

it produce a constant flow of mucous, a slime track on which its body and foot walks or undulates by muscular waves from back to front. An average snail's speed may be funny. It's not zero, but about one mile in sixteen days, fourteen hours—some one finds. Its soft foot lies always on a greased floor, protected from the rough ground. Though we cannot expect snails to leap off the ground, they *can* lift up their heads, and a few can burrow down a foot or two during droughts or winter.

It is only in rare, abnormal cases that humans are hermaphroditic, whereas most snails are naturally. Each individual snail has the reproductive apparatus of both sexes, both sexes combined in one; paring snails fertilize each other.

Well, about the New Zealand snail. Snails lay eggs like birds, but this snail's eggs are very large in proportion to the parent's size. I've seen a snail from an isolated island off New Zealand, its one egg about the size of a thrush's; a specially adapted reproductive system, not for the mass production of marine snails, but for one superb individual product, like that of several tropical giants. The snail I'm describing lays very interesting eggs. I've collected them after much poring about, peeping under fallen clumps of parasitical tree-plants, in well-protected, mouldy, damp, shady places as at the base of tree-trunks or tall palms. I've never found them in the open, unprotected. Others have discovered them up trees among the dense grassy tree-plants I've just mentioned, like birds' nests; or like the Solomon Islands arboreal snails, and Philippine Islands species supposed to live near the tops of tropical forests.

You may find as many as eighteen of these eggs neatly packed together; they are white, oval, about a quarter-inch broad, hatching out fairly easily at ordinary temperatures, in moist conditions taking six weeks to two months. The wee snail comes out, not by the shell's being pecked through, but perhaps by the mere process of expansion, all the time borrowing lime material from the egg-shell itself (which was originally borrowed from the limestone

habitat) and building it into its own baby shell. The egg-shell is weakened and can then be readily burst. Did you ever know such economical economists?

Now, it's unparental and illegal, I know, but no parental care is exercised by either of the twin-sexed parents except that possibly moulds and similar food matter are chosen for the nest as food for the young.

From ancient Tarquinium to Whip-snade snails have been farmed for epicures. My interest isn't epicurean. This New Zealand snail is rare in being definitely carnivorous. You have only one or two carnivorous snails here, all the rest are confirmed vegetarians. I wish I could show you its teeth under the microscope; they'd horrify you. Instead of molar teeth on a flat base, grinding leaves against a horny upper jaw, like most snails, this snail has real canine teeth, sharp pointed, backward-crooked cusps placed all round the mouth walls. Flesh is rubbed and scraped between two-toothed sides, not thirty or forty, but ten thousand. It takes a mass of muscles to work those rows of teeth. The common snail has about fifteen hundred herbivorous teeth; the great black slug boasts thirty thousand canine teeth like our giant's, and seems to be proportionally carnivorous and omnivorous. I've kept the giant snails among lettuce and leaves, but, hungry or not, they didn't touch it. Most snails, being herbivorous, would be happy. So we see some snails have teeth like dogs and cats, others like cows—the great majority.

