

Ellis Edward Sylvester

# Blazing Arrow: A Tale of the Frontier



Edward Ellis

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## CHAPTER I. LARRY AND WHARTON

"I'll follow him to the right, and you, Larry, go to the left; we'll have him then, sure."

"All right; it's mesilf that will bate ye, fur all ye're the swiftest runner in Kintucky."

"There isn't a minute to lose; move faster, Larry!"

"Do you attind to your own business, and lave Larry Murphy to himsilf."

The words were uttered quickly, for the two youths were eager and excited. They had caught sight of an enormous bear a few minutes before, as he lumbered into the canebrake in the direction of the torrent which swept furiously toward the Ohio. The young Irishman happened to be a few paces in advance of his companion, Wharton Edwards, and took a flying shot at the brute. Whether he struck him or not was uncertain. The probabilities were that, despite his skill with the rifle, he only scratched his bulky body, or missed him altogether. Before Wharton could bring his weapon to bear, bruin was beyond reach for the time.

It was at this juncture that the fleet-footed youth bounded to the side of his Irish friend and urged him to hurry to the left, while he circled in the other direction. One of them must head off the game, and it mattered little which did it provided it was done.

Larry Murphy was as ardent in his pursuit as his comrade, and was hopeful of getting the prize away from him. Pausing, therefore, only long enough to exchange the words quoted, he was off like a deer.

"That young man houlds a high opinion of himsilf," he muttered, as he crashed forward, "and I've saan worse fellys than Whart Edwards. He can bate all creation running, but I'm hoping that he may thrip his feet so as to give mesilf a show – "

It was poetical justice, perhaps, that the fate which the young Irishman wished might overtake his friend claimed him for his own, for, while the words were in his mouth, a wire-like vine on the ground did the mischief. It wound round his ankle like an angry black snake, and he sprawled forward on his hands and knees, his gun flying several feet from his hands.

"Bad luck to it!" he growled, climbing to his feet; "that's just the sthyle I used to thrip up the spalpeens. I'm onsartin whether me neck is broke off or not, but I'll have to lave it to find out till this little job is over."

The fall was so violent that he limped for a few paces, and his speed was lessened; but the stream was not far off, and the rugged lad was quick to rally from his discomfiture.

"Begorrah, but I've got the laugh on Whart," he exclaimed, a minute later, as he caught sight of a dark object among the trees; "that shot of mine landed the beast, and knowing that it's mesilf that's entitled to him, he has left Wharton and turned off there to wait for me to finish him."

If this quaint faith were genuine, Larry did not trust it farther than he was compelled to. Instead of waiting till he could draw nearer and secure a truer shot, he stopped abruptly, brought his heavy rifle to a level, sighted quickly but carefully, and let fly.

There was no doubt about his having hit the mark this time. He was a good shot, and the distance was too slight for him to miss. Forgetting the law of the hunter, which requires him to reload his discharged gun before moving from his tracks, Larry lowered his weapon, and driving his broad honest face through the wreath of smoke before it could lift from the muzzle of his rifle, he dashed forward toward the game to which he was sure he had just given the finishing touch.

In his excitement, and with his partly obscured view, he did not observe that the bear remained immovable. If he had noticed it, he would have concluded that the beast had been mortally wounded by the first shot and had collapsed while on the way to the stream of water.

"Now Whart will be filled wid jilousy whin he finds that the bear surrindereed to me. Had it been him that come in sight of the beast he wouldn't have stopped, but obsarving that it was mesilf, he threw up his hands and – "

Larry paused in dismay. Crashing through the brush, he stopped close to his supposed prize, and found that, instead of its being the game he had in mind, it was the lower portion of an immense tree that had probably lain for years on the ground. It bore some resemblance to a prostrate animal, but the youthful hunter never could have made the mistake except for his flurried condition.

"Wurrah, wurrah, now, but that was a bad miss," he muttered, grinning at his own blunder. "I don't see any necessity for acquainting Whart wid all the sarcumstances, but if the stump doesn't say anything about it, I'll hold me pace."

The slip took away from the youth about all the hope he had felt until then of bagging the bear. He knew at the time that young Edwards gave him the better chance, for it was just like the magnanimous fellow to do that thing, and Larry had lost it through his own stupidity.

He listened for a few moments, uncertain which way to move or turn. There seemed little use in trying to regain his lost opportunities, but the doughty fellow mortally hated to give up the peculiar contest without another effort.

He could hear the dull roar of the torrent as it poured over the falls only a short way off, and he fancied once that he detected the rush of some swiftly-moving body through the wood. Of this, however, he could not be certain, because of the interfering noise of the stream.

"Whist, now, but I forgot the same!" he suddenly added, as he recalled that it was an empty weapon which he held in his hand.

"S'pose now that that cratur should turn 'round to make my acquaintance; I would have to ask him to have the kindness to wait awhile until I could get the gun in shape, and he would be mane 'nough to object."

Despite Larry's fondness for talking, either with a companion or himself, and despite the apparent absurdity of many things he said, he wasted no time when it was of value, and he committed few errors of judgment.

The proper amount of powder was poured from the unstopped horn into the palm of his hand and sent rattling down the inclined barrel of his heavy gun. Then a bullet, clasped in a small square of oiled cloth, was rammed tightly upon the charge; the yellow flint was drawn back and the pan filled with the black grains; then the hammer was carefully lowered, and the old-fashioned weapon was ready for use.

At that moment the report of a rifle broke the stillness, and the startled Larry, glancing around, exclaimed in a guarded undertone:

"I b'leave Whart is in trouble."

## CHAPTER II. ON THE BRINK

Meanwhile young Edwards found himself a stirring actor in a stirring series of events.

He set out with all the ardor of a young hunter to bring down the bear, which was the most enormous one he had ever seen in the Kentucky wilds. His fondness for his jovial companion led him to give him what seemed to be the best chance to secure him; and it may be said that, had the situations of the youths been reversed, bruin would have quickly fallen a victim to the prowess of the young Kentuckian. But fate made a turn of the wheel of fortune of which neither dreamed.

Wharton Edwards possessed wonderful fleetness of foot, and counted on no trouble in running down the lumbering beast; but when he struck the point where he ought to have been visible, he was not in sight.

The acute hearing of the youth, however, told him where the bear was plunging through the undergrowth. It was in the direction of the stream, and fearful that he would escape him altogether, Wharton took up the pursuit with all the energy at his command.

