THE CATHOLIC REGISTER

THE EMPTY CHAIR

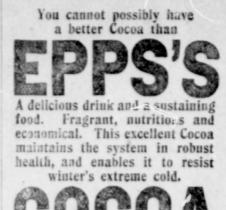
Gordon Raymond stepped out to where his carriage waited for him. He was a stately old man, richly clad, his general appearance that of one accustomed to ease and elegance. His footman stood with hand upon the open door of the vehicle, and he paused halfway down the stoop to how courteously to a young girl who looked at him with a smile and modded as she passed.

Gordon Raymond's face did not relax, his eyes did not brighten, though the countenance upturned to his would have gladdened the heart of any man not a misonthrope. Its very fairness and freshness and unspoiled youth would have served as passports to imquediate favor. Ordinarily, even Gordon Raymond could not resist it; ordinarily, it gave him a distinct sense of pleasure. But not to-day. There was a heavy cloud upon his spiritsdue, indeed, partially, if not wholly, to the pretty girl herself.

For she was one of his happy nextdoor neighbors. In spite of the crus-Winess which the years had brought to a lonely old man, he had found himself unable to resist the brightness of the three young sisters who made their home next to his dwelling place-feeling but too well the difference between those two words. Because of the gayety and lightheartedness of the 4rio he had, during the first few months of their proximity, ignored them; during those first few months he had withdrawn into his shell, doing his best to remain insensible and unmoved by their bright good mornings and cheerful good days. But he would have had to be more than human to resist. Try as he might, he could not. Try as he would, he felt that he dared not; that he was shutting out the only bit of pleasure that had come to him in years. He bent, he thawed, he yielded, and so strong thy that where he had avoided he now sought them. The older one with the gray eyes, and the next one with the yellow hair, and the youngest one with the pretty smile-this was the way he arranged them in his mental category

ing like a white rose from her soft you heard good news?" and smiled she held up a great bunch do you ask?"

he had grown suddenly cold and chill- shrunken. He moved his feet closer "I understand, I understand," said They had spoken of him- only to the fire. They were numb. And Gordon Raymond, waving the exa few words, a few simple and sym- as he sat and meditated, a curious planation aside. "But this time I pathetic words:



Sold by Grocers and Storekeepers in 1-lb. and 1-lb Tins.

pride to keep him company and forget the noisy happiness he might never hope to take part in, though once---But he had no regrets; he surely had no regrets, he, the wealthy and highly respected Raymond, the millionaire

And as he came down the stoop the youngest one with the pretty smile passed below him and nodded and laughed and held up her bunch of

After that the old man saw little of the city streets as his carriage rolled through them. In spite of himself, he could not help but remember past Christmases - Christmases which had been very, very happy con-trasted to that which he would know ed his old face and tightened his thin lips, yet he could not, even if he would, have put the memory away. He stopped at his club. entering, acting on an impulse, he went into the big confectionery store close to it and ordered a box of candy, monstrous in size. With it he enclosed his card.

grew the craving far human sympa- the poor, lonely, rich old man next tion, and even the thoughts of these they would say when they received it. right enjoyed to the full.

pretty smile who paused to flash that him in some astonishment. feet, pretty smile up at him, her face shin- "Hello!" he exclaimed. "Have and

"Genuine Christmas weather,

"Yes," he answered, slowly. "Genu-

But Bob Winthrope's high spirits

those lads of mine pester you a bit!"

He ended so cheerfully, so boyishly,

that Gordon Raymond bent forward.

A smile crept to his thin lips, and

"I'd be tempted to accept, Bob,"

he said. "I would indeed, but I take

Christmas dinner to-morrow with my

"My daughter, yes; my daughter

"Of course, of course!" cried the

young man, hastily. "I didn't know,

Raymond. In fact, you've surprised

me. I thought-every one believes-

of course, that is another thing. Well, a merry Christmas, a merry Christ-L must be going on. I just

mas! I must be going on. I just dropped in to see if I could catch Pe-

Adele. Under the circumstances-

Bob Winthrop's eyes widened.

daughter.

