The hunting wasps

Fabre Jean-Henri
Title: The hunting wasps

Author: Fabre Jean-Henri

This is an exact replica of a book. The book reprint was manually improved by a team of professionals, as opposed to automatic/OCR processes used by some companies. However, the book may still have imperfections such as missing pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were a part of the original text. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections which can not be improved, and hope you will enjoy reading this book.
THE HUNTING WASPS
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE LIFE OF THE SPIDER
THE LIFE OF THE FLY
THE MASON-BEES
BRAMBLE-BEES AND OTHERS
THE HUNTING WASPS
THE
HUNTING WASPS

BY
J. HENRI FABRE

TRANSLATED BY
ALEXANDER TEIXIERA DE MATTOS
FELLOW OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1916
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XVII THE RETURN TO THE NEST</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII THE HAIRY AMMOPHILA</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX AN UNKNOWN SENSE</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX THE MODERN THEORY OF INSTINCT</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

HENRI Fabre's essays on Wasps will fill three volumes in all, of which this is the first. The others will be entitled The Mason-Wasps and More Hunting Wasps. The former will include the chapters on the Common or Social Wasp.


It is a pleasure once more to express my thanks to Miss Frances Rodwell, who, as usual, has rendered me much valuable assist-

vii
Translator's Note

ance, and to Mr. Geoffrey Meade-Waldo, of the Natural History Museum, who has been kind enough to set me right on many an entomological point.

Alexander Teixeira de Mattos.
Chelsea, 1915.
CHAPTER I

THE BUPRESTIS-HUNTING CERCERIS

THERE are for each one of us, according to his turn of mind, certain books that open up horizons hitherto undreamed of and mark an epoch in our mental life. They fling wide the gates of a new world wherein our intellectual powers are henceforth to be employed; they are the spark which lights the fuel on a hearth doomed, without its aid, to remain indefinitely bleak and cold. And it is often chance that places in our hands those books which mark the beginning of a new era in the evolution of our ideas. The most casual circumstances, a few lines that happen somehow to come before our eyes decide our future and plant us in the appointed groove.

One winter evening, when the rest of the household was asleep, as I sat reading beside a stove whose ashes were still warm, my book made me forget for a while the cares of the morrow: those heavy cares of a poor professor of physics who, after piling up diplomas and for a quarter of a century performing
The Hunting Wasps

services of uncontested merit, was receiving for himself and his family a stipend of sixteen hundred francs, or less than the wages of a groom in a decent establishment. Such was the disgraceful parsimony of the day where education was concerned; such was the edict of our government red-tape: I was an irregular, the offspring of my solitary studies. And so I was forgetting the poverty and anxieties of a professor’s life, amid my books, when I chanced to turn over the pages of an entomological essay that had fallen into my hands I forget how.

It was a monograph by the then father of entomology, the venerable scientist Léon Dufour, on the habits of a Wasp that hunted Buprestis-beetles. Certainly, I had not waited till then to interest myself in insects; from my early childhood, I had delighted in Beetles, Bees and Butterflies; as far back as I can remember, I see myself in ecstasy before the splendour of a Ground-beetle’s wing-cases or the wings of Papilio machaon, the

1Léon Dufour (1780–1865) was an army surgeon who served with distinction in several campaigns and subsequently practised as a doctor in the Landes. He attained great eminence as a naturalist. Cf. The Life of the Spider: by J. Henri Fabre, translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos, chap. i.—Translator’s Note.