

When these reptiles are about to change into a fly state, the smooth and depressed form of the upper part of the body becomes more swollen and of a rounder shape. They are found in the greatest numbers along the banks of the Rhine, or the Seine, near Paris, where about sun-set, for three or four days in the middle of summer, they excite astonishment by their multiplicity. The thickest descent of flakes of snow in winter does not seem to equal their number; the whole air seems alive with the newborn race, and the earth itself is covered all over with their remains. With these the operation of change is performed with the greatest ease. The aurelias are scarcely lifted above the surface of the water, when their old sheathing skin bursts, and through the cavity which is thus formed a fly issues, whose wings, at the same instant are unfolded, and lift it into the air. Those that are yet beneath the surface of the water, wait only for the evening to begin their transformation; the most industrious shake off their old garments about eight o'clock, and those who are the most tardy are transformed before nine. Millions and millions of aurelias rise in this manner to the surface, and at once become flies, and fill every quarter with their flutterings.