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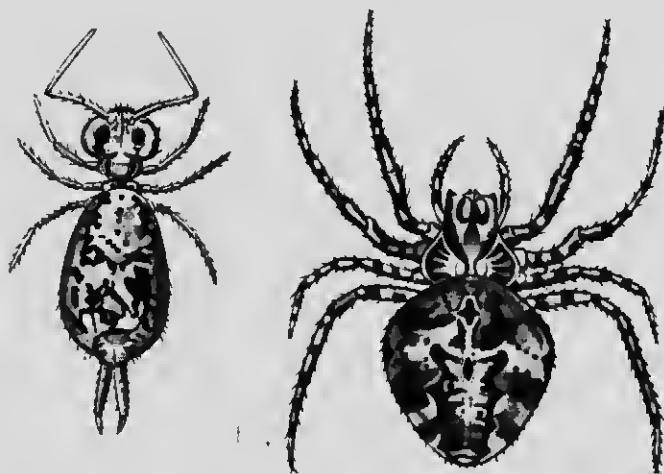
THE HERCULES BEETLE.

L. Ssp. F.L.S.

What is an Insect ?

In a work intended to give a popular account of the Wonders of Insect Life, it is essential that there should be a clear understanding as to the particular animals that are comprised under the term Insect. Formerly any living creature of small size was regarded as an Insect ; and we fear that among the present generation there are many persons for whom the word has scarcely any more definite meaning. But in this work we shall deal only with those animals that are accepted as Insects by modern naturalists ; for though we shall endeavour to describe their structure and their ways in language "understood of the people," we hope to speak with the accuracy that is often wanting in popular accounts.

All the multitudinous forms of animal life have been sorted out by naturalists, and placed in a number of grand divisions according to their possession of certain characteristics. There is no present need to name all these, but one division



INSECT AND SPIDER CONTRASTED.

A springtail, which is one of the simpler forms of Insect life, is here contrasted with a spider, which is not an Insect. Note the eight legs of the spider (right) compared with the six legs of the springtail ; the six legs being a distinguishing character in all Insects at maturity, whether they are winged or wingless.