

The  
**SHADOWBROOK FIRE**

F. X. SHEA

ELEPHANT TREE PRESS



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2009

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Elephant Tree Press  
85 School Street  
Watertown, MA 02471-4251

Design: Circle Graphics

All photos, unless otherwise noted, are from the New England Province Archives.

Printing: Braintree Printing, Braintree, MA

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1956





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*This book would not have been possible without the much appreciated help of several people:*

Susan Gussenhoven Shea, who gave crucial assistance at every stage of the project, providing copies of the parts of the manuscript that had not been printed previously and giving permission to use them, answering dozens of questions about Frank Shea's life and career, and even proofreading the manuscript at the final stage of the project.

Alice Poltorick, director of communications for the New England Province of the Jesuits, who oversaw the project from beginning to end and facilitated its completion in numberless ways.

Alice Howe, assistant archivist and curator of collections for the New England Province, for providing the photographs used in the book, tracing their provenance, and supplying much useful information about their subjects.

Pat Mullaly, of Circle Graphics, who designed the cover, laid out the text, and performed feats of wizardry making old photos come alive.

John Buckingham, of audio-visual services at the College of the Holy Cross, for technical assistance in high-resolution scanning.

Charles J. Healey, S.J., who in a sense suggested the whole project by writing his own account of the fire, in letters home to his family

in the days after the fire, and contributed these letters to a volume of reminiscences for a reunion of Shadowbrook alumni fifty years later.

Lisa Gentile, who laboriously scanned and edited the parts of the manuscript that had been printed in the province newspaper in 1973-74.

*The Berkshire Eagle* and Gene Mitchell, one of their photographers at the time of the fire, for dramatic photos of the fire and its aftermath.

Raymond Helmick, S.J., Edward O'Flaherty, S.J., and James Woods, S.J., for their detailed memories of Shadowbrook floor plans more than fifty years ago.

And finally, thanks to two provincial superiors of the New England Province: Thomas Regan, S.J., who gave his support and encouragement to the project in its early stages and first suggested that its home should be the history section of the province web site; and Myles Sheehan, S.J., without whose approval and financial support the project would not have been brought to a conclusion.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

On a cold, cloudy night in March 1956, fire destroyed Shadowbrook, the Jesuit novitiate at Stockbridge in the Berkshire hills of western Massachusetts. At the other end of the state, Frank Shea, a young Jesuit about to turn thirty, was studying theology in preparation for ordination to the priesthood the following June. A gifted and aspiring writer, who had already completed a full-length play about the life of Ignatius Loyola, he saw a compelling subject in the events of that night at Shadowbrook. He spent the summer after his ordination and parts of the following year—while he was finishing his theology studies—interviewing the survivors of the fire as well as the Lenox and Stockbridge neighbors who played significant roles in the events surrounding the fire. He turned the accounts into a vivid narrative that is all the more remarkable in that it was written, in effect, in his spare time.

Shea told friends that he modeled his approach and the book's structure on *A Night to Remember*, Walter Lord's best-selling account of the sinking of the Titanic, published the previous year, which Lord had based on interviews with some 70 survivors. Whatever his template, Shea produced a manuscript that is far more than an exciting disaster story. In its account of the fashionable resort life of the Berkshires in the 19th century and of the somewhat fabled lives of the builders and later owners of Shadowbrook, it offers an entertaining slice of American social history. And, from the viewpoint of fifty years later, it is clear that Shea's manuscript also provides an unusually well filled-in picture of one

part of a vanished era in the life of the U.S. Catholic community and of the Jesuit order.

For several reasons, then, it seems appropriate to rescue the manuscript from the files and archives where it has lain all these years. It is not clear why it was never published when it was written. In the fifties there was little precedent for Jesuits publishing books that weren't of a scholarly or devout nature. And perhaps no one thought there was a market for a book about a relatively local event. Shea himself told Jesuit friends that province administrators thought the book was too frank and didn't reflect well on the Shadowbrook community. Whatever the reason, the manuscript lay in Shea's files for years. In 1973-74, some of the chapters were printed in *SJNEws*, a sort of newsletter for Jesuits of the New England Province published in tabloid newsprint format in the early seventies. But the whole manuscript has not been available until now.

Frank Shea went on to many accomplishments after he was ordained. Born in Dorchester in 1926, he attended the old Boston College High School in the South End of the city, and entered the Jesuits after graduation, in July of 1943. After two years of novitiate and two years of college-level studies in the juniorate at Shadowbrook he did philosophy studies at Weston and, following the typical pattern of Jesuit training, was sent in 1950 to test his vocation teaching high-school students at St. George's College in Jamaica, in the West Indies, where Jesuits of the New England Province had worked since 1929 running parishes, social agencies, and the two best secondary schools on the island. He returned to Weston for theology studies in 1953. After being ordained in 1956, and completing the final year of formation Jesuits call tertianship—repeating the *Spiritual Exercises*, studying the Constitutions of the order, and developing pastoral skills giving retreats and working in parishes and hospitals—he and his superiors agreed, in 1958, that he would begin graduate studies in English literature at the University of Minnesota.

When he finished doctoral studies, in 1961, he was assigned again to teach at St. George's in Jamaica. There were close to 100 Jesuits working in various institutions in the country at this time and they constituted a large intellectual presence

in the island's culture. Shea involved himself in public issues, sending a number of articles to the local press about educational reform and other matters. The dramatic productions he and his students presented attracted wide attention. In 1963, however, province superiors wanted to provide someone to teach 19th and 20th century literature at Boston College, and Shea was assigned there.

At B.C. he quickly became a magnetic figure on campus, a popular teacher, an eloquent and witty preacher, and in the eyes of some a too eager supporter of educational reform and change. He marched with Martin Luther King, Jr., in Selma and was in the middle of efforts to bring more black students into B.C.'s student body and provide them with the support they needed to graduate. His creativity went in diverse directions. The Boston Theological Institute, a consortium of nine graduate theological schools and seminaries of different faith traditions, came into existence in 1967 as a result of a chance conversation on a plane trip, between Shea and the dean of the Episcopal Divinity School, about how their institutions could respond to the ecumenical spirit of Vatican II.

In 1968, the new president of Boston College, W. Seavey Joyce, S.J., asked Shea to become the university's first executive vice-president. It was a tumultuous time in America and in higher education. An unpopular war in Vietnam, the civil rights movement, and the spirit of the counterculture resonated on even relatively conservative campuses like Boston College's. The new administration commissioned a financial audit and discovered a serious deficit. Tuition hadn't been increased for several years and when it was a four-week student strike resulted. Students occupied several buildings protesting different issues and their own voicelessness in settling them. By temperament and by his position, Shea was the focal point of many of the controversies and inclined to see merit in the students' view of some of them. He restructured the school's financial administration and was instrumental in hiring the treasurer who would bring the institution out of its financial problems. But his critics were numerous and he knew that his own position had gradually become untenable and in 1971 he resigned from Boston College.

He became president of St. Scholastica College in Duluth,

then a small liberal arts college for women, whose previous presidents had all been Benedictine nuns. A friend from those days said that he descended on the college and Duluth “like a Cape Cod nor’easter.” The college had just decided to admit men and Shea calculated that a sports program would attract more of them, so he created a men’s hockey team, which in its first season won the league championship. He invited the whole college community to fish fries at his lakeside house when the seasonal smelt run occurred. He built residence halls and promoted curricular reform, developing programs in Indian studies and in media studies. His interests were not limited to the Scholastica campus. He led the establishment of the Lake Superior Association of Colleges and Universities, joined the local Rotary Club, headed the citizens’ lobby that brought a medical school to the University of Minnesota Duluth, and helped establish a Duluth public radio station.

Then, in 1974, he surprised everyone with three momentous decisions: he resigned the presidency of St. Scholastica, went through the canonical process of leaving the Jesuits and the priesthood, and married Susan Gussenhoven, a research physicist on the Boston College faculty, whom he had met at the Newman Club at the University of Minnesota when both were graduate students. That fall he took on a new challenge as chancellor of Antioch College’s original campus in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Antioch has a storied history in American education. Its first president was Horace Mann. It was one of the first colleges to admit women, to pay its female faculty the same as men earned, and to admit black students. It was also born in controversy—two different Christian denominations supported its establishment and contended over its early policies—and controversies have periodically marked its history. The central issue that dominated Shea’s years as chancellor (and arguably led to the demise of Antioch thirty years later) was whether the resources of the Yellow Springs campus were being drained to support the growth of a “greater Antioch” that offered law degrees and other professional graduate programs in store-front facilities across the country. Shea sided with those who thought Antioch’s main business was the liberal

arts college in Ohio. A showdown ensued. The visionary president of greater Antioch fired Shea. The trustees restored him and fired the president. But it was a no-win situation and on June 30th, 1977 Shea resigned as chancellor, saying he would rather quit than stay on in an unworkable administrative structure. On July 9th, he died of a massive heart attack. For the determinedly secular institution Antioch had become, the funeral Mass celebrated in the school's open-air amphitheater was a whole-hearted and beautifully executed ceremony attended by some 500 members of the Antioch community. A few days later another funeral Mass was celebrated at Boston College.

Frank Shea wrote voluminously—about education, literature, current events, the Jesuits, and the Catholic Church. His mind roamed across wide spaces. An early set of lectures was delivered in Trinidad on “Student Revolt and Black Power,” a later talk on “Higher Education and the Duluth Economy.” But most of what he wrote was tailored to occasions and audiences, and published if at all in out of the way journals and proceedings. Other than a book he jointly authored in 1967, *The Role of Theology in the University*, and an unpublished collection of essays about education, his account of the Shadowbrook fire, though youthful work, is the only book-length project he finished.

In the questions he wrestled with and in the resolutions he arrived at Frank Shea lived a life not unlike those of many of the young men who passed through Shadowbrook in the years after World War II and then faced the challenges of the sixties and the seventies. In this respect his account of the fire and of the world in which it occurred preserves a valuable picture of a significant moment in the history of American Jesuits, and of the U.S. Catholic church, when the changes to come had not even been imagined but the foundations were being laid for all the different ways Jesuits would respond to them when they did.

~ J. A. Appleyard, S.J.



## CHAPTER ONE

*The Resort*

*Stockbridge Bowl* is a double barreled name. It had always been used by the Jesuits of Shadowbrook to describe the long valley and the ring of hills they could view from their front porch. But this is only another instance of where the Jesuits and the world disagree, for on all approved maps—for example, the U.S. Geodetic Survey map—it is used as the name of a medium-sized lake which held central place when the eye scanned the land- and mountain-scape from the same vantage point on the Shadowbrook porch. In fact, it was no less an authority than Catherine Sedgewick who originally gave it this title. However, since the lake is more familiarly known by one of those traditional Indian names which make New England's geography a spelling bee nightmare, and since, after all, the Jesuits are going to have pride of place throughout this journal, we shall refer to it, as do most of the local people, as Lake Mahkeenac, and reserve “Stockbridge Bowl” or “The Bowl” for the landscape.

The Bowl, then, when viewed from the center of its northern slope, from the side of Baldhead Mountain, that is, is one of those superb, almost grecianly balanced landscapes which seems to delight English painters. There is nothing violent in this view; each hill is rounded and green. The lake valley is spacious—its length is some fifteen miles—but its grandeur is quiet, modest and inclosed. The ring of hills (called “mountains”



Shadowbrook, looking north from Lake Mahkeenac towards Baldhead Mountain.

only by courtesy) has just sufficient variety to escape mathematic regularity. The western slope is bounded by a long ridge, a part of the Taconic range, called Stockbridge Mountain, which runs about three miles north and south. Ordinarily it is a rather unobtrusive term for the sight, leading the eye back to the central picture of lake and distant field. But splashed with the moving shadows of fair-weather clouds, or ominous under an approaching thunderstorm, its long flank scoops out, it seems to heave itself to an unexpected height and demand the reverence due a mountain, moody and imperious.

A small conical hill and some distantly seen hills intervene between the end of Stockbridge Mountain and another ridge which runs east and west to bound the southern end of The Bowl. This ridge is the Monument Mountain of William Cullen Bryant's trystful tale—the one where the Indian maiden figures, a-leaping for love. The name comes from a heap of rocks found at the foot of the eastern end. It was from the crags at this end of the ridge that the unrequited lady jumped, and the rocks are supposed to have been tossed there one by one by passing braves to honor her deed and allay her curse. These same crags have occasioned another little known dispute between the Jesuit residents of Shadowbrook and the rest of mankind. For seen from

the Shadowbrook vantage, they offer the steep brow and proud nose of a quite chinless, but unmistakable face, thrown back and up against the sky, and every Jesuit who has lived at Shadowbrook persists in calling Monument Mountain, despite its enshrinement under that title in American Literature, by the name “Indian Head.” Whichever name is preferred, it remains true that the Indian face adds just a touch of the bizarre to a landscape which otherwise might be too perfect to be really interesting.

The eastern side of The Bowl is bounded with surprising adequacy by a very small, long-sloping hill called Rattlesnake, which, while its summit is not over a quarter of a mile in length, is placed at a northeast, southwest angle in such a way that the eye travels almost immediately to the distant Indian face, completing the inclosure.

Mahkeenac is, as I have said, only a moderately large lake. Roughly a circle when seen, as we are seeing it, from the slope of Baldhead, it narrows towards its southern end like the tail of an ascension balloon, and resting in the valve sleeve is a tiny patch of an island, wooded with pine. Past the island, the lake spills over a weir into a creek which flows to the Housatonic. A mile or two beyond Mahkeenac, among the pines that march down from the end of Stockbridge Mountain, there is a tiny jewel of blue water called Averic by the mapmakers who choose to ignore the fact that it was Jenny Lind, who, riding past (singing, of course) christened it with charming triteness “Echo Lake.” Because of the two lakes the land at the southern end of Mahkeenac has been called, by mapmakers and people alike, “Interlaken.”

Fields, cultivated, rolling and folding in on themselves, make up the rest of The Bowl. There are none on the eastern



The view of Lake Mahkeenac or Stockbridge Bowl, looking south from the front of Shadowbrook. The lake creates a minor tributary of the Housatonic River, joining the river at Stockbridge, on the distant horizon.



The main entrance of Shadowbrook, on the north side of the house.

side, since the slopes of Rattlesnake come right down to the lake shores, but the expanse between Mahkeenac and Stockbridge Mountain, a distance varying between a quarter to a half mile, is filled with their colorful undulations. The six or seven miles between the end of the lake and the foot of Monument Mountain is also mostly farmland. Since, however, these fields are crumpled by perspective into a mere series of low pleats, it is well for the symmetry of the view that the woods high on the western slope of Monument Mountain have been cleared and cultivated in a large expanse called the “Sky Farm.”

Such is Stockbridge Bowl and the nomenclature thereof.

Its faults can be best summed up, perhaps, in a story told of Mr. Anson Phelps Stokes, the man who built the Shadowbrook mansion which is the subject of this informal history. Once when he was entertaining the ubiquitous English House Guest over cigars and coffee on his front porch, The Englishman, looking out through the stone arches toward the evening-colored Bowl, remarked: “It needs a touch of sublimity. Now if there were only a snow-capped mountain out there somewhere...” Stokes is reported to have replied, “For heaven’s sake, don’t say that to my wife. She’ll order one tomorrow.”

The story also serves to give an insight into the character of Stokes, but we can leave that for the moment.

The Bowl does not, I think, any longer arouse the raptures

it once did, and the Englishman's criticism has to some degree prevailed. But when it was pronounced, it was close to sacrilege. For this was a landscape revered. The aesthetic arbiters of New England society pronounced it the most perfect in the Berkshires, which was tantamount to calling it the most perfect in all the America that counted. And the Berkshires did count—counted in the multi-millions before they were through.

Cleveland Amory uses Lenox in his chatty study *The Last Resorts* as the prime example of the law of resort history. Your typical resort, he says, begins with Creation and ends with taxes. To naturally lovely surroundings add writers, preferably poets, though novelists will do. Let the solution stand for a sufficient time to allow millionaires to form—at first “good” millionaires which he seems to define as those who can read the writers or at least enough about them to know where they live. These millionaires of the first crystallization are “good” because they, being readers, have *taste*. Gradually you will notice changes in your resort as it begins to form “bad” millionaires who have not got *taste*. (These are the millionaires who only read enough about millionaires to find out where they live.) From this point on you have a resort, fully formed, awaiting dissolution, the first signs of which can be detected in 1920 after the first decade of income tax and which will burst out in rank decay in 1929.

This “law” seems to trim a little to the wind, but it does offer a useful structure for a quick survey of the circumstances that made Shadowbrook what it was.

The first Berkshire writer seems to have been Jonathan Edwards. Naturally, we cannot look to his grim, Calvinistic tracts for the beginning of the Berkshire resort. Millionaires, not even “good” ones, are that intrepid and the day of the Stockbridge preacher came and passed with no change in local real estate values. The literary phase in the history of the Berkshire resort begins with that Catherine Sedgwick who renamed Lake Mahkeenac, Stockbridge Bowl. She is known now, I suppose, only to Doctors of Philosophy in American Literature and inhabitants of Stockbridge and Lenox, both of which towns claim her as their citizen. She was the literary-minded daughter of Judge Theodore Sedgwick of Lenox and a nineteenth-century lady novelist whose

outlook was much closer to George Eliot than, say, George Sand, and whose style is best tasted in quotation:

“Everell sunk calmly on his knees, not to supplicate life, but to commend his soul to God.... The Chief [Mononotto, wicked Indian] raised the deadly weapon, when Magawisca [good Indian, female], springing from the precipitous side of the rock, screamed “Forebear!” and interposed her arm. It was too late. The blow was leveled—force and direction given; the stroke, aimed at Everell’s neck, severed his defender’s arm, and left him unharmed. The lopped, quivering member dropped over the precipice. Mononotto staggered and fell senseless, and all the savages, uttering horrible yells, rushed toward the fatal spot.”

“Stand back!” cried Magawisca, ‘I have bought his life with my own. Fly, Everell—nay, speak not, but fly—thither—to the east!’ she cried, more vehemently.”

“Everell’s faculties were paralyzed by a rapid succession of violent emotions. He was conscious only of a feeling of mingled gratitude and admiration for his preserver. He stood motionless, gazing on her. ‘I die in vain, then?’ she cried, in an accent of such despair that he was roused. He threw his arms around her, and pressed her to his heart *as he would a sister that had redeemed his life with her own*, and then, tearing himself from her, he disappeared.”

I have italicized a phrase which I feel must be one of the most carefully qualified psychological descriptions ever printed. Catherine was an emancipated lady for her period—she followed the traditional course, and abandoned the gloom of Calvinism for the gentle light of Doctor Channing—but she was never less than ladylike.

This type of thing won her a huge public for the time, and a list of acquaintances on both continents. Since name-dropping is unavoidable in this first chapter, let us reproduce a list of Miss Sedgwick’s friends from Olive A. Colton’s *Lenox* and have done with the business. Catherine was known to Lafayette, Daniel Webster, Louis Napoleon, Dickens, Thackeray, Rogers, Macauley, Carlyle, Fenimore Cooper, Morse, Channing, Harriet Beecher Stowe etc., etc. She is reported to have been a charming lady and she was certainly an incessant booster of the



Looking past the west end of the house towards Lake Mahkeenac. Generations of novices peeled potatoes on the first-floor porch adjacent to the kitchen.

Berkshires. For soon the literary lions began to arrive in prides, and in the ensuing racket a few native cubs were encouraged to roar. William Cullen Bryant, the young county clerk from Great Barrington, was protégéd by Catherine and founded a long line of Berkshire authors—Holmes, Melville, Rachel Field, Edna Millay—their end is not seen yet. But the bulk of the art colony in the mid-century Berkshires was made up for most part of immigrants, and the most part of them friends of Catherine Sedgwick or friends of friends.

One of the first to come was Fanny Kemple who sat with Byron, heard Tom Moore sing and called Tennyson, “Alfred”—who also shocked the Berkshires by riding astride her horse, by reading *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to a church group in Stockbridge and by broaching a keg of beer for the boys who scythed her lawn. Before the resort came to full flower, the good people of the County were going to watch more shocking things than this: they would meet “Rosie” the pig who attended hunt balls and was kissed by all those New York women, and they would watch Mrs. Charles Lanier ride into the Lenox post office astride her pet bull! But Fanny Kemple came at the beginning of the era of the “good” millionaires when an evening of charades was high living enough for a Christian soul, and she cut a wide swathe.