The momentary pause had given the bear an advantage which he used with a sagacity worthy of a more intelligent creature than he. Without turning to the right or left, he swung ponderously along until he reached the edge of the torrent, into which he tumbled like a rock falling down the side of a mountain.

"I've got you now!" was the exultant exclamation of the youth, who reached the point where bruin had disappeared within ten seconds afterwards.

An exasperating state of affairs confronted him. The high, rocky bluff on each side of the swift current shut out all view of the water within two or three yards of the side on which the spectator happened to stand. Whether instinct led the bear to adopt the course he did is uncertain, but it is hardly credible, since his species are well known to be stupid; but, be that as it may, this specimen, instead of making for the other bank, kept so near to the one from which he had leaped that young Edwards could not see him. The only way in which he could gain a view of him was by lying down on his face and peering over.

He had no time to do this, besides which, under the circumstances, it was almost impossible to gain a shot at the swimming bear.

The presumption was that he would make for the other bank in quest of some opening by which to leave the water, but Wharton, in his eagerness, was unwilling to count upon that.

"If I were upon the other side," was his thought, as he hurried nervously along the bluff, seeking to keep pace with the rushing current, "I would have him just where I wanted him. But I shall lose him, for there is no way to get across – yes there is, and I'll do it, sure as a gun."

A hundred yards below, and quite near the falls, the bluffs approached each other so closely that he was sure he could leap from one to the other. Thus in a bound he could place himself in the best position to shoot the game against which he began to feel a resentment because of the manner in which it baffled him.

Had young Edwards been more familiar with his immediate surroundings, or less enthusiastic in his pursuit of the prize, he would have hesitated, and, adopting the good old adage, looked before he leaped; but he was carried away by the excitement of the moment, and did that which no one would have been quicker than he, under other circumstances, to condemn.

Running rapidly along the bluff, and parallel with the course of the stream, he reached the narrow portion upon which he had fixed his eye, gave it a glance, and decided that by no great effort he could leap to the corresponding bluff on the opposite side.

And beyond a doubt he would have succeeded had he used only ordinary precaution, but he was in dread lest the bear should escape him. The falls were but a short way below, and though the raging waters were likely to finish him, that of itself would spoil everything. No hunter likes to see another take his game out of his hands, and he viewed such a loss through the falls in the same light. His blood was up, and he meant to secure the animal if it was "in the wood."

Stepping hastily back for a couple of paces, he gathered himself, ran the distance, and, concentrating his strength in the effort, leaped toward the opposite bluff.

The instant he left the ledge he saw to his horror that he was going to fall. A leaper or runner always feels what is coming before the crisis is upon him, and Wharton Edwards knew he had made an awful miscalculation.

With the desperation of despair he flung his rifle from him at the instant of leaping, and when it was too late to withdraw. It landed on the rocks, and the impact of the hammer caused its discharge, the ball, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, passing within a few inches of the owner's face.

It was only for a passing breath that the youth was in the air, but it seemed to him he was held suspended for several minutes over the raging waters. He struck only a few inches short, but those few inches were fatal. His chest and lower part of the body collided violently with the solid wall, and his hands were thrown over the surface on which he had hoped and expected to place his feet.

He clutched fiercely to save himself, and had there been anything to grasp must have succeeded; but there was nothing, and, rebounding fully a foot, he went down into the torrent twenty feet below. As if fate meant to dally with and mock him, he splashed within a few feet of the bear, who, with a snuff of fear, turned away and began a wild effort to swim against the current. The brute had become aware of the roaring falls close at hand, and saw the trap in which he was caught, and from which it was impossible to extricate himself until, as may be said, he was almost on the brink of the falls.

A short distance from the plunge was a gap in the bluff, where the ground was only a few inches above the surface of the water. If the brute should hold himself close to the bank on that side until this favoring point was reached, he could save himself.

And he did, though little credit belonged to him for the feat. Like the stupid creature that he was, he continued furiously striving to swim against the current, and without stemming it in the least; but the same blind instinct kept him clawing at the rocks on the side from which he had leaped, and thus held him in the only position which gave the slightest hope.

All at once the beam-like claws struck the rocky bottom. The water quickly shallowed. By a prodigious effort he checked his swift downward progress – then he secured a foothold – his massive, shaggy body heaved up from the water – he plunged heavily to one side, and, with another mighty putting forth of his strength, walked out upon the solid earth and was safe.

Beyond peradventure, Wharton Edwards would have done equally well had the opportunity been given him to study for a few seconds his perilous surroundings. He would have been quick to see the opening through which his intended prize escaped, and the gorge was so narrow that he could readily have swam across to it in the few moments at his command; but the youth was in a hapless situation.

He landed against the bluff with such violence that the breath was driven from his body, and when he struck the water he was senseless. The rush of the chilling current, as he shot below the surface, partly revived him, and he made an instinctive effort at self-preservation. The blow, however, had been severe, and his brain was in a whirl the next moment, the torrent carrying him with great swiftness toward the falls.

Larry Murphy was closer to the stream than he had supposed, while reloading his rifle. The report of his friend's rifle gave him the necessary guidance, and he dashed over the intervening distance at the top of his speed.



A minute later he peered over the bluff, and, without seeing the bear, which was almost beneath him, saw the head and shoulders of his friend, who had come to the surface a few seconds before.

"Ye blundering spalpeen, that's no place to go in swimming!" called the frightened youth, with no suspicion of the mishap that had occurred.

Undecided what to do, and yet unable to stand idle, Larry ran along the edge of the bluff, and a minute later saw to his amazement the bear emerge and shake his dripping coat. It would have been easy to shoot him down, for there could not have been a fairer target; but the youth had no thought of bagging game in those terrible moments, and he bestowed hardly a glance at the brute.

A second look at young Edwards told him that something was wrong.

"Swim toward me!" shouted Larry, loud enough for his clear voice to be heard above the thunder of the waters.

He had bounded headlong down the sloping bluff, and then off into the open low space, which offered the only hope. It was a high leap, but in his excitement he did not notice it.

"Swim hard, ould felly, or it'll be too late – hivin save me, but he's drowning!"

Wharton's head was dipping below the surface, and his arms had ceased the feeble struggles they made a short time before. The youth was really drowning.

He was now so nearly opposite the opening in the bluff, and so near the plunge of waters, that had he been in the full possession of his senses and strength he could have swam the space, brief as it was, only by the most desperate efforts. In his senseless condition he could not accomplish it, of course, had he been in water as still as a mill pond.

