CHAPTER NINE

The Red Lion

Tragedies all end happily. It is inevitably so for tragedy is a word reserved for misfortunes which happen to men, and men ultimately are immortal. There can be no disaster, bloody, horrendous, arbitrary, which the immortal spirit of man cannot pattern into meaning. The Greeks who invented the art of tragedy knew this, and after the shrieks, the gory tableau, the brandished axe, their dramas enter a clean, reflective mood of knowledge and content. Man made for eternity cannot stay sad forever.

Hollywood has made the happy ending a synonym of inartistic contrivance and has thus cheapened it to a mere box-office necessity consisting of pan shots of growing wheat, the winding road to the sunburst, all seen in a crescendo of upbeat music. Contrivance and strained probabilities are not the major sins of the Hollywood happy ending, for contrivance has been necessary to the script writer since Aeschylus; and, as a matter of fact, life itself seems often contrived, as though faintly scored with the tool marks of its Artisan. When Hollywood misuses the happy ending, it is most often, I think, because she has ignored the preceding pain. The tragedy has taught its principals nothing. Yet tragedy, according to the Greeks, should issue in wisdom. Man incorrigibly pushes forward, but after disaster his thrusting hopes are tempered, gentler, because through tragedy he has learned to know something about himself.
There is always a temptation to impose patterns where they do not exist; this is the artistic crime of didacticism. The journalist is constantly tempted by art, and if he succumbs, it is most frequently to the seduction of a second-rate didactic art. Aware of this, I shall try to eschew improved patterns.

There was a lightening of mood experienced by all the victims of the fire once they had left the scene itself. It is easily explained by the combination of loosening nerves and the resurgence of more familiar, less dramatic concerns. The urge which possesses all groups of young men to sing on a bus ride asserted itself momentarily on the way to the Red Lion Inn until the sudden recollection of the recent deaths sobered them. But the happy ending of the Shadowbrook fire cannot be explained merely by physical relief: the relief of superiors that so many had been saved, of novices and juniors that they were in new, somewhat exciting surroundings, of everyone that it was over. Physical relief was present, naturally, and there were many providential, wonderful escapes, many reasons for individuals and the
group to give thanks to God; but taken by themselves, none of these are sufficient to explain the deep, clear-running happiness which marked the life of the shattered Shadowbrook community during the weekend they spent in the Red Lion Inn.

We must recur again to the Greeks because the only adequate explanation of why this tragedy issued in joy follows Aristotle’s analysis of tragedy’s proper work: Shadowbrook had learned wisdom during its wild and tragic struggle. And like all true wisdom it was a lesson in love.

For over thirty years now Jesuits had been trained in the big house that hulked, red-roofed and ostentatiously, out of the Baldhead slope. The Berkshires never quite knew what to make of the Jesuits—one hundred and fifty men living in their midst with scarcely any communication on either side. They saw them walking Rosary Lane in bands of bowed-headed threes, playing touch football down in the lower field, handball, tennis and basketball on the hard courts above the farm, or walking around the lake in surely the oddest old clothes worn by Americans since the New Deal. But they made so little splash: no Saturday nights in town, no shopping sprees, none of the friendly, funny or rancorous incidents that have ever marked the lively histories of town and gown.

On Shadowbrook’s part, contact was limited to a shy type of friendliness, not infrequently marred by a secret censorious priggishness. For the novice struggling with the world in his heart occasionally finds solace in objectifying his enemies (spiritual, of course) into figures in a facile, external drama where a car speeding by at night—devoted doctor, likely—becomes a symbol of dark forces threatening his precarious peace. The stiff, uncomfortable novice riding the Pittsfield bus from a visit to the eye-doctor could well be repeating behind his wary glances Kempis’ unsociable comment: “I have never left my cell without returning less a man.” And was probably from embarrassment, if from no other cause, rather unbending company.

The relationships between the Shadowbrook community and Berkshire County were, then, only moderately cordial as far as anyone could tell from overt expressions. And yet during those thirty years, perhaps unknown to anyone, a genuine affection
had been growing. The novices and juniors had no trouble falling in love with the Berkshires as mountains, and though, because they were only novices and juniors, they could read awry the Christian lessons and be at times reticent or gauche in expressing the intensity of new insights, still they were religious, pupils of the schola amoris, and their lesson, slowly learned, as it must be, was love. They might be tempted smugly to judge the Berkshire people as the handiest examples of worldliness they had, but they soon learned to recognize it as temptation; and the farmers, retired professors, artists and cheerful townfolk, once again accorded a chance at salvation, could be seen for what they were: open-hearted, likeable humans.

