

To the first tribe, those, namely, with *four* gills, some spiders belong, the instincts of which are very remarkable. One of the largest and most celebrated is the bird-spider.* It forms the tube which it inhabits of a white silk like muslin, which it fixes amongst leaves, and in any cavities, and there watches its prey; it is accused by some of destroying even birds, whence its name, especially the humming-bird:† but this rests upon questionable authority; and writers are not agreed as to its general habits. Probably several species are confounded under the same name. I shall not therefore enlarge further on its history; I mention it merely as the largest spider known.

The proceedings of those called the *trap-door* spiders‡ are better authenticated, as those of the mason-spider by the Abbé Sauvages,§ and those of another species very recently, in the annals of the French Entomological Society, by M. V. Audoin, one of the most eminent of modern entomologists, under the name of the *pioneer*;|| of his interesting memoir I shall here give a brief abstract.

Fig. 88.



Cteniza fodiens.

Some species of spiders, M. Audoin remarks, are gifted with a particular talent for building: they hollow out dens; they bore galleries; they elevate vaults; they build, as it were, subterranean bridges: they construct also entrances to their habitations, and adapt doors to them, which want nothing but bolts, for, without any exaggeration, they work upon a hinge, and are fitted to a frame.¶

* Mygale avicularia.

† Trochilus.

‡ Cteniza.

§ Ct. Sauvagesii.

|| Ct. fodiens.

¶ The French word is *féyure*, which I cannot find in the dictionaries, but it means the circular frame of the mouth of the tube which receives the door.