Larry Murphy saw and comprehended all this in the twinkling of an eye. He knew that if he stood where he was it would be to see his loved friend die, and if he plunged in after him both would go over the falls, with possibly one chance in a thousand of their escape.

And did he, while quickly weighing the chances, hesitate?

## CHAPTER III. OVER THE FALLS

Not for an instant. He had decided on his course while leaping down into the opening which had admitted the imperilled bruin into safety. The moment he landed he flung his gun away, snatched off his hat, doffed his coat, seemingly with the same movement, and leaped with might and main into the terrible current.

The narrow width at this portion caused him to strike within arm's length of his friend. The left arm of the powerful young Irishman gripped the collar of the sinking youth, and he gave him a shake fierce enough almost to dislocate his neck.

"Wake up, Whart, ye spalpeen! What's the matter wid ye?"

They were now so close to the falls that the voice of Larry was indistinct, but the violent shaking did just what was needed. The half-drowned youth was roused, and stared about him in a bewildered way. He gasped and began struggling.

"Take it aisy, me boy," added Larry, who could not avoid talking even in that appalling moment; "ye nadn't try to swim over the falls, for the water is kind enough to save ye the trouble."

The knowledge that his friend was alive, when he feared he was not, was enough to send a thrill of pleasure through him, even though the awakening, as may be said, was on the brink of death itself.

Young Edwards was still too bewildered to comprehend matters. His struggling continued, but it was instinctive and naturally without the least result. His companion retained his grasp on his collar until he saw that nothing could be gained by it. Then he let go and gave more attention to himself.

By this time they were on the brink of the falls. The torrent moved with a calm, swift, hurrying impressiveness that was the more appalling because of its contrast with the churning hades of waters below. It was as if the volume, gathering itself for the plunge, ran forward with eager speed and dived off the rocks into the boiling cauldron.

Larry Murphy was too wise to make any resistance. He drew in his breath, cast one look at the white face of his friend, uttered a prayer for both, and then over they went.

Neither of the youths were ever able to tell clearly what followed during the few moments, though their experiences must have been quite similar. Larry Murphy probably kept better track of events than his companion, because he had not suffered the temporary daze undergone by him a brief while before.

It seemed to him that on the very brink of the falls he was thrown bodily outward and downward by some fearful power independent of the resistless current. The descent, of necessity, was short, but it appeared to be tenfold its actual length. Then he went down, down, down, as though he would never stop, until he fancied that he was driven to the bottom of a watery cavern of immeasurable depths.

He instinctively held his breath until he felt that the distended blood-vessels must burst. He was whirled about and tossed hither and thither amid spray and foam and more sold water, like an egg-shell in a maelstrom. Then, when he could hold his breath no longer, he made one spasmodic inhalation. He was almost strangled, but a part of that which he drew in was air. The next breath was all air, and then he was swimming in the comparatively smooth water below the falls.

As soon as he could clear his eyes and look about him, he saw that he was borne along by the swift current, which was double the width of the stream above. Instead of the rocky bluffs which rendered it almost unapproachable in that portion, the banks were comparatively low and lined with large trees, some of which leaned out over the water, with their limbs almost touching it.

The most pleasing sight that greeted Larry was that of his friend in the act of lifting himself upon dry land, with the help of one of the overhanging limbs. He had escaped and was himself again.

"Are you all right?" he called, in a cheery voice, looking around at Larry, who was swimming hard toward the same point, but would be unable to strike it until he passed a few rods below.

"I'm not sure, but I think I be; I'll report whin I sets fut on dry land."

"If you are bruised or hurt, I'll swim out to your help."

"Stay where ye be till I asks ye to do the same."

Wharton moved along the bank, so as to keep pace with his friend. When the shore was reached he extended his hand and helped him out, and, as may be supposed, the two greeted each other with warmth and gratitude.

Wharton explained what a woful mistake he made in his eagerness to get a shot at the bear, but Larry did not refer to the blunder he committed when he shot at a fallen tree instead of the brute.

"I wonder where that cratur is?" said he, looking around as if he expected to see the animal at his elbow.

"Safe beyond any harm from us," replied Wharton; "he had enough sense to get out of the water before going over the falls."

"And it's yersilf that would have done the same, but for the whack ye got from trying to bust the rocks apart by jumping against them."

"That was the stupidest thing I ever did in my life. If I had taken ten seconds more I could have made the leap as easy as you can jump over your hat."

"Ye are mighty good at leaping and running, but I wouldn't want to see ye try that again."

"Which reminds me, Larry, that it's best to go back and get our guns before some one else finds them for us."

The clothing of the youths was drenched, but they cared nothing for that, for it was the summer time, and the weather was seasonable. So far as Larry Murphy could tell, he had received no injury whatever. His companion suffered somewhat from his collision with the rocks, but that was of a nature that it must soon pass away, and was only felt at intervals.

While the couple are making their way to the point above the falls, where the elder had left his gun and part of his clothing, we will give a few sentences of explanation.

Brigham Edwards and his family dwelt in one of the small frontier settlements of Kentucky. His family consisted of his wife, his only son Wharton, aged seventeen, and the Irish youth, a year older. They had lived originally in Western Pennsylvania, where Larry was left to the care and kindness of the well-to-do settler, who had been one of the best friends his Irish laboring man ever knew. The mother of Larry died in his infancy, so that he was an orphan, without any near relatives.

Mr. Edwards was among the prominent members of the frontier town, where he had lived for nearly three years, when the incident just described occurred. The parents took it into their heads a short time before to make a visit to some old friends that had settled in a larger town about a hundred miles farther east. In order to do so, they mounted their ponies and followed a well-marked trail, crossing several streams and mountainous sections, and incurring considerable danger from the Indians, who, in those days, were nearly always hostile.

About half way between the two settlements stood a block-house, which was a favorite meeting-place for Boone, Kenton, McClelland, Wells, and the frontier rangers whose names are linked with the early history of the great West. It was agreed between the parents and the boys that they should meet on the return of the former at this post, and make the rest of the journey together.

Mr. Edwards fixed on the 10th of August as the day he would be at the block-house. The boys were to arrive no later than that date, and no sooner than a day before. The parents agreed to wait twenty-four hours for them if necessary, and then, in case they did not show up, they were to continue their journey homeward.