"Your--'

Snapping, hearty, gorgeous,

lenge him to speech, as if to say to be-happy look; a sort of long-lost-re-him, "And where is your holly? And lative-just-found look!" And again consternation that would prevail where are you going at this hour on he laughed, while Gordon Raymond among his pretty neighbors in a few with a brighter gleam. What visions of the way displeased, a frown on moments. The look of amusement What visions of the brighter gleam. Christmas eve, instead of staying at home? Have you no merry Christ-mas to prepare for, to look forward word on his lips. He threw off his overcoat and sank as ge entered the library. "Tell Stephen to come here," were

He knew well that she had. That into a leather chair near the open his first words, and the old butler, a day he must have been deaf did he not grate. The room was warm, bright, little mystified, went at once to the overhear the bursts of laughter, the well lighted, but Gordon Raymond toom. bright chatter, the gay voices wafted was chilled to the marrow. He or- "Stephen," began Gordon Raymond, into his open library window from dered a hot drink; it did not warm "it is rather late to give orders now. the window next door. And perhaps him, nor the cigar that he puffed at but what arrangements have you made he left his own window open much slowly, nor the heat of the room, nor for to-morrow?" longer than he would have deemed ne- the nearness of the blazing logs. He "Nothing out of the ordinary, sir,"

ters and take him back with me. Peters is godfather to my youngest, and I suppose I'm a fool over them, "Grandchildren- beautiful, lovabl but Peters is worse than I am. A the delight of all who know them." merry Christmas, Raymond, and to" -with a curious look—"a merry Christmas to your daughter, too!" 'So." Gordon Raymond looked in-to the fire with sombre gaze. "All those things you have, and men, even He rose, turned, but his gaze linger- men such as I, call y au blessed. Well, ed on the old man's face. There was Stephen, you have been with me-we an unwonted brightness in his eyes have been together many years." as he went down the room.

"The poor old chap!" he whispered under his breath. "The poor, lonely old chap--with all his money." His voice brok

At the door he met Peters. Peters vonload of toys to the Winthrop do- angelmicile, but Peters now bore under his

micile, but Peters now hore under his arm several suspicious-looking bun-dles, and his pockets were full to overflowing. Peters was younger than his lifelong friend, Bob, but not yet as happy, as Bob told him, since he was still single. Now, as they went out together, Winthrop indicat-id that quiet figure in the chair by a

Who's his daughter?"

eters. ied. wor(s.

"Poor old chap, poor old chap!" re-eated Bob Winthrop. "If I told cy that to-night she sits opposite to larion that it would spoil her Christ- me-the girl I sent away, the flowers mas.'

her! on the morrow. The memory sadden- tically. "There's enough unhappiness mine with their old joyousness. Dead in the world without making her un- or living, God gives me this grace happy. Why, Bob, every time I see to-night, this hoppy Christmas night, Marion I only hope I can bring that to see her once again as she was, as Before look to Nell's face."

"To my three pretty neighbors, from ty soul, drifted out of the conversa- He looked at him. door," he scribbled on the back of it, happy folk, to whom the delights of "That is all, Stephen. When dinner smiling as he did so, thinking what Christmas came as their right-a is ready, you will find me in the li-And his old lips were so unused to such smiling, and his face so accus-throp left him. His cigar went out, ped lightly and announced the serving tomed to its severity, that a fellow- fell from his fingers to the floor, lay of the meat. Gordon Raymond bowategory. It was the youngest one with the member, meeting him as he stood in there forgotten and unheeded. Pres-the hall of the club house, looked at ently, however, he rose slovly to his her his arm, escorted her to the door, feet, stretched his tired old limbs, which Stephen held wide open. In sil-Jackson held ready for him, thanking Raymond ate he looked at the empty brown furs. She was merrier than the other two, and now as she passed "No," he said, rather shortly. "Why that made the man's eyes shine. A Stephen served at it first, and then few seconds later he was starting to- brought the dishes to his master. In of holly in her gloved hand, and put her dainty head on one side with a gay and roguish look, as if to chal-were a joke. A good-chect-and-let's-were a joke. A good-chect-and-let's-were a joke a sort of Christ-were a joke a sort of Christ-were a joke a good-chect-and-let's-were a joke a sort of Christ-were a joke a good-chect-and-let's-were a joke a sort of Christ-were a joke a good-chect-and-let's-were a joke a good-chect-and-let's-were a joke a good-chect-and-let's-were a joke a good chect-and-let's-were a joke a g

