

THE TRUE BEES

(Super-family Apoidea)

This great group, comprising about five thousand species, includes all of the true bees, both the honey-gatherers which have social communities and live a strict community life, and the solitary bees.

We have already seen in the table of super-families that the hind feet of these insects are dilated or thickened, and that the hairs of the head and thorax are feathery. These peculiar feathery hairs are found only in the true bees, which also differ from other Hymenoptera by the peculiar modification of the mouth-parts which are lengthened into a structure which is almost like a proboscis. It is a very conspicuous organ and is fitted in many of them for probing deep flowers and for gathering nectar. The mandibles or upper jaws

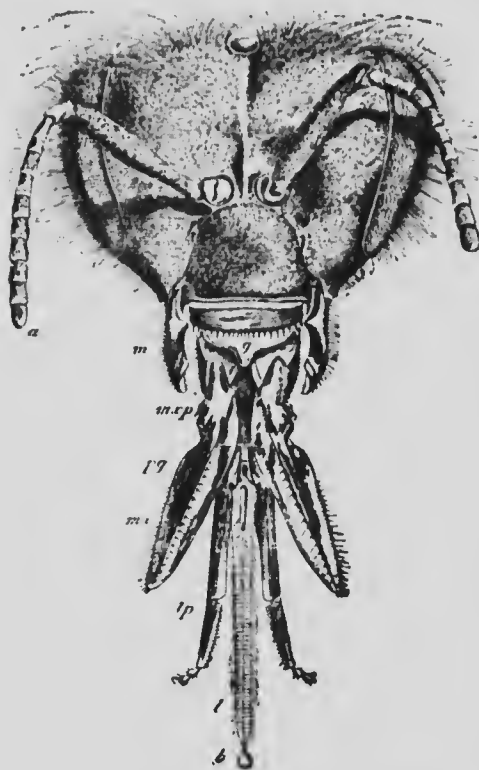


Fig. 1.—Head and tongue of worker honey bee.
(Redrawn from Cheshire.)