Then there were the fathers who gave communion breakfast talks, helped out in the local parishes, attended the Tanglewood concerts, and the brothers who dealt with the merchants, helped with the neighbors’ harvests. They had no difficulty in learning to like the Berkshires and the Berkshire people; and, apparently, it was returned. For, from Saturday night when Byrne Bauer opened his inn to the fugitives until Monday morning when they shipped out for their new homes, the lobby of the Red Lion Inn was the scene of an agape, a feast of love, in which the people of Berkshire County demonstrated that they had taken these strange characters who lived in Anson Stokes’ old house to their hearts. It was for all the Jesuits who went through it a cleansing, humbling, happy experience. Mrs. Gould pertly asked Father Corcoran on Sunday morning, “You didn’t realize you were so loved, did you?” And Shadowbrook did not. The realization, like all genuine happy endings, made the whole thing seem meaningful.

When Byrne Bauer received his peremptory orders from the unknown policeman, he had swung his car into the Gould farmhouse and dropped off his load of blankets. The buses were already loaded, and he was not sure he would be able to get back to Stockbridge before them; so he took the inside lake road which was a narrow, dirt-covered affair, rarely plowed in the winter. The drive on any other occasion would have absorbed his entire attention. Bumping and sluing around on the rutted ice at two o’clock in the morning could have given him a tale for lobby
recounting, good for months. But tonight he drove automatically with his mind so occupied that it hardly noticed that his skill at the wheel had to challenge the late Lucky Tetter. The hotel was being kept open during the winter for the first time in years, but he would have to get the heat turned up and into unoccupied rooms. Most of the rooms were made up already—that would help—but there were ten (or was it a dozen?) which would need doing. He would have to get his wife and daughters on that right away. She was due for a surprise. There were only a few guests in the hotel and so they weren’t overstocked on food. That would be a very large problem—all the wholesale dealers were closed on Saturday.

He got back to his hotel around two-fifteen. There was time only to tell his wife, go down and wake up his furnace man, and make some brief hasty preparations before the buses pulled in.

The Red Lion has a long history. Silas Pepoon, a Stockbridge burgher, opened it shortly after the failure of Jonathan Edwards’ attempt to make the Stockbridge Indians into proper-living, hell-fearing Christians. Its inauguration marked a relaxation in moral conduct following the passing of the Genevan regimen advocated by Edwards. For its rampant red lion with the fine green tail invited the young people of the village to dancing and merrymaking. We are told “the ladies sipped wine and cider and ....the more seductive flip, while the gentlemen indulged in even more fiery and exciting beverages.”

In 1774, the first Revolutionary Congress in the state was held in its ballroom, and the resolutions of boycott and defiance adopted there became the model for hundreds which soon followed throughout the Colonies. Naturally, the Berkshires were not of one mind; and the next year, in 1775, the ballroom again witnessed another convention. This was convened against the Tories “as they were something insolent.” After the Revolution the Red Lion was host to a third convention where the Berkshires rather arrogantly requested that the Massachusetts Supreme Court be situated at Stockbridge. Throughout the early nineteenth century the inn, which was then run by the appropriately “red-faced” Jonathan Hicks, was a stage stop on the Hudson
River run. During the invasion of resort people after the middle of the century, the inn, in a not-very-successful attempt to attract some of the fashionable Lenox custom, changed its traditional name to the more characterless “Stockbridge House.” But after it was partially destroyed by fire in 1896, it was expanded and returned to its pre-Revolutionary name. Throughout most of the last century and almost up to the present day it was owned by the Plumb family and then until very recently by a related branch, the Treadways, who founded a series of Treadway Inns throughout New England. These proved more profitable than the Red Lion, where they had gotten their start; and in 1954 they sold the inn to Byrne Bauer, a New York advertising man, who wanted to fulfill that ambition, apparently common among his tribe, of “mine-hosting” a country inn. Under Mr. Bauer’s administration a good deal of redecorating was done, and this was the first year in a long while that an attempt was being made to keep the inn open during the winter months.

