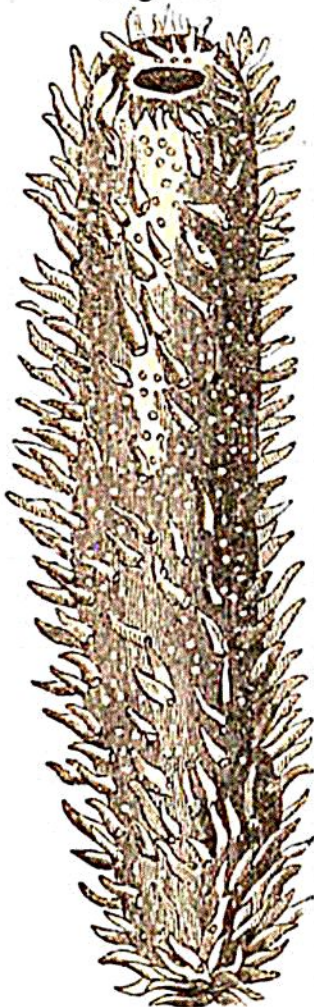


growing from its skin (*fig. 27*): but a closer examination would give him a very different idea, and he would discover, with wonder, that it was a mass filled with animals, united by their base, exceeding the number of the above appendages. The common body that contains these creatures resembles a hollow cylinder closed at its upper extremity and open at the lower; this body or mass is gelatinous and transparent; a number of tubercles of a firmer substance than the tube, but at the same time transparent, polished, and shining, differing in size, cover the surface; some being very short and others longer, and the longer ones terminated by a lance-shaped leaflet. At the summit of each tubercle is a circular aperture, without tentacles, opposite to which is another circular orifice, which is toothed.

Fig. 27.



Pyrosoma giganteum.

\* P. atlanticum.

† P. giganteum.

The pyrosomes are among the largest of the phosphoric animals, the *Atlantic* species\* being about five inches long, and the *Mediterranean*† sometimes attaining to the length of fourteen. Their power of emitting light is so great that in the night they cause the sea to appear on fire. Nothing can exceed the dazzling light and brilliant colours that these floating bodies exhibit—colours varying in a way truly admirable, passing rapidly every instant, from a dazzling red to saffron, to orange, to green, and azure, and thus reflecting every ray into which the prism divides the light, or which is exhibited by the heavenly bow. In the water their position is generally horizontal, and their locomotion very simple: they float, as they are carried by the waves or the currents; like the salpes, they can, however,