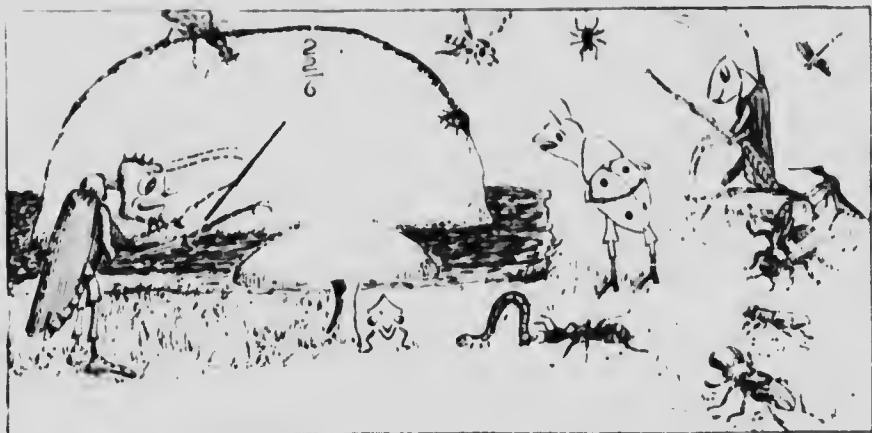




PROFESSOR INSTINCT'S SCHOOL FOR BUGS

MOTHER NATURE doesn't often make mistakes. She is a wise old dame. But when she started a school for bugs she certainly got herself into trouble. Yes, sir, she did. Of course she had a good teacher in Professor Instinct. He did his best and was not to blame for what happened—I will say that for him. The plan was wrong: and if you start on a wrong plan, nothing will go right.

You know that sunny bank near Lynn Creek, sheltered by vine maples, alder and crab-apples? Well, it was right there on that very bank where you ate your lunch when you went picnicking, that Professor Instinct, on a hot July morning, opened his School for Bugs. You should have seen them come! Hopping, running, crawling, creeping, wiggling, flying; big bugs and little bugs, all eager to be on time—as most little boys and girls are—the first day of school. Fat, sleek beetles, fuzzy-wuzzy bees, gay girly butterflies, young stubby-winged grasshoppers, flashy hover-flies, clumsy electric-light bugs, humpy fleas, and, sailing overhead, in soaring circles and dashing nose-dives, the aeroplanes of insect-land—the dragon-flies. Dear me, what a zipping, nipping, humming, drumming, buzzing, jolly crowd they were!

But the school-room was big enough to hold them all, and Professor Instinct looked very pleased as he waved his antennae for silence and pulled a long ruler out of his coat-tail pocket. Instead of a black-board he used a whiteboard formed of a nice fresh bracket-fungus on a piece of bark. A stick of charcoal took the place of chalk.

While the Professor turned his back to write a question on the whiteboard, Johnny Leafhopper took the chance to jump under the toad-stool that served the teacher as a desk. From this secure hiding-place he made faces at the other bugs. The tittering and giggling that followed made the Professor wheel round and glare angrily at his class. Not seeing any apparent cause for their merriment, he thought they were laughing at him, which of course made him angrier than ever.