

Exercise 8

Abridged from 'Far Away and Long Ago' by W.H. Hudson.
Write a precis of the following passage in not more than 80 words.

Snakes were common about us: snakes of seven or eight different kinds, green in the green grass, and yellow and dusky – mottled in the dry and barren places and in withered herbage, so that it was difficult to detect them. Sometimes they intruded into the dwelling rooms, and at all seasons a nest or colony of snakes existed in the thick old foundations of the house, and under the flooring. In winter they hibernated there, tangled together in a cluster no doubt, and in summer nights they were at home, coiled at their ease or gliding ghost-like about their subterranean apartments. I would lie awake and listen to them by the hour. For although it may be news to some closet ophiologists, serpents are not all so mute as we think them. At all events this kind, the *philodryas aestivus* – a beautiful and harmless colubrine snake, two and half to three feet long, marked all over with inky black on a vivid green ground – not only emitted a sound when lying undisturbed in his den, but several individuals would hold a conversation together which seemed endless, for I generally fell asleep before it was finished: a hissing conversation it is true, but not unmodulated, or without considerable variety in it, a long sibilation would be followed by distinctly-heard ticking sounds, as of a husky-ticking clock, and after ten or twenty or thirty ticks another hiss, like a long expiring sigh, sometimes with a tremble in it as of a dry leaf swiftly vibrating in the wind. No sooner would one cease than another would begin; and so it would go on. It was dark in my room, and to my excited imagination, the serpents were no longer under the floor, but out, gliding hither and thither over it, with uplifted heads, in a kind of mystic dance; and I often shivered to think what my bare feet might touch if I were to thrust a leg out and let it hang over the bedside.

10 Keys

Exercise

"Snakes of different kinds and me"

Precis:

There are different kinds of snakes.

Some are green, yellow and dusky in colors with spots.

They found under the flooring of old-houses.

They remain inactive in winter, and in summer, they move

with a ghost-like hissing sound and communicate with each other.

I saw them dancing in my dreams, and become afraid to my lower body.

Total words:

334

Precis words:

57

(Require words less than 80)