The trail was so plain and the route so well known that it was easy to make accurate calculations, and to figure the time within a very few hours when the respective parties would reach the block-house. This figuring, as in these later days, was based on the supposition that no accident befell any one concerned.

Wharton and Larry had walked about two-thirds of the distance between their home and the block-house, when they had their flurry with the huge bear, which certainly did not suffer as much as they. It was early in the afternoon of the mild summer day, and they were in the depths of the vast Kentucky wilderness through which prowled the wild beasts and equally wild red men.

The lads soon reached the spot where Larry had flung his coat and coonskin cap. The former was picked up, and a short distance off he found his rifle unharmed. The cap, however, was still missing, after the two had spent some little time hunting for it.

"Whart," said Larry, stopping short and staring hard at him, "I know what's become of that fine hat of me own."

"Well?"

"The bear sneaked back here and stole it; he's got the laugh on us so far, but I'll niver be satisfied till we mate again and adjoost accounts."

"More likely you flung it into the water in your excitement, and it went over the falls with us."

"Why didn't I think of the same?" asked Larry, with a relieved expression on his freckled face. "I don't mind its absince, for I'd rather be widout a hat than to wear one, but the sun harms me complexion."

"Come on," laughed Wharton, laboriously climbing his way to the higher bluffs, whither his companion followed him; "I feel a little uneasy about leaving my rifle so long."

"How are ye going to get to the same?"

"I'll show you."

It will be understood that they had left the water below the falls on the side from which they had entered it, so that the weapon lay on the bluffs just across where the owner had flung it. The athletic youth intended to repeat the leap he made a short time before, despite the protests of Larry, who had no wish to make a second descent of the falls in his effort to help his friend.

"Go ahead, go ahead," he said, "if ye find any fun in the same; we've got a half day to spare, and I s'pose we may as well spend it in turning flip-flaps off the rocks and over the falls as in any other way."

"No fear of that," calmly answered his friend, who, having reached the place, now prepared to make the leap.

The preparations were simple. There was a run of a couple of rods, all that he needed. Taking a number of short, quick steps, young Edwards bounded from the edge of the bluff for the opposite one, whose elevation was about the same.

He formed a striking picture, with his fine athletic form crouching in mid-air, or sustained for an instant over the rushing torrent into which he was precipitated on his first effort. His feet were partly gathered under him, and his bent elbows were close at his sides in the approved attitude. Larry, who knew the marvellous powers of his young friend in running or leaping, never felt any misgiving as to the result, though he pretended to be alarmed.

He saw him alight more than a foot beyond the edge with the grace of an antelope, taking only a couple of steps forward from the momentum of his new leap.

"That's aisy," he muttered, "that is, for him as finds it aisy to do; I'm sure I could make the leap if they'd move the bluffs about half the distance nearer to this side than the same is at this moment."

Larry was indulging in these characteristic expressions, when he thought his friend was acting as though not fully satisfied with things. He walked a few steps, as if about to lift his gun from the ground, but abruptly halted, straightened up, and looked about him in a puzzled way.

At this point the two were so far above the falls that they could easily understand each other's words without elevating their voices to an unusual extent. The Irishman's waggery was irrepressible.

"I say, Whart, the bear tuk it the same as me cap; he's going off with both his arms full."

Young Edwards must have heard the badinage, but he gave no evidence of it. He stood looking at the ground, but not across the stream, where his friend was watching him.

"I say, what's the matter?" called Larry, beginning to feel uneasy at the peculiar action of his friend.

In answer, the younger lad turned about and looked hard at him. His face was pale, as if he were laboring under great excitement; beyond question he had made some alarming discovery. Glancing to the right and left, young Edwards now came to the edge of the bluff, and making a funnel of one of his hands called out:

"Run, Larry, as quick as you can! don't wait a minute."

"What is it, owld felly?"

"Indians!" was the startling reply; "the woods are full of them."

"Why, then, don't ye run yersilf?" demanded the astounded Larry; "leap back here, and we'll keep each ither company."

"Run, run!" called his companion, frantically gesticulating and motioning him away. "They've got my gun, and if they see you, Larry, you're lost!"

The impetuosity of the youth literally forced the Irish lad away from the stream and among the trees. He retreated a few yards, puzzled beyond expression.

"What the mischief can I do?" he asked himself; "I can't jump more'n half way across the stream, and that won't do me any good. What does Whart maan by sinding me away while he stays and won't jump? By the powers! I have it!" he exclaimed, striking his thigh and stopping short. "It's a maan thrick of his to git me out of the way, where I won't be harmed, while he rolls up his slaaves and fights a whole tribe of Injins. That thrick won't work! Larry Murphy must be counted in."

## CHAPTER IV. BLAZING ARROW

At the moment of flinging his rifle from him, when he made his first leap, Wharton Edwards noticed where it landed, and of course knew just where to look for it. When he searched that place for it, and saw nothing of the weapon, he knew, therefore, that something was wrong.

A thrill of alarm went through him on realizing the oversight he had committed, but he met it with the coolness of a veteran.

He pretended to be still searching for the weapon, and moved back and forth, and hither and yon, with his head bent, as though his eyes were fixed on the ground, but the eyebrows were elevated and his vision was roaming along the edge of the trees only a few rods distant, in quest of Shawanoes.

None of them were in sight, but he knew that they were there, and more than one pair of serpent-like eyes were fixed upon him and watching his every act.

Wharton's impulse was to turn back and leap to the other side of the gorge. The temptation was strong, but he dared not attempt it. He could not make the jump without a short run, and that would give the Indians all the chance they could ask to wing him on the fly, as they most assuredly would do.

During the few minutes that he pretended to be groping for the missing gun he did a lot of thinking. He knew he was caught inextricably in a trap, and for a time saw no possible way out.

Had there been anything to gain by a sudden leap into the torrent he would have made it; but that insured another plunge over the falls, with the chances in favor of drowning. That, however, was as nothing compared to the fact that he would be at the mercy of the Shawanoes from the moment he entered the water.

Hopeless himself, his concern was for the chivalrous Larry, who had imperilled his life for him. There was hope that his presence on the other bluff was unknown to the red men, and Wharton felt that if he could frighten him into getting out of the way he would be comparatively safe, and would be at liberty to hasten on to the block-house and secure help for him.

But Larry seemed to be taken with a spell of obtuseness just then. He called to Wharton several times in a dangerously loud voice, and appeared not to see, or at least not to understand, the signals which were assiduously made to him. The young man became so solicitous for his companion, who was without comprehension of his danger, that he forgot everything else, and, advancing to the edge of the ravine, indulged in the vigorous gestures and words which accomplished what he intended.