"Five, sir-still living, all." "I know. And grandchildren."

"Grandchildren- beautiful, lovable, "Many years, Mr. Raymond."

"You know my history. I, too, His voice broke.

"A wife, sir? Oh, no, not a wife. had already despatched almost a half Rather, sir, an angel. Oh, sir, an

"Lent to me and taken back

ed that quiet figure in the chair by a Stephen, knowing that you know, it pleases me to tell you that I dine "I just asked Raymond to the house with my daughter this Christmas but he declined; says he's going to night, when all the world sits down amidst its own, rejoicing, merry and "Never heard he had one," said head of my table, Stephen, that chair glad. Place the empty chair at the Sure he said his daughter?" "His daughter Adele—those were the ords." "Oh, his mind must be wandering." "Poor old chan poor old chan!" re-"" that she loved best about her, their "Then, for goodness sake don't tell perfume surrounding her. It is my exclaimed Peters, very energe- fancy that her beautiful eyes meet "Well, you've every prospect," said Bob, laughing. "Both young, hearty, cheerful and of like tastes."

And so the "poor, lonely, rich old His hands dropped. Stephen made man," with his chilled heart and emp- no pretense now of hiding the tears.

"Mr. Gordon, sir-

brary, as usual."

then slipped into the overcoat ence the meal began, and as Gordon ently Gordon Raymond's face lighted up, so keenly did his imagination take possession of him, and his eyes shone

> What visions of that absent one came before him! The little girl in her white robe, with its black ribbons-that first, lonely, heart-breaking Christmas after his wife's death. The schoolgirl with her shining, youthbeautiful face. The young woful, man, accomplished, graceful, winning, lovable

And after that?

Nothing. For it was then, just then, that she had defied him. not openiv, but a quiet self-will which enraged the man of self-will. She married-married beneath her in wealth and station.



E proven that the most progressive firms clear out their entire stock at the end of each year so as to enable them to start next seasons operations on a proper basis. We find we have enough skins on hand to keep our immense factory employing 140 fur cutters and finishers, going until the 15th of January. It is our aim to convert this stock, along with our present manufacturers' stock, into cash, so as to enable us to start next season's business with a clean sheet. Already His Majesty's Customs have notified us of the arrival of 60 bales of raw furs for next season's trade, amounting, without duty to the enormous sum of \$62,000. This shipment comprises a small portion of the purchase of our Mr. Sellers, who has just returned from the European markets. After this month our large factory staff will be devotedentirely to making new samples for 1908. The

Thursday, January 9th, 1908

price concessions which we will make from day to day during the month of January will surely have the effect of reducing our stock to the minimum, which is our desire and expectation.

Alaska Sable Muffs, large Imperial and round styles, eider. down beds, satin lining, and silk wrist cord. Regular \$12.50; sale

Isabella Squirrel Ties, trimmed with royal ermine, lined Large Heart-Shaped and Imperial Muffs to match above; regular \$16.50

Large Mink Stoles, trimmed with large natural mink tails, lined with brocaded and brown satin, military roll collars, beautifully Mink Jackets, finest selected Canadian mink, trimmed with

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Lynx Ties, blue, black and natural lynx ties, in all the new throw Lynx Muffs, blue, black, and natural lynx muffs, all the new

styles, extra fine quality fur. Regular price \$24; sale price \$15.75

. door!'

