



The Children's Life of the Bee

Maurice Maeterlinck

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A fascinating and beautifully written exploration of the life of the honey bee. CONTENTS I ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE HIVE II THE SWARM III THE FOUNDATION OF THE CITY IV THE YOUNG QUEENS V THE MASSACRE OF THE MALES VI THE PROGRESS OF THE RACE The inhabitants of the hive become restless, and the old queen begins to stir. She feels that there is something to be done; something strange, that she has to do. So far, she has religiously fulfilled her duty as a good mother; but, to her, the accomplishment of this duty will bring no reward. An unknown power threatens her tranquillity; she will soon be forced to quit this city of hers, where she has so long reigned. But this city has been made by her. She is not its queen in the sense in which men use the word. She gives no orders; she obeys, as meekly as the humblest of her subjects, the hidden power that for the present we will call the "spirit of the hive." But she is the mother of the city; its inhabitants are all her children. It is she who has founded it, brought it together out of nothing, triumphed over the uncertainty and poverty of its beginning; it is she who has peopled it; and those who move within its walls--the workers, the males, the larvæ, the nymphs and young princesses--she is the mother of them all. Maeterlinck, who won the Noble Prize for Literature, wrote a more scholarly work called *The Life of the Bee* but then rewrote it in simpler terms so that children could appreciate what goes on in a hive. This book describes in simple language the inner workings of a hive from its beginning with a swarm to the fully functional hive with thousands of workers, drones and a queen busily building, repairing and gathering.

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