"Now, if he will use sense, he can save himself," was the conclusion of Wharton, from whose heart a crushing weight was lifted; "he has not been seen, and only needs to keep out of sight until he can take the trail again."

But he was in a dreadful situation himself. Between the ravine and the woods, from which he knew the Shawanoes were watching him, was an open space, something more than fifty yards in extent. This narrowed to a fourth of that width up stream, and disappeared altogether at the brink of the falls.

It was useless to pretend longer to hunt for the missing rifle on the face of the rocks when a minute's scrutiny was sufficient to prove that it was not there. His actions had already shown that he knew something was amiss, and the Indians were not likely to allow the farce to continue much longer.

To go directly away from the stream and toward the wood was to walk into the hands of the fierce red men, and the youth was ready to take any risk before doing that. The frightful contingency

he feared was that the moment he made a break for freedom they would fire, and the distance was so short that he could not escape their aim. That brief, open space over which he must run was the gauntlet of certain death. If he were only a little nearer the trees, he would attempt it. He saw but one possible thing to do, and he now attempted it.

Pausing in his groping for the weapon, he raised his head and looked inquiringly about him. He did not dare let his eyes dwell on the trees immediately in front, through fear of exciting suspicion, and the quick glance which he swept along the trees failed to show him so much as a glimpse of his enemies. But he knew they were there, all the same.

Fixing his eyes again on the ground, he pretended suddenly to discover shadowy traces of something in the nature of footprints, but, instead of leading straight toward the wood, they led up stream, where the open space rapidly narrowed.

He walked slowly forward, with his gaze seemingly on the earth, but he was slyly watching the wood, with the alertness of a weasel, on the lookout for the first evidence that his action was mistrusted.

It was a fearful test to the nerves. With every foot's advance his heart throbbed faster with hope, and his desperate resolve became more fixed. His greatest task was to restrain himself from bounding forward at the topmost bent of his speed as he saw the friendly trees drawing near with each passing moment; and yet he not only forced himself to do that, but he came to a dead halt, slowly turned around, bent his head down and scanned the ground behind him. His action was as if he had suddenly come upon some evidence, but in that sweep of the head he again glanced along the edge of the wood that confronted him when he leaped the chasm. This time he saw a movement so faint that he could not identify it, but it told him the crisis had come.

He had now gone so far that nothing less than a disabling bullet could restrain him. He longed more than ever to leap away, but every inch gained was of incalculable worth, and, repressing his impatience with an iron will, he continued edging along, his heart throbbing like a trip-hammer.

To fail to keep close watch of the wood any longer must defeat his purpose. With little attempt, therefore, to hide his action, he quickly turned his head, and, without checking his advance, scanned the margin of the forest. As he did so, he observed a stir among the trees. The Shawanoes evidently concluded that the farce had gone too far. Without another second's hesitation young Edwards made a tremendous bound in the direction of the trees, and was off like an arrow shot from the bow.

He expected a rattling volley from the Shawanoes, and few who have not been through the ordeal can understand the sensation which comes over one when absolutely certain of a demonstration of that kind. To his amazement, however, not a shot was fired, and he dodged among the trees unscathed. Puzzled beyond measure to know what it meant, the fugitive glanced over his shoulder. That which he saw perplexed him for the moment as much as his immunity from the part of a target. One solitary Shawanoe warrior had leaped to his feet and started in pursuit. Like a flash the whole meaning of this act came to Wharton Edwards.

When the Indians were not so hostile toward the whites as they were at the time of which we are writing, they occasionally visited the block-houses and settlements for purposes of barter, and to engage in friendly contests of skill in shooting, leaping and running. The red men were so trained from infancy to this kind of amusement that they were experts, and held their own well against the pioneers, though it is well known that the Caucasian race, under similar surroundings and environments, surpasses all others in physical as well as mental attainments.

The champion of the settlement was Wharton Edwards, who, despite his seventeen years, vanquished all contestants. He received the praise of Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton, who agreed that there was but one Shawanoe, outside of the unrivalled Deerfoot, who could hold his own with him. That was the famous warrior Blazing Arrow, who was about double the age of Wharton, and who claimed to have beaten every one with whom he struggled for supremacy.

Following this declaration from such high authority came the natural desire to see young Edwards and the Shawanoe runner pitted against each other, and efforts were made to bring about a contest between these representatives of their respective races. The great difficulty in the way was that the Shawanoe was one of the most vicious and treacherous of his tribe. He had committed so many crimes against the whites that he feared to trust himself in their power, and stubbornly refused to come to the settlement, despite the assurances of the leading pioneers.

He was persuaded, however, to venture out of the woods one day, and the arrangements were quickly made for a race between him and young Edwards. Before the trial came off some one gave the Shawanoe a draught of "fire-water," which roused the sleeping devil in him. Whipping out his knife, he emitted his war-whoop, and charged upon the astonished youth, with the intention of slaying him.

Wharton, who naturally had no weapon with him, succeeded in dodging the miscreant, and before the wrathful settlers could punish him he darted into the woods with a defiant shout and disappeared.

The glance which Wharton Edwards now cast to the rear, as he started to flee, showed him that his single pursuer was Blazing Arrow.



## CHAPTER V. THROUGH THE WOODS

The race between Wharton Edwards and the famous Shawanoe runner, Blazing Arrow, was to come off at last, but under far different circumstances than either had ever anticipated.

The wretch, while under the influence of liquor, had attempted the life of the youth, and now, when his own natural self, he was determined to run him down, and to his death. He hated the whole race with a consuming hatred, and his wrath against this lad was more intense than against any human being. It was he that had the audacity to think himself worthy of running a race with him, who had defeated the most renowned runners of the Wyandots, Pottawatomies, and the adjoining tribes, to say nothing of his own people.

The action of the Shawanoes, when young Edwards made his leap of the chasm, can be understood. The youth's life was spared, where no other person would have been permitted to live after placing himself in their power. Blazing Arrow, as well as several of his associates, recognized the youth the instant they saw his face, and a hurried consultation took place as to what should be done.

But for the presence of their champion they would not have permitted him his slight advantage; but their faith in Blazing Arrow was as complete as his own, besides which he was one of their leaders. He ordered them to remain quiet, or rather to devote themselves to bringing down what whites were near, while he made a little dash and brought back the fugitive.