And he knew himself then for what he was-"a poor, lonely, rich old man!'

He pushed his book away from him his life seemed most barren and valueand sat back in his chair, the light less. fading from his countenance. He had Again, as once before that selfsame never looked at it in quite that way. He had always been proud of his sta-head fall back. "A poor, lonely, rich stephen, who had been with Gordon Raymond let his evening, Gordon Raymond let his head fall back. "A poor, lonely, rich tion, his birth, his independence, his old man"-truly, now, that was his adamantine will, his firm disposition, proper title. And the lines about sir. And-and-an elaborate spread? even his good health. He was pleas- his mouth deepened, and the shadows Places for how many, Mr. Gordon?" ed to see that men considered him grew darker until his tired eyes and clever and consulted him and asked his forehead took on a frown that his advice, even though he were now was not all due to the light of the somewhat advanced in years. These room, but seemed rather to signify things he was indeed proud of with repressed pain. His thin handsa very great pride, and because he one lying upon his knee, the other had very great wealth he was never holding his cigar-clasped and unclaspandeceived. For the first time in his ed nervously. And while he sat thus singularly lucky, supremely contented a cheery voice called to the irreand highly respectable existence he proachable waiter, and the same had heard his name spoken with sym- cheery voice saluted him as its owner gathy and pitifully. It had been the took a chair opposite. older one with the soft gray eyes, "Hello, Mr. Raymond!" he exclaimthe one he liked the best, and per- ed. haps it was the thrill of feeling in her this. low and gentle voice that brought isn't it? Christmas is in the air. "home the words with such stunning Gordon Raymond, unclosing his eyes, nodded several times without Sorce:

"The poor, lonely, rich old man!" lifting his head. 'No Christmas tree!" Ah, that had been one of the sorrows of the ine Christmas weather, and-erseason which they felt he must en- Christmas is generally in the air "No tormenting sisters!" An- about this time of the year, isn't it?" dure. other sorrow, this? "And, oh," with a laugh and a rush that sounded as if could not be dashed because Gordon there were thirty instead of three Raymond was not enthusiastic. girls in the room, "no sweet, beautiful, altogether lovely and charm- me than the one that preceded it," he ing mother, with a father in the back- said. "The boys make it lively ground who was a veritable Santa I've four youngsters, you know, and Claus!" And then a deeper and full-I'll guarantee we have as much fun er and older voice remonstrating, to the square inchdrowned amid a shower of kisses and He paused suddenly. He was indeed shricks of laughter. For was not a gay-hearted fellow, not too young, this Christmas eve, and were they- with a splendid home, a lovely wife children at heart still-not privileged and happy, healthy children. But he had not gone through life untouched to be as foolish as they pleased? No wonder he ordered his carriageby its pain, and he read the signs now

"the poor, lonely, rich old man"-and in the white countenance opposite shut his window tight, and planned to him. drive off with his thoughts and his

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lonesome for you! Come on, and let . ware mild, sure and safe, and are a perfect eregulator of the system.

They gently unlock the secretions, clear away all effete and waste matter from the system, and give tone and vitality to the from his lips to his eves. whole intestinal tract, curing Constipation, Sick Headache, Bilionsness, Dyspep wia, Coated Tongue, Foul Breath, Jaundice, Heartburn, and Water Brash. Mrs R. S. Ogden, Woodstock, N.B., writes: "My husband and myself have used Milburn's Laxa-Liver Pills for a number of We think we cannot do without They are the only pills we ever

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thought struck him. The chill came want you to get up as elaborate a "The poor, lonely, rich old man next from within; his heart and soul were dinner as you know how, and you cold and empty, and because this was know how, Stephen. I want the dinthe season of warmth of heart and ing-room decorated with holly and soul, because this was the eve of that smilax, and as many-as many," he great day which the Lord had made, hesitated a little, "lilies-of-the-valley as you can buy at the stores. Send

a messenger out now to order them." Stephen, who had been with Gordon

"Lilies-of-the-valley? Yes, sir; yes, chair. "One guest and myself. My daugh-

ter dines with me.' The consternation on Stephen's face turned to absolute dismay, but he recovered himself quickly, bowed, and him. went out.