Oakwood, the original residence built on the property by Sam Ward. It was somewhat east and north of the site of Shadowbrook, close to the Richmond Road. Part of the building—the wing to the right—survived and was called *Campion Cottage* by the Jesuit community. Several lay brothers had rooms here. A bakery and tailor shop were located in the basement.

The clergy-men who saw her as a cloud no bigger than a man's hand had good weather-eyes.

The patron saint of Berkshire litterateurs is Hawthorne. He lived at the head of Stockbridge Bowl in a little barn-colored clapboard house on property adjoining what was to become the site of Shadowbrook and where the Tanglewood Music Festival is presently held.

It is somewhat strange—this cult of Hawthorne in the County. He lived there a short while. His reputation, at least at the present time, is not as lustrous as the native son's, Melville. It does not even seem provable that he liked the Berkshires, and certainly, except for some brief references in his journals, they do not appear in his writings. The only work he completed while resident there was *The House of the Seven Gables* which reeks the sour, salt tang of Salem, while *Tanglewood Tales* which do preserve the name of his tiny Berkshire property are all about the

goings-on of gods and heroes in ancient Greece. And yet when the movie *Moby Dick* was shown in Pittsfield last summer, the company strung a banner across the main street, “by Herman Melville, Pittsfield’s own.” For, though it would be hard to find any Pittsfield pedestrian ignorant of the fact that Nathaniel Hawthorne once lived over there in Lenox, there were many, I’ll wager, who found that banner informative.

Hawthorne seems to have been the first to find the view of The Bowl less than exhilarating. He commented once that it was impossible to work with “that outside my window.” This is locally interpreted to mean that his literary efforts were constantly interrupted by time-consuming raptures, but I suspect the correct exegesis is rather that his dark talent found The Bowl’s quiet loveliness a bit of a bore. He has a few nice things about it in his journals: Monument Mountain in October was “a sphinx, wrapped in a Persian shawl.” But there is no hint of Fanny Kemple’s fervor who yearned in England for “the splendid rosy sunsets over the dark blue mountain tops, and for the clear and lovely expanse of waters reflecting both, above all the wild, white-faced streams that come leaping down the steep stairways of the hills.” And one can imagine the dour delight he would have had with the poem read during the Berkshire Jubilee of 1849 (held in joint honor of Mark Hopkins and the Stockbridge and Pittsfield Railroad.)

The Stockbridge Bowl! – Hast ever seen  
 How sweetly pure and bright,  
 Its foot of stone, and rim of green  
 Attract the traveler’s sight?

The self-consciously literary atmosphere and cloying rusticity soon sent Hawthorne back to his coastal marshes, but the Berkshires continue to love him anyway.

The temptation to go on name-dropping must be stoutly resisted for the string of names that could be fashioned out of town histories, old newspapers and back issues of *Country Life* would be a long and brilliant one with diamonds and showy rhinestones interestingly mixed. But the Berkshires as writers’ warren is not our subject, and we shall have to move on. Using

the same unchivalrous stratagem, then, I used to précis the conquest of Catherine Sedgwick, I shall lump together a selection of the greats and not-so-greats without regard for chronology or accomplishment.

At various times the Berkshires have harbored Holmes, Lowell, Emerson and Kate Douglas Wiggin (who gave readings from the manuscript of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* in parlor B of the Curtis Hotel.). Edith Wharton entertained Henry James in her Lenox mansion. The pulpits of the local churches have been graced by Henry Ward Beecher, Ellery Channing and Charles Parkhurst. Alexis de Tocqueville came up to investigate the phenomenon of authors in the wilderness. Longfellow lived with his wife's family for a time in Pittsfield. Richard Watson Gilder (the heart of a hero in a poet's frame), editor of the *Century*, built a villa in Lenox, and Thoreau spent a night in a stone hut on top of Mt. Greylock with rats nibbling his toes. *Basta!*

So the first element, writers, had been generously mixed into the scene. According to Amory's law of resorts, we should soon begin to notice millionaires.

Among the first were the Higginsons. I cannot tell whether they would fulfill the definition of being "good" millionaires because I do not know whether they were millionaires. Yet,



The grand central hall of Shadowbrook before the Jesuits purchased the building. The main entrance from the carriage port is in the center, between the columns. The door to the principal parlor is on the right.

since they were a Boston banking family, I suppose that much can be presumed, at least if we take into account the relative buying-power of money. I do think it would be difficult to challenge their right to the adjective "good."

The family was founded by Francis Higginson, a clergyman, who came from England in 1629 to care for the souls engaged in an expedition of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. His son John who wrote the preface to one of Cotton Mather's works was called "incomparably the best writer among the American Puritan divines." There were Higginsons in the Revolution, of course, and Francis John and Thomas Wentworth Storrow Higginson both served the Union in the Civil War. Francis was Commander of the *Massachusetts*; Thomas, colonel of the first colored regiment. Thomas is the most famous of all the Higginsons. He was a Unitarian minister turned soldier and author; his best known book was *Life with a Colored Regiment*, but he also produced biographies, was a respected critic of American letters and discovered Emily Dickinson. Henry Lee Higginson founded, and for a time sustained without the assistance of other backers, the Boston Symphony.

The Higginsons built an attractive farmhouse for vacation living on the side of Baldhead, overlooking The Bowl, immediately adjacent to Hawthorne's Tanglewood. "Mahkeenac Farm" is still owned today by Lee Higginson, a daughter of the family who married John Gould, a New York lawyer. For about ten years the Goulds have used it as their year-round home.

With the Higginsons we move close to Shadowbrook for their farm is just across the road from the Shadowbrook gatehouse. The neighborly ties between the two estates have always been close. In fact, Anson Stokes purchased the corner of land on which the Shadowbrook gatehouse stands from the Higginson family. The bill of sale has the quaint stipulation that the land is to be used only for a gatehouse; furthermore, should the gatekeeper keep a dog or cat or other quadruped which does prove annoying to the Higginson family, the right of ownership shall be forfeit to these same Higginsons. During recent years the Goulds have collected maple syrup from the trees along the Shadowbrook driveway for which privilege they provided the

Jesuit community with several mornings of properly flavored pancakes.

But at the time the Higginsons built Mahkeenac Farm there was no Shadowbrook. The property was owned by another “good” millionaire, I suppose Amory would call him, though there are, apparently, other possible points of view. He was Mr. Samuel Ward, the “king of lobbyists” and the “sinner” of the recent book, *Three Saints and a Sinner*.

Sam Ward was certainly one of the most engaging of the dandies who can always be found hanging around, creased, boutonnièred and insouciant, the anteroom of letters. He was the brother of the three well-married sisters, Julia Ward Howe, Louisa Ward Crawford and Anna Ward Bonapart. But Sam did not enter society on his sisters’ coattails (or bustles); for he was on his own hook the personal friend of almost every writer of the American literary beginnings. Emerson addressed his *Letter to a Friend* to him. (One wonders what Sam really thought of the over-soul!) He had a bottle of rhenish in each pocket for Longfellow the morning he ran into the poet on the streets of Cambridge with which the two Heidelberg cronies toasted their memories of youth. He made and spent three fortunes (one of them in gold-rushed California) with all the grace of a gentleman. He was a patron of the arts whose own art seems to have been the living gesture and in Amory’s context, he was an excellent example of a “good” millionaire.

In 1844 he purchased a tract of land on the open-meadow slopes of Baldhead about two hundred fifty to three hundred feet from the lake and which placed, as it was, in almost dead center of the Baldhead vista, gave a prospect which none of the neighboring estates could match. He built a rambling, gracious mansion of dark wood and named it “Oakwood.”

To Oakwood came all the tasteful people of the East Coast as guests of Sam and the reputation of The Bowl as a landscape unsurpassed grew apace. The Wards played hosts to Jenny Lind and it was their horses she rode on her jaunts to Echo Lake. Despite quite convincing evidence to the contrary, it is still believed by many that she was married in the chapel of Oakwood. It seems, however, very certain now that the marriage took place



The front porch, overlooking Lake Mahkeenac, in earlier days.

in Boston. Yet we know that Sam did maintain a chapel. His wife, originally Protestant, converted to Catholicism, and it was in the chapel of the Wards' Oakwood that the first Mass in Lenox was celebrated.

By 1890, after fifty years of intense cultivation by the cultivated, the first two stages in the growth of a resort were completed, and the "bad" millionaires had arrived. Acres and acres of unassuming mountains had been purchased by the railroad kings and "robber barons." "Farms," turreted, domed, colonnaded, sprawled over the sabine surroundings. "Rosie," the pet pig, was here.

Anson Stokes, New York banker and railroad owner, bought the Oakwood property in 1892 along with a much larger tract down in the valley, up the eastern slope of Stockbridge Mountain, and across behind the Ward home to the summit of Baldhead. His holdings totaled some fifteen hundred acres. "It is no small thing to own the whole slope of a forest covered mountain from the valley lake up to the very crest," chirped *Country Life*. Indeed, it was not, Mr. Stokes agreed, and determined to build no small house.

His original intention was to place his house on the



The original dining room.

precipitous side of Stockbridge Mountain facing east. In preparation Stokes planted a lane of elms which still stand – three precise lines of magnificent trees leading through fields and underbrush to the rocky foot of the ridge. But the American fin-de-siecle aristocrat was under the domination of his architects, tyrannous ample-girthed men with heavy gold watch chains and decidedly patrician tastes, according to popular report. Since I have been unable to discover a picture of H. Neill Wilson who was the Lenox architect in charge of designing the Stokes “farm,” I am in no position to dispute the image. Wilson was entranced by the perfection of the view from Baldhead and persuaded his client to build there. The property to the west was to be used for the farm buildings proper.

Oakswood was demolished except for the east wing, and that remains today. We shall throughout the rest of this story refer to this remnant of Sam Ward’s Berkshire interlude by the name it eventually came to bear after the Jesuit invasion, “Campion Cottage.”

With the Ward home properly reduced to the status of gardener’s cottage, Stokes was ready to throw up his own vaunt to

the future. A good deal of blasting was necessary to prepare the ledge selected to receive the structure his architect had conceived. The ledge was about a hundred yards to the west of Oakswood and approximately thirty feet lower. From a promontory it had to be made into a very spacious plateau, for the house was to be over four hundred feet long on the center line. Roughly in the shape of an L, its western wing ran north and south and faced out towards Stockbridge Mountain. This wing bent twice slightly before joining the eastern wing which ran east and west commanding the view. On the extreme eastern end of the eastern wing a short extension running north and south brought the L shape around not quite far enough to form a C, but enough to give the driveway an enclosed aspect.

What shall we say of Mr. H. Neill Wilson's design? It was eclectic: and that gets us off safely. We must remember that Anson Phelps Stokes was a "bad" millionaire in the Amory scheme of things. He was boisterous, I suppose, certainly pretentious and Mr. Wilson designed a boisterous, pretentious house—whether to please himself or his client, I cannot say. Doubtless to a purist the house was a hopeless mishmash of styles, and purists are not to be gainsaid. I will say, however, that Shadowbrook was a pleasing mishmash, full of hidden surprises, like the carvings high up on ancient cathedrals, and the audacity of the building, its size, its imperious domination of even the surrounding mountains served, I believe, to reduce criticism to niggling. There she stood, like Massachusetts, needing no defense.

There were three towers on Mr. Wilson's castle. One, a slim pillar of stone finished off the short north-south extension of the eastern wing and met the eye first as one came up the drive. The second was a more massive dunjon, also of stone, and stood commanding The Bowl at the juncture of eastern and western wings. The third was a more modest thing altogether. It was stucco and timbering, a mere two stories high, facing the drive on the inside of the juncture of the two main wings, and it looked in shape and decoration like an immense military drum.

Two dominant styles came together in a shotgun marriage on Wilson's drawing board: English Tudor timbering and stone. What style stone work I could not say. Generally, the effect was

Norman for its brute mass, but the main entrance facing the drive was topped by a section of stonework which rose beyond the roof and was peaked and buttressed in a decidedly Gothic manner. The first-floor level was faced throughout in stone. Most of the second and third floors were stucco, with outside timbering of charred cypress. Sections of the upper floors overhung the stonework, other sections were recessed. From foot to foot Mr. Wilson kept surprising you. He was an antiquarian inasmuch as there was nothing in his design which was not borrowed from the centuries, but it would be a mistake to think him a fussy antiquarian. He mixed his lore with good brisk stirrings and the result was a huge house whose impact was solid, peculiarly its own, and within its own premises, perfectly valid.

There is, perhaps, less to be said for the interior design. Judging from old photographs, fussiness occasionally ruled inside the house with fine Victorian hand.

One entered under the Gothic peak through huge castle doors into the "pompeian" room in the center of the eastern wing. Square, with wooden grecian pillars and plaster frieze, it had a terrazzo floor, a central fountain and an incongruously huge fireplace of marble before which sprawled a slaughtered tiger. Out the huge windows and through the arches of the porch one could see The Bowl. Off this pompeian reception hall lay two parlors: one to the left was a truly fine piece of work, curved and cornered with gracious opulence. The other was the "morning room": a conventionally square room, its regular lines were broken by a deep alcove which again overlooked The Bowl and was framed in doric pillars. The ballroom, or "music room" as with suspicious modesty it was called, was truly magnificent. It had a parquet floor of apple wood, walls entirely wainscoted in oak, and a ceiling of quartered oak carved in large whorls. Off the ballroom in the short extension of the eastern wing was a room done in green stained wood used, apparently, to serve refreshments during the balls. The smaller of the two stone towers opened into this room and had within it a stone spiral staircase which ran up to the artist's studio on the third floor.

Towards the center of the house where the east and west wings joined was the main staircase. It rose from a hall done



The second-floor hallway.

in dark walnut paneling, a single flight to a similar hall on the second floor which was half-paneled in walnut. Not much can be said for the effect of this staircase. It was a bulky affair, some ten feet wide, banistered, carved and newel-posted, it made a great to-do about getting up its one flight with three turns and a long landing whose casement windows offered once more, The Bowl; and somehow it seemed to be too ponderously self-conscious to be really pleasing.

No one, however, can cavil at the effect of the dining room. It was a truly beautiful room—oak-paneled, beamed, and with an eighteenth-century fireplace carved of Bavarian black walnut into men-at-arms, horses—a whole crowd of splendid conceits. The upper section of the dining room was a breakfast “nook”. Set in the large lakeward tower, it formed a rounded alcove of beautiful proportions whose three curved picture windows faced east, to the fall of lawn, south, to The Bowl and west, to the sweep of Stockbridge Mountain.

There were two servants’ rooms at the far northern end of the western wing on the second floor, but most of the servants were confined to the small rooms on the third floor of the western wing. The rest of the second and third floors were given over to bedrooms and sitting rooms; eighteen of them on

the second floor, eight on the third. The Stokes' bedroom was directly over the dining room and out the windows of the tower they could wake of a morning to the prospect of The Bowl. The master's study was in the room directly above this, and since the tower at the third-floor level formed an open porch, he could go out beneath its stone arches and with "opera glass survey his domain."

Kitchens and scullery took up the entire first floor of the western wing. The cavernous cellars hid a large laundry and a machine which produced acetylene gas "for beautifully illuminating the many rooms." There was another quite pedestrian staircase besides the romantic stone spiral in the small tower and the walnut monster outside the dining room—a servant stairs in the middle of the western wing. It ran from the cellar to the attic, turning around an open shaft for an elevator whose principle of operation was the same as a dumbwaiter's. In a white-tiled, very confined shaft beside the front entrance there was a tiny elevator operated in the usual Otis fashion. It also ran from the cellar to the attic and communicated the "pompeian" room with the rooms in the center of the eastern wing. To finish off these last more pedestrian details we may state that the attic under the capricious gables and main peaks of the red-tiled roof was left unfinished.

The Shadowbrook "farmhouse" was completed in 1893 by the builder, James Clifford, of Lenox at the cost of half a million dollars. Should the masons and woodcarvers exist who could duplicate it, it could not be done today at seven, ten times the price. H. Neill Wilson with titanic (get it?) pride stated that it would last for centuries, and at its completion it was, reportedly, the largest private residence in America—a report, no doubt, that gave some satisfaction to its owner.

Of course, the property was not equipped as a "farm" without farm buildings. Down in the valley beside the lanes of elms where originally he intended to build his home, Stokes constructed his farm: two stables each accommodating twenty horses, three cottages, a cow barn, a tool barn, a horse barn, a hay barn, a chicken house, a duck pen, a carpentry shop, a blacksmith's shop, a large ice house, a dairy, a boat house on the lake,

a few sheds for wagons and tools, and assorted out-buildings, all finished in a golden-gray stucco with high-peaked low-dipping roofs and outside timbering. Alas for Mr. Wilson's efforts, it was his designs for the farm buildings that won praise from Professor Capper of London who rather cruelly ignored the mansion to call the barns and shops "the most important piece of American architecture so far." This gracious group of buildings was later converted into a home and the Stokes family still lives there. Canon Stokes wrote his important study on the relations of Church and State in the high-ceilinged, dark stained library which was once his father's ice house.

For unfortunately old Anson did not long enjoy his Shadowbrook. It was not financial failure which caused him to sell it, but a personal tragedy.

In the western part of the property where the merging of Baldhead and Stockbridge Mountains form the rounded north-west curve of The Bowl, there is a small brook. It runs over rocks beneath pines which to the very life "stand like druids of old, bearded with moss" in their own perpetual twilight. It was named "Shadowbrook" by no less a phrase-maker than Hawthorne himself, and the name was eagerly appropriated for the estate. One day, while riding with his daughter out by the brook, Stokes' bay stepped in a hornet's nest and plunged ahead out of control, collided with a tree and crushed the leg of its rider. His daughter rode to the house for help and Mr. Stokes was carried back beneath his towers. The leg had to be amputated, and during the long month of convalescence, lying in the second floor tower room, Stokes found that his pleasure in the house had run its course. He left it in 1898 for a new palace in Noroton, Connecticut, where he took up yachting.

From 1898 to 1906 Shadowbrook was virtually abandoned. It had a brief career in 1901 as a resort hotel on lease from Stokes, but most of the time the vast halls with the slip-covered furnishings stayed pathetically empty. In 1906 it was finally sold to Spencer P. Shotter, a New Orleans planter, who had gone in for finance.

Shotter seems to have assaulted Lenox Society with dismal results. Perhaps his southern drawl was against him, but

all his efforts to be accepted in the East Coast *haut monde* were met by the agonizing chilliness which it is New England's skill to communicate effectively and without loss of personal dignity. Shotter was also in trouble financially and, perhaps, the captains of industry with the superstition traditional to all who sail rough waters told their wives to "stay away from that fellow Shotter, he's a jinx." Whatever the explanation, Spencer P. Shotter's tenancy, by all reports, could not have been a happy time. When he put the place up for sale in 1912 (only one year after his greatest social triumph, the September Hunt Ball of 1911, which had rated six columns in the old *Berkshire Journal*), the sale price was impounded for deficits in his company, American Naval Stores.

Again the great house stood empty. It was leased by Mrs. Arthur Vanderbilt for nine months in 1915 following her husband's death, and she spent the time quietly and in mourning.

Finally in 1917 it was sold again, this time to Andrew Carnegie. The gentlest of "robber barons" was now old, and almost crazed with grief over the failure of his peace efforts. He purchased the house, persuaded by his wife and family, who felt he needed something to take him away from the headlines and his obsession with the war. After inspecting the estate, the old man was highly pleased by the terrain, especially the gorse-covered slopes of Baldhead which, he said, reminded him of his boyhood Scotland. And so he bought the estate from Shotter's debtors for \$300,000.

For a few years he found delight in Shadowbrook. He planted rock gardens and tall hedge paths. To the east of the house he installed a pool and fountain. Each day during the summer months he would walk out among his gardens to select his own boutonniere—verbena or heliotrope—for he loved flowers next only to fishing on the lake. He had a high-powered launch built for cruising on the modest Mahkeenac, and enjoyed sitting on its cane bottomed deck chair watching his local guide bait his line and exchanging with him views on life and philosophy.

