

## NOTE ON THE OVIPOSITION OF THE MUD TURTLE.

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By MAILES COWLEY, Bristol, Que.

In the month of October, 1896, my hired man was ploughing near the Ottawa River in the Township of Clarendon, and about nine feet above the level of the water he ploughed up a mud turtle's nest, which contained about fifty eggs. They were about eight inches under ground and covered with a solid grass sod, there being no entrance to the nest except from the top, where there was a hole about one inch and a quarter in diameter. The field in which the nest was situated had not been cultivated for more than forty-five years. The nest was shaped like an inverted soup-tureen, the hole being in the top of the dome, and how the young turtles got out when hatched is not easy to guess. These eggs were seen in the fall and not a thing was found in the shells when the snow was going off in the month of April, the following spring. Were they hatched by the early spring sun, or did some animal eat them?

One of my neighbors, Mr. John Telfer, a reliable man, who has done much hunting and fishing, says that some years ago he came across a good sized turtle about six acres from the Ottawa River at Clarendon Front, in the county of Pontiac, and as its movements were peculiar he decided to watch it. He climbed a leaning tree and from his position a few feet above the ground he saw the turtle lift up her hinder part and drop an egg. Then with one of her hind legs she took the egg and reaching far down in the hole placed it in the nest. After about a minute the same process was again gone through with, and so on until she had laid about a dozen eggs. Mr. Telfer says that he is satisfied that a turtle lays all its eggs at one time, not at intervals like a hen. He affirms that they hollow out the nest first and then cover it over, leaving a small hole in the top large enough to allow a hind leg to enter it with an egg. Mr. Telfer also expressed his wonder at the length to which a turtle could stretch her leg and the care she displays in placing the eggs in the nest. Though he never saw a young turtle come out of a nest his belief is that the mother watches the nest, and when the young are hatched, either pulls the