This was how it came about that Wharton Edwards, instead of being pursued by a score of Shawanoes, started off with but a single warrior trailing after him.

But it is noticeable, further, that the same pursuer carried his rifle, or rather that of the youth; for, with the characteristic refinement of cruelty, he meant to add this little triumph to his capture of the lad when he should run him down and smite him to the earth.

Wharton had no weapon other than his hunting-knife, while his foe took good care to see that a weapon was at his own command. He was the one who, if any accident befell himself, would feel pleasure in shooting down the lad that had never harmed him.

The sight of Blazing Arrow gave Wharton a knowledge of the situation, and during the few minutes that he was dodging through the trees he tried to decide upon the right course to follow.

They were but a short way from the main trail. This was clearly marked, although it was travelled so little that in many places the overhanging limbs interfered with one's passage. He believed he could dash along this faster than his pursuer, and but for his anxiety about Larry Murphy he probably would have attempted to do so, but the report of a rifle which reached his ears a few minutes later deepened his fears and increased his anxiety.

If he should put forth all the speed of which he was capable, it was not likely to surpass that of the Shawanoe, who was accustomed to dodging among tree trunks. There was little to be gained by speculating at this stage of the contest, but he concluded to go ahead until the opportunity was more favorable for turning his own amazing fleetness to account.

Besides, it should be stated that Wharton was not yet certain that he could beat Blazing Arrow in a contest of speed. The Indian was a wonderful runner, and the youth was not certain by any means that the red man would not overhaul him when the test should take place.

"At any rate he has got to do the hardest work of his life before he captures my scalp," muttered the lad, compressing his lips and ducking under a limb which would have caught under his chin if he had neglected the precaution.

He headed for the trail, darting a look behind him now and then to note their relative speed. As nearly as he could judge, it was about the same, but as he could not know whether Blazing

Arrow was putting forth his best efforts or not, the knowledge was of little benefit. At the moment of striking the path, Wharton recalled a fact that had slipped his mind until then. Less than an eighth of a mile in advance the trail crossed a natural clearing where, for fully a fourth of a mile, not a tree or shrub obtruded. Then the two could do their best, and the question of supremacy would be decided, providing the red man indulged in no treachery. Blazing Arrow dropped into the path at a point about a hundred yards behind the fugitive, which was a little more than the space separating them at the moment of starting.

It was necessary to keep the advantage he possessed, and to gain all he could before the plain was reached. If Wharton should prove himself superior to the Shawanoe, the latter would resort to his rifle, and either kill him or wound him so that he could not run. If the fugitive was the inferior, he must fall into the hands of his enemy; so that, no matter how it eventuated, the situation of the youth was full of peril.

"I guess I may as well let myself out while I have the chance," the latter muttered, a moment after striking the trail.

And Wharton proceeded to "let himself out," while Blazing Arrow, the Shawanoe, lost no time in doing likewise.

Wharton's aim was to increase the distance between himself and Blazing Arrow as much as he possibly could before reaching the clearing, half a mile wide, where the way was open and the test of speed would be decisive.

Within the same moment that he recalled the existence of the clearing he was dashing along the trail like a terrified deer. This work proved harder than he anticipated. The obtruding branches swished his face with smarting violence, and more than one twig cut his forehead and nose like the lash of a whip. He thrust out his hands to ward these aside, and they hurt his hands.

He kept it up, however, for he was now running for life, and what is to be compared to such a stake? But these obstructions, despite all he could do, retarded his progress. The alarming truth quickly became manifest that instead of gaining ground, as he had hoped, he was losing it.

"Suppose he can beat me?" was the terrifying thought that almost paralyzed him for the moment; "but," he added, "he hasn't done it yet!"

The Shawanoe did not utter any cry, and he was so far to the rear that Wharton did not hear him as he came along the trail with the grim certainty of fate. He was a marvellous runner, and he did not mean to allow the detested youth, whose beard was not yet grown, to get away from him.

More than once, while speeding in this fashion, young Edwards asked himself whether he could elude his enemy by leaping aside or hiding among the trees. Possibly he might have done it could he have drawn beyond sight of him for a few minutes only, so that his divergence would not be seen. But just there lay the difficulty, and he dared not make the attempt.

It was a sight that would have tried the nerves of the bravest man when he looked back and caught a glimpse of the Indian warrior, partly hidden by the brushing limbs and vegetation, as he sped forward like a furious animal, and knew it was a mortal enemy that was after him, impelled by a hatred which nothing but death could quench.

The fugitive determined that for the time he would not look behind him. Almost unconsciously to himself, when he did so, he lost a little ground.

The straining vision which was now cast forward saw the light made by the clearing or opening in front. A few more bounds and he struck the margin of the space, which for half a mile was as free from trees as a stretch of Western prairie. Here was the place for the supreme test, and the youth, with a muttered prayer, bent all his energies to the task, fully alive to the stake at issue.

Not a breath of air was stirring on this mild summer afternoon, but the wind created by his arrowy-speed was like a gale as it rushed by his face and lifted the short auburn hair about his neck until it floated straight out. The arms were bent at the elbows, the chest thrown forward, while the shapely limbs worked with the swiftness and grace of a piece of perfect machinery. The feet

doubled in and over each other with bewildering quickness, there seeming at times to be half a dozen of them on the ground, in the air, and to the rear at the same time.

The stride was tremendous. The handsome face of the youth was pale with an unshakable resolve, and the thin lips were compressed, his breath coming thick and fast through the nostrils. The hazel eyes gleamed and the brows were knitted as with a person who means to do or die.

Ah, that was a race worth travelling many a mile to see! Had Simon Kenton, or Daniel Boone, or Anthony McClelland, or the Wetzel brothers, been in that open clearing, they would have stood like statues, wrapt in admiration and wonder, for never could they have beheld before such a magnificent exhibition of prowess in the way of speed.

Every thrilling element was present, for not far to the rear rushed a six-foot Shawanoe, who, like the youth in advance, strained every muscle to the highest tension. And he was a frightful object as he ran, for his face was that of a race-horse. The long coarse locks streamed behind him like a whipping pennant in a hurricane; and one of the stained eagle-feathers in the crown was snatched loose and fluttered backward. The naturally hideous face was made more so by the red and black patches daubed in fantastic splashes over it. The sinewy chest was bare, but the fringes of the parti-colored leggings and moccasins flickered and twinkled in the sunlight as the Shawanoe thundered across the clearing, his black eyes fixed on the flying figure in front, and his countenance distorted by a passion his terrible race is so capable of feeling.