The Red Lion Inn, as much as any other structure in the County, and more than most, can serve to symbolize the County itself. For its history is almost as long and has followed, fairly exactly, the same independent course. And in accepting the burned-out community into its warm hospitality the old

![Novices at Mass. (Berkshire Eagle photo)](image-url)
inn expressed even more than the Bauers’ generosity. Somehow their action stood for the reaction of the durable Berkshires to the Jesuits’ misfortune.

It was a sad-looking bunch of refugees which came into the unfamiliar luxury of a hotel lobby that night—tousle-headed, smoke-grimed, shivering, huddled in patchy blankets. Here and there the tentative grin with which some raunchy-looking novice answered the warm greeting of the Bauers revealed the gaps of missing dentures, left trustingly on a sink shelf some hours ago; and some poor unspectacled myopics looked squint-eyed around the lightsome lobby. One man was barefooted, another had to be told to leave his smoldering blanket outside on the walk, almost all were still in rumpled pajamas. Mr. and Mrs. Bauer were immediately afraid that they might have to deal with cases of shattered nerves. It was not an unreasonable fear, looking at the horrible parade that shuffled in that night.

There were instances of nerves. Almost all took care to inspect possible exits in their new quarters before they went to bed that night. Brother Wolf would not be able to sleep in entire comfort for a long while to come. Father Kelly would burst out crying Sunday night during a final get-together of the faculty fathers and have to be led to his room. Then there were others who remained a little distant or laughed too stridently, but generally, speaking, the few days of refugee living were days of calm and even bubbling happiness.

The chief reason for this has already been indicated, for it was impossible for them to stay grim when each hour repeated, intensified the same theme: that they were loved. Kindly affection and concern swathed and sustained them. But there were other factors, too. The first was what Byrne Bauer, recalling the experience, terms “the discipline of those boys.” Discipline is an easy word and to some degree accurately describes the effect of novitiate living; yet it can be, I fear, a profoundly misleading word.

The Jesuit novice and the Jesuit scholastic belong to that division of the Christian life called in Church language, “regular.” They are “regulars” because they live a common life under rule. There is uniformity of practice to a large extent, but it is well to
keep in mind that the only force creating such uniformity is the free consent of the individuals involved. Religious discipline is not something imposed, at least in the modern Church where ecclesiastical sanctions of an external, physical kind have been abandoned as means of sanctification, which, while probably legitimate, are almost certainly inexpedient. A religious order does not attempt to cow men into obedience by shaking a big stick. The first question asked by every provincial on his yearly visitation is always, “Are you happy?” Because, if the subject is not convinced and content, then he very probably should no longer remain in the order. The aim of these armies is not served by anyone forced to conformity. And so the “discipline” which seemed to have edified those who witnessed the life of the displaced community during their weekend at the Red Lion must not be confused with any of the notions of discipline so prevalent in our age of military service and the post-military-service novel. There was a routine, familiar to them all, to which they naturally tended to return once they were accustomed to their new surroundings, but there was no command given. On Saturday morning when the manudctor asked Father Hanlon about the “order of the day,” he was told that the novices could do pretty much as they liked. If they felt up to it, they could make the usual periods of prayer at the approximate times; they should try to rest when they could; and he, the manudctor, should make sure that enough novices were helping out in the kitchen, the dining room, and in keeping the hotel clean as far as possible. Almost everyone followed an order of duties which nearly duplicated the one that had ruled their day at Shadowbrook, but they did it willingly from individual conviction that they should: that they needed the periods of prayer and silence, that order, regularity, discipline were light burdens, sweet yokes. When we subtract the military connotations from the word “discipline,” then we can agree with Byrne Bauer that “the discipline of those boys” was one of the chief factors in the contentment and happiness he noticed in them.

The second reason was, again according to Mr. Bauer’s observation, “the continual kidding that went on.” “I think, Father, the ribbing they took from one another helped to snap them all out of the doldrums.”
Very many witnesses of the Red Lion interlude remarked on the incessant bantering they overheard. Some seemed to find it unexpected, though why that should be, I don’t know. Some even found it crude—which I find much easier to understand.

One of the difficulties in writing an intimate history like this is that one is so familiar with certain aspects of the story that it seems unnecessary to explain them to others. Thus I have had constantly to guard my vocabulary against intramural neologisms or accompany them with exegesis when I have used them. But I was unprepared for the surprise I heard expressed so often on the subject of Jesuits’ jokes. I had not reckoned on accounting for them.