And it was very, very beautiful in-The old man moved slowly And the woman whom now his vision deed. through the room, his eyes dwelling contemplated held out to him her beon the daintily-set table. The silver, the delicate china, the tall candlesticks, all the carefully-hoarded trea- the little one I gave into your care? sures of the old house spread in a manner to please the eye and the taste of the most fastidious. It was long since the dinner-board was thus de- head fell forward on his breast, his about him with satisfaction-at the dust oaken walls on which candlegleam and firelight played, bringing on the polished table, Stephen moved out new shadows and intensifying with noiseless steps toward the door. deeper ones. The scent of the liliesof-the-valley, sweet and penetrating, Stephen lingered, addfilled the air. ing a touch here and there, his gaze

"Each Christmas seems happier to seeking, off and on, the face of that other old man; not curiously, but with a strange look of pity.

"Is everything right now, sir?"

credit

"At what hour do you and-er-do phen." you expect to have dinner, sir?" "The usual time. You have so ar-

ranged it, Stephen?"

'Yes, sir.'

"I say, I really forgot you didn't have any one," he began in an altered tone. "Lots of friends, oh—of course "The old man access to the fire." I want to talk to

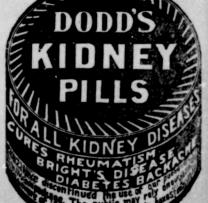
The old man came close as he was -but you know-well, you know what I mean." He paused. The other, neibidden. the hearth, his arm resting on the ther by word nor sign, filled up that pause. "Do me a favor, will you, high montel board.

"Stephen," he began, very quietly, "you have had a wife." "Yes, sir. The Lord give her Raymond? We'll have none of the old folks this year. Neither Marion's

parents are alive, and mine are still in Europe on account of the father's peace. "Amen to that, Stephen. She was

health, so we must keep Christmas without them. Will you come home a good woman." He paused an inwith me? There's nobody in that big bouse of yours to care and oh hang house of yours to care, and-oh, hang "And you have had children." it all, Raymond, it must be a bit

DODD'S



To-night she sat before him, the gracious, graceful girl he loved, and who, he knew, had loved him dearly. The beautiful girl, with her gentle voice so like her mother's and her gentle face and her gentle ways. The meal went on, and as it did so he bent forward, thinking that he heard her speak.

Stephen withdrew to the side of the room, standing with glance riveted on his master's countenance, his master's glance riveted on that empty

Ah! Gradually the dream was fading. Gradually the sourow of his own self-deception was being forced upon For no keenness of the imagination could bring that sweet presence before him, and even as he gazed he saw another face, a lovable face, set above a slim, white-robed body.

seeching hands. "Gordon," she prayed, "where is Husband and father, what have you done with my little girl?"

eyes closed. And while he sat thus, his white hair shining in the as I am. candle light, his white hands resting He opened it. A woman entered, stately as Gordon Raymond's self, beautiful; advanced to the table, and sat down in that empty chair without footstep or breath to herald her com-

Gordon Raymond did not lift his eyes. As he sat silent, his mental he asked. "Does it please you?" eyes. As he sat silent, his mental "Very, very much," said Gordon Raymond. "We shall do ourselves heard a voice:

"Give that to father, please, Ste-

that it did not disturb or startle the him. old man. He looked up slowly-this For the empty chair was filled.