As Blazing Arrow ran, he carried the youth's rifle in his right hand. It was grasped just in front of the lock, the muzzle pointing ahead, as though he had but to press the trigger to bring down the fugitive without a change of aim. The left hand rested on the knife thrust in his girdle, the position of the two hands suggesting that he was thirsting to use both weapons upon the lad whom he sought so desperately to run down.

## CHAPTER VI. A MISCALCULATION

The Indian was doing his best. Had the whole tribe been assembled on that clearing, with eyes fixed on him and urging him on, he could have done no better. He had run many a race, and, since his manhood, had won them all. Most were gained by no more than half trying, just as he expected to gain this one when he ordered his companions to remain behind in the wood, and leave to him the task of bringing back the white youth who had the effrontery to appear as a contestant in a trial against him.

The expectation of Blazing Arrow was that of running down Wharton Edwards just before or at the time he entered the wood on the opposite side of the clearing. Stretching forward his massive hand, he meant to hurl him from his feet, and then drive him back to where the other warriors were waiting to subject him to their whimsical torture.

Yes, Wharton Edwards was destined, in Blazing Arrow's mind, for the torture. This had been the fierce savage's purpose from the outset, and it remained as such for a few moments after the two had burst into the opening. Then a doubt arose, and by the time half the clearing was thrown behind him the despised youth in front was running faster than he was.

The soul of Blazing Arrow must have been humiliated beyond expression when, despite the most strenuous exertions he could put forth, and the knowledge that never in all his life had he run with greater speed, that lithe, graceful youth in front began steadily drawing away from him.

It was an astounding truth. Wharton Edwards could outrun the champion of the Shawanoes, and he was doing it with such certainty that neither he nor his pursuer could fail to see the fact.

The youth waited till a fourth of the distance was passed, so there could be no mistake as to the actual test. He had gone that far with all the strength of which he was capable. He knew that his pursuer had done the same, so that when he glanced around, the truth as to their relative speed must be established.

The result was more striking than he had dared to hope. He had widened perceptibly the space between them, and was still doing so, even though his venomous enemy was putting forth the utmost exertions of which he was capable.

It can be understood how the discovery thrilled the fugitive, and he can be pardoned if, even in that trying moment, he felt a touch of regret that the race between him and the Indian did not take place, as it was arranged, at the settlement. What a triumph he would have won!

Nor can he be blamed because in the flush of victory, and with the belief that the real danger was past, he deliberately snatched off his cap, swung it above his head, and uttered a shout of exultation. It was only human nature, and you or I would have done the same had we been in his place.

The cry was wormwood and gall to Blazing Arrow, and deep must have been his regret that at the time when, seized with drunken frenzy, he made for the lad, he did not finish him. Had he done so, the Shawanoe would have been saved this humiliation.

Why did not the pursuer stop short and bring his rifle into play? He was a good marksman, and the distance was not enough to require any special skill on his part. Doubtless the dusky miscreant was influenced by several reasons, one of which was the loss of ground he would sustain. Then, too, a man who has been using his muscles so fiercely is not in the best condition to aim a rifle accurately. Furthermore, it is not impossible that the Shawanoe believed that the youth was unable to maintain his astounding speed. He must soon slacken it, and then the Indian champion would take revenge for this temporary defeat. Wharton feared an attempt to shoot him, and he continued his prodigious exertion, since there was every inducement to increase the gain he had made, and the

sheltering wood was now but a short way in advance. He glanced back a couple of times, and then threw his thoughts forward, for he recalled that he was confronted by a peculiar condition of things.

Immediately after entering the forest again, the trail made what may be described as a horseshoe curve. A deep, wooded ravine interposing in front necessitated a looping of the path. The circuit was a furlong in length, the trail coming back to within a few rods of the first turn. Standing at this point, one could see the slightly ascending course on the side of the narrow ravine, and a man or animal walking up the gentle incline was in view of any one at the beginning of the curve.

It will be understood, therefore, that if Blazing Arrow should halt at this point the instant he reached it, and the youth should keep to the trail, the latter would come directly under the muzzle of his own rifle, in the hands of his implacable enemy.

But Wharton Edwards was not the one to throw away an advantage gained by a display of speed such as it is safe to say no other living person could have made. It would have been idiotic to do so when no necessity existed.

Several ways of escape presented themselves. He could leave the trail at the lower point of the loop, not returning to it until well beyond sight of his enemy, or possibly he could leap across the gorge, as he had done in the case of the torrent, and thus not sacrifice any ground.

It was this step which he revolved in his mind while dashing across the last fourth of the narrow plain, but a single fact restrained him; he doubted his ability to make a successful leap. Although he had been over the path several times, and might be considered familiar with it, he had never studied it closely enough to settle the question without another inspection, and there was not a minute to spare for making that.

If he could make the leap it would be a great gain; if he should fail, the disaster would be irreparable, for among the wood, brush and undergrowth he could neither conceal himself nor travel as fast as the Shawanoe, who would quickly have him at his mercy. The risk was too great to incur, and he decided not to take it. He did a thing, on the contrary, which was like an inspiration. Making the short turn, he ran a few rods, when he glanced toward the plain. Blazing Arrow was invisible, and would remain so for several minutes, despite the speed with which he was approaching.

The youth made a powerful leap aside from the path, and dodged behind the trunk of an oak large enough to shelter his body. Then he stood panting, alert and watchful, awaiting the coming of his enemy. He saw him a minute later, through the trees, running with undiminished speed, and like an engine that was absolutely tireless. The Shawanoe was more familiar with the course of the trail than the youth, and therefore knew of its looping, which had puzzled the latter for a few brief moments. The course adopted by the Shawanoe was peculiar, and for a time assumed an almost ludicrous phase.

The quick glance which he cast down the path failed to show him the fugitive, who he must have supposed was still running over it and would speedily reappear as he rushed up the incline. By leaping the ravine he would head him off and have him at his mercy.

The pursuer decided to adopt this course, and with only a slight slackening of pace he dashed toward the gorge; but when almost on the brink he must have concluded the chances of success were against him, and he changed his mind. But he did not succeed in changing the course of his body, as he meant to do. He would not have failed had the bank of the ravine been as firm as he supposed it was. He checked himself with the skill of an experienced runner; but the ground gave way, and despite everything he could do he went floundering, scrambling and struggling to the bottom of the ravine, which was almost perpendicular and fully thirty feet deep.