The situation was unusual, of course. Here was a cloister unseamed—the “garden enclosed” was open for sightseers. And, I suppose, the archetypical monk, scooping a shovelful a day out of his grave and raptly ogling the skull on his prie-dieu, is, like all archetypes, hard to eradicate; still, I was unprepared. Well, let me state the fact (now that circumstances have exposed us, we must put the best face on it possible!): Jesuits do joke. Men living what my novice master called “a barracks existence” inevitably joke, about themselves, the other fellow, the eternal verities and the food. It seems to be a necessary social lubricant. So the barracks life of a Jesuit scholastic produces a crop of genuine wits, ersatz wits, and people who do their level best. The atmosphere of raillery, with the only excision of obscenities, duplicates that of a warship’s bunkroom, is mightily enjoyed by all, and is a feature of religious life, quite Christian, and, I should have thought, quite expectable.

Bill Russell, after he had accompanied Father Kelly to the Campion Chapel with the Blessed Sacrament, had asked Father whether it was all right for him to wear the humeral veil he had around his shoulders for warmth. Father Kelly said of course it was. So he swept into the Red Lion lobby with his customary hauteur cloaked in wrinkled pajamas and riddled blanket, topped with the magnificent gold brocaded humeral veil, which trailed off his shoulders towards the floor, to be greeted by a grinning Gerry Finnegan, who called with loud impudence, “Here comes Mr. Russell. Always impeccably dressed!” The gust of laughter
that swept through the glum and ragged group in the lobby was the beginning of clearing skies.

Bill Mulligan found a beret left by some artily-inclined summer visitor and wore it continually, making it his own bag of tricks, his cap and bells, a single prop which proved to have a thousand bright uses.

Father Hanlon and Anna Mahon kept up a continual exchange of small arms fire about the Roosevelt administration. Someone driving a carload of novices over to Cranwell on Sunday afternoon was startled to hear the following conversation:

“I’ve been sent to the Rock.” (St. Andrew’s Novitiate, Poughkeepsie, New York).

“Isn’t White going there?” “Yup.”

“Look, when he gets out of the hospital and shows up there, get him up on that high roof. And then run down to the bottom and shout: ‘Do it again, Bobby, we didn’t see you the first time!’”

So much for the fact, frequency and quality of the jokes. They are welcome, even the poorest of them, in every religious house, and never more so than during the days of readjustment at the Red Lion Inn.

The first problem for the Bauers was to get something hot into their shivering guests. The furnace engineer arrived and managed to get steam into the kitchen in fifteen minutes—a record for the course, as it customarily took him two hours. They were served cups of hot cocoa and then in groups of ten or twelve led by either Mr. Bauer or his wife went upstairs and distributed haphazardly into rooms. Only one man can be found who slept. He knelt briefly beside his bed, climbed in and began to buzz in a matter of minutes, much to the disgust of his roommate, who moved over into one of the other rooms where discussion of the excitement was taking place. For all the others were too keyed up, and they sat up during the remainder of the night comparing stories and grimly speculating on the number of dead.

About a quarter past four Fathers Corcoran and Kelly came in. After finding the gymnasium at Cranwell dark, they had been told of the move to the Red Lion by one of the Cranwell lay
professors. Anna Mahony and John Mahanna of the Berkshire Eagle were already there, as well as Fathers Sullivan and Hanlon, who had come on the buses. The other fathers were either in the hospital or had been driven to Cranwell.

An informal conference began on what had to be done next. Byrne Bauer pointed out that his main problem would be food but that he was sure that he could get some of the wholesalers to open tomorrow once they heard what had happened. Brother Frost, who had returned from the hospital shortly before, said that he would bring over a truckload of vegetables from the Shadowbrook root cellars and there was no need to worry about milk since their herd could supply all that was needed and more.

The next problem on the agenda was clothing. Father Corcoran was anxious that his community get to Mass that morning. Perhaps, as never before, the community Mass, where the group, conscious of itself as a group, one with humanity, and humanity in miniature, offered the ritual act of worship which links human strivings and pains to the Cross, would reach a significance that in normal circumstances—celebrated daily among the warm oak of the old ballroom chapel and in its ordinary position within the familiar rhythm of daily duties—became inevitably slightly blurred. He knew that, as religious men, his community would realize this Mass as they had few before it. It would be a Mass of Requiem for those who had died, of thanksgiving for the preservation of so many, of petition for the health of those injured, and, most of all, an act of community worship offered by a shattered community that yet believed in their unity and their purpose. He was most anxious to have Mass celebrated this morning, but he could not send his community out into the streets in ragged, half-decent night clothes.

