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of stone with the hammer, and when I saw that, I wasn't much scared by his actions; I told him what Miss Nellie said, and then I added:

"It looks like you wanted to be secret about that red rock you've been breaking, and all I've got to say is that if you think I'll blab about it, you don't know me, and you'd better discharge me at once."

His face changed then.

"That's so," he said. "I never had a man keep his mouth shut as close. Um—you know what the rocks are?"

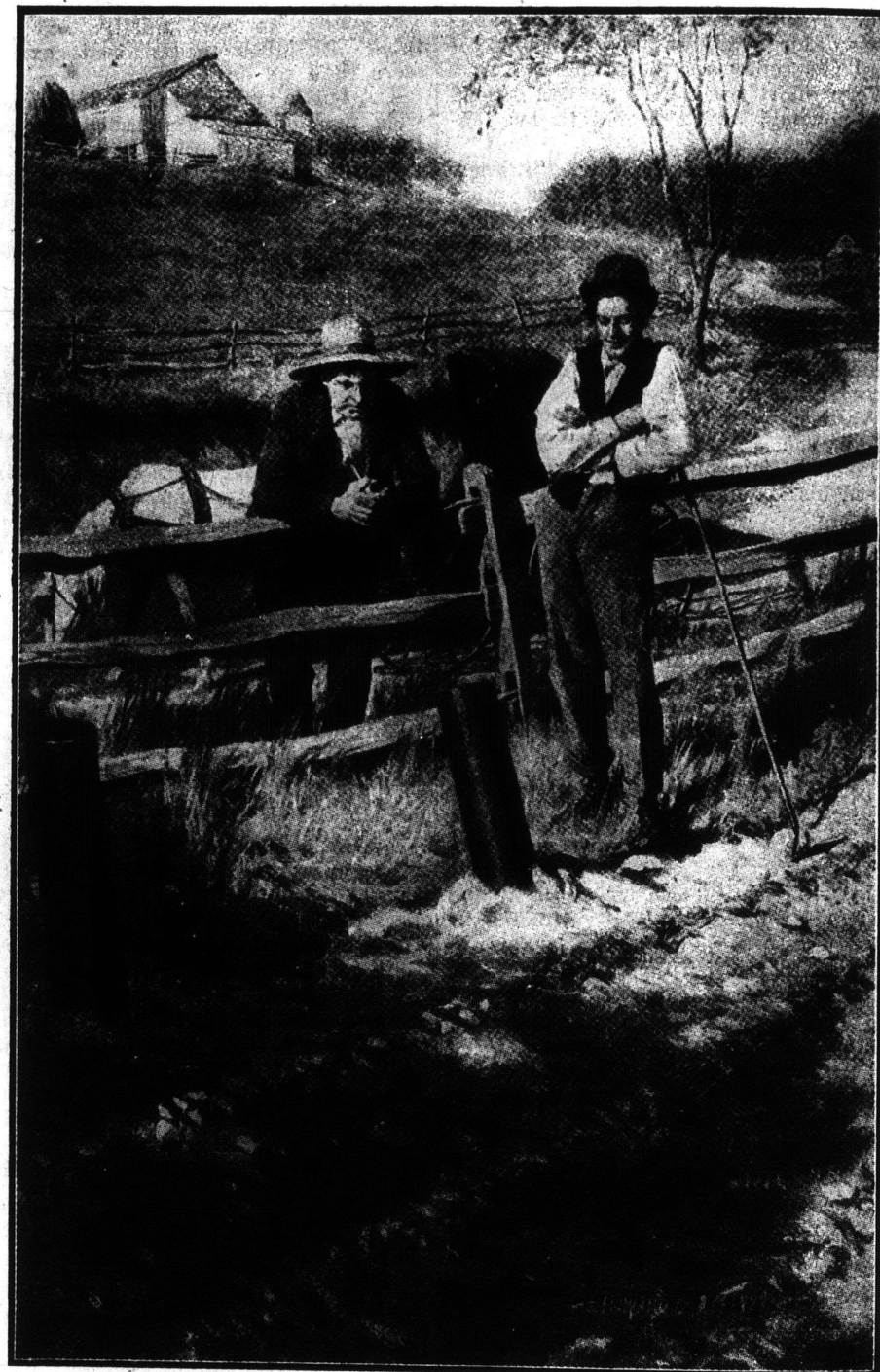
"No, I don't know, and I don't aim to ask," I said. "But they look like the iron ore I used to work in—"

"That's it," he said. "The whole gulf's an iron mine, and I guess you knew it the moment you saw the stuff, seeing you worked in a bed of it up in Jefferson City. Now you keep still until I get title to the farm, and I'll make you foreman of the gang when I begin development work."

some kind of game when he was talking about being friendly to the young man. And it was a slick game, too, but of course I didn't show any interest in what was said and done then.

As I said, the Ogden farm joined ours on the south. It lay where the land began to pitch down into the valley. The house was small and old the barn was worse, and the whole place was grown up to weeds and quack and briars. I have heard that Mr. Burwell used to complain about the eyesore as much as anybody, but for the last year or so before old Odgen died (he'd been dead a week when his nephew came), there wasn't a man in the country that showed any sort of friendly interest in the old crank but Mr. Burwell.

Did I call old Odgen a crank? Well that's what he was. He'd been a machinist in his day. Then he bought the farm and said he'd show people how to raise big crops. And he did it,



"Will those pipes keep the frost from nipping your early beans?" said I.

I calculated I shouldn't have to wait more than a year for that job, for I'm lucky, but things don't always happen as I expect.

When we got home, Miss Nellie met us in the front yard.

"Here's a postal from Odgen's nephew," she said holding it up. "He's to reach the Falls at four o'clock. You wanted to be called, if necessary, you know, so I sent Jacob."

"That's right, Nellie," said Mr. Burwell. "I knew you wanted me the moment I set eyes on Jacob. Um—we'll be as friendly as we can to young Mr. Odgen. It's no more than right we should, seeing his uncle was our nearest neighbor for so many years. We must make him feel comfortable."

As Miss Nellie turned away her eyes half closed, just as her father's did when he was making a bargain, and I knew she was thinking he was up to

too, for a time; but he lost his grip, some way, the place went to the bad and when he found he had to die soon he made a will leaving the farm to some kind of asylum down the valley unless a nephew of the same name living in New Jersey, somewhere, would come up and raise a crop on one acre that would sell for a thousand dollars. And the crop was to be raised within two years of taking possession.

The will as first written called for a five-hundred-dollar crop, but the price was raised, and just why no one seemed to know or care, at that time, though I had an idea which I kept to myself.

Well, Mr. Burwell soon hitched up his roadsters and drove away. It made me smile to think how the young man would feel when he came to his farm, especially if he really were a farmer, as everybody said he was. But I never was more mistaken in my life. As Mr.