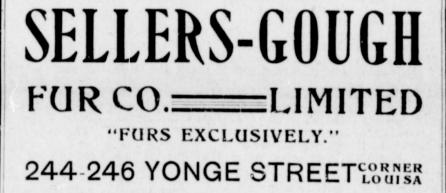
Gordon Raymond stood at a coronet of gleaming silver. Those and that here, here sat Adele! blue eyes were still as blue and open, yes, and as loving as of yore. Those lips were curved to the sweet smile he knew. In all shings this was like, so like, his lost Adele. And yet unlike, too. An older Adele-one who had known life's trials and vicissitules, but still lovely, lovely with a beauty shining from within. She smiled at him again as he looked at

her-smiled, but said no word. His hand went to his forehead in a dazed way. Stephen quietly put down the dish he held, went out and closed the door, and his existence was forgotten by Gordon Raymond. He rub-bed his eyes, but still she sat there. smiling. He looked away from her and back again. The mystery of it smote him, then smote full upon him. He sprang to his feet, leaning his weight upon his hands while he bent toward her.

"If you are no vision of a disordered brain, no phantom conjured up by my imagination, speak, speak! Speak, if it be but one word!"

He saw her rise and push back her chair and move toward him. She put her arms about him and held him close; her warm, soft cheek was press ed to his cold one, her warm fingers met about his neck.

"It is no vision, no phantom, dear



father." she whispered. "It Adele

and in rapture. it is Adele!"

"Indeed, Adele," she answered. Who has been waiting for this hour that gave forgiveness, and all to win her way back into your heart. well between them from that hour. Whose husband and whose children are The meal began once more, Stephen, waiting, too. How I have prayed for smiling and happy, hovering about this." prayed! And how God in His great yielded to the spirit of Christmas, love, and through our good Stephen's My father, my dear father, my loved thought to do again in all the years and loying father, tell me you are glad that remained to him,

"Oh, child!" he murmured gently, tenderly. "Child, my child!"

'For months, though I kept myself hidden from your sight, I have been girls with whom you have been making friends-yes, they are yours, too. Can you realize that?"

He could realize nothing yet-staring from her to the empty chair and back again. Content to realize nothing save that here was Adele, here beside him, her hand in his. That provement in your child. his daughter's loving eyes gazed into

It was a very musical voice, so soft his, that her loving face beamed upon

He could realize nothing but that was but part of his dream-gazed the heart in his bosom suddenly woke "Then come here; come closer, near- down the table-sat staring, mutely. to life and warmth, and sent blood with new vigor through his say if I offered you work?" Above that blow where once shone frame; that the chill and the cold had hair of gleaming gold was piled now left him; that all was well with him,

And with that new life welling ple."

is within him, he responded to it. His three pretty neighbors came, and with

He leaned against her, tremblingly. them their father, a gray-haired man He gazed into her eyes; he put his now, with the stamp of years well arm about her, touched her hair, her spent upon his countenance-a good cheek with his fingers in amazement husband, a true man, a useful, noble man, devoted to his wife and children. "Adele!" he said. "God be praised, Gordon Raymond advanced to him, both hands outstretched-hands that

asked forgiveness, to be met by hands was she went on. "How I have the table. And Gordon Raymond and talked and laughed as he had help, has straightened the way for me. not done in years, as he had never

And surely, surely, not even the kind-hearted Bob Winthrop was happier among his loved ones than ' the 'poor, lonely, rich old man" who dined with his daughter that Christyour next-door neighbor," she con- mas day-whose loneliness was, from tinued. "The mother of the three that day on, forever a thing of the past .- Grace Keon in Extension.

> If your children are troubled with worms, give them Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator; safe, sure and effectual. Try it, and mark the im-

The other day a benevolent old gentleman was stopped by a tramp, wio asked for a night's lodgings.

"Well, look here, my man," the old gentleman said, "what would you

"Bless yer life, sir," came the re-ply, "I wouldn't mind a bit. I can take a joke the same as most peo-

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