

with its head reared in the centre, his mouth unclosed, his fierce eyes gleaming vindictively, and all his motions indicating a watchful and enraged enemy. Hark gazed at the reptile with an eager and malignant satisfaction. His features, usually stupid, were now animated with hatred and triumph. The scene was precisely suited to interest the sportsmanlike propensities of Mr. George Lee, if he had not happened to be too hungry to enjoy anything which might delay him any longer in the wilderness.

“Kill the snake, boy,” said he, impatiently, “and then show me the way to some house.”

Hark motioned with his finger, as if enjoining silence, and replied laconically, “It ain't ready yet.”

The rattle-snake now raised his tail and shook his rattles, as if in defiance; and then, as if satisfied with this show of valor, and finding that his enemies made no advance, but stood motionless, slowly uncoiled himself, and began to glide away. Hark left his position, and, with noiseless steps, alertly made a small circuit so as to place him in front of the enemy. The snake raised his head, darted out his tongue, and then turned to retreat in another direction; but no sooner had he presented his side to Hark, than the intrepid snake-killer bounded forward, and alighted with both his feet on the neck of the reptile, striking rapidly, first with one foot, and then the other, but skillfully keeping his victim pinned to the ground, so as to prevent the use of its fangs. The snake, in great agony, now twisted the whole of its long body round Hark's leg; and the boy, delighted to witness the writhings of his foe, stood for a while grinning in