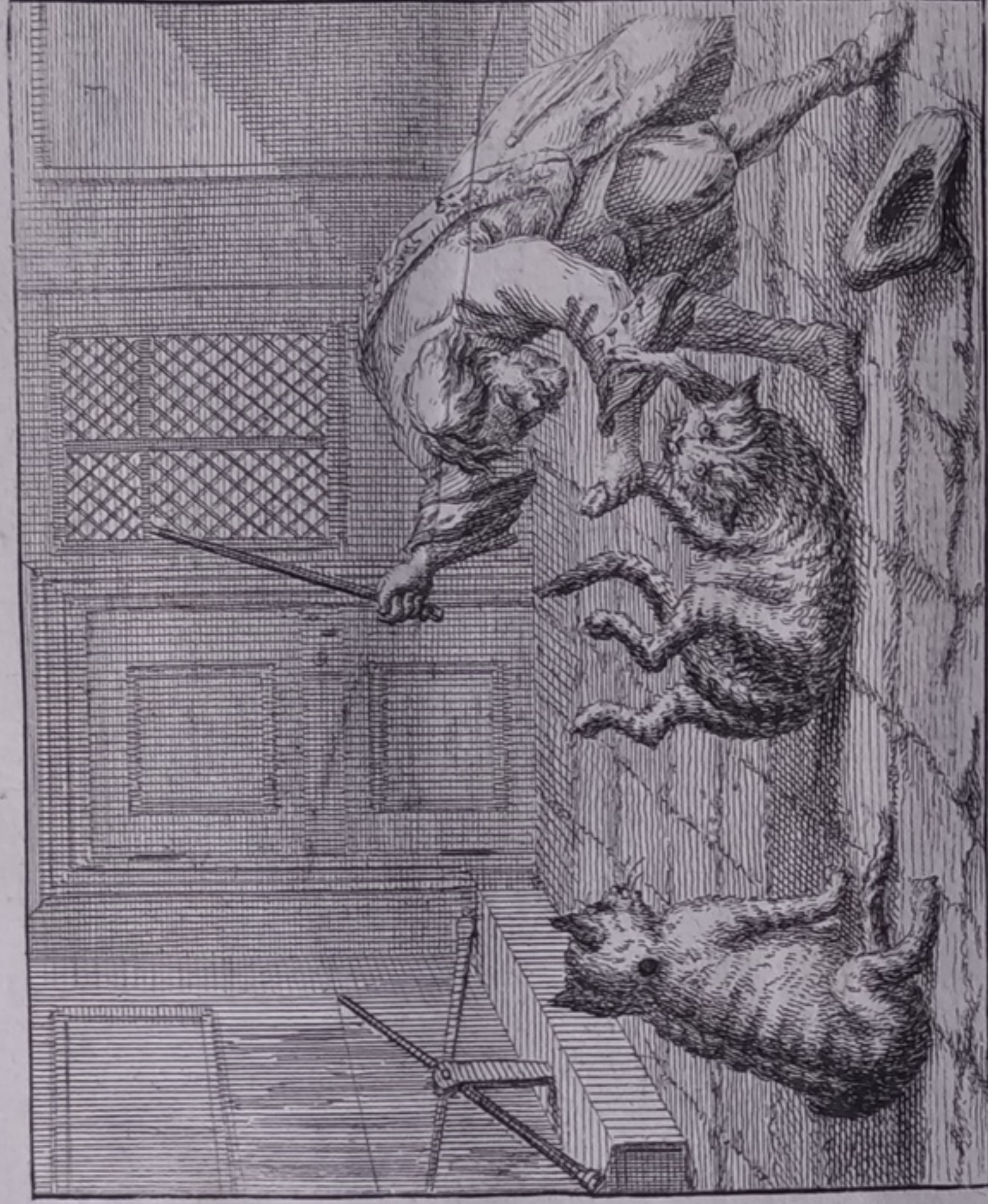




I. Wootton. inv.

P. Fourdrinier. scul.

FABLE XXI.

The RAT-CATCHER and CATS.

THE rats by night such mischief did,

Betty was ev'ry morning chid :

They undermin'd whole fides of bacon,

Her cheese was sapp'd, her tarts were taken,

Her pastys, fenc'd with thickest paste,

Were all demolish'd and laid waste.

5

She

She curst the cat for want of duty,
Who left her foes a constant booty.

An Engineer, of noted skill,
Engag'd to stop the growing ill.

From room to room he now surveys
Their haunts, their works, their secret ways,
Finds where they 'scape an ambushade,
And whence the nightly fally's made.

An envious Cat, from place to place,
Unseen, attends his silent pace,
She saw that, if his trade went on,
The purring race must be undone,
So, secretly removes his baits,
And ev'ry stratagem defeats.

Again he sets the poyson'd toils,
And pufs again the labour foils.

What foe (to frustrate my designs)
My schemes thus nightly countermines?

Incens'd, he crys: this very hour

The wretch shall bleed beneath my power.

So

So said. A pond'rous trap he brought,
And in the fact poor pufs was caught.

Smuggler, says he, thou shalt be made
A victim to our los of trade.

The captive Cat with piteous mew

For pardon, life and freedom sues.

A sister of the science spare,

One int'rest is our common care.

What insolence! the man reply'd,

Shall cats with us the game divide?

Were all your interloping band

Extinguish'd, or expell'd the land,

We rat-catchers might raise our fees,

Sole guardians of a nation's cheefe!

A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,

Thus spoke, and sav'd her sister's life.

In ev'ry age and clime we see,

Two of a trade can ne'er agree,

Each hates his neighbour for encroaching;

Squire stigmatizes squire for poaching;

Beautys with beautys are in arms,
And scandal pelts each other's charms;
Kings too their neighbour kings dethrone,
In hope to make the world their own.
But let us limit our desires,
Not war like beautys, kings and squires,
For though we both one prey pursue,
There's game enough for us and you.

