

Some were vertical, like shadowy streaks against the clear blue, while others were broken, with distinct intervals of atmosphere between their parts. Jed's Indian training told him how these were made. A few bits of twigs and leaves were kindled, and, when fairly ablaze, were partly smothered by a blanket flung over the fire for a few moments, and then removed. This being done at regular intervals, the vapor ascended in spots, as may be said, and when shown against the sky beyond presented a curiously mottled appearance.

It was not the first time he had seen signals made in that manner, and, as has been said, he knew what they signified. Then there were bird calls that vibrated through the forest arches, all emitted with a skill that would have misled the most experienced scout, but which did not deceive him. The fact that a number of these were within a few rods of where he was stealing through the dense, rocky wood, warned him of his peril, and yet he continued to press on.

The interpretation which the veteran gave to all this was that a force of fully a hundred scouts were manœuvring in front, at varying distances, while not a few were in his immediate neighborhood. Beyond them, to the northward, was a force of probably a thousand Iroquois, possibly greater, who were steadily falling back before the advance of the