But the war went on, and its horrors penetrated even this retreat. The power of his millions had accomplished much throughout his life, it had bought him nearly everything he



The ballroom. Its massive oak ceiling was suspended on chains hung from beams in the attic above the third-floor. The windows on the right looked out on Lake Mahkeenac.

wanted; but never had he wanted anything as he wanted world peace. He had labored for it, set up conferences, built the Peace Palace in the Hague, spent freely to buy statesmen, politicians, world opinion for the cause of peace; but the world went to war and for three years persisted in war. The old man here in the Berkshires was forgotten. He still cabled to heads of state, querulously demanding negotiations, appeasement, cessation, but his *fiat* had lost all force, and finally he was broken. In the spring of 1919 he took to his bed. Throughout the early summer months his weary old voice could be heard, calling hourly from the tower bedroom on the second floor, "Wife, has the war stopped yet?" On August 11, at 7:10 in the morning, he died.

The funeral was severely simple, limited to the family and a few close friends. The body lay in state at the western end of the oak ballroom. A small vested choir sang a few of his favorite hymns from beneath the carved fireplace, a short eulogy was preached and the cortege left for the family burying ground in up-state New York.

Lenox, the resort, had fulfilled its course according to Amory's law; dissolution was upon it. The residents could already see the signs of decay. The artists who had been the indispensable ingredient, for without them Society, at its highest, cannot

maintain itself, were still there. They remain even to today. There is the Academy of the Dance at Jacob's Pillow, schools of painting and drama still flourish, the distribution of fashionable prep schools has remained generous to the Berkshires, there are a few writers still rejoicing in quiet loveliness of the hills, and, of course, there is Tanglewood. The Berkshire Music Festival was founded by Dr. Serge Koussevitzky, and the Tanglewood concerts alone would be enough to keep the County's reputation as the home of the artist in good burnish. But by 1920, money, at least in great heavy globs, was moving away.

Courtland Field Bishop is a name which can still lift eyebrows in a gathering of Berkshire people. He secured his right to be called a "bad" millionaire (despite the fact that he played host to Maeterlinck) by assorted high jinks and especially by his last will and testament. He left his fortune to be equally divided between his wife and his mistress on condition that the two ladies (who had never met before, it is said) would live together lovingly until one of them died. An excellent framework for an English murder mystery!

Dr. Bishop in 1920 read the signs of the approaching end of the Lenox resort and delivered himself of an analysis of its causes in the Lenox paper. Courtland Field Bishop will have none of the explanations which looked to a decline in fortunes; there was still plenty of money around. But, he reasons, how can you have a proper resort unless there are gardens; and how he pounces with shattering logic, can you have gardens with Prohibition! "The Italians, like the French, have returned to their old homes for they will not work without their wine."

Whatever the value of Mr. Bishop's analysis, it remains incontestably true that he is a contemporary witness who must be listened to with respect, and whatever the cause or causes, it is clear that the death of Carnegie can serve to mark the beginning of the end. Nothing attests this more than the fact that the next purchaser of Shadowbrook in 1922 was the Society of Jesus.



## CHAPTER TWO

*The Monastery*

It has been the fate of five other Berkshire mansions that I know of to fall into the hands of religious orders. Anson Stokes seems unwittingly to have been a great builder of institutions, for his home in Noroton, Connecticut, which he constructed after he had abandoned Shadowbrook, is now owned by the Madames of the Sacred Heart. The magnificent estate which was once the Berkshire Hunt and Country Club and which was during the twenties the East Coast hideaway for Hollywood, was given to the Society of Jesus by Thomas Cranwell of New York and is now a private academy named for its donor. The meek have inherited the land, or at least picked it up at bargain prices.

The Jesuits had been proliferating along the eastern coast which at that time formed one province called by the hyphenated name Maryland-New England-New York. The time had been approaching for the formation of a separate province of New England. In anticipation of this split, which was not finally effected until 1926, Shadowbrook was purchased to serve the new province as a novitiate and juniorate.

In June of the year 1923, the novitiate at Yonkers, New York, consisting of seven lay brothers, five priests and forty-one novices, traveled by bus to their new home in Lenox. Many months before, however, teams of four novices had been coming to Shadowbrook to work on the grounds for two weeks at a time.

Brother Glennon, the cook, acted as superior in the absence of Father Dillon, the Minister, who came at intervals to see how the work was progressing. When Father Dillon was away, the novices and lay brother would rise early and walk to Lenox for daily Mass. While working at Shadowbrook, the novices ate canteen style at Campion Cottage off tin plates.

After the community's arrival, all ate supper at Campion on benches knocked together out of box wood. Before the first shipment of bedsteads, they slept in the great bedrooms of the old mansion with their mattresses spread on the floor. The first year seems to have been very difficult all around. The house was unfurnished, and only gradually did the community fill the vast spaces until, in fact, they overflowed. The first year, too, it was found that the heating apparatus, originally designed for summer living and, when used during the winter, called on only to warm a few of the many rooms, was completely inadequate to heat the entire house. Brother John Ford, now one of the better known moral theologians of the American Church, was recovering from tuberculosis. He slept on a porch in a sleeping bag.

When the pioneers from Yonkers first arrived, it was the community's holiday period—three weeks, traditionally called "villa" from the European custom of holding holidays in some house outside the city within walking distance. Since there were no classes and only a minimum of spiritual duties, time could be devoted to the exhilarating task of knocking down walls. With young men's zest, the novices set to work with fire axes smashing plaster. Room partitions in the eastern wing on both the second and third floors were gleefully torn away. The paneling and other wood from the debris were frugally preserved to make much-needed bookcases.

The cleared areas were to serve as dormitories, one for the novices on the third floor with the juniors' on the second. Three chambers on the third floor in the center of the eastern wing were co-opted for novice "ascetories" or study rooms. The furthest of these was Anson Stokes' old study with its tower porch. Three more chambers on the second floor, beginning with the master bedroom which extended into the tower and in which Andrew Carnegie had died, were made into junior ascetories. Two of the



The ballroom was an ideal space for the community chapel, at its most beautiful when garlands of laurel and fir and red ribbons decorated it for Christmas.

larger bedrooms on the second floor served the juniors for classrooms, and a study situated over the front door, together with the walls of the second-floor hall, became the library.

In general, the first floor was untouched. The ballroom was converted into a chapel. The carvings over the fireplace were sufficiently heraldic to recall the military Ignatius and with the addition of his coat of arms were allowed to remain. The fireplace itself was removed and an altar, beautifully carved in matching oak, set in its place. Pews completed the transformation. While the changes were going on, the community heard Mass and performed the common spiritual duties in the “morning room” where the altar from Yonkers had been temporarily installed. Afterwards this became the novice chapter room and classroom.

The green-stained room off the ballroom, which communicated with the smaller tower, served as a sacristy, and the “pompeian” reception hall along with the large parlor were left as they were for the use of visitors. The dining room after the addition of plain wood tables and a flock of dark-wood kitchen chairs managed as a quite crowded refectory.



The Jesuit community dining room in the early days. Novices sat on the right and juniors on the left.

The west wing was left relatively untouched. The rooms on both floors of the stucco tower were used for faculty rooms, the rector's being the one on the second floor. The other rooms, formerly master bedrooms or, on the third floor, servant quarters, were used by the faculty for combination study and sleeping purposes. The brothers who had taken vows also had rooms in the west wing.

Mr. Amory—to return for a moment to the man who proved so useful in the first chapter—repeats a story told of one of the early superiors of the Shadowbrook community which I personally am inclined to doubt. It seems, the story goes, that Mrs. Stokes met this father one day and asked him how the community liked their new quarters. The priest is supposed to have replied that they could not have been more ideal for their purposes. Mrs. Stokes, aware of shortcomings of the old mansion, skeptically asked his reasons. The Jesuit father then said: “Mrs. Stokes, the novitiate is a testing ground. It is designed to test candidates spiritually, mentally and physically, but Shadowbrook in addition tests them socially.”

I am inclined to doubt the story, first of all because it sounds a little too gushy to have come at least from any superior I have known in the Society; secondly, because in the sense in which I am sure Amory understood “socially,” it has no basis. The novices and juniors at Shadowbrook had no “social” contacts. The only people they ever met outside their own house were their pupils in the local Sunday schools and an occasional farmer whose apple crop they might help to gather. The Jesuits are not a cloistered order, but the novitiate regime comes very close to being Carthusian. And if the meaning of the story is that the baronial halls probed the capacity of these sons of immigrants for gracious living, it appears mildly ridiculous, for there was little grace to life in the converted mansion. Everything was crowded and jammed together.

The one possibly valid meaning for the story comes clear if we read the “social” test as an examination of a man’s capacity to live with his kind the life of a bee with other bees crawling over, under and around him in a packed hive, and smile while doing it. In that sense the story well describes the “social” test of Shadowbrook. The novice asceteries were equipped with specially built desks, approximately a foot and a half square; the corridors of the novitiate were lined with wash-bowls and those of the juniorate with books. The cellar toilets and shower rooms were wonders of dank confinement unmatched outside Mammouth Cave. Superiors early saw that the Stokes mansion was inadequate for its new purpose, but it would have to serve for a while. So the new community set to work to make shift and for thirty genuinely cheerful years it managed.

Many of the rooms were baptized: the “pompeian” room was named St. Joseph’s Aula and his statue in white marble replaced the fountain. (*Aula* is the Latin word for hall, and since both the novices and juniors are obliged to speak Latin in the house, the use of Latin place names gives them a head start.) The “morning room” which came to be the novice chapter hall was christened St. Ignatius’ Aula. The large visitors’ parlor, in view of its still secular purpose, was denied the name of a saint and called with overtones of simple monkish wonder at the luxury it proclaimed, the “silk parlor,” which name it retained throughout

the years while its grandeur slowly molted to decay. The central hall in the juniorate on the second floor was named Bellarmine, in hopes, I suppose, that the juniors would be inspired to read the books which lined its walls and become doctors of the Church when they grew up. The largest room in the novitiate which had a small chateau-like porch overlooking The Bowl received the name St. Mary's Aula and a variety of uses through the years: recreation room, classroom, dormitory, ascetory, workshop. A small dormitory in the novitiate on the northern side overlooking the front drive had a vast ceiling and a gothic, basilica-sized window. It received a secular and realistic name, the "polar dorm." Most of the rest of the house was designated by names more practical than devotional. The small elevator near the front door was removed, and a spiral staircase set in its narrow shaft. This was reserved for the exclusive use of the novices. No one else was much tempted to trespass, for it was a headlong, slippery helix of metal which only a novice could love. But they ran up and fell down it happily while they named it with small devotion the "iron stairs." All the stairways, in fact, had their piety slighted. A small flight which ran from the end of father's corridor down to the kitchen area was baldly called the "back stairs." The stone stairs in the small tower were the "tower stairs" and the stairs in the western wing which turned around the elevator shaft were the "brothers' stairs," named from those who most frequently, while not exclusively, used them.

The grounds, however, were divided into gardens whose names sing like a litany: Corpus Christi, Della Strada, Consolatrix, Isaac Jogues, Aloysius. Andrew Carnegie's pool became the Sacred Heart Pool and was allowed to retain its fountain although the thing was rarely turned on. The main drive, which ran out to the fork between the road to Interlaken and the Richmond road, became Rosary Lane, and each afternoon—pouring rain or blinding snow (the adjectives are not chosen lightly), being the only excuses—the novices in bands of three walked down it saying the Rosary aloud.

On the feast of St. Ignatius, July 31, 1923, six novices took their first vows of the Society in the morning-room chapel since the alterations had not yet been completed in the ballroom,

and started their juniorate studies. Mr. Henry B. Muollo was appointed the first beadle of juniors and Shadowbrook was ready to begin its year.

A great deal has been written by different authors, hostile, distant, friendly and frankly starry-eyed, which treats of the life of a Jesuit novitiate. I shall not attempt to go over the same matter here, but I think a little background on the life of the Jesuit novice as it was concretely lived at Shadowbrook is in place.

The Jesuit candidate customarily comes to the Society from high school; his age is about seventeen or eighteen. There is a percentage which enters during or after college—the “college men”—and some few come in as old men of thirty or more. They are usually in the minority, however, and since the word “adolescent” seems to attract the word “pimply,” we will be justified in picturing the typical young man, grip in hand and emotions in grip, bidding farewell to his tearful family beneath the intimidating towers, as a “pimply adolescent.”

The conscious reasons which drew him to ask for entrance are probably very various, but behind lies the one reason that counts, the secret Grace of God that drew him more deeply than he can possibly know. Since he is a “pimply adolescent” (and even if he is not), he has much to learn about his vocation and himself in relation to it. The two years of the novitiate are given to him for this learning. Six *experimenta* or “trials” have been established by the *Constitutions* of the Society to aid him to examine his vocation, and the Society to examine him.

The fourth of these trials constitutes the bulk of his life as a novice, “that, after his entrance in Our Lord, he should exercise himself with all diligence and solicitude in various abject and humble tasks exhibiting in them all good example.”

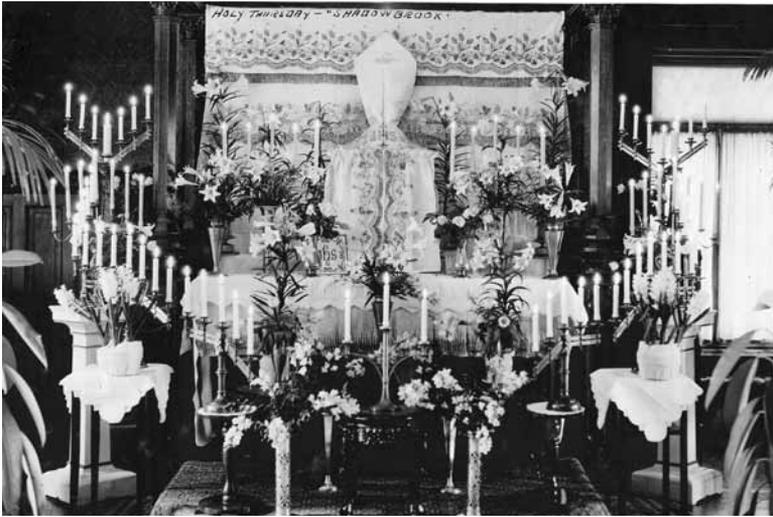
No doubt for the supercilious renaissance youth of noble blood and gentle breeding, “abject tasks” were a severe trial in themselves and a harsh test of vocation. But I never found that the pot-walloper in the Shadowbrook tubs were particularly scored by the humiliation of it all. A pot-walloper was called at Shadowbrook by a quaint Latinism, *culdie*, a word whose meaning is not to be found in any of the dictionaries of early, middle or late Latin. It can only conjecturally be read as an abbreviation of

*culinarius die*, which with some vigorous stretching of grammar, might be translated as “kitchen servant for the day.” I remember one novice in a holiday mood, scrubbing away at an immense stock-pot, his head and shoulders all the way inside its mammoth mouth while he sang boisterously “Tarara BOOMdeay, I am a *cul die*.” The echoing walls of the massive aluminum pot sent his voice sounding up the brothers’ stairs to the novice master’s room on the second floor and brought the master and a stiff penance down upon him before he had finished the second verse. The story illustrates the attitude of most American novices towards “the abject and humiliating tasks”—they were a lark.

But it also demonstrates, I believe, the real trial for the American temperament in the novitiate order, silence. The Jesuit novice is not bound to Trappist silence, but his silence of rule is the next thing to it. I have even heard it maintained by a serious student of the religious life that the silence of a Jesuit novitiate is more difficult than that of a Trappist monastery. The Trappist is not allowed to speak at any time except when conferring with his spiritual directors or superiors, and yet he can wig-wag any message that occurs to him. I understand some become very fluent, even witty, with this type of finger talk, and the social wheels can turn ungratingly. The Jesuit novice can never, outside of recreation, speak while inside the house, unless the message is “necessary”—an exception widely or loosely interpreted according to different temperaments, always very strictly by superiors. And then the message must be communicated in Latin. Most novices, fresh from trotting their way through a high school course in Caesar and Cicero, would take the Trappist’s sign language any day. For both Caesar and Cicero prove frightfully unhelpful when one has an important message about mopping floors.

Then, of course, the traditional “great silence” (usually called “sacred silence” at Shadowbrook) was in force nightly from the end of the preparation of points for the morning’s meditation until after breakfast the next morning. During this time imminent death to oneself or one’s neighbor was about the only reason which justified speech.

Entrances usually took place during the summer, and



An altar in the sacristy decorated for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament after services on Thursday of Holy Week.

at the beginning of October the first year novices were ready to start the first *experimentum*, provided for in the *Constitutions*, the thirty days, in absolute silence, of retreat according to the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. Probably no little book of its size had been picked apart so much in the history of writings on the spiritual life. Especially has this been true in recent years. There is, then, no need here to attempt to analyze the *Spiritual Exercises*. Let me only say that despite their proven usefulness as a source for short retreats, missions and general ascetical doctrine, the *Exercises* are designed to have their full effect only in circumstances similar to those in which they are given to the young Jesuit novice. For Ignatius thought of them primarily as a course of exercises (he was a very literal man, and chose his few words with care, if not with brilliance) to be given to young men who stand on the threshold of great decision and who wish to make that decision as far as possible the one most aligned with the Will of God. Ignatius felt that the *Exercises*, once made, would never have to be repeated; for the decision to which they should point would be a life-long dedication and the ideals, the inspirations, harkened to here, would resonate throughout a man's days. For this effect two things were needed, a generous subject, docile

to the illuminations of the Holy Spirit, and the full course of *Exercises* for thirty days of silence and retirement.

October makes The Bowl a parti-colored splendor of blue sky, blue water and fiercely dying summer, but novices on the Long Retreat had no eyes for the spectacle. You could see them along the long slope of the farm road to the west of the house, a straggling line of hunched figures in black, heads bent, with small books in their hands, or rosaries or simply walking alone, wombed with their thoughts. There is nothing to be said of the Long Retreat at Shadowbrook, unless I were to describe the externals: how the days turned cold, the leaves perished and fell, and how the solitary after-supper walks toward the end of the month when the meditations were on the Passion of Christ took place in the dark of nights which were already winter. But the Long Retreat belongs to each man singly, and this is the story of the house.

One of the trials prescribed for Jesuit novices was never held at Shadowbrook. This was the month's pilgrimage to be made in religious habit and without funds, begging to support oneself. It was wisely felt that in a country whose traditions are largely Protestant, and even Calvinist, mendicancy would not be considered edifying, and then there was the Depression, and perhaps the competition could have proved too stiff.

Another one of the six trials was used, only once, I believe, because it can only be performed by a novice who is already an ordained priest. Doubtless he "proceeded to the hearing of confessions and the preaching of sermons according to the dispositions of time, place and men" as the *Constitutions* provide.

The second trial in the *Constitutions'* list of six was, quite strangely, not used until very late, until, in fact, 1947 under Father John Post as master of novices. I say strangely, because it is a good one, a genuine test of the young man's capacity for love, his capacity, then, for Christian Living. This trial calls for a month's service in a hospital. The *Constitutions* are very explicit on what this service should entail, and in what spirit it should be performed:

"The second (trial) is to serve a month in one or more hospitals, there taking their food and sleeping and spending

certain hours daily as circumstances of time, place and persons dictate, in offering help and service as they are ordered, to sick and well alike, in order that they might lower and humiliate themselves, and in the same way, prove that they have left the pomp and vanity of the world, but most of all that they may serve their Creator and Lord Who was crucified for these people whom they serve.”

The American temperament may not be dreadfully pained to be forced to mop floors, peel vegetables and weed, but coming from a background of daily showers and schoolrooms where the motto “Cleanliness is Next to Godliness” is hung above the blackboard, there are few middle-class American boys who cannot be touched by the squalor of some of the wards of a large city hospital. And that is where they worked. Each month four novices from Shadowbrook traveled to the Boston City Hospital to work anonymously as orderlies in the more difficult wards.

The last trial of the six is for the novices to teach catechism to children. I believe that when Ignatius originally established this *experimentum* he had in mind the men whom he had first recruited for his new Society, most of them graduates of the large European universities, licensed to face audiences of international scholars. Teaching catechism was again to be “an abject and humiliating task.” For the novice at Shadowbrook, just out of high school himself, to face a lot of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries in the role of teacher was certainly very often a trial, even if not so for the reasons which Ignatius had supposed.

