

hollowed points. It frequents the fresh waters of Europe. But it is in some sort amphibious; for it can live on land as well as in the water, and comes often on shore for its food; yet it swims well in water, both on its belly and back: it is distinguishable by its brightness. In the water its belly appears covered with a silver varnish, which is only a bubble of air attached to the abdomen by means of the oily humours which transpire from its body, and prevent the immediate contact of the water. This bubble of air constitutes the substance of its dwelling, which it constructs under water; for it fixes several threads of silk, or such fine matter, to the stalks of plants in the water; and then ascending to the surface, thrusts the hinder part of its body above water, drawing it back again with such rapidity, that it attaches underneath a bubble of air, which it has the art of detaining under water, by placing it beneath the threads above-mentioned, and which it binds like a covering almost all round the air bubble. Then it ascends again for another air bubble; and thus proceeds, until it has constructed a large aërial apartment under water, which it enters into or quits at pleasure. The male constructs for