

John D. Rockefeller's second cousin died in poverty in little Wisconsin town

### WILLIAM REYNOLDS

Penniless and in need during his old age, William Reynolds, aged 93, a blood relative to the world's richest man died last week, the little cottage in which he passed away not even his own. Although a second cousin to John D. Rockefeller, who up to date is reported as having given \$125,000,000 to charity and for education, Judge Reynolds as he was popularly known, tasted nothing of the oil king's generosity. The relationship to the billionaire of Reynolds could not be disputed, for he had a family tree on which he pointed out with pride to the name of the philanthropist. Of late years, according to relatives, many letters were addressed to the wealthy oil magnate by the aged man, but answers failed to come, and it is doubted now if the letters of the Waukesha county pioneer ever reached the hands of the person to whom they were addressed

Though nearing the century mark, Reynolds death was untimely. Asphyxiation by coal gas caused his death, and his wife, aged 85, narrowly escaped death in the same way. The aged woman is now convalescing at the home Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Richart here, Mrs. Richart being her daughter. Although weak from the effects of the gas and claiming continually that she still smells the gas which caused her husband's death, Mrs. Reynolds was able to sit up in bed and partake of a meal. When asked whether she believed Mr. Rockefeller her husband's cousin, she replied that she thought he was for as long as she could remember her husband had always made that assertion.

But the great grief of the old man and aged woman was not, that help from Rockefeller did not come, but that their wealthy son, manager of a Pittsburgh company, at a salary of \$600 a month never aided them and even sent a message saying he was ill when he learned of his father's death. Two years ago according to Mrs. Richart and Charlie Green, son of the late Reynolds, their brother who is almost fifty came to Eagle for a visit. His parents at that time were indeed in dire need. According to his brothers and sisters, he benevolently offered to loan his father \$50 if good security was given. With good security lacking and his father grief-stricken over the demand of his son, George Reynolds, the wealthy son left Eagle for

Pittsburgh. Mr. and Mrs. Richart living nearest to the little Reynolds home acted as the aged couple's guardian. It was arranged that if one of the aged pair was sick, or if they wanted their daughter, Ellen to come over they hoisted a white towel on a flagstaff. No towel appeared, everything was thought well so Mrs. Richart who was washing on the day, the aged couple was overcome did not go over to the Reynolds home until afternoon. While going to the back door, Mrs. Richart heard a peculiar noise and looking into the window she saw the aged couple lying side by side as if dead. The house was filled with coal gas. Immediate care was taken of the two, but Mr. Reynolds died the following morning never having regained consciousness. On the same day his brother died in Minnesota. The woman, although found unconscious, revived, and now physicians declare she will get well.

Judge Reynolds was one of the best known characters in Waukesha county. He was married three times and has lived in the county fifty-nine years. Until he was 92, he was justice of the peace. A former school teacher, he delighted in having the villagers come and solve his problems. He was a farmer and owner of a farm once in Vernon county. But his second wife took the farm into court, and she got the land while he was given \$700, but that was many years ago, and the last dollar of it was gone long before he became 85. Mr. Reynolds left nothing to speak of save some newspaper clippings about his second cousin under which in many cases he wrote little stories. Under one clipping from the Milwaukee Journal, captioned, Rockefeller to "Loosen up". Mr. Reynolds wrote, "Charity begins at home and then wrote out the relationship to the oil king. It is thought he intended to send this to the oil king. But death intervened.

Milwaukee Journal, Nov. 5  
Eagle, Wi.

### DEATHS.

#### William A. Reynolds.

On Sunday night William A. Reynolds was overcome by coal gas and died from the effects thereof on Tuesday forenoon. He was born in Kinderhook, New York, May 19, A. D. 1817, and was a son of Dr. Edward and Hannah Avery Reynolds and was a second cousin of John D. Rockefeller. He came to Wisconsin in 1846 and lived in the town of Mukwonago until November 16, 1891, when he was married to Susan P. Green at the home of her daughter in Eagle. The couple purchased a fine home here and lived a happy life. Previous to his last marriage he was twice married. He taught school in his native town, held town offices in Mukwonago and Eagle. On public occasions he was a center of attraction in the Martial band playing his flute. In religion he affiliated with the M. E. church. In politics he was a Democrat. His death ends a long and useful career and Eagle folks as well as his family will miss him. The funeral was held yesterday afternoon from the M. E. church, Rev. W. W. Perry of Milwaukee officiating. Interment in Jericho cemetery. We all extend our sympathy.

#### William A. and Susan F. Reynolds Asphyxiated by Coal Gas.

On Sunday night William A. Reynolds, aged 93 years, and his wife Susan F., aged 84 years, retired as usual and on Monday at 2 p. m. Mrs. Philip H. Richart, a daughter, residing a short distance from them made her usual call. To her surprise the house was locked and she gained entrance through the cellar door. She found the rooms filled with coal gas and the aged couple in bed unconscious. Medical aid was summoned but Mr. Reynolds did not regain consciousness and died Tuesday morning. Mrs. Reynolds is still alive and has partly regained consciousness.

The aged couple turned the damper too tight on the coal heater which forced the gas into the room. They have been living happily together for years in a fine home on Railroad and Sherman St. and the relatives have called on them daily to see them. They were in fairly good health considering their age on account thereof no one suspected any harm in not seeing them out and around.