Anna Mahony cut in brusquely, “You’ll have clothes. Don’t worry about that. What time do you want Mass?”

“Sometime between nine and ten, I suppose. We should let them sleep, if they can. And yet, I don’t want to keep them hungry too long. As a matter of fact, now that I think of it, we can set up an altar here in the lobby. There is really no need to go out to the parish.”

But Miss Mahony had the bit fixed in her determined
teeth and would not hear of any makeshift. The first thing to do was to organize a clothing drive. John Mahanna would get WBEC, the radio station owned by the Berkshire Eagle, to broadcast an appeal, wouldn’t John? Mahanna answered by going to the phone. And she would call up WBRK herself right now. There would be clothes. She’d ask that they be left here at the Red Lion, or at Cranwell, or at the Red Cross County Headquarters in Pittsfield. Clothes would come pouring in.

I do not know what was implied to complete Anna Mahony’s metaphor. A teacup? A shower? A steel ladle? Did she know she was invoking a deluge? I believe not, for, as we discussed before, no one then realized that an immense reservoir of affection of unguessed depth and extent had built up quietly through thirty years for the odd, reserved men who lived at the novitiate.

The community did go to Mass that morning at St. Joseph’s parish church in Stockbridge, neatly clothed in pants, shoes, shirts and warm, fur-collared jackets. The commander of the marine base in Pittsfield sent up a shipment of jackets and caps which arrived after seven. The boys were trickling down from the upstairs bedrooms, having had enough of lying awake and discussing experiences and rumors. They found the lobby already changing character. It was becoming crowded and rather messy looking. People with boxes, bundles and armloads were trooping in in increasing numbers. A few Red Cross ladies were valiantly attempting to maintain order. Some of the people who were bringing in clothes had stayed to help sort them. The novices and juniors as they came down the stairs were told quickly to get to work picking out a pair of pants, shoes, shirt and underclothing in their size. “One of the marine jackets over there, please; and now go up and get dressed.” The clothes were in sufficient quantity already so that fits for even the odd-sized were found very quickly.

By eight the crowd of cars on Main Street had assumed jam proportions. A queue snaked across the wide porch of the Red Lion and down the walk as though something were being given away. At the Red Cross headquarters in Pittsfield a similar scene was staged.
The New England provincial, Father William E. FitzGerald, had arrived at seven-fifteen. When Father Larry Ryan had first returned to Cranwell the night before, he had told Father Keane to call the provincial. The provincial and his assistant, Father John O’Connor, had said Mass immediately and prepared to go up to Lenox. Another call from Father Ryan on his second trip to Cranwell to open up the gymnasium told them that it was feared two had died. With that news and the continual bulletins on the car radio to spur them, they drove the one hundred sixty miles from Boston at a pace that caused Father O’Connor to remark afterwards that a police escort could only have held them back. They went immediately to Shadowbrook.

The crowd had diminished somewhat, but new people were coming. The spectacle, however, was almost done with. The fire still burned pathetically in the western wing although most of its walls had collapsed. In the crisp March morning the ruins shimmered like an August landscape, and no one could approach them for the heat. Father FitzGerald questioned the firemen on the feasibility of raking the ashes for the remains of the two who were dead. They told him that they were sure the number was four. This new uncertainty made him anxious to see the community. He was told that they had gone to the Red Lion Inn, and he and Father O’Connor drove off.

The pitiful sight of that tumble of smoking debris and the shocking news that two more had died had suddenly caused the tragedy to assume its true, grim proportions, which their brisk activity since the telephone call last night had tended to obscure. It was a black ride around the lake to Stockbridge. Their thoughts were apprehensive: they half expected to find a group of dispirited, tattered refugees who would perhaps run to cluster around their knees for comfort. They were prepared to administer it in large executive doses. And so, it was a startling scene that greeted them in the cozy, toast-warm lobby.

The Red Cross ladies were bustling around, plump, maternal, competent. Some of the novices were strolling about the porch already warmly dressed, looking like a party of skiers about to set out on the day’s sport. Father Kelly, looking fresh after two baths (the first of which had turned the tub black as coal),
The bits of bone that were recovered from the ruins were buried in one grave in the small Jesuit cemetery at Shadowbrook. All the graves were subsequently transferred to Campion Center in Weston, Massachusetts.

