

PUSS IN A SPARROW CHASE.—Our family cat doubtless has figured in other sparrow chases—of her own instituting, but I want here to introduce her as a star actor in a real humanly-conducted chase, such as the boys in some communities at least, are all familiar with.

As everyone knows, the noisy, quarrelsome, hungry, dirty, little English or house sparrow becomes an intolerably numerous and annoying nuisance at times. To keep him within some sort of bounds, shooting, poisoning, and other means must be employed, and as I have intimated, these various measures may be applied in concert by a whole community. A sparrow chase is ordinarily launched by the choosing of sides, usually in the winter season, when other birds are out of harm's way.

On one occasion Puss entertained us to some rather extraordinary behaviour, and set us wondering just what goes on in the mind of a mere cat. When our quest of sparrows one night, took us up into the barn, we found Puss there ahead of us on a like errand, experience having taught her that occasional stragglers might be had for the taking. Being an old pet, our proceedings did not disturb her much, and she looked on quietly, until presently escaping sparrows, blundering about the mows, aroused her interest. In the fitful light of our lanterns the birds would sometimes find new roosting places under the roof, but as often as not they would settle where quite accessible to us, or the cat. The latter was quick to see her advantage, and would spring after a passing sparrow, or marking its course, would pick her way along the framework or across mows, to reach its new resting-place. She was soon fairly beside herself over the novelty of the situation; at least that is how we charitably accounted for some of her eccentric doings. Time and again on capturing a bird, she hurried directly to us, and dropping it at our feet, proceeded to divide her attention between jealously guarding her precious booty, and rubbing herself furiously about our legs. Evidently she knew she "hadn't ought to" trust us humans so far, and yet she was consumed with a desire to manifest her delight, and we were the only beings about to show any adequate appreciation of her magnificent prowess. We surely did lionize her, seeking in so doing to hold her attention sufficiently to enable us to appropriate the sparrow's head before she should take the notion to eat it. The head was all we wanted, but when we feared her appetite might begin to fail, we deftly slipped an occasional bird out of sight, and took care to get her in-

terested in the chase again as quickly as possible. For several nights the comedy was repeated, Puss retaining her inordinate vanity, or whatever we call it, to the end of our operations in this barn. Once in a while, through a lurking suspicion of us, or some other whim of her own, she was ready to ignore us, and make a meal of her capture by herself, but usually coaxing was effective, when her own motives would not have brought her.

I have thought it worth while to record this, because, while a cat with a bird or mouse will often show a certain degree of friendliness, I have never seen or heard of anything to compare with this demonstration. On a couple of occasions I have known a cat with young kittens to behave in a somewhat similar manner. After keeping them carefully secreted for a time, she one day displays unusual attachment to a human friend, persisting in her attentions until she succeeds in drawing him, with evident purpose, to their hiding place—another instance, it would seem, of some overwhelming hunger after human sympathy or commendation, which domestication has placed there.

HERBERT GROH.

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ALBERTA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.—The 14th annual meeting of the society was held at Red Deer, on Friday, Nov. 28, 1919.

At the afternoon session the usual business was transacted, including the reading and passing upon of the report and financial statement of the secretary-treasurer, and the election of officers for the ensuing year, viz: Hon. President, Hon. D. Marshall; Hon. Vice-President, Mr. J. J. Gaetz, M.P.P.; Second Vice-President Mr. H. A. Craig; President, Mr. F. C. Whitehouse; Vice-President, Mrs. W. A. Cassels; Second Vice-President, Dr. H. George; Directors, Mrs. George, Mrs. Pamley, Mrs. Root, Mr. E. Wilton, Mr. C. H. Snell, Mr. W. F. Harris; Edmonton, Messrs. K. Bowman, F. S. Carr, D. Mackie.

At the evening session the following papers were read: The executive report, Mrs. Cassels; Annual entomological report, dealing with insect pests, Mr. Whitehouse; The crow family, Dr. George, illustrated with specimens and eggs; Birds of Flagstaff, Alberta, Mr. Fleming, of the University staff, Edmonton.

During the year the following papers were given:

Feb. 31—Notes of a survey tour down Peace river and through the Peace Delta, 1916, Mr. C. H. Snell.

March 28—Butterflies of Alberta, demonstrating





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