

Hon. John N. C. Stockton

Will speak on Prohibition in Ocala Saturday, January 18, at 11 o'clock. A free dinner for all. Come in and hear one of Florida's most distinguished men.

Nephew and Niece.

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Old Peter Rhinehart, bachelor, was a very rich man and a very queer man. He had two brothers and a sister and three or four nephews and nieces, but for the last thirty years of his life not one of them was permitted to step foot across his threshold. When he reached the age of seventy and his health had begun to fail all his relatives and friends besought him to change his way of living. There was fear that he would die alone and unattended. The old man refused to make any change whatever. What was feared came to pass within a year. After the old man had not been seen for two days the house was broken into, and he was found dead.

Old Peter had made his will six months before. He had given to charity, and he had been generous with all his relatives, but the bulk of his fortune had been left to a certain nephew and niece. John Rhinehart was twenty-four years old and a son of the old man's brother. Mary Davis was twenty and a daughter of his sister. He had not seen either one of them a dozen times in his life. Though relatives, they cordially disliked each other. They met but seldom and always quarreled when they did meet. Neither was liked by the other relatives. At the time of the old man's death both were engaged to be married to others.

Had old Peter studied for years he could not have wrought out a worse plan than he put in practice. The money was left to this pair on condition that they marry. If they did not marry, it was to be divided up among the others; if they did, the one who survived the other took all.

At first both nephew and niece declared that they would not accept the legacy under the terms. They flouted the idea, and they talked of going to law. After a bit they took a different view of the case. The spirit of avarice predominated in both, and in their selfishness they concluded to obey the provision. It was stipulated that they must live together for at least five years unless death intervened and the legacy was to be paid in five annual installments. Their engagements to others were broken, and they were married. They became man and wife, but lived together as two strangers. The feeling for each other was one of bitterest hatred.

One day three months after marriage they went riding together in a boat on a mill pond. The husband hoped that some accident would happen and the wife be drowned. While he was planning to "accidentally" lose an oar and be swept over the dam she produced a pistol and threatened to shoot him if anything went wrong. A month later he got word that she had asked for poison at the drug store, and he charged her with an intention of killing him and thereafter was suspicious of his food. It was shown after his death that he bought a live rattlesnake and let it loose in the orchard. It was shown that she removed a ladder to give him a fall from the roof of the house. She went rowing alone to find that the oars had been tampered with, and but for a boy she would have been swept over the dam and drowned. He found that a gun he was cleaning and carelessly handling was loaded instead of empty.

There was no doubt in the mind of any villager that the couple hated each other so bitterly that each had murder at heart and that murder would have been done but for the fear of the law. A year passed away. The first portion of the legacy had come when the marriage took place. The second was paid when the first year had expired. A few days after this money had been received the husband suggested to the wife that they visit Niagara falls. They had not left the village since their marriage.

"He wants to throw me into the rapids and send me over the falls," said the wife to herself as the suggestion was made, but in a moment she replied that she would be glad to go.

"She will bring about my death there if she can do it," said the husband to himself as he looked at her.

Both were right. We all saw them leave the village, and it was afterward said that they seemed to demean themselves more like husband and wife than ever before. At the falls they were taken for a newly married couple on their wedding tour. They strolled about, with her arm in his, laughing and chatting, and yet all the time they mistrusted each other and each had a plan. This dissembling lasted three days. They walked through Prospect park and over on Goat island by day and in the evening, but at length they took their last walk. It was down to the very brink of the falls. They sat there and held hands, and his arm was around her. Thirty different people noticed them. By and by as the hour grew late all went away—all but these two. They continued to sit there as people looked back. When they had not reached their hotel at midnight a still alarm was sent out. When another day

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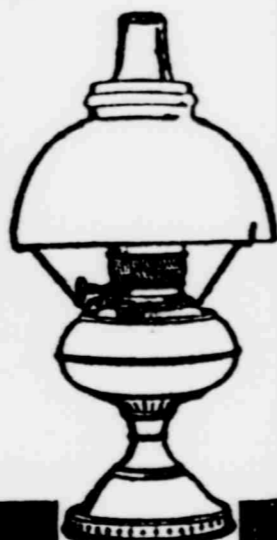
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