The provincial stayed around the Red Lion until shortly after eight-thirty when the community, all now fully equipped, was setting out for the parish church and Mass. Then he drove over to Cranwell where he lay violent hands on a telephone and set about solving his proper problems: the movement of men and materiel.

The first need was going to be to procure enough clerical suits and habits for the community. The clothing drive, at the rate it was going, would take care of all other necessities; but, although the Stokes family had already sent up an excellent “Episcopal” black suit which had been gratefully commandeered by one of the fathers, it could not be expected that the attics and cedar closets of the Berkshires would yield enough canonically approved dress for one hundred fifty men. Father Keane of Cranwell told him that the other houses of the province had been calling, wanting news and offering help. The provincial told him that suits and habits were the first need and that every house should be contacted. By noon that day, trucks, cars and station
wagons loaded with laundry hampers, trunks and boxes began to arrive from all the houses of the province until by nightfall everyone wore black. The Red Lion lost its ski-lodge look and assumed the appearance of a makeshift monastery. There were more habits, and of better quality than the novices, who by rule must display their detachment by wearing the hand-me-downs of the old, the dandified and the deceased, had ever seen before, much less worn. Ministers in every house found reason to complain when weeks later it became clear that the enthusiastic generosity of their communities had not shied at sending the very best to Shadowbrook. It was a happy day for the tailors.

The second need was going to be, of course, to find new houses for the displaced. Many plans were discussed by Father FitzGerald and Father O’Connor on the ride to Cranwell, but they had not been long there when the initiative was taken away from them. Telegrams from the provincials of both New York and Maryland arrived, offering to take their novices and juniors and specifying how many rooms they had available in their novitiates. It was only the beginning. Before the day was much older, there were offers from every provincial in the United States; and during the next two days almost all the European provinces had wired. Since the two neighboring provinces had enough rooms, it was decided to accept these first offers; and before the morning was out, arrangements had been completed by telephone. Father FitzGerald told them to expect the men on Monday morning.

In the meantime, the fire had become a national front-page story. The Berkshires have become buried in our national consciousness—they are our Lake Country, it has been said, and like all scenes with literary associations, they mean more to us as a nation, I think, than anyone can properly analyze. Then too, Shadowbrook itself appears to have been better known than Shadowbrook suspected. The thousands of visitors to the Tanglewood Music Festivals had all seen it and (who knows?) admired it. The pictures by Margaret Bourke-White for a recent Life article on the Jesuits, the publicity connected with the fund drive for a new novitiate—all of these were factors. John Mahanna after a sleepless night had reluctantly fulfilled a promise made to his family and driven up to St. Albans, Vermont, on a visit to
relatives, and at ten o’clock on Saturday morning saw pictures of the fire taken by Gene Mitchell of the *Eagle* staff (which John himself had just finished placing in the layout of that day’s paper) on the local TV. The West Coast newspapers carried the story and Mitchell’s pictures on the front page of their eight o’clock editions. The editor of the *Stars and Stripes* in Tokyo couldn’t see much point in printing a wire service release on some seminary being burned in the Berkshires until he found himself reading it over the telephone repeatedly to excited subscribers who wanted information; it was strange, all right, but obviously news.

Other New England radio and TV stations had picked up the appeal for clothes from the two Pittsfield stations, and cars from every New England state would arrive before the day was out, their back seats heaped, as for a trip to the beach, with all kinds of clothing. But already it was becoming clear that the blizzard of gifts, which threatened to smother the Red Lion and had made huge mounds in the Pittsfield office of the Red Cross, simply had to be stopped. At nine-thirty an appeal was broadcast, calling off the request for clothes, but they kept coming. By the end of the day, Shadowbrook was more lavishly accoutered than it had ever been in its history.

It would be bootless, probably dull, and certainly (alas for the hectic circumstances that mocked the fathers’ efforts to remember all their benefactors) impossible to catalogue all the kindnesses of that Saturday. I can only select a few salient instances for their typicality or piquancy, and let it go at that.

There were the doctors: Wickham, who was the house physician, and Henly, Blais and Campbell. They came to Shadowbrook during the fire, followed the victims to the hospital, or served them throughout the months of convalescence. Both Doctors Wickham and Campbell drove back to the Red Lion on Saturday night to check on those who had not come to the hospital, and it was then they decided to send Brother Bousquet, who had inhaled too much smoke, back to St. Luke’s.

