

CHAPTER LXXX

THE QUEEN-BEE

THE eggs destined to give birth to queens are laid in special cells, much more spacious and solid than those where the working bees hatch. Their shape is, in a general way, that of a thimble. They are fastened to the edge of the combs and are called royal cells."

"When she lays in a large or small cell," asked Jules, "does the queen know whether the egg is that of a queen or of a working-bee?"

"She does not know, she does not need to know. There is no difference between the queen-eggs and working-bee-eggs. Its treatment alone decides the issue for the egg. Treated in a certain manner, the young larva becomes a queen, on whom depends the future prosperity of the hive; treated in another way, it becomes one of the working people and is furnished with brushes and baskets. Bees make their queens at will; the first egg laid would suffice to fill the royal functions worthily, if treated with that end in view. And what does not treatment, or education, accomplish with us in our tender years? It does not make us kings or peasants, but honest people, which is better; and scoundrels, which is worse.



Queen Bee