Had he given less attention to the effort to save himself and looked where he was going it would have been better; for, as it was, although the fall was considerable, it was so broken that it would have amounted to little had not his head come in collision with the base of one of the trees growing in the bottom of the gorge. The impact was violent, and must have jarred the tree. It jarred Blazing Arrow to that extent that he tumbled over on his back senseless.

Wharton Edwards was watching matters like a cat waiting for a mouse. When he saw the Shawanoe disappearing he ran cautiously forward from his hiding-place, and, not forgetting to screen himself, peeped over the edge of the ravine.

"I'm afraid he hasn't broken his neck," he muttered, as he noted the shock the other had received, "though that crack against the trunk of the tree was enough to kill anyone."

This unlooked-for incident insured the safety of the fugitive, who, if he chose, could have continued his flight to the block-house; but two considerations led him to take a different course. He could not desert Larry Murphy, who, beyond all question, was in imminent peril, and he disliked beyond expression to lose his rifle, which was a birthday gift from his father, and a superior piece of workmanship. It was this act that led him to attempt a feat worthy of Simon Kenton himself.

Leaping lightly from the edge of the ravine, he grasped the branches of a tree near at hand. It bent low with his weight and broke; but he seized another, and that also, after dipping downward, gave way and let him fall. By that time he was so near the ground that he dropped lightly to his feet. He paused and glanced at Blazing Arrow lying outstretched on his back, with his face upturned, as if he were dead. But he was not; he was only senseless.

"If he will only stay that way for a few minutes I shall be all right; but if he awakes – "

Aye, if he awoke, what vengeance he would take on the youth who dared not only to beat him at running, but to steal like a beast of prey upon him!

But young Edwards had determined upon his line of action, and it was now too late to turn back.

## CHAPTER VII. A CHECK

It was characteristic of Larry Murphy and Wharton Edwards that each should hasten to risk his own life for the other.

When the latter made his leap across the chasm, through which the water rushed, with his rifle that had been left there, he had no thought of the peril in which he placed himself. Had he turned on the instant, or sprang back to the bluff he had just left, he would have had a companion, with a good weapon between them, even though he possessed no gun himself.

But that would have placed the Irish lad in the extremity of peril, as Wharton well knew, and he determined to face the danger alone, reasoning that it was useless to involve both as long as it could be prevented.

The earnestness of Wharton caused Larry to withdraw from the gorge until he was among the trees beyond, when he halted for a moment, and, reflecting on the situation, read the purpose of his friend.

"I see through the trick," he muttered, angry with himself that he had been duped even for a few moments, "and it won't work on me. Larry Murphy isn't to be left out of this business."

It was all well enough to form this resolution, but the youth was confronted by the query as to how his friend was to receive any practical benefit from his efforts. Peering from the trees in the direction of the gorge, he saw nothing of him, nor of the Indians who he was sure were there.

Nothing would have pleased Larry more than to repeat the performance of Wharton, and thereby place himself on the other side of the gorge; but he saw no way of doing it without a fatal delay. It was utterly beyond his power to make the leap which was so easy for the other. He knew that if he attempted it he would plump down into the torrent and go over the falls again, unless he swam out, as did the bear, on the same side from which he entered.

There was no break in the bluffs across stream by which one could climb out above the falls, so that the only feasible way open to him to reach Wharton was by swimming the torrent below the falls. That, as we have said, involved a delay which, under the circumstances, was fatal to all chance of giving his friend any practical help. But Larry could not stand idle. In the blind hope of doing something, he hurried down stream and approached it again at the point where he had entered it before, and whence the bear had emerged.

It was as he feared. He might as well have tried to climb the smooth face of a perpendicular wall as to leave the torrent at any point above the falls, to say nothing of the danger of being swept over the latter.

A slight bend in the stream enabled him to discern the spot where Wharton had landed when he made his leap. He was looking fixedly in that direction, hoping he would reappear, when a Shawanoe Indian came into view and paused on the brink of the gorge.

He held his rifle in one hand and was in war paint. He seemed to be looking at the water and the other bluff, as though measuring the distance preparatory to leaping the chasm. This indicated that the red man knew, or suspected, that another was near at hand, and on the other side of the stream.

The leap was a good one, even for a trained warrior, and when this one made up his mind to attempt it, he stepped back several paces in order to gain the necessary momentum. When he paused, only the top of his head was visible to the watchful Larry, who knew very well what he intended to do.

The Shawanoe suddenly ran the short distance, and made the leap with the ease shown by Wharton Edwards a short time before.

At the moment the crouching form was in mid-air, with limbs drawn together and muscles set, the rifle dropped from his grasp, his arms went upward with a wild cry that rose above the waters, and his body, landing on the edge of the bluff, rolled back in the torrent and instantly sank out of sight.

"I can jump the stream myself. I don't maan that such spalpeens as ye shall have the chance of doing the same," muttered Larry, stepping back several paces and reloading his gun with the utmost haste.

None knew better than he that the occurrence would stir up matters among the Indians on the other side, and he would have been a zany to invite a return shot by remaining a fair view to those who would investigate the matter offhand.

Had he possessed one of the modern breech-loaders and repeating rifles, he might have secured a good position and held half a hundred Indians at bay; but with his clumsy though excellent weapon he could not hope to maintain his ground for any length of time.

The moment his gun was ready he cautiously advanced to the edge of the stream and peered around the rocks. There was no warrior in sight, but he was shrewd enough to allow his vision to roam along the bluff on the other side down to the falls themselves.

So far as he could judge, no one was near. A dark body, however, caught his eye in the water itself. It was going over the falls, a limp and inert mass, which he was quick to recognize, and at which he cast but a single glance.

But the youth was not left long in suspense. His keen eyes were roving along the edge of the other bluff, which was sharply outlined against the blue sky, when a small protuberance suddenly appeared at the very point on which his eyes happened to rest.

"It's anither of 'em," was his thought, as he screened himself so far as he could behind the ledge of rocks and brought his rifle to a level; "when his head rises high enough I'll plug him in the eye. Whisht now!"

The Indian was cunning. Instead of bringing his crown into sight, it sank out of sight again.

Larry was standing with his gaze centred on the point where he had just seen the object, his gun loaded and ready to fire the instant a fair target was presented, when it shot up like a jack-in-the-box a dozen feet to one side, immediately dropping out of view again.



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