There was the nursing staff at St. Luke’s who, like the operators of the Lenox Exchange, volunteered in a body to put in extra hours for the emergency. And the superiors of the nursing nuns at St. Luke’s who transferred two of their best sisters to the
hospital as “specials” for our men.

There was the Lee Laundry which refused payment on two hundred dollars worth of laundry service for the Red Lion.

The Main Street Mart in Stockbridge stripped its shelves so that there could be a breakfast for the community when it returned from Mass.

Then there was the shoe manufacturer in North Adams who sent down a basketful of brand new shoes.

And the two little girls who pasted adhesive tape around some oil cans, wrote “Shadowbrook Fund” on them and went out on the street soliciting like they had seen it done in the movies.

Offers of shelter, so many of them, it was impossible to keep track: from the Fathers of Mercy in Stockbridge, from the Berkshire Industrial Farm, from Canon Stokes by telegram from Florida.

And Doctors Norton and Cerutti. They were the opticians of the house and supplied all the glasses lost in the fire free of charge. The Pittsfield Optical Company called in their entire staff and, working throughout Saturday and Sunday, they had ground out eighty-eight pairs of lenses by Monday morning.

The General Electric workers at the Pittsfield plant took up an impromptu collection, bought clothes and presented a check to the provincial at Cranwell on Saturday afternoon.

On Sunday Anna Mahony, realizing that bags would be needed to carry all these new wardrobes, broadcast a cautious appeal for luggage. The announcement stated that anyone wishing to offer suitcases, gladstones and so forth should first call the Red Cross and describe the luggage available since only eighty pieces were necessary. It was a chary enough appeal, but on the experience of the day before no more than necessarily high-handed. The quota was filled within an hour.

And money. And telegrams. And nine million, seven hundred and forty-four thousand, six hundred and twenty-three phone calls according to the rough estimate of Father Pat Sullivan, who manned the board at the Red Lion!

Parents, anxious and fearing the worst, began to arrive before lunch on Saturday. Most had been contacted by the Red Cross and told that their sons were safe, but some had started off
at the first news before the Red Cross could reach them, and all
wanted more assurance than a telephone call could give.

Father Peter Dolan started the phone-call dime on its
rounds. He had come over from Cranwell to visit the Red Lion
and met the preternaturally present Miss Mahony in the lobby.
“Is there anything I can do for you, Father?”

“Yes. Could you lend me a dime? You see, today’s my
birthday, and with the fire now especially, I know that my relatives
will expect to hear from me. I’d like to call them up.”

That single borrowed dime was passed a good deal more
than any buck from one to another until some seventy “collect’
telephone calls had been completed, and then returned, minus,
no doubt, a few mill marks, to its owner.

By Sunday afternoon the Red Lion looked like a church
bazaar which somehow had attracted the State Fair’s attendance.
A crowd of two to three hundred people cheerfully bumping
and excusing themselves in limited space looked State Fair sized,
while the mounds of clothes with the “production” staffers from
the Red Cross, volunteers both clerical and lay, and sharp-eyed
mothers picking them over, sorting or choosing a wardrobe
for their “juniors,” supplied the bazaar look. The few anxious
moments before parents found their sons sometimes proved
tense, but the molten embraces and shrill joys of greeting were
almost painfully happy. The heroes of the West Stockbridge
Sunday School showed of what stuff they were made by going off
doggedly to teach on Sunday morning. Generally speaking, it was
a warm, friendly crowd, exuberant in their relief.

The Red Cross women had to persuade the mothers to
take over the job of picking out their sons’ new wardrobe, since
the boys, partly out of motives of religious poverty, partly, I
suppose, out of masculine diffidence face to face with a bargain
basement, were taking the first things that came to hand, and
many too few of them. Maternal instincts, long frustrated, went
to work with a will. Most of the contributions from the houses of
the province, which contained the bulk of the necessary jesuitical
dress, had had to be left at Cranwell for lack of room in the inn,
and the opportunity to drive their sons again in the family car
was eagerly seized.
Byrne Bauer’s father, a gracious patriarch, was presiding over an impromptu bar in his own quarters on the second floor where he served highballs and rich conversation to Red Cross workers and occasional Jesuits of sufficient years and discretion. The happy ending was in full swing.