Then there were added elements of difficulty. The novices who taught at the parishes of Lenox and Lenoxdale had a pipe. All they had to do was walk the few miles into Lenox center where the Lenoxdale people enjoyed the weekly adventure of a bus ride. During the winter the road to Lenox was always plowed. Those who taught in West Stockbridge, however, needed the spirit of martyrs or, failing that, the spirit of Perry, Scott or Byrd, at least during the Berkshire winter. For their journey led up the Richmond road over the ridge of Stockbridge Mountain and along a dirt road that was never plowed in the back of Stockbridge Mountain for about five and a half miles. The snow



Juniors, and less frequently novices, put on classical and sometimes original plays. They were often skillfully adapted to eliminate women's roles. The story was told of a production in which a character named "Lady Macbeth's brother" introduced the familiar speeches by saying "She was lately heard to say..."

drifting down off the ridge was frequently four, five, six feet deep. Yet it should be said that the road to West Stockbridge was a beautiful hike, overlooking the panoramic Richmond Valley which stretches off to the New York line. Sometimes, too, the pastor, anxious to have his Sunday School staffed, would send a car on the worst days.

These six *experimenta* which the Constitutions prescribe are designed primarily to give superiors a knowledge of the capacities of the novices; they point toward determining a novice's canonical fitness to pronounce the three vows of religion. At the same time they have an accompanying effect on the novice himself; for unlike intelligence or personality tests, they are intended not merely to manifest capacity, but, to a marked degree, create it.

The Christian religious life had its birth in the wattle and woven-palm huts of the Fathers of the Desert. There under the frightful sun it was scorched with a character it has ever retained. The religious life which is centrally a growing experience of God must always begin and be accompanied in every stage by asceticism, the unrelenting struggle with creatures. Self-knowledge, self-conquest—these are not for the Christian the

supreme good they are for the humanist; and yet, because “God is a spirit and those who adore Him must adore Him in Spirit and in truth,” the Christian is committed to a life-long contention whose prize is consciousness and untrammelled will. For the spirit is connaturally “all at once and everything”; it is self-possessed and nothing of itself is hidden from its knowledge; it is self-controlled and so its dedication, its gifts and promises are irrevocable. The angels who, according to Catholic theology, are the only “pure spirits” outside of God achieved eternal happiness or damned themselves forever by a single act which, since it was entirely spiritual, was utterly irreversible. The Christian spirit, pressed by time and circumstance and companioned by beguiling flesh, can never be itself—which is, of course, alright with the Christian for he knows and happily accepts the fact that he is not spirit. Exclusive attention to the demands of the soul is not a Christian ideal; contempt of the body has been as fruitful a source of heresy as anything else, more so than, say, hedonism. But the sinuous reasoning of Christian paradox can immediately turn around with the question: which aberration has more often caused damnation, excessive asceticism or excessive hedonism? And then, astride, as always, the mystery and paradox of man, the Christian can reject his own question as ultimately frivolous. His course is clear. It lies between the whirlpool and the rock though both are points by which it must be calculated. He must seek salvation as a man of flesh, not through any fear of *hubris*, of divine anger at his presumption of spirit, but simply because his salvation has come through the God Who was made flesh. And he must at the same time strive to liberate his spirit, not for the sake of building up his character, attaining perfection or any such purely optional ideal, but in order to confront the God Who must be adored “in spirit and in truth.”

Easily the most unusual feature of his new life was for the usual novice (who, while he did practice a good garden-grown variety of piety during his life in the “world,” was ordinarily not acquainted with the sheer falls and crags of religious questing) was its flinty aspect of asceticism. I remember well the startled, uneasy gasp of laughter that swept through first ascetory when toward the close of our habit retreat the retreat master suddenly

in the midst of a conference on penance produced what he called “our instruments of penance” with a conjurer’s flourish from the folds of his cassock. He was sitting up against the door to the tower porch and the things he was holding dangled in silhouette against the distant blue of Stockbridge Mountain. A small serpentine whip and a length of wire links and points about ten inches long—shaking them at us slightly, he told us that the whip was called the discipline, the wire affair, the chain, and that we would be expected to find good use for them both. The effect was grotesque and very comic I thought. In fact, I can remember being convinced that he was performing some elaborate spoof; and so thought we all, until a few days later when we received our habits and found the discipline and chain laid out with loving care beside the long-desired black robe and cincture. He wasn’t kidding.

The discipline was taken in the dormitory before retiring. After the last visit to the chapel around 9:15 the novices would come hurrying up the iron stairs and into the dormitory. There they stripped to the waist and stood beside their beds, holding their disciplines. When all were ready, the manuductor, or senior novice, would snap out the lights, and with the sound of an immense threshing machine loud in the darkness everyone would set to work with a will laying the cords across his shoulders. The chain was a cat’s-cradle of baling wire, equipped with perhaps fifty or sixty pointed ends which stood up and pressed into the skin. It was worn around the thigh at least two mornings a week from the time of rising until after breakfast.

The discipline and chain were two come-on performers on the outside platform of asceticism. “The real show is inside, folks.” And like all come-on performers they were flashy and somewhat meretricious. The grim sight of fifty or sixty hunch-backed men waiting in the dimly lit barn-sized dorm with small scourges dangling from their crooked fingers, the tight-lipped strain of moving painful legs without a limp—these were the necessary and traditional theatrics of an experienced Christian asceticism, but by themselves they were nothing. They could be less than nothing, positively harmful, “sources of pride” as all spiritual masters agreed. A new first-year novice (one of the

*primi*) inevitably marveled at the crisp casualness with which his elders in religion ran up the iron stairs, stripped and prepared to beat themselves. He wondered the first two months or so that he wore the chain whether he could ever school himself to stride so briskly with pain brilliant on his wincing legs as the rest of the community seemed to do. Unconsciously, while almost unavoidably, he had adopted toward corporal penance precisely the attitude which the spiritual warned him against. For asceticism must never become athleticism merely. It is more than the urge to take cold showers, long walks—to “take it.” It is connected with the urge that sets little boys turning cartwheels and climbing trees when little girls go past the playground. That, despite the fact that the athlete is frequently moved by the noble ambition of self-improvement and the show-off by an exhibitionism, popularly contemned. The little boy upside down from the tree branch is an inchoate lover. He may one day do great deeds for fair lady, or native land or God, for his efforts are related to another person, however little the other is realized as person. He is impelled by the first fingerings of love. The athlete is a solipsist, and if a confirmed athlete, I’ll wager, a confirmed narcissist.



Productions triumphed over minimal resources, setting up lights and scenery at one end of the first-floor conference room. This play was notable because the actor third from the left was James H. Dolan, who later became provincial and established Fairfield University.

The human soul is a great ocean and these young men were invited to dive down to the extent of their staying power into its shifting deeps. Freud and the others have few surprises for the serious student of asceticism. No matter how gratefully he may greet the psychologists' concepts and, at times, their terminology for the clarification they afford, he recognized most of the phenomena as familiar, even in great part already usefully categorized by the masters of the spiritual life, even, alas, to the aberrations. Pride and sensuality may sound like rather robust terms in which adequately to sum up man's wrestlings with the dark angel of self, but their myriad and vermicular approaches have been well charted throughout the history of Christian strivings. To know their fully nuanced definitions is to know much of man. To rebuff them at every approach is to be a saint. And it was sanctity that the novice was after.

Thus he had to learn to ply his whip and buckle on his chain, to do it casually and without pride—not because he was strong, but because he was, strong or weak, to the limit of his gifts, a lover. From the first moment he sprung out of bed in the pre-dawn gloaming of the big dorm, knocked the snow off his blankets (it was there often enough if his bed was beside a window), and ran shivering into the sink-lined corridor to the early night hour he returned to roll into his cocoon of blankets once again, he sought to live in the insistent spirit of St. Bernard's great question: "Why have you come?" It was motive he questioned continually throughout his tightly scheduled day. He sought to purify, deepen, make more adult and free every action and the reasons for action. It was tough sledding at times. He perhaps no more than the boy acrobat knew the One for whom he performed. Like the child, he had not touched the Other's personality; he was merely impelled to action by the presence of his audience galvanizing hidden motives. Yet he knew what he wanted. He strove to allow that Presence to penetrate his consciousness ever deeper, and he hoped that by fidelity to its promptings one day he could experience full the interchange of person to person, that he could say "thou" to God with the same incandescence that he now said "I."

Certainly one of the more difficult aspects of his life

was what was called variously, “regular order,” “*de more*,” “the ordinary duties.” The day’s schedule was shredded into little bite-sized chunks of time; the bell calling him to one task after another flays the spirit more effectively than the discipline. There were two periods of prayer (an hour in the morning, a half hour in the evening), two periods set aside for examining the conscience, two for spiritual reading, two for class or study, two for manual work. The first of these was called *manualia* and was mostly light housekeeping. The other called *laborandum* was a more extended period of work in the early afternoon and frequently included outdoor assignments which were considered as desirable as recreation. Even when the assignment was to the kitchen, every effort was made to allow the work to be done out of doors. Beneath the kitchen and running approximately its length there was an open cellar area, forming what I suppose would today be called “a patio.” From its row of gothic arches which sunk neck deep below the ground level, it was named (with what technical accuracy, I cannot attest) the “subcloister”. There on sunny days from early April to mid-October the kitchen crew squatted on stools and gossiped over colanders of peas and mounds of purpled turnip. The anxiety for outside work was dictated by the imperative of Latin talk which held empire in the house. Recreation was, of course, a time of liberation from Latin, but not entirely. There were two periods of recreation (everything seemed to go in pairs) –one following lunch and the second after dinner. They were both about 45 minutes long, but even they were divided. Recreation was held outdoors, summer and winter, blizzard and wind storm. Rain and rain alone had power to move the recreation to shelter on the long porch which ran behind the chapel and along its southern side. Each novice was assigned to a band of three by the manuductor; these were his companions for the time and no others. “Breaking bands,” even to shout a remark, was considered a fault. To call the bands home since no one but himself and his sub carried watches, the manuductor fifteen minutes before the end of recreation would shout “Last quarter. All home.” The long-drawn cry, hooting like the old radio signature of *Refrew of the Mounted* pulsed slowly out through the unlighted paths and down over The Bowl, and when it found the distant bands, it

chilled like a flight of owls across the moon. For the cry was the signal to begin Latin-talk again.

On holidays and, if I remember correctly, Sundays, the entire period of recreation could be conducted in English. Then the black bands of three, gathering in the driveway before the porte cochere for the end of recreation, sounded, as well as looked, like the convening of a rookery. There was a shrill gabble of over-intense voices, as each strove to finish his anecdote. Scarcely hearing one another, they jockeyed for the last word. For when the sub-manuductor whanged his bell from the main doorway, silence fell louder than sound. A good performer could time his curtain line with a precision any playwright could envy, and leave his companions struggling against a desperate ebullience of sniggers.

Sniggers, guffaws, chuckles—laughter, as many visiting lecturers found out to their disconcertion, was always a feature of novitiate life. It would be a serious error to conceive of these tyro ascetics as grim. There were, no doubt, strains in this life. The



A procession in the early fifties, possibly on the feast of Corpus Christi or of the Sacred Heart, when benediction was sometimes held at an altar on the grounds.

novice with his face lined with forced austerity, his head sunk tortoise-like between clavicles, was, indeed, a common enough sight, and perhaps even a necessary stage in the development of almost all. But the over-pious novice too often was simply self-deceived, naïve. Naïveté may be the product of our best instincts, but ultimately, because God is never served by irreality no matter how well intentioned, it had to pass. A novice who had learned to step through the intricacies of the daily order's minuet, to kneel upright for his ninety minutes of prayer, to chain his wilder appetites was often tempted to picture himself already as a companion of the angels, competent to wear his nimbus with becoming modesty. He had to realize that he was still a spirit mired in flesh, that ambitions which burned more brightly real than anything he saw or knew around him were still mirages unfulfilled, that he was still a man with a piece of road to travel yet. Everything conspired to keep him realistic: the advice of his novice master, the counsels of spiritual writers, the growing frustrations of prayer (for divine gifts do not encourage falsehood), and, since humor and health are synonymous, the pressure of healthy humor.

Novices laughed at everything. The disproportion between aspiration and accomplishment which is perhaps a definition of the comic was continually before the eyes of these men who twice a day for fifteen minutes picked over their souls' ruck of motive and broken desires. They live a close life where character could not be hidden from even the myopic. They were islanded, trained in common tasks, conversant with a specialized vocabulary that permitted shorthand allusion immediately understood by all. It was wit's paradise. Unfortunately, like most family humor, it is hopeless to attempt to translate it. It may though be stated that it was honest humor, genuine and affectionate, but, as it had to be, impudent, irreverent. There were the bootlegged nicknames (everyone should have been addressed as "Brother"). There was the inexhaustible fount of faculty's eccentricities. The monastic practice of publicly telling one's fault in the refectory could be a real humiliation and was often hilarious. When a man forgot the formula, he was helped out by a whispering voice from one of the tables giving him the formula for

confession or the act of contrition. There was the man who said a *culpa* for “breaking a whole stack of unbreakable dishes”; the man “who killed a horse”; the two culprits who, having heard Brother Perry tell the hired farmer that “Stella” was ready, anticipated his wishes and led the poor thing to the bull themselves. They almost succeeded in killing both themselves and the badly frightened cow. Their *culpa* was worded to the delight of the community who had, of course, heard the story, ‘for actions unbecoming a religious.’ Then there was the man who was learning to drive and who came whipping in the farm pick-up down the roller coaster road toward the back kitchen porch just as all the novices were coming in from *laborandum*. Five men in the back leaped up and caught at overhanging branches and were left dangling as though they were the leavings of a lynching while he came careening straight at the vegetable peelers behind the kitchen who were running away like an alarmed chicken yard. One man tripped over his long apron and lay, his face slashed with terror, one arm stretched out in supplication towards the hurtling truck. The driver his foot still glued to the accelerator suddenly swerved to his left and dumped down over an eight-foot parapet into the garden called “Stanislaus, Patron of Novices.” There the truck, now crumpled like old paper, somersaulted once and lay nose to the ground, sobbing quietly. The driver whose imperturbability was legend climbed out unhurt and that night told his chuckling “dear fathers and brothers” that he was at fault “for being careless with community property.”

Attempts at sermons in the refectory and in speech class were often a delight and the reader in the refectory was sure to amuse the novices. The daily reading from the *Roman Martyrology* was eagerly anticipated. The wonders there found which an earlier, less critical age attributed to the saints, the macabre details of ancient slaughters were sure to trip their hair-trigger risibilities, particularly if the nervous reader announced that these took place in “the perseclution of Dioclution”. It was amusing to be told by the young man reading *The Rules* that no Jesuit could “have books without leaves.” The yearly commemoration of the industrious fellow who vowed never to waste a minute and consequently spent the time he took walking from his cell to the refectory each

day translating the Psalms into Greek verse, never seemed to edify as much as it tickled. One refectory incident is especially dear to me with that rueful affection we save for life's embarrassing moments, for I was the blushing, thick-tongued villain of the piece. That time the community heard that St. Francis Borgia "was grateful for the warmth of the room," that "after the cold journey, he was cheered by the sight of a red hot brassiere, glowing in one corner." Living in community, it was at times hard. St John Berchmans called it his greatest mortification. But it was what gave contour to the novice's shapeless adolescent character. Of course, by this time it must be evident that it would be a serious error to conclude that, because all were submitted to the same rigorous training, all were supposed to be patterned alike. Any Jesuit community is a many-splendored thing. Each house of "Ours" displays the complete spectrum of human personality, glowing gloriously, from the infra-reds through the ultra-violets and beyond. The earliest domestic witticisms the Shadowbrook novice learned were two stock phrases used with tiresome repetitiveness to describe the community's rich diversity: "If it's a nut, we've got it" and "If you can't find it on the counter, we've got it on the shelf." (This last harked back to the earlier, roomier days when occasionally old or sick fathers were sent to live out their days in the novitiates.) These tattered old gags were heard over and over, for each new group of postulants were always struck by their succinct summation of what was the most striking feature of their new life. They are fallen among strangers, fantastic as Martians, improbable characters whom they called "Brothers." It was an exhilarating, difficult, laughable, strained, wholly new and important experience. Through it they were formed into sanctity.

There is much elided in this account of novitiate life at Shadowbrook. We have not mentioned the Thursday picnics, once held in a draughty old chicken-house where the nose remembered the former tenants, but in recent years in the fine stone building equipped with fireplace and piano which Brother Perry built at the lake shore. We should have to take up pages describing the walks held on Thursday which in my day were brutal endurance contests where one group vied with another in getting as much

mileage out of the few hours before six o'clock supper as the human ganglia could stand. But it would be a hopeless task and, I fear, of limited interest, to attempt to chronicle even a small share of such events. Still we cannot by-pass Christmas.

Christianity is supposed to have canonized the pagan mid-winter feast because she found it impossible to persuade the sentimental Nordics to give it up. The northern soul needed an interlude of high wassail, roasting deer and mead-hall-thumping song to endure the winter stretch of blank days and long nights, and so Christmas became the feast it is. There may be more Christmassy places than the old Shadowbrook mansion with its chunky stonework lapped in snow, its retinue of winter-liveried pines, and its big interior rooms with their fireplaces and their warm richly paneled walls, but if there are, there are few of them in North America. H. Neill Wilson's castle never looked better than when celebrating the feast which was developed in castles.

The preparations began early. To inquiring first year novices, who, may be, had a touch of homesickness and might ask wistfully, "Say, Brother, how do we celebrate Christmas around here?," the second year man would inevitably and infuriatingly reply (in Latin) "*Videbimus, frater.*" "We shall see, Brother."

From about the middle of November, and sometimes as early as late October, the snows begin in the Berkshires and Shadowbrook would already start to take on its Christmas look. (I don't suppose that every Christmas there was a "white" one but such is my selective memory.) Around the beginning of December, usually on the feast of Francis Xavier, Laurel Day would be declared. The whole house (for this was a "fusion" day when novices and juniors could speak to each other) would go on a picnic up to Baldhead, where a great fire would be lit in the old abandoned reservoir and food cooked by a crew of Jesuit woodsmen. The areas where the laurel was most plentiful had been carefully scouted by the men in charge of the operation and a large map of Baldhead indicating the best picking appeared on the bulletin board that morning. It was always covered with caricatures of the community and domestic jokes drawn with a wicked eye for the foibles that seem to sprout like stored onions in the cellar air of community. I think the pickers were divided

into teams and for the team which brought in the largest amount there was some sort of prize. I know that there was a prize for the individual who gathered the heaviest bag—he was put in charge of the next year's Laurel Day. Since the novices and juniors enjoyed "fusions" at only rare intervals, it was a grand occasion for renewing old friendships amid Currier and Ives surroundings and even a good deal of laurel somehow got picked.

Throughout December the novices worked in St. Mary's Aula during recreations, twining the laurel into wreaths and streamers. This was frequently a great joy too, because it meant they were not forced to go outside and "enjoy themselves" walking around the sub-zero paths. And English was permitted during laurel twining—a benison, believe me!

Christmas Eve was a fast day, of course, but the great bustle of decorating crews made the hours, sustained only by a little salt cod, go swiftly. The chapel received most attention, and the dark-green, burnished laurel against its oak wall and ceiling made a handsome sight. The flower-crew drove down to O'Brien the florist on the road to Lenox and came back with the poinsettia and red and gold chrysanthemums they had previously ordered, then retired to the wine room at the bottom of the tower stairs where they spent the day contorting their flowers into surprising and sometimes very successful arrangements. Hip-booted, in mackinaws and with axes over their shoulders, the tree-crew ranged the snow fields of Baldhead for nicely shaped evergreens. Hemlock was laced into the carvings on the main staircase, and the ungainly affair seemed almost graceful. The community retired early because of the midnight Mass.

High on the wall of the novitiate dormitory whose ceiling rose to the roof there was a door leading into the unfinished attic. Behind this door shortly before 11:30 on Christmas Eve the junior choir used to gather quietly. Suddenly they threw open the door. The colored lights which were strung around it shone down into the dark and sleeping dormitory. At the same time the director would drop his hand and the first triumphant blast would come pouring out: *Hodie Christus Natus est!*

The second-year novices were used to this, of course, some of them had been lying awake waiting for it, and waiting to

see the reaction of the *primi*. It was a simple device, an old device, but it never failed. The poor *primi* came bounding, comically tousled and bewildered, out of their beds. Some one was sure to shout, "Hey what's going on here?" Some one else was sure to wake up with a foolish beatific grin on his face, convinced he was in heaven. He would be found boring everybody at table during the next morning's *deo gratias* breakfast (one at which talking was permitted) by explaining carefully how beautiful and moving he found the experience, how, honestly brother, he thought he was hearing angels. Every year there was someone who heard angels.

After about ten minutes of carols the juniors moved off to wake up the rest of the house with song, and novices got up and dressed for Mass.

Jesuits are not renowned for their liturgical practice. As a matter of fact we have quite a bad reputation on the matter; frequently a parish priest who sees that he has a Jesuit come to celebrate some solemn liturgical function, will laughingly say, "O, I know how you fellows are. I'd rather do it myself." Then he goes out as often as not and makes a complete mess of it. It is rather infuriating. I think it should be stated somewhere and perhaps this is as good a place as any: the story that Jesuits cannot properly assist at solemn functions is, by and large, a canard. Solemn feasts, the Holy Week ceremonies—all these are carried out in our houses with exactitude and beauty I have rarely witnessed elsewhere, and no where more meaningfully than in the Shadowbrook chapel.

The Liturgy should create an intimacy between the celebrant and the worshippers for it is a community worship; the small warm Shadowbrook chapel unifies the pews with the altar in much more than a physical sense. The Liturgy should be a solemn act of great dignity and beauty, for it is the highest worship of God; the genuine beauty of the room, the carefully rehearsed singing, the rich vestments (heavy gold brocade, generously cut for solemn feasts like Christmas), the slow grace of the ceremonies—all made a solemn Mass at Shadowbrook a beautiful action, conscious of its purpose and determined to be as worthy of it as human limits allowed.

And the best was always the midnight Christmas Mass

with, maybe, soft flakes drifting in under the chapel porch and swiveling to the ground in the light from the big windows or perhaps with the vast winter vault opened to its unimagined depths and its whole glitter of worlds bending over our small planet, still stupefied at the audacity of the claim it had made and commemorated this night - to possess the Creator of them all. The Mass was the peak of the Christmas observance.

After Mass the community was served cocoa or hot bouillon with crackers from a large cart that was wheeled into the lower staircase hall or “outside refectory” as it had come to be known. Sacred silence was still observed, but with little dips of cups and swift furtive smiles, greetings, dumb but happy, were exchanged. Then one by one they straggled off to bed.

Christmas day was an anti-climax, but where isn't it? There was a fusion, and presents from home to be opened (and turned into the socius or minister the next day) and after the evening dinner, an entertainment.

The shows at Shadowbrook used to be staged in the old morning room, now the novice chapter and conference hall. A marvelous portable stage had been constructed to fit into the alcove behind the Doric pillars. By the time I made my novitiate the boards looked like they were stolen from a hockey rink, they were so worn and scratched, and the thing protested vocally any time an actor did more than sit still—very annoying when the scene called for tension and the occasion of much unplotted humor. I remember one production of *Oedipus Rex* when we went in for elaborate “mood” lighting. We had a row of salt-water dimmers flaring and bubbling out in St. Joseph's Aula. There was a follow-spot held in the gloved hands of a man on a stepladder and a flood-light, fashioned from an old sun lamp and worked by a hero who stayed curled up in the fireplace throughout the show, so that long eerie shadows could be thrown against the back set during one particularly affecting sequence. Everything went swimmingly until Oedipus came down the steps of his palace, heavily pounding his feet as he stalked the blind Terisias with shouted accusations. The heaving stage almost threw the spot man off his ladder. But this happened in the juniorate, which deserves a separate treatment.

The juniorate is an entirely different life. After two years of mutual testing the Society approves the novice for vows and the novice has to come to the decision that he belongs in the life of a Jesuit. He is then allowed to pronounce his three simple religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The vows are absolute and perpetual on his part, but the Society reserves the right to release him from them, if at any time throughout the course of studies it becomes clear that he is not fitted for the Jesuit life. The Jesuit, as a matter of fact, is on probation until his solemn vow day between fifteen and seventeen years after his entrance. The second two years of this probation are usually spent in the juniorate, depending on his previous education. For juniors study a course roughly equivalent to the first two years of a college arts course: the humanities, the Latin and Greek classics, English literature, modern languages and history. And at Shadowbrook they were cocks of the walk.

After the novitiate that pimply adolescent who came in two years ago is now in his own mind, at least, proficient in spiritual matters with his purpose in life firmly fixed. He may not, in fact, have attained the maturity he credits himself with; quite surprising if he ever does *that*, but there is no doubt that he has a more articulated rationale, a more profound understanding of himself and his aims than most young men of nineteen or twenty. On his vow day he arrives at accomplishment, all the accomplishment which Shadowbrook puts immediately before his eyes. If there are years of peak and trough still before him, they are mercifully hidden in the joy of his *own* habit (no longer the misfitting castoffs of the province), a biretta, and the privilege of wearing clerical dress outside the house. It is almost as though he were already ordained, already shouldering the wheel. The Shadowbrook juniors on the summer morning of the vows used to walk in groups to Lenox or around Mahkeenac with the single purpose of dressing in the Roman collar and black suit, the suit which had hung unused for two years in a closet, reeking of moth balls, off the big dorm, and which was referred to in reverent tones as "the vow suit."

I remember that once, soon after my vows, I made a trip to the eye doctor in Pittsfield. Standing waiting for a bus,



The boat house on Lake Mahkeenac was built by previous owners. Only juniors were allowed to use it. Novices had a ramshackle building off to the right.

I saw two nuns coming along the street. It had been some years since my parochial school days, but that instinctive hunch of the shoulder, and quiet discomfort of the stomach—reflexes conditioned by many rulers and pointers competently wielded—began again. I shuffled the feet, I cleared the throat, and when they drew within earshot hissed the parochial-school greeting which no man can make sound controlled and casual: “Morn’s ssstirs”. And lo, there was apprehension in their eyes too—a reflex conditioned by events and experiences it would be rough to speculate on. They bobbed in unison and back came the startling reply: “Good morning, Father.” An incident like that puffeth up.

But while the junior might give the impression to the novices of being insufferably self-assured, he actually is a hard and meek enough workman. The classes were at least four a day and the matter difficult. During the month of May, however, his class schedule became extremely light for this was the period of repetitions, when the year’s work was gone over in preparation for the final oral examinations. Throughout the school year except for the recreation periods and holidays, the junior must study at his desk when not in class, but during repetitions he is free to study where he wishes. And so little groups of two, three or four

would take off immediately after the morning class for the slopes of Baldhead, the Tanglewood meadows, or a boat drifting over Mahkeenac where flights of swallows dipped and fainted at the toy-sized waves. The meadows clinked like Mass bells with the songs of bobolinks and the solitary thrush in the deep woods intoned a plainsong chant. There are no statistics on this but I believe that the New England Province since the opening of Shadowbrook has produced more minor lyric poets than perhaps any other in the history of the Society.

There were five men on the faculty for the first year. Father John Harding Fisher was both rector and master of novices; he was later to become novice master at the Wernersville novitiate in Pennsylvania and rector of Fordham University. Father Gerald Dillon was the minister and also novice professor. Father Francis J. Lamb was spiritual director of the juniors, Father Joseph J. Williams treasurer, and Father Joseph S. Hogan the only teacher in the juniorate. Father Dillon was the first Jesuit to be buried at Shadowbrook.

It would be useless and dull, perhaps, to list all the fathers who have lived and worked at Shadowbrook during the years from 1923 to 1956. They were, let it only be said, an enthusiastic, intermittently brilliant lot of men whose influence on the men of the province has not and will not, for some years, cease reverberating.

Two of Shadowbrook's six rectors were afterwards consecrated bishops: Father Rice who succeeded Father Fisher was first made rector of the newly opened mission school in Bagdad, Iraq, then afterwards, bishop of Belize in British Honduras. Father John J. McEleny was made rector of Fairfield University in Connecticut, provincial of New England, and is presently the bishop of Kingston, Jamaica, British West Indies.

Throughout the years the members of the Shadowbrook community have been active in retreats, missions and various pastoral works in the surrounding towns. During the C.C.C. days they were the chaplains of the camps at Becket, Bear Mountain and Lalu Cascades. Sometimes juniors accompanied the fathers to tote the portable organ, serve Mass and Benediction and practice their rhetoric by way of exhortation to the

campers. Once these domestic missionaries proved their jibs were out as rakishly as their brothers' in the "bush" of distant lands. The spring rains washed out the fording of a river near one of the camps; the army trucks which had been sent to fetch them refused to attempt the crossing. So into the turbid waters strode these unassuming Greek professors, stemming them with hearts of controversy.

In 1949 a society wedding took place in the green-stained sacristy, and the old frump of a house had a brief remembrance of her former glory. During the thirties Dr. Serge Koussevitzky bought a gracious white mansion from Kate Buckingham, the Chicago millionairess. His new home was on a much higher slope of Baldhead directly behind Shadowbrook. The novices and juniors used to ski on the open slope behind his house during the winter holidays, and the old conductor would occasionally visit the novitiate during the summer, dropping in unexpectedly for Benediction to hear how the choir was progressing. And so when his niece, the Princess Maria Leuchtenberg, was to be married to Joseph di Pasquale, the orchestra's first viola, he asked permission to have the ceremony performed at Shadowbrook. It was a quiet affair (few of the novices and juniors were even aware that it took place), but the green room looked lovely and a string quartet played from Handel and Mendelssohn.

In 1952 the U.S. Air Force inaugurated a Sky Watch at Shadowbrook. Until the fall of 1956 it was maintained on a twenty-four hour basis, with both novices and juniors sharing the duty. The large tower which overlooked The Bowl ended at the attic level in open battlements, and there, beneath the improbably hostile sky where three states were visible through binoculars, summer and winter, night and day, paced the lonely figure of a monk. It was great fun, and for the novices particularly whose day is customarily cut frustratingly into little bite-sized chunks of time, the hour on the Sky Watch was a duty eagerly anticipated. They could read or write uninterrupted, except for occasional trips to the phone to report aircraft. In the beginning this was quite a chore, since there was no phone except the one in the porter's lodge three flights downstairs. But eventually a special line was run up through the elevator shaft to the tower, and from



A group of lay brothers assigned to Shadowbrook in 1950.

that time on they could play at soldier in proper ease.

Only once did Shadowbrook figure in the main current of events, and then its role was a quiet one. Four neat young men in business suits moved their bags into Campion Cottage. This happened occasionally when someone by special arrangement would make a retreat under one of the fathers on the faculty. It was relatively rare, however, since Shadowbrook was not a retreat house, and the fact that there were four of them was decidedly unusual. Brother Timmy Cummings who ran the bakeshop in the basement of Campion was sure there was something strange about them: "funniest retreat I ever saw. They slept all day and were out all night." The rumor got around that they were Trappists from the monastery in Rhode Island which had just burned down, but what Trappists were doing in business suits and carrying brown leather luggage was difficult to explain. Only the rector knew that they were F.B.I. men who had come up to find some papers or other over in a barn in Lee and had asked to stay at Shadowbrook as about the most unobtrusive place around. It seems they found what they were looking for and the incident of the G-men and monks passed without either party getting to know one another.

By the spring of 1955 the inadequacies of the old house for its new purpose had become too painfully evident to ignore

any longer. The General of the Society had been for some years issuing ukases to the successive provincials of New England ordering them to construct a new novitiate. The provincials, however, were able to plead a lack of funds, an argument with powerful ability to turn aside superiors' wrath, and the situation went on unchanged. The continuing hope was that they would eventually be able to save enough money out of the ordinary revenues to build the necessary building, but the needs of the growing province swept away their hoardings as fast as they accumulated. Reluctantly Rev. William E. Fitzgerald took the step his predecessors had been anxious to avoid, and organized a special drive for three million dollars to build a new Shadowbrook.

St. Ignatius founded his Society as a mendicant order. The Catholic Church has never been tainted with the Calvinist ethic that tends to look upon a hand-to-mouth existence as somehow a curse from God, that finds nuns begging in the streets at least an irritant, a disturbing, when not a revolting sight. The Church knows that her Divine Founder "had no place to lay His head," and she cheerfully accepts the fact that her destiny is to travel through the centuries with outstretched palms. So it was not simple shame which caused the New England Province to hesitate before asking for funds. Rather it was a consciousness of the number, variety and worth of the demands already being made on New England's Catholic community, to build churches and schools to accommodate its increasing numbers, hospitals for its sick, orphanages, homes for the aged and on and on. But finally, convinced of the justice and necessity of their cause, the Jesuits began the "Shadowbrook Drive" with all the appurtenances of modern mendicancy—with kickoff dinners, brochures, committees, lists and a flood of mail. Mr. Joseph Sullivan of Lowell accepted the chairman's post and Father George V. McCabe was appointed executive director.

Meanwhile life continued in the old Stokes mansion. Laurel Days, Habit Days, Christmases, examinations, prayer—a round quite different than the previous ones which used to make the lights of the great house glow in the woody hills like a liner in the midnight sea. Now by ten each night, the bulky lines of stone and red-tiled roof faced indistinguishably into the forest,

unless, perhaps, a yellow square from an isolated room where some father prepared his class or hurried to finish his Office, still marked where Stokes had built the “ruby of the Berkshires.” And when the first grey dawn unveiled The Bowl there she came emerging from the night as sudden as the mountains; a landmark no less necessary to the countryside than the tossed hills.



## CHAPTER THREE

*The Last Day*

The evening of March 9, 1956 was clear, cold and Lenten. The Bowl looked as it had since the first snow back in November. Stockbridge Mountain stood out against the faded blue winter sky, its long flank mottled with snow patches and the black of jutting ledges. The snow from several recent snow storms lay out over the frozen lake, bright in the weak sun, but dull and gray in the distance down by the island and Interlaken.

It had been an ordinary day at Shadowbrook; routine, with the full force of that word which is only realized, perhaps in the novitiates of religious orders, where each day is carefully calculated to resemble the one before and the one to follow as much as possible. Contingency, time, change are inevitable, but this is a school for eternity. The tyrannous excitement of variety is, to the extent warranted by considerations of health and common sense, decisively excluded. Let change be restricted to the slow deep-sea change of growth in grace with as little surface agitation as possible.

And so the novices had followed the centuries old order of the novitiate which can in its essentials be found in the records of Sant'Andrea, established before the death of St. Ignatius. They had risen at 5:30, made their hour of prayer at the tiny desks in the crowded ascetoreies; Mass at ten minutes to seven; breakfast at twenty minutes to eight. Sacred silence was observed until

after breakfast. Then a day of spiritual readings, periods of work in the kitchen, laundry, sacristy, scullery, refectory, farm—all the hundred odd jobs which serve to maintain a hundred and fifty men in the ancient monastic tradition of self-sufficiency. The day is broken with classes in Greek and Latin—grammar, as befits the penitential spirit of the novice's life. It is a rare mind that finds itself intellectually over-stimulated by novitiate grammar class. This, too, is calculated; the mind for, these two years should be almost exclusively occupied with God and the advance in perfection.

The juniorate order had followed the novitiate's exactly until after breakfast; but while the novices read Rodriguez' *Christian Perfection*, the juniors were cracking open their Liddell and Scott *Dictionary of the Greek Language*, or lip-moving their way through Chaucer's racy Middle English. They are the drones of this hive as far as manual work goes. Some do help on the farm or tinker with motors during recreational periods, but they are free to do what they want at this time. Their purpose is study, literature and the humanities, for they have begun the long course of study which will train them for the priesthood. Rightly to represent the infinite God to diverse men, they must know so many things.

And so the juniors had attended their classes and worked the hours of study in the helter-skelter ascetories, which, with their large desks each one equipped according to its owner's fancy and mechanical skill with its own custom-built bookracks, dictionary stands, pigeonholes and catchalls, contrasted so sharply with the clinical neatness and severity of the novice ascetories, and manifested more, perhaps, than any other feature the difference between the two ways of life. A small group had gone skiing down the long slope of the front lawn that afternoon and the soft snow, now crisping in the evening chill, was still rutted with their tracks.

Not everyone had leisure for athletics, however. Mr. Joe Appleyard had called a rehearsal for the play *The Strong Are Lonely*, which was to be presented in honor of the Ignatian Year. Dramatics have historically played a large part in the Jesuit curriculum which was formed during the later Renaissance



On the front porch, looking towards the lake.

and consequently was directed to the end of acquiring *perfecta eloquentia*. There is good evidence that the art of ballet was developed out of the gigantic, rococo productions which the Jesuit schools of France used to entertain the court of Louis XIV, and, of course, the dependence of the classical French theater on the Jesuit-trained Racine is too obvious to need elaboration. But with the aim of education generally directed to skills and manipulatory power and away from mere expression, the practice of present-day Jesuit educators has necessarily veered away from the traditional *Ratio*. There is no criticism implied here; what has been done seems to me not merely necessary, but even desirable. Flexibility should rule the selection of contingent means to a transcendent end. But one result which I personally regret has been to confine “dramatics” to being just another and sometimes



In 1955, with plans for a fundraising drive underway, a professional photographer took a number of pictures intended to show how crowded and inadequate the building was. Here juniors are shaving in the early morning, somewhat better dressed, for the photographer, than ordinarily.

slightly disreputable extra-curricular activity. But they flourish still in Jesuit novitiates and juniorates.

Another group also spent the noon recreation period indoors. They were the staff of the relatively recent juniorate magazine, *Studia*. And they were working on the linoleum cuts, cut-outs and pop-up pages of their definitely avant garde publication with as much dedication as if they had a national circulation instead of a list of subscribers which was limited to a few scholastics' recreation rooms throughout the province.

The days had begun to lengthen perceptibly, but the nights were still sudden, and the juniors in the first ascetory could not see Stockbridge Mountain out of the curved windows of the tower. Not long before, fluorescent overhead lights had been installed and their bright glare had given the ascetory the nickname "Stop & Shop." But in my day each desk had been equipped with its own goose-necked lamp. The entire house would be still. Upstairs the novices would be making their evening meditation. There were no footsteps or scraping chairs

to disturb the hush. The jagged outline of the tall blue spruce could still be seen against the faint green light that still held the zenith, but night would slowly be piled up against the windows of this room where Anson Stokes had lain, staring for months at the strange hollow in the sheets where his leg used to plump them out, and where Carnegie had tossed weakly railing against a world he could no longer command. Little lamps divided the large room into fifteen separate caverns of light, each inhabited by a black-gowned figure, hunched over a book. The half-hour spiritual reading was a witching hour in the juniors' first ascetory.

Mr. Walter Young, down in the second ascetory beyond the staircase hall, found it difficult to concentrate on his book. Tonight at supper he was assigned to preach the first of three sermons in honor of the fourth centenary of the death of St. Ignatius. He found the phrases of his sermon coming unbidden into his mind. Any one of these long minutes now the five-minute warning bell would ring for supper and the community would file down to their Friday fish. He would have to stand up before them and deliver the sentiments and phrases he had composed to the heartless accompaniment of rattling dishes, and indifferent, masticating jaws. Well, he had done his best. He would make a short visit—alas, probably as equally distracted as his spiritual reading—before supper. Then it was out of his hands. At least he had chosen a rousing text and theme: the words of St. Ignatius to St. Francis Xavier before he sent him to the Indies, "Go, set the world on fire." He hoped the rhetorical flames his voice and words would evoke might be strong enough to pierce the miasma of minds concerned, after the Lenten fast, with their "one full meal."

The sermon was thoroughly discussed and dissected during the after-dinner recreation period by the little bands of hooded and scarfed novices which picked their way around the icy, rutted and lightless roads. The juniors for the most part confined themselves to the glassed area of the front porch and strove to square their comments with the best principles of Longinus.

In the fathers' recreation room over in the west wing, comment on Mr. Young's sermon was, I fear, brief and perfunctio-

ry. Years of refectory sermons have dulled somewhat their enthusiasm for the practice. “Go, set the world on fire” is a theme rich in rhetorical possibilities, of course; but most of them have been actualized before this—many times in fact. The “tropes” were genuinely effective, but expectable; words evoke small response in these minds sophisticate in rhetoric. Father Bob Campbell, an incurable and incessant punster, was entertaining his small group of devotees: Father Harry Muollo, Father Rector (Father Francis Corcoran), and Father John Post, the novice master. The recreation took one of those unexpectedly bright turns that sometimes occur, when Father Steve Mulcahy announced that he intended to attend the Jesuit alumni dinner to be held that coming Sunday at Cranwell. As part of the Ignatian Year a series of these dinners were to be held all over the country, and Cranwell was the site for the alumni in the Berkshires. Father Alphonse Yumont got special delight out of twitting Father Mulcahy, one of whose most vulnerable spots was his extreme devotion to Boston College where he had served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Father Yumont poised for the attack:

“Do you realize you’ll have to sit with Holy Cross men, Steve? Do you think you can act civilly?”

It was an old tactic, the source of many jokes which might seem feeble enough outside the walls, but which were sufficiently serviceable for intramural recreation. Father Mulcahy rose dutifully to the bait, and his rich eloquence flowed with the amusing fruitiness the subject deserved, for he had a fine hibernian power of overstatement and a keen sense of the ridiculous. It was, Father Yumont attests, a “brilliant recreation.”

Father William Carroll was not in the rec room that night. He was rehearsing the house choir in the *Te Deum* to be sung that Sunday in honor of the Ignatian Year.

Following recreation the novices had study until the nine o’clock litanies which mark the close of the day in our scholasticates. After litanies the novices, who had made their points and examen during the half hour before, went immediately to their dormitories for the common discipline, held three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday—unless one of these days is a feast day. They then hurried to bed, clattering up and down the

iron stairs to the toilets in the basement. Some few stopped by the big garish Sacred Heart statue which stood in a dark corner by the big dorm for a last prayer and review of the matter for the morning's meditation. Brothers Dick Wolf, John Redgate and Frank Bergen were the novices on trial that month—they worked in the kitchen getting the breakfast and had to rise for an early Mass and so they slept apart from the others in the “trial dorm,” a small room on the third-floor corridor of the west wing, facing onto the front drive. Brother Bob White was also on the third corridor of the west wing in the novice infirmary. He had suffered now for some months with a series of minor ailments, anemia, stomach upsets, lassitude. No one could discover what exactly was the matter.

The rest of the house retired after the novices. Immediately after litanies there followed a fifteen-minute period to prepare the points for the morning prayer, then fifteen minutes of examination of conscience. It is common practice to use the examen period for confessions.

Brother Jim McDavitt went to confession that night. As he passed down the gloomy third corridor he saw the bent form of old Brother Henry Perry coming from confession. Friday, though, was never the most popular night for confessions and so



A Latin class of second-year juniors with Fr. Robert Banks, one of the Shadowbrook faculty.



The dining room in 1955, with novices on the left, juniors on the right, and faculty in the turret alcove. A reader is sitting at the small desk in the center.

the number of those early to chapel for the last visit was light. Almost the entire body of the juniorate filed down together then for the short visit in the darkened chapel. Then upstairs for the discipline. After that there are just ten minutes allowed for washing up and getting to bed.

Mr. Ed O'Flaherty, the beadle, turned out the light a few minutes after ten. The number of late stragglers increased each month. The novice's individuality is somewhat inhibited, a novice tends to move automatically with the crowd and quite strictly according to the order posted each day on the bulletin board. But your junior is a man burgeoning as a personality under the influence of his humanistic studies and his consciousness of himself as one of the elders of the community. All kinds of little businesses keep him from getting to the dormitory at the exact minute before the lights are doused. Which is all very well, of course, but hard on the poor beadle who must not only turn out the light promptly but also sleep in the bed right by the door where every time someone comes in he pushes aside the squealing sliding-door, sends a shaft of light from the corridor into the beadle's eyes, and stumbles noisily by in the pitch black, bed-crowded room. Those who slept on the right side of the dormitory, however, had become quite used to groping their way

to bed. The light on that side had been burned out for some weeks. Mr. O'Flaherty supposed he should have told Brother Frost about it before this. He reminded himself to do it tomorrow, but no doubt tomorrow like all the other days would be so crowded with distractions, he would forget it again. Sunday the juniors had permission to watch Maurice Evans on TV and he must make sure that the set would be available and working. Now that was something he mustn't forget!

The faculty retired later. Frs. Muollo, and Campbell were in the recreation room. They had decided to wait for the 11:00 o'clock TV news. For some reason—perhaps a satiety with the inane flow of images and words from the set—they went to bed earlier than the eleven o'clock news. They put off the lights in the fathers' recreation room and turned down the second-floor corridor towards their own rooms. Both lived at the very end of the fathers' corridor where the building abutted on the original ledge which Anson Stokes had had blasted away in 1892 to make room for his home. Father Muollo's room faced out towards the west on the corner, a small room traditionally occupied by the house treasurer. Father Campbell lived in the adjacent room, an even smaller one, whose window faced north directly onto the rock face of the ledge and was separated from it by the width of the driveway.

Bobby Campbell (inevitably "Soupie" to the juniors) is a little priest whose keen eyes and puffy cheeks give him a chipmunk-like expression of friendly wariness. He favors the swinging stride of a much larger man, but this is all anyone could point out as a pretense in him. For his qualities are those of a tough-minded realist, practical, ordered and neat in all his thoughts and conclusions. For years he had been the spiritual adviser of the juniors. He was often asked whether he would not prefer a larger and more lightsome room, but his reply was inevitably the same: "I'm the man the men with problems are supposed to come to. The man with a problem is not always anxious to let other people know he has one. Tucked around two corners in the back of the house is the best place I could possibly live."

The night light was burning over the back stairs which went down one flight to the kitchen corridor as the two priests

turned towards their rooms. The room at the head of the stairs facing out towards the east and overlooking the front drive, was still showing a light, and they could faintly hear Father Carroll's laugh through the closed door.

Father Campbell turned to Father Muollo just as he was opening his own door and reminded him that he had promised to take a parish call down in Goshen, Connecticut, that weekend. Harry said he would be off in the morning.

Father Martin Ryan lived in the room at the head of the back stairs, and Father Bill Carroll was visiting him. Father Carroll was the professor of Latin in "Poetry" year which is the first year of the juniorate. In former years, when he had first come to Shadowbrook, he had taught the English courses which Father Ryan now handled. Temperamentally, Frs. Ryan and Carroll have much in common. Both are talented teachers, imaginative, easily moved themselves and with the gift of moving others. Father Carroll perhaps is the more flamboyant of the pair, his conversation a roman candle display of knowledge and interests of startling range and collocation. He will follow a rapid paragraph on the musical structure of old English madrigals by one, equally exhaustive, on the construction and decoration of American outhouses. And his mood shifts bewilderingly from earnestness to raillery so swiftly that it is a constant trap for the unwary.

Father Ryan, I have said, was of similar temperament, though to see the two of them together one might well judge that Father Ryan, a sparsely-haired rather grim-mouthed man, was the dour pole to Father Carroll's obvious gaiety. There are four Ryans in the province; all thin, tallish, bald and each one an exotic blend of earnestness and humor. Father Martin is on the humorous end of the Ryan Spectrum. He can, like his brothers, be disconcertingly serious, but he is customarily lighthearted, witty and the best company in the world. It was not unusual to hear, as Frs. Campbell and Muollo did that night, the sound of laughter from Father Ryan's room.

They had been discussing the plans for the new Shadowbrook which Father Rector had left in the recreation room for comment by the faculty during the past week. I don't know, of course, how familiar people outside the Society can be expected



The kitchen and scullery.

to be with the nature of “comment” within it. But it seems to me that it should not be too hard for anyone to reason to a picture of our intramural criticism. The elements are these: a group of highly diverse men, most of them naturally sensitive and intelligent, all of them with minds honed to the limits of their gifts by a minimum of fifteen years of academic training, engaged from the motives of love and dedication in a communal enterprise of which the only limits are defined in the vague cosmic phrase “for the greater Glory of God” and the means of which are anything at all—within the bounds of possibility and morality. Given such a situation, is it any wonder that a group of Jesuits’ comments on the lives and transactions of Ours and the decisions of superiors tend to be tart? It seems inevitable from the nature of things. Since I got into this, let me only state that the comments, while usually somewhat negative, are almost invariably given with the benediction of wit; they are the children of loyalty and a readiness to obey delivered with ruefulness and familial freedom. In my own years in the Society, I have only on very few occasions, and then

always with the shock of the unexpected, detected resonances of bitterness.

All this is preparatory, of course, to saying that the new plans were being roundly clobbered by Father Carroll and Father Ryan. The point seemed to be that the room placement was inept, and the overall effect artistically dismal. Father Carroll contended, "If we need a new Shadowbrook—and anyone who has lived in this firetrap knows we do—couldn't we get something better than this?" And he added with the phrase-maker's proper pride, "It's a monumental mediocrity."

A few years previously, Father Carroll and Father Mulcahy had been driving to Cranwell Preparatory School about 7:30 P.M. when an intoxicated youngster came full speed down the wrong lane and smashed into their car. There were other fathers in the car, but only Frs. Carroll and Mulcahy were injured and both of them quite seriously. Father Mulcahy had smashed his hip and ever since walked with great difficulty. For more than a year he had had to use a crutch. Since the accident both men had been rather nervous, not only about driving but also about the possibility of violent death in any form. Why it was true I don't think anyone can say, but the fact remains that in adding up the disadvantages of Anson Stokes' wonder house as a novitiate (and the fathers who lived in it did add them up quite often) the danger of fire was rarely mentioned until shortly before the fire itself. Then, it seems, the two moving spirits in that type of grim speculation were Father Carroll and Father Mulcahy.

Spurred by their nervousness, concern about the possibility of fire had become a common topic of discussion among the fathers. The minister had had new fire hoses installed only a few months before throughout the house. In searching for a leak in the water main, a section of the front lawn out in front of the porte cochere had been dug up and left open for nearly a year while the possibility of putting in another hydrant was studied in the usual desultory fashion in which such things are studied in press of more immediate needs. It was finally decided that the main would not supply enough water to matter and what it would offer would only subtract from the flow that could be taken from the other hydrant about a hundred and fifty feet away on the road

by *Campion* cottage. And so that fall the hole had finally been filled in. But the complacency about *Shadowbrook's* durability, which the sight of its turrets and brawny fieldstone walls had, I suppose, fostered in the minds of previous faculties and administrators of *Shadowbrook*, was now definitely impaired. *Shadowbrook* was worried about fire.

This concern was the best safety measure which had been taken in years. Physically there was little which could be done. The house, built in an age when architectural caprice was highly prized, showed its age not merely externally in the whimsical mixture of styles—its Spanish roof, Norman turrets, Chateau stucco, and (crowning joke!) chessman chimneys—but within, in its honeycombing of hidden spaces that provided a network of updrafts and cross-drafts capable of moving fire swiftly anywhere throughout the house. The chapel ceiling hung suspended by chains from the roof three flights above. Between it and the second floor there was a space over four feet deep and sixteen hundred feet square, a chamber completely hidden and perfect for fire. In three different sections of the fathers' wing, air shafts went up two flights to the roof opening into little gable windows. In many places, abutting rooms were separated by hollow walls of two or three feet of empty space, where the building bent, or the dictates of Victorian aesthetics demanded a room smaller than the space reserved for it within the baronial shell. Fire in this building would be extremely difficult to detect and practically impossible to control.

A year before this, Father Carroll had smelled smoke at night. No one else could smell it, an investigation could discover nothing. Next day the Lenox and Stockbridge fire chiefs were called. They could find nothing. For two days and two nights Father Carroll continued to insist that there was a fire burning somewhere in the house. The fire chiefs made another trip. Brothers Perry and Frost together with the chiefs, eventually after some hours of search, stripped off the plaster from a corner of the juniors' basement toilets and in the space between this ceiling and the kitchen floor found a wooden beam glowing red along a distance of seven or eight feet, and eaten away by the smoldering fire to over half of its foot and a half bulk. The fire had glowered



This is probably a gathering posed for the fund drive photos, since a choir practice would have been led by Fr. William Carroll and the only other occasions when scholastics would gather for a singalong would have been during summer or Christmas vacations, when they would not have been wearing habits.

for four days, nursing itself on the air it had within the wall space and slowly creeping toward a supply of oxygen which would let it spurt out in full anger. Some mystery of complex and no doubt marvelously indirect venting had brought its little smoke and faint smell into Father Carroll's room. Nowhere else in the house could it be detected.

No, fire precautions in the usual sense were little use in this house. Its odd construction, years of aging its oak beams, floors and paneled walls, oiling and waxing and varnishing them had all served to make any fire's job a lark. And the water supply, while adequate enough to wash and lubricate one hundred and fifty men, and clean their utensils and their clothes, was pitifully incapable of producing the sudden tons needed to check a blaze once it had started.

And so the concern that had begun with Father Carroll's and Father Mulcahy's fears and gradually spread to the rest of the faculty was well justified and the only real protection the house enjoyed. Father Carroll's remark to Father Ryan about the house being a firetrap was casual enough, but it showed how his mind

was focused that night and every night for some time past. Shadowbrook would be grateful to his nervousness before the night was over.

About five minutes of eleven, Father Carroll left Father Ryan's room to go to the recreation room for the eleven o'clock news. Finding it empty, he decided to forget it. Half the fun of watching world events in the Society is the comment and opinion one gets right off the top of one's brothers' heads. So he went to his room and in about twenty minutes was in bed. The fathers' second-floor corridor was empty and asleep, dimly lit by three ten-watt bulbs that glowed as night lights at all times.

On the third floor, everyone had retired about eleven o'clock. The brothers and novices and the two juniors—one in the infirmary which overlooked the west view of Stockbridge Mountain, the other in a small wall-boarded room that had been made from a glassed-in conservatory behind the stairs and elevator shaft—had all been asleep by ten. The last father to retire was Father Thomas Grogan and he had gone down the stairs by the elevator shaft to the chapel and back up them again about twenty minutes to eleven, almost a quarter of an hour before Father Carroll left Father Ryan's room. He was the last up on the third corridor and he was in bed by quarter to eleven.

Two brothers, Brother Connie Murphy and Brother Bill Frost, had climbed to their attic rooms about quarter past ten, gone promptly to bed, and already slept the profound sleep of the first few exhausted hours.

The novices and juniors, of course, had long since made their way to their beds in the big dorms over in the far eastern wing; and the dorms already stirred with the eerie animal sounds of many sleepers, the thrashers, the snorers, the grinders, the moaners.

By quarter past eleven only one man was still awake. Brother Peter Gabriel, a short, cheerful-eyed dark-complexioned Lebanese, was the house infirmarian. But for the past few months the doctor was sick. Peter was convalescing from treatment of a spinal disk. He had been hospitalized for some weeks and the omni-competent Brother Frost had assumed his job as infirmarian, while Peter on his return from the hospital had been given



A group of novices by the lockers in the basement corridor in 1955. Undoubtedly, this is another posed photo, as silence was the rule in these areas.

one of the two bedrooms on the first floor that he might avoid climbing stairs.

This room was at the end of the kitchen corridor immediately beside the narrow flight of stairs which ran to the fathers' corridor and the section where Frs. Muollo, Campbell and Ryan lived. His room faced onto the drive, and the corridor widened at this point the width of the building to the back delivery porch. The door to the brothers' recreation room, which ran along the width of the building beneath Frs. Campbell and Muollo, opened onto the corridor over near the porch.

As it happened for some months past, Brother Gabriel could not sleep. He had tossed and turned since about twenty past ten and shortly before eleven o'clock he got up and went outside. The corridor was dark except for some faint light which spilled down the stairs from the night light in the fathers' corridor above him. He could very faintly hear voices from Father Ryan's room at the head of the stairs. He groped his way to the brothers' recreation room, got the papers, brought them back to his own room

and settled down to see whether he could induce sleep by reading. He read until about quarter to twelve when his head began to feel blissfully heavy. He got up and returned the papers to the recreation room. The tiny lights in the fathers' corridor still marked the rises of the stairs, but there were no voices now. The only sound was the weird heave and sigh one hears in a large house where many men are asleep and which often seems to be the breathing of the house itself. He returned to his room, got into bed, turned out the light and, with immense gratitude, slept.



## CHAPTER FOUR

*The Discovery*

Some time before half past twelve—between the time that Brother Gabriel went to bed at about eleven-fifty and forty minutes later—something went wrong on the kitchen corridor. What it was we shall never know. Perhaps some adventurous mouse, his appetite jaded on the soapy scraps to be found in the drains and around the scrubbed urns, decided to bite into the insulation wrapping the wires inside the walls of the kitchen corridor. We can picture him crouched in the intramural darkness gravely nibbling death. If that is true—if, that is, the fire did begin inside the walls as is entirely likely—then it may be possible to place the time of its beginning even before the house had retired. Not, I think, much before, because the walls of this work area had not been designed like those of the living rooms to create the impression of ducal, devil-may-care luxuriance. These were the kitchens, and practical. The walls were merely two thin coverings of wood or plaster over a framing of two-by-fours. A fire could not long hide its heat from the many who had gone along this corridor only a short hour ago.

We can be sure of the place where the fire began, even though we must allow some leeway in establishing the time of its beginning. From the reports of those who watched its progress, we know with certainty that during its earlier stages the fire was confined to the kitchen corridor and those areas of the upper

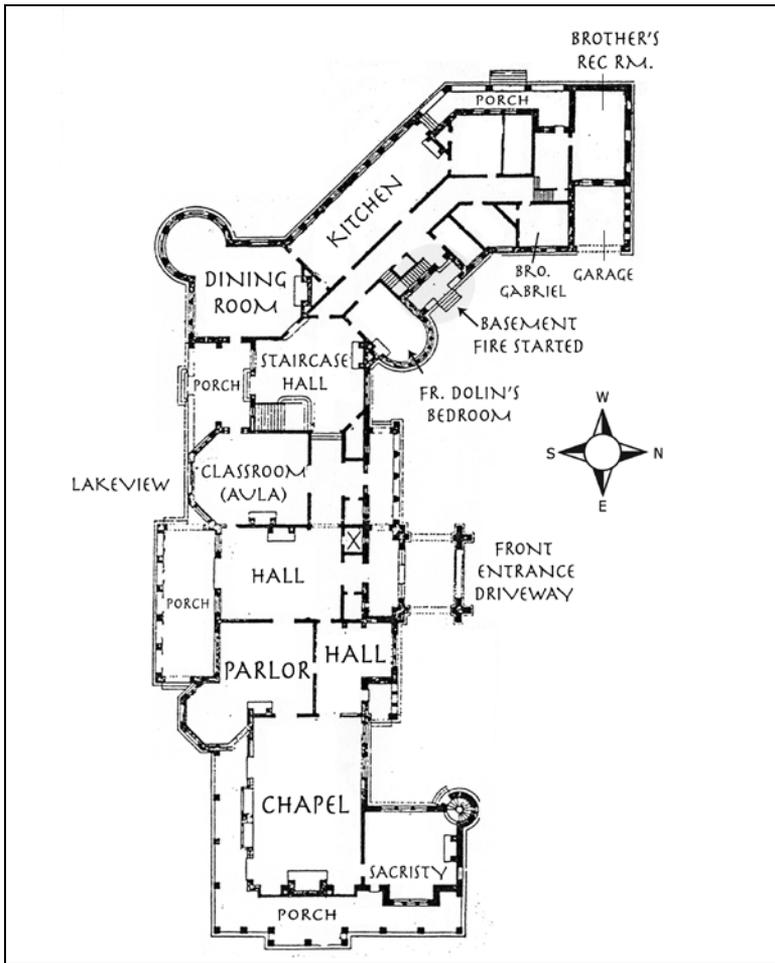
corridors immediately adjacent to the draft from the elevator shaft. The windows of the rooms off the kitchen corridor were dark, and the only flames which could be seen from the outside were confined to this specific area around the elevator shaft until almost one-fifteen when the combustion pattern began to change.

Our mouse, if mouse it was, did not long survive his furtive meal, for once the wires were crossed the flame must have shot into full fury, eaten away the walls of its confinement and once in the open run wild. The first man to see the fire, at most a half hour after its kindling by our reasoning, saw it already a giant, uncontrollable and furious.

A few minutes after half past twelve, Father Carroll sat up in his bed. Again, as so often before, he smelled smoke. It was unmistakable. He did not waste time arguing with himself, and he remembers that his sleep-drugged brain had no sophisms to offer to persuade him to forget it and go back to sleep. He was awake in a second and absolutely convinced that there was genuine danger. He slipped into bathrobe and slippers and opened his door. The corridor was vaguely hazy, more unreal than it ordinarily was, even though it customarily, by the dim glow of the night lights, wore an aspect of the half-alive and the haunted. He was not conscious of smoke other than by its smell.

Across the corridor in a room beside the elevator shaft lived Father Pat Sullivan, the dean of studies at Shadowbrook and professor of Greek. Father Carroll banged on Father Sullivan's door. He had come into the corridor with foreboding, liquid in his midriff. But something about that silent corridor firmed his fears into a swift ball of panic in his throat. His voice was uncertain, choked with the effort to speak above the sudden hardness in his larynx. He did not wait for Father Sullivan to awake but broke into the room and shook him.

Father Sullivan is temperamentally the opposite of Father Carroll in almost every respect. A pipe smoker, a calm and deliberate teacher, he is not the man to be stampeded into action without thought. When he had got clear why he was being shaken awake in the dead of night, he moved quickly enough, while somewhat skeptically, into his shoes and pants. But before he had



The first floor of Shadowbrook in the Jesuit years. The fire was discovered in the area of the wooden freight elevator, opposite the kitchen in this diagram. The open "Brothers' Stairs," which encircled the elevator shaft from basement to attic, provided a ready airway for the fire to spread. The small area near the front door, marked X here, was the location of the spiral iron stairway, which ran from the basement to the attic.

completed his hurried dressing his senses became sufficiently awake and *he* smelled smoke. He told Father Carroll he would see how bad it was, and now with all his actions economized by anxiety he rushed out his door and quickly down the brothers' stairs. No more than a few steps down to the first landing and

he saw it. Flames filled the elevator shaft and back out into the kitchen corridor as far as his swift terror would let him see. He ran back to Father Carroll who after his first moments of activity stood immobilized at the head of the stairs on the second floor. "It's very bad, Bill. Let's get the minister."

The two men rushed down the corridor to Father Arthur Tribble's room, the last on the east side of the corridor before the stairs outside Father Ryan's room. Father Carroll was now nearly helpless with panic. Someone else had taken over making the decisions; he could let his own thinking cease and just follow along for company's sake.

Father Sullivan, with no ceremony at all, rushed into the minister's room. The minister had, as a matter of fact, two rooms: one a sort of sitting room/office where he kept his cabinets of toothpaste, shoelaces, cigarettes and shaving cream, and the other a tiny bedroom. It would have been a waste of time to knock. A quick shake and Father Tribble was awake. "There is a fire in the house. Very serious. It's serious! Get the firemen."

Father Tribble, something like Father Sullivan himself, was a man who naturally looked before he leaped. We do not know how long it took him to adjust from sleep to action. Fathers Sullivan and Carroll did not wait to find out. The thought had occurred to Father Sullivan from time to time during discussions of the danger of fire at Shadowbrook that should the house ever really catch fire the men who would be in most danger were Brothers Murphy and Frost up in their attic rooms. As he rushed from Father Tribble's room with the intention of waking the rector, this was the thought which came into his mind. One of the more remarkable things about the activities in the house during the fire itself was that there was so little duplication—everyone seemed to think something to be done which no one else thought of. Had the same thing occurred to everyone, the few mad minutes given for rescue would have been wasted and the loss of life staggering.

Father Sullivan ran the length of the fathers' corridor to the rector's room in the stucco tower of the second-floor landing of the main staircase. Father Carroll again ran with him. They crashed into the rector's room. Father Corcoran sat bolt upright

fully awake. Fathers Sullivan and Carroll, now a frenzied duet, told him of the fire, its seriousness, and left, back again to the fathers' corridor. Father Sullivan made immediately for the brothers' stairs, calling that he was going to rouse the men in the attic. Father Carroll was now again in control of himself. The sprints up and down the corridor had crammed his panic back down his throat. He was urgent with terror, but again thinking. He called that he would wake up the fathers.

All this had taken perhaps a minute, perhaps four or five—no more. The corridor still seemed smokeless but its unreal, other-earthly aspect had intensified. Now the haze about the light bulbs was definitely blue and everything on which the eye focused hovered and shook. A strange heaviness pressed on the eyelids and chest and into the brain. A sound, ominous and half-heard like the fading of a gong, shimmered somewhere along the ceiling.

Father Mulcahy in his bathrobe stood at his door across from the stairway and elevator shaft. In the weird light and insane situation he was just there. Accepted like the incongruities of a dream, he stood asking patiently what was the matter. Father Carroll with even more patience explained that there was a fire, a bad fire, that he must get out, that it was cold outside, that he should take a blanket, that he could use the blanket as a protection against the flames, that he should hurry, that he should, for God's sake, hurry. Father Mulcahy turned back to his room where, it seems, he died.

Father Carroll went into his own room which was next to Father Mulcahy's on the same side of the house and picked up a blanket and pillow from his bed—some residue from his own advice to Father Mulcahy—and now his head cleared completely. He must rouse the rest of the corridor. Of course, he must stay calm but not at the expense of speed. The heat was becoming unbearable. Still no flames but they would not be long in coming. He must be swift.

He ran down the length of the corridor to Father Ryan's room at the head of the back stairs. Perhaps they could get down those stairs to the first floor and out by the brothers' recreation room to the back delivery porch. When Father Carroll banged on

his door Father Ryan got up quickly enough and came out into the corridor, but he was argumentative. He wanted to know how bad it as, who was up, where was the fire—a seeming hundred foolish questions when now the thing to do was get out, get out! Father Ryan went rushing up the corridor shouting he would wake up the juniors. Only Fathers Campbell and Muollo were left and it was getting hotter every second.

There was no smoke around the light bulbs yet, but there was an eerie flickering along the walls. And, Oh God, the stairs were on fire. And now it came: like the breaking of a huge comber, an immense wave, perfectly invisible, horribly palpable, of intense heat fell on him. Frantically he pounded on Father Campbell's door. "Fire, Fire, hurry!" Father Campbell's deep unperturbed voice called: "All right, all right. I'm coming." Now Father Muollo: his door is locked, he's hard of hearing—pound, pound. Father Muollo's door swung open. Father Carroll whirled around and saw Father Campbell in the corridor too. Thank God! The heat was scorching.

As Father Carroll turned he shouted, "Follow me," and rushed back towards Father Ryan's room at the head of the back stairs. The door had been left open since Father Ryan had come out and disappeared up along the fathers' corridor, and now the room was choking with smoke.

There was a peculiar acridness to this smoke to which all who were in the fire attest. It got into the throat and lungs, resinous and scummy; a small whiff was enough to cause a burning irritation which lasted several days. Speculation on the source tends now to blame the battleship linoleum runners which lay in all the hallways and corridors. The one in the kitchen corridor was a venerable, patchy old thing, used to years of hard abuse, scrubbed and waxed within an inch of its ancient life.

By now Father Carroll had breathed this poisonous smoke for seven to ten minutes. He had done his job. Everyone on the second floor was awakened and his one thought was escape. The light which Father Ryan had left burning beside his bed glowed faintly like a moon behind clouds and showed nothing but itself through the heavy shifting mass of smoke.

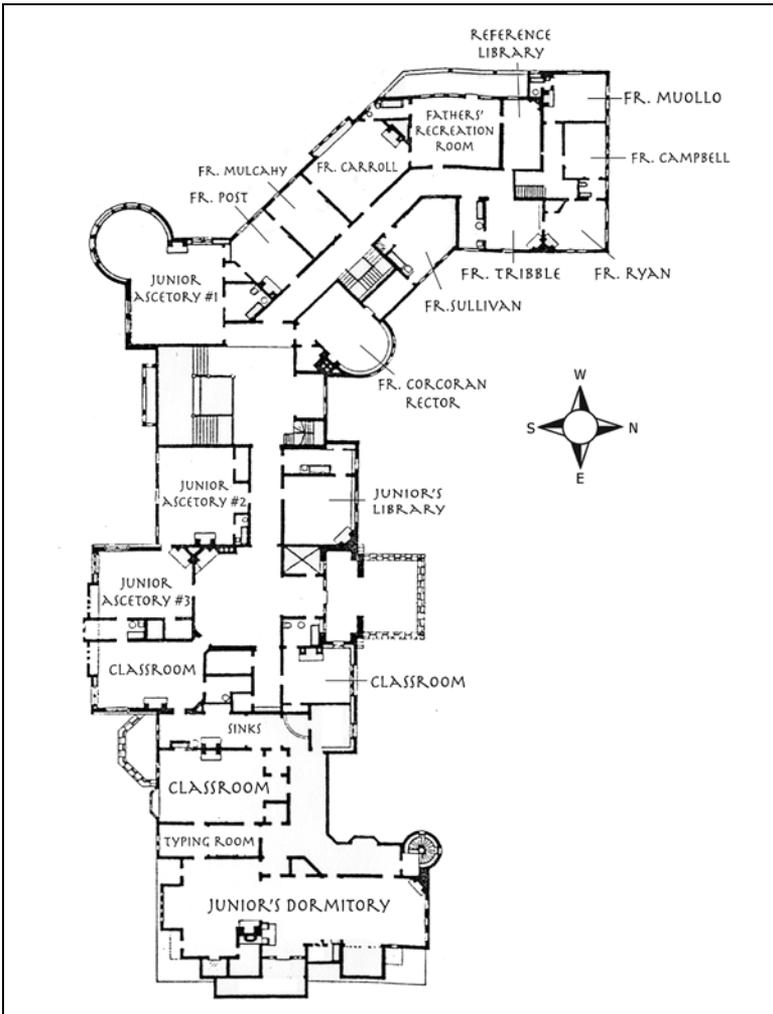
He groped his way to the window opposite the door. There

were two of them, both hinged casements of leaded glass closed by a brass ill-fitting hasp. Beyond them, snug storm windows, secured by hooks and eyes, kept out the mountain winter.

He struggled with the hasp on the inside window. Like so many of us, Father Carroll is a man who finds difficulty with mechanical things; machines seem endowed with malevolence and arbitrary, contemptuous personalities. The hasp would not move. Someone rushed into the room behind him, coughing, shouting—Father Muollo. They shouted back and forth at each other as Father Carroll wrenched and wrenched at the hasp. Someone else came running, pounding down the corridor and into Father Ryan's room. The heat was incredible. At last the windows swung open. Shouting, "Here, here!" Father Carroll began beating the storm windows with his hands. Swiftly he smashed out the center with his open palms. Air, pointed, hard and cold, shafted into his lungs. Thank God! "Here, here." A few beats with a closed fist cleared out the larger spearheads of glass around the frame. He threw his hands on the sill and a voice, not Father Muollo's but Father Tribble's—where did he come from?—called for absolution. Father Carroll threw himself out. He landed about fifteen feet from the side of the house on one heel which shattered against the rock-hard ice.

Though to those who passed him lying on the ground he seemed conscious, while slightly incoherent, Father Carroll remembers nothing from this point on until he was put in a car for the hospital. The words of absolution seemed to repeat and repeat themselves in his pulsing skull. "*Ego vos absolvo . . . I absolve you from all sins and censures in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.*"

Father Martin Ryan had gone to bed soon after Father Carroll had left him at eleven twenty-five. In fact, for some time before he went, Father Ryan had been fervently wishing that he would go. The slightly formal graciousness—a legacy from the Spanish *hidalgo* who was our founder, I have always believed—which characterizes most of the relationships of Jesuits among themselves, even between the most intimate friends, and which has mistakenly been interpreted by some observers as coldness, prevented him from expressing his impatience. And yet he was



The second floor. The layout of rooms in these plans for the second and third floors is approximate, as some remodeling occurred after the Jesuits occupied the building and no plans exist of the changes. The center and eastern sections of this floor housed the entire juniorate.

tired. Since early that morning, immediately after his last class at ten o'clock, he had been on the move.

Father Ryan was in charge of organizing the fund for the new Shadowbrook up in North Adams and the surrounding districts. He had been driving from place to place, meeting

people, making plans, giving himself entirely to the exhausting, extremely distasteful task of begging for money. When he finally returned at about half-past ten, every nerve called for sleep; and now an hour later he did wish that Bill would call it a night. But when Father Carroll had finally gone, he found with bitter disappointment that his exhausted body was stubbornly alert. Several times he dozed, only to be jerked upright by one of those sudden spasms of overtired nerves that leave one sitting helplessly awake. He tried reading for short snatches, but about twelve o'clock he determined to turn out his light and simply lie there waiting for sleep.

Long minutes went by—perhaps ten, perhaps twenty—when he heard heat come gurgling and banging into his radiator. This was stupid, of course; the thermostat should be turned down at night. Brother Frost must have forgotten. The room was becoming too hot and he thought of getting up and adjusting the thermostat outside his door. But in the growing warmth, sleep was beginning to overtake him. If he got up now who knows when he would get back to sleep. One night of extra heat would hurt no one. He fell asleep at last.

Father Ryan, after only some twenty minutes of sleep, was dragged awake by the cries of Father Carroll outside his door. He acted quickly but with more than some impatience. This was not the first time he had been awakened by Father Carroll to investigate a fire at night. Bill always knew that he could be counted on to get up and give the house a careful search. But why did he have to pick tonight? And why all that shouting and banging? He'll wake the whole house. Father Ryan slipped his habit on over his pajamas, put on his slippers and went out into the corridor.

Flames were crackling up the stairs to his right; along the ceiling a blue haze hovered and shifted. Father Carroll, a pillow jammed to his mouth with one hand, was pounding with the other on Father Muollo's door. Stupidly, Father Ryan called to him. "Is it a fire? Where? How bad? Who is up, Bill?" Father Campbell came to his door and stood there holding one shoe in his hand. Frantically, Father Carroll continued to pound on Father Muollo's door. No one answered Father Ryan's questions.

"No one can get out of here with the stairs on fire," Father

Ryan began to reason. "Bill must have got me up first. He always does. Then the others are not up. Lord, the juniors!"

Father Ryan took off down the corridor, expecting the others would follow him, shouting to rouse whoever might still be asleep in the fathers' rooms. Ahead of him beside the elevator shaft an underbrush of flame about two or three feet high blocked his passage. He accelerated, pounding down the corridor as fast as he could run. He intended to rush through the flames out to the other side and over the landing of the main staircase to the juniorate. About four feet away from the fire itself he was brought to an abrupt halt. He does not remember that there was any gradual slowing down, a slow reluctance in his legs as he neared the fire. His impression is that from a wild run he came to a peremptory stop against a block of heat solid as a wall. He whirled and ran back in the other direction. As he got to the minister's door—a distance of about twenty-five feet—the same phenomenon occurred. Heat and smoke, curt and definite, simply stopped his churning legs. And he whirled. Back and forth—he cannot remember how many times—he ran in an alleyway continually foreshortening. Somehow, instinctively, he found the still ajar doorway to Father Carroll's room, and pushed it open.

The room was heavy with smoke, white and billowing, but compared with the corridor it was cool and comfortable. He made for the windows which faced west and overhung the subcloister area two floors down. He intended to hurl himself out, but in passing around Father Carroll's desk he bumped open the door to his small bathroom. A breath of clean, smokeless air. He went in. For some inexplicable reason, instead of mounting the washbowl and crashing out through the small high window as he had determined to do, he spent minutes groping about the dark little room for a rope. Though why he should expect to find a rope in Father Carroll's bathroom no one but his guardian angel can explain. There was no rope, of course, but there were some sheets which Father Carroll had been meaning to put on his bed for some days and simply forgotten. Quickly he tied them into some sort of rope, lashed one end to the pipe under the washbowl, climbed up, smashed the window, flung out the sheets and went over the sill.

His few sheets did not reach very far. Miraculously, someone was out there—who Father Ryan did not then know. A ladder was flung against the building, and it reached just to the end of his rope of sheets. His foot met its top rung, and down he went as smoothly as if this were the well-rehearsed ending of a circus act.

Luck and his guardian angel were also with Father Campbell. He woke out of a sound sleep to hear the voices of Fathers Carroll and Ryan shouting in the hall. Customarily an extremely mild-mannered man and one who rarely expressed irritation when he did feel it, Father Campbell woke up an angry man. He had heard the faint sounds of talk from Father Ryan's room when he went to bed, and the intervening sleep telescoped time so that he connected these sounds with the earlier ones. He was sure that the two fathers were being needlessly and thoughtlessly unconcerned about the community's rest. He lay there a few seconds fuming. Then came the hammering at his door and Father Carroll's shout.

Among other oddities (or so they seemed to some) of Father Campbell's ruggedly individualistic personality was a mild interest in physical culture. In his closet he had rigged a chinning bar, and for some years now the juniors coming in for spiritual direction were likely to have their spiritual father come swinging into the room at them feet first from the darkness of his closet. When the danger of fire had come up for discussion in the fathers' recreation room in recent months, Father Campbell always had one reply: "I'm in no danger in my room. All I have to do is swing out my window, hang by my hands and drop." And indeed for a man of his fitness it would be a small task. Now as he heard the cries of "Fire" in the hallway, he thought of his plan. Unlike almost everyone who woke to the confusion of the March night, Father Campbell had no doubts from the first moment of the existence and the seriousness of the danger. He reasoned that no one would go shouting around the corridors in the middle of the night unless there was genuine and grave peril. And so he thought with accustomed calmness of his escape plan. But now for the first time he began to doubt it. The one thing his plan had not provided for was the safety of others. There might be others

trapped in the building who needed help; should he drop safely to the ground and later find that someone he could have assisted remained behind, he would not be able to live with himself.

Something like that reasoning moved swiftly through his neat mind while he slipped into his robe and reached for his shoes. His voice automatically assumed its heavy cheerfulness as he called out to Father Carroll's frantic pounding, "All right. All right. I'm coming." It seems he made the decision to abandon his plan for escaping by the window very suddenly because, having put on only one shoe, he wrenched open his door and stood in the hall.

Here, his mind, a second ago working along well-oiled, familiar grooves, clogged. Father Carroll beat and kicked Father Muollo's door, his voice now almost a raw scream. Yet, for a second he looked incongruous. Everything seemed normal. A strange unsubstantial sort of haze around the light bulbs that still burned on the almost smokeless corridor, a few almost friendly looking flames licking about the bannisters of the back stairs. That was all. Everything else was the same as it had always been deep in the monastic night—silent, familiar—except for Father Carroll screaming there. The impression lasted only a second's duration. For Father Campbell was immediately stunned with a monstrous horror built out of the familiar. To the quiet glance, everything was almost as it had always been; but heat, heavy and viscous, bound him like a judgment. He recalls that the effect was instantaneous. One second he was in his room among his reasonable belongings and the ordered normality of his way of life, quietly adjusting to a break in the routine, and the next he was drowning in a dreadful hallway which mocked him by its familiarity.

Father Campbell, as perhaps I have indicated before, is not an imaginative man. His description of his own reactions is for that reason the clearest picture of the frightful force of the fire, for he speaks of it from this point on in the exuberant sick images of nightmare.

For some seconds he simply stood there, stupidly holding one shoe in his hand, doing nothing, watching almost detachedly the antics of Father Carroll banging on Father Muollo's door.

Then Harry's voice came cheerfully through the door: "O.K. I'm coming." His door swung open. Father Campbell stood and watched. Father Muollo was in his pajamas, a short, round little man grinning at all the noise it took to wake him up. Father Campbell stood and watched and saw the same stunned incredulity erase the laughter on Father Muollo's face, watched his jaw drop slack, his eyes fix and the rational light behind them wink out. It was one of those long detailed moments when the eternity that lies behind our coursing minutes thrusts out and freezes its memory forever.

Father Carroll said, "Thank God," turned and ran full tilt toward Father Ryan's room, shouting "Follow me." And now Father Campbell, galvanized by the movement, began to move and to think again. The flames coming up the back stairs had increased. He was sure that no one could live in Father Ryan's room and that there, there was no exit. Shouting now himself, he ran down the corridor towards the center of the house.

He had not gone ten steps when again he was stopped by the heat. He stood only a moment, then sank down to his hands and knees in the middle of the narrow passage. His mind was again mesmerized, idling, but this time, he recalls, there was no horror. It was peaceful, lulling, and he became beautifully calm and childlike. The conviction that he was dying was suddenly with him like a hand on his brow, and with the careful and proud enunciation of a drunkard he began an Act of Contrition.

Father Tribble, his blue bathrobe flying, came running full tilt around the corner from his room, past Father Campbell and into Father Ryan's room behind him. In the still seemingly smokeless corridor, Father Campbell could see him clearly.

The passage was narrow here by the stairs and Father Campbell lazily moved his head out of the way of Father Tribble's running feet. He turned to the left. The flames at the railing of the stairs were still only quietly, almost diffidently, working away at their job. For a second he stared at them inches away, still saying his Act of Contrition and cherishing the strangely sweet conviction of death. But they burned, and their sudden searing was the first violence he experienced since he had opened his door. He turned away impatiently. His head struck open the swinging door

to the fathers' reference library. This was a small room adjoining the recreation room. He breathed cool air, and with it the will to live revived.

He crawled in on his hands and knees and lay breathing breath after breath of the remarkable air. He remembers standing and walking slowly into the recreation room itself. He walked over, put on the lights and sank into an easy chair. All the time he kept repeating like a propitiation, "Beautiful, beautiful."

For some time he sat there taking breath after breath, and then the lights went out. From where he sat he could see through the keyhole of the door to the corridor, and the little space was brilliant with fire. And now he panicked completely, rushed to the window. In his hand he still held his one silly shoe, and with it he began madly to beat the glass. Outside the recreation room was a small porch, also glassed during the winter against the winds which dip down over Stockbridge Mountain. He stood and pounded out one of the windows, swinging his shoe like a sledge. Then he stepped out.

This porch faced in three directions. Father Campbell, in terror of the malevolence promised by the blood-colored keyhole, had thought of nothing but escape and beat out the first window he came to. But he had chosen well or it had been chosen well for him, for he selected the one side which gave onto a fire-escape. He fell six inches to the grilled landing and walked to the ground.

It was now perhaps ten or twelve minutes since Father Carroll had awakened to the smell of smoke, and the fire itself had probably not been burning much more than about forty minutes. The sound which Father Ryan heard around twelve-fifteen was doubtless caused by the flames in the walls of the kitchen corridor playing on the steam pipes. And yet in that short time the old house was finally doomed. The kitchen corridor was already aflame along its entire length. By the time that Father Campbell fell out onto the fire escape, some of the novices and juniors under the direction of Brother Frost were attempting to fight the fire in the first floor stair-case hall outside the refectory; but the flames were already roaring into the refectory itself and their attempt was hopeless. The second, third, and attic floors were burning brightly in the area around the elevator shaft, and

smoke, great killing clouds of it, rolled down every corridor. The men who remained in their rooms with their doors closed would be able to survive some minutes more, but the hallways were death traps.

Brother Peter Gabriel, whose room, as you will remember, was off the kitchen corridor itself and beside the back stairs, had been violently awakened from his long-desired sleep by a thumping noise outside his door. It sounded as though someone was heaving barrels around in the refrigerator room across the hall. He was afraid he had overslept and looked at his watch. It was only twelve-forty and he had been asleep for less than an hour. For a few seconds he was tempted not to investigate the noise. Doubtless it was nothing — some one of the brothers had forgotten to do some job which needed to be done before morning. Or perhaps it was a thief — and the swift sorties of reassurance familiar to anyone who has been awakened by strange noises at night crossed his mind. Then the need to prove himself the man forced him to get up and open his door.

The entire corridor was a storm of flame, whipping by like a wind off the sea. He turned and bolted for the little bathroom which lay off the right side of his bedroom where he had left his clothes. He closed the door to the bathroom and dressed quickly. There was no window in the bathroom itself and he had not closed the door to the corridor in his bedroom. When he stepped back into the bedroom to make for the windows, flames like quick, bright-colored animals were running around the door frame and the entire chamber was murky with smoke. It was only one step from the bathroom to the window, but he came close to suffocating before he had smashed its pane and jumped out into the hard-packed pile of snow that the plow had left beside the garage entryway. He saw Father Carroll who had just before this leaped from the window of Father Ryan's room, which was over the garage doorway, lying on his back about fifteen feet from the house.

Father John Post was the master of novices. During the two years of novitiate, the applicant to the Society is given over to the direction of the master of novices for the formation of his ideals, his spiritual orientation. The master of novices knows

him better than anyone else ever has. His parents, his teachers, his friends, his confessor—none of them have the opportunity to know him as intimately as does his master of novices, for the master, if he is a good one, combines all of these functions. The Society is very careful to provide good masters of novices; her existence depends on them. For the Jesuits in the almost formless complexity of their diverse tasks must be men capable of mature self-direction under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Many are asked to assume chores in the middle of pelting distractions and frequently far from the support of men dedicated as they are. The cenobite ideal of community living was a wise and necessary development in the Church. When Ignatius rejected it he did an audacious thing. He showed his own realization of its importance because wherever it was at all possible he sent his men in bodies and directed that they set up communities. (Indeed, most Jesuits live in communities to this day.) But he never allowed the ideal of community living to interfere with the performance of some work for the Church that could be better done by one man alone. And so today any Jesuit can be called to months, years or a lifetime away from a community on a lonely mission station, in some secular university, on a scientific expedition or (but rarely, despite the legends!) disguised among hostile men. The Society Ignatius founded was to be a society of frontiersmen, a missionary society to which the support of communal living could be nothing more than a dispensable luxury. The Jesuit must learn to make a monastery in his heart. It is during his novitiate, by prayer and under the guidance of the graces given him, that he learns how to be a monk despite the noise of distraction. The human catalyst in all this is his master of novices.

The purpose of this aside in the midst of a fire has been to give some idea of the character of Father John Post. If, in order properly to form the Jesuit, the master of novices must know his novice intimately, it is inevitable that that novice knows, with what I should imagine is embarrassing intimacy, his master. Consequently, any deviation observed in him from the high ideals he must propose is noted by his subjects—sometimes with the heartless exactitude of very young men. I have never known a class of novices who were unanimously pleased with their novice

master—nothing but a saint would do for them, and, to read some hagiographies, some of the saints would have had small chance for a unanimous vote. This is as it should be, of course; sanctity has been the gift given to many strange personalities throughout the Church's history, some of whom even found it difficult to bear with one another.

Father Post has been called saint by some who had him as their master of novices, but then, so has every other man who has ever been a master. He has been roundly criticized by others and this, too, is the fate of all masters of novices. No, the men of the Society, at least the older ones, quite rightly consider the measurement and comparison of individual holiness a very frivolous task, and when a master of novices is to be selected careful consideration is given more ponderable qualities. Is he a man with a profound knowledge of Christian spirituality, of the Society, her history and aims? Is he capable of directing men? Is his personal conduct a manifestation of a holiness easily perceived by young men who perhaps are not capable of subtle perceptions? Father Post is all of this and more. If we were to put it in language more familiar to those unacquainted with monastic terms, he is physically and temperamentally an heroic type.

It is one of the ironies of the March 10th fire at Shadowbrook that most of the heroic activity (in the usual sense of that word) was performed by people who were not fitted for it naturally. Father Carroll, sensitive, excitable, was the man who stayed longest in the area of greatest danger and was responsible for giving the first alarm. Father Post, a man with a large athletic body, iron will and utmost calm, was permitted to save only himself. He was called on only for the type of heroism he would have chosen for himself, the hidden, grinding heroics of bearing months of pain.

For some strange reason Father Post was the only man on the fathers' corridor who was not aroused. When Fathers Carroll and Sullivan ran to the rector's room, they passed his door. It was the first one on the west side of that wing just off the second-floor staircase hall. When they returned from the rector's room, Father Mulcahy was standing in the hallway outside his own doorway, which was the second one down from the staircase hall and

beside Father Post's. Doubtless, as Father Carroll came around the corner he saw Father Mulcahy and in his urgency to tell him of fire and the danger forgot that he was going past Father Post's room. In any case, it was not until some time later that Father Post was awakened by the sound of the fire crackling outside his door. He knew what it was immediately because smoke had already entered the room and he could see it curling under the ceiling. He believed that he was the first man up and naturally his first thought was for his novices. Waking out of a sleep sound enough to let him ignore all the hubbub that had gone on outside his door, his mind was not capable of doing more than clenching around that single thought: must get the novices out. It was his undoing.

He slipped into shoes and opened his door. The flames were a solid thicket about four feet high, bushing out all over the corridor three feet away from him to the left of his doorway in front of the elevator shaft. Over them he could see the length of the fathers' corridor all the way down to the stairs near Father Ryan's room. It was empty: Anyone who was going to leave had already got out. But Father Post did not know that. He thought still that he was the first up. The swift thought of the fathers who he was sure were trapped down that corridor sickened him. He gave one shout and turned towards the stairway hall. Perhaps, he thought, he could get them later, but the first thing to do was to wake the novices.

He had crossed his arms over his face to ward off the intense heat and now he was sucking in his breath through the cloth of his pajamas at the crook of his elbow. It was what saved him. For, running as hard as he could, he experienced the same reaction as Father Ryan had some minutes earlier in the corridor. The thick, poisonous atmosphere refused to let him move. He churned his way about half way across the length of the upper staircase hall; then he could go no further. It seemed an impossible thing to get back to his room. But he must. He fought, pumped and finally stumbled back the ten or twelve feet he had gone, shut the door and breathed.

He did not waste time. Still convinced that no one else was awake, he had to get out some way and save those he could.

He ripped the blankets and sheets off his bed and fashioned a rope. Then he went to the window. He tied the rope of sheets to the center post of the casement. He watched with some interest some of the novices below him. They were attempting to put the ladder, which they had used to take Father Ryan off his rope of sheets, up against the wall beneath Father Post. They shouted to him to wait.

Father Post knew them, of course, and watched their efforts; but he did not draw any conclusions from their presence there. His mind had gripped hard around one purpose: to get the novices out; and in the clarity of that single idea which was all he could think of in the hurl of these past few urgent moments, he was unable to draw the illation that, if novices were putting up a ladder to his window, then the novices were already out of the house. The ladder slipped and fell. It did not look long enough. Father Post was determined. He pitched a chair through the glass of the storm window, threw out his sheets and went over the sill.

When he had opened his door and put his hands before his face against the fire, he had been badly burned. He had not been conscious of these burns, but when his hands gripped the rope of sheets, the flesh tore away. He fell hard on the ice on the cement floor of the subcloister two floors below in a sitting position. Mr. Braunreuther, who was one of those who had been attempting to get the ladder up to his window, heard him give a soft moan. It was the last expression of pain anyone heard from the master throughout the long months of pain ahead. He had smashed two vertebrae and severed the motor nerves of his legs and hips.

There was no one left now on the second floor of the west wing except Fathers Mulcahy, Muollo and Tribble. They died there.

Almost everyone on the third floor of the west wing was trapped, and there was only one ladder, much too short even to reach to the second floor. Father Hanlon, Brother Bourrie, Brother White (a novice), and Father Yumont were all either sitting on the roof outside their rooms or hanging gasping out their windows on the west. Over on the east Mr. Griffin had jumped from the third floor and lay moaning in the snow. Father

Rector hung out his window, and below and above him the fire roared and flickered. Brothers Wolf, Redgate and Bergen were dropping a rope of very flimsy sheets down over the side of the building from the third floor, and Brother McDavitt was inching along the shaking gutter of the roof to Father Banks who clung in desperation to his window sill, clad only in his shorts. No one had seen Brother Perry.

If anyone had been capable of grimly reckoning the probable loss of life at this moment, his total would have been staggering.



## CHAPTER FIVE

*The Town*

THE word "town" has been selected to head this chapter in the sense in which it is used in the phrase "town and gown" or "town versus gown." By it I mean to characterize not a political unit, a municipality, but a people, a different way of life. The religious life, lived behind the low and (like all such found in the New England countryside) crumbling stone wall which surrounded the Shadowbrook property, was one thing—we have seen something of it; the life lived in the Berkshires is quite another. Shadowbrook was a community within a community, and while to an extent, remarkable in this age of communications, it remained aloof, it was not unaffected by the life of the "world" around it.

Enough has been said about the Berkshires as a resort. This was necessary for it was the resort which brought the house into being, yet it would be a serious error to identify the resort with the Berkshires. The period of the millionaires was a frivolous interlude which has passed and revealed the essential rocky character of the hills and their people unmoved and unchanged.

The area in these northern Appalachians was our first frontier. We tend to mark our beginnings as a nation with the Revolution; and the more diffuse and bitter French and Indian War, which won North America for the English-speaking race, has, for that reason, a lesser part in our consciousness. Conse-



The novice entering class of 1952. They were second-year juniors when the fire occurred. (*Jesuit Seminary News* photo)

quently, our concept of the frontier is larded with images of those later, further frontiers, where the Indians rode horseback and the white men were levied cavaliers. But the essential frontier was far different. Instead of open plains it was composed of myriad, small wooded pockets in the White and Green Mountains and the Berkshire and the Catskill Hills, and its Puritan frontiersmen were sworn enemies of all cavaliers. But it was the essential frontier, not merely because it was the first, which had to be won that history could take the course it has, but, because it was here that that strange forging of greed with consciousness of mission, which was the spirit of the frontier, was fashioned. The soberly dressed Christian of Stockbridge village in the mid-eighteenth century who went about his quiet chores and worried about salvation was enlisted in a war. The enemy was principally, of course, the romanish French who wished to seize this Land of Canaan from the Elect of Predeliction. But the strategy in this war as seen by the General Court in Boston was peculiarly indirect. The immediate objective was clear: to win the Six Nations of the Iroquois into firm allegiance to the English cause; but the plan of attack was devious. They, the Iroquois, must be

made good Congregationalists. If they accepted proselytizing, the war was over; for they would have nothing more to do with the papist French. If they did not, they could in good conscience be destroyed as the reprobates they were. To give the Indians their chance at salvation—and life—the General Court of Massachusetts supported the Indian Mission School at Stockbridge and in 1750 sent the famous Northampton divine, Jonathan Edwards, who had demonstrated his charismatic powers by instituting a religious revival in Northampton which had infected the entire Connecticut River Valley with salutary fear of the wrath to come.

The Berkshires' heritage from their days as a frontier has not been a religious one, of course. Unrelieved Calvinism, if I am not mistaken, has lost popularity everywhere, and the Berkshires today show the same quilt-like variety of religious affiliation common throughout the United States. But the Calvinist mind was an independent mind, for how could a man who had, by concentration and cunning will, wrested from a reluctant God a conviction of his own righteousness submit to another's, a mere man's mind? While the Berkshires may not base their independent spirit any longer on a religiously held conviction of rectitude, they have remained independent—there is no other-directedness here, Mr. Reisman.

It is no great surprise to learn that the bloodiest incident in Shay's Rebellion broke out simultaneously in Stockbridge and in Sheffield some days after the revolt had been effectively suppressed and the cause was hopeless. When Fanny Kemple offered to give dramatic readings for the benefit of the poor of Lenox, she received a short answer from the town fathers: "There are no poor in Lenox." In this sturdily Republican county, the Berkshire *Eagle*, which is the single newspaper of importance, supported Truman in '48, Eisenhower in '52 and Stevenson in '56. And each of the little towns in the area is sharply specific, differing in atmosphere, temperament and architecture from its neighbor, which may be only four or five miles away. Thus Lenox is a town of grand manners; Lee, a tough little mill town that still remains small-town and charmingly unassuming; and Stockbridge is essentially the colonial village it has always been.

Shadowbrook was technically in Stockbridge. The village center lies down at the far end of The Bowl in a tri-cornered valley formed by Rattlesnake to the north, Monument Mountain to the southwest and Bear Mountain to the south. It is perhaps more historically rich than Lenox, for its life has always been unquestionably its own, and it has a long and enviable record. Whereas Lenox was the resort center, and for years its annals were necessarily concerned with names and doings which were not the names and doings native to the Berkshires.

Situated on a kind of plateau at the far northeast corner of The Bowl, the view from the center of Lenox was once expansive. From the porches of the fashionable Curtis Hotel, one could see down to Mahkeenac and beyond to Stockbridge Mountain. But trees planted on the various estates have grown up and blocked the vista, so that today the square in front of the Curtis has an enclosed and modest aspect. There are three main streets: one, running at right angles to the Curtis and back behind it, goes to Lee; another, running down into the valley, leads to Stockbridge, and a third, called West Street from its direction, runs off across the top of The Bowl and through the cleft between Stockbridge and Baldhead Mountains over to the Richmond valley. Before the trees grew up, Lenox sat on her lofty plateau, like a matriarch, mistress of all the outlandish domes, turrets and arches of the estates which lined West Street and the road to Stockbridge. And, though Shadowbrook lies over the Stockbridge line, from its earliest days it paid its obeisance to Lenox. Stockbridge might collect her taxes, but Lenox was her address. There was, I think, more to this than the geographical fact that Shadowbrook was closer to Lenox. It was more than likely a function of the importance, stressed many times by Bertie Wooster's aunt, of a good address. And too, Shadowbrook's telephone exchange has always been the Lenox exchange.

The telephone exchange in Lenox is a small, glass-fronted office facing the main road to Lee and opposite the Curtis Hotel. One room, divided by a wallboard partition against which the banks of switchboards are set, and with two rather commonplace oak desks towards the front, it would look very much like a small-town real estate office, except that its front door is kept

locked and curtains drawn over the plate-glass windows. In the busy summer season, particularly during the Tanglewood Music Festival, all of the switchboards are operating and they handle calls placed to every part of the country. For Lenox still retains something of her reputation and the Tanglewood concerts have given her a new lease on gaiety; but in the Berkshire winter it returns to the same small town it has always remained throughout its long history. Make no mistake: millionaires made it a playground and left it, artists and writers have mooned around its hills and meadows, tourists in bright shorts have wandered into Hagyar's drug store and asked for aspirin in every known American and European accent—but they have left the character of Lenox untouched; for, after all, it is a Berkshire town. The summer aspect of the town would, no doubt, startle old Judge Sedgwick, should he return, but once he accepted the fact that his courthouse where he had reigned, a nabob of justice, had been converted to a library, he would recognize that, with the addition of some claptrap mechanical conveniences, Lenox from November through May was the same Lenox he knew and helped to make. And the brain of this town, as it is of most small towns, is the telephone exchange.

The operators of small-town manual switchboards perform the functions of personal secretary for the whole town. I believe that the telephone company for this reason is finding decided opposition to progress. When it desires to install the efficient but soulless dial-system in towns where people have grown used to the luxury of having an operator whom they know and who knows them, it has faced determined resistance. A city man, used to regarding a telephone impersonally, might be startled on asking for a Doctor Smith's number in Lenox to hear a cheery voice say, "Doctor is over at the Jones farm. Their boy cut his leg quite badly, I hear, on the saw. Do you want me to see if I can get Doctor Brown? Or if it's an emergency and you want Doctor Smith, I'll try him at Jones.'" The city man might be startled, perhaps resentful, but small-town people like it.

On the night of March 10th only one operator was on duty at the Lenox exchange. She was Mary Shalley, a pleasant-faced, matronly looking woman who has lived in Lenox all her

life. She had been a telephone operator on the Lenox exchange before her marriage to John Shalley, who was selectman in Lenox for a good number of years, and after her husband's death she returned to her former post.

In the middle of the winter night the telephone exchange is a lonely place and the calls few indeed in a proper living town like Lenox.

A few minutes after twelve-thirty a light came on on the board. It was an extremely puzzling one—587. Now that was the special line which the Air Craft Warning people had rigged up two years ago at the Shadowbrook novitiate. It used to burn frequently during the night when Shadowbrook had maintained a twenty-four-hour watch; but since last September, night watches had been discontinued and the light had never once burned after dark since then. She plugged it in, but could get no answer to her "Number please." This was very strange. Something could go wrong mechanically, of course—wind could cross a line, but there was very little wind tonight. She kept trying for some minutes and then 85 burned on. That was the regular house number at Shadowbrook. Someone had evidently been trying on the other line and when he couldn't get through walked downstairs to the main phone. She couldn't remember when a call had been placed so late out of the novitiate. It must be an emergency of some sort.

She plugged in 85. Again she could hear nothing—a static riding