That night at supper, the last they would eat together as a community, Father FitzGerald read a telegram of sympathy from the Father General of the Order in Rome and made a speech. He assigned the men to their new destinations, congratulated them on their conduct and dwelt on what has been the theme of this final chapter: the generosity, kindness, love which had been shown them on all sides—the humility and rededication it should cause in them.

That night after the students had gone to bed the fathers got together for the last time. It should have been a cheerful, convivial gathering of parting friends, but it failed. They suddenly found, after the turmoil of the last two days, that they were strained with one another, embarrassed by emotions which could not be expressed without shame. When Father Tom Kelly, without sleep since Friday night, began to weep, the party broke up, grateful that according to the traditional code of manhood all the traditional things had been left unsaid.

The next morning the buses were at the door at eight-thirty, and at nine, according to schedule and despite the prophecies of the Red Cross, which was sure they would not leave until noon, the first bus pulled away. Because it was Lent, the Red Cross canteen in Pittsfield supplied lobster sandwiches for the trip, and Anna Mahony was there, her eye for details as sharp as ever, with pen and pencil sets for everyone, billfolds for the fathers, and Dramamine for anyone prone to car sickness.

There were the usual waves from an unusually large crowd, and Shadowbrook dissolved at last in a blast of exhaust smoke.

The happy ending described in the last few pages, must not, of course, be confused with the synthetic matinee ending. It was an emergence from violence into peace and new understanding, and it still bore the shadows of sorrow.

When Doctors Wickham and Campbell came to the Red
Lion Inn early Saturday morning they had little hope to offer for the recovery of Father Post and Mr. Griffin, and they predicted a long and painful convalescence for Brother White and Father Carroll. Anxiety for those in the hospital, grief for those lost in the smoking ruins, dimmed the days the community spent with the Bauers, warmed in the mid-lenten brilliance of their neighbors’ concern, to twilight time where dark and light contended together.

Father Tribble’s brother had driven over from his home in Troy and sat hours in the lobby of the Red Lion talking to anyone who would listen, questioning over and over again for details of his brother’s last acts, savoring the bitter-sweet tale of his final heroism which had saved so many.

Continually there were questions and tears as someone else remarked how he or she would miss Father Muollo—a man who, it seems, had made everyone in the county his personal friend.

Saturday morning the contracting firm of Farrell and Gregory moved in their earth-moving shovels and a long derrick equipped with a wrecking ball. They set to work knocking over
the turrets and battlements of old Anson’s fancy so that the ruins could be entered in safety. The still glowing ashes were dumped out on the driveway, and the slow work of picking them over for bones began under the supervision of Brother Frost. After two days of painstaking work, a pitiful little heap of human bones rattling in an undertaker’s bag was all that they had found. Mr. Pellegrini, another contractor, asked permission to volunteer his services too. He was a great friend of Brother Perry and was sure that he could find his body. All week, until the search was finally called off on the next Friday, the contractors slowly excavated the fathers’ wing. Not much was added to the small heap in the bag Brother Frost kept with him.

At the hospital Mr. Griffin was lying in a cocoon of fat bandages which submerged almost his entire body. His face had been deeply seared, and he would need repeated skin grafts before it again took form and contour. His hand would be a purple claw, frightfully twisted for a long time to come. He was going to recover, but now no one knew that.

Father Carroll was in traction, the bones of his heel snapped. Only now was he beginning to remember, and the memories were confused, violent, menacing.

And Father Post was incising his heroism into the receptive hearts of the nuns. “The man was a saint. When he came in that night, Father, I saw Doctor Wickham take his burned arms and hold them under boiling hot water, then slough off the skin from his entire forearm. I’ve seen a lot, Father, nursing, but I turned away. And, Father, he didn’t say a word, make one sound, except that I could see his lips moving: ‘My Jesus mercy.’” And the weeks he lay in his bed, while he fought for life, with his burned arms stretched out cruciform and resting on two little tables on either side of him, his beard growing and his torso immovably fixed, caused the good women to make a comparison which is no less theologically justifiable for being a facile metaphor. The one man who, perhaps, before all others was designed for heroics was fulfilling his destiny.

On the Thursday following the fire a pro-burial Mass of Requiem was said at St. Ignatius Church in Newton. On July 31st, at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new Shadowbrook,
an interment ceremony was held in the little graveyard out by the farm, and the small collection of relics was buried under a common headstone which carried the cryptic epitaphs of four Jesuits: the day of birth, the day of entrance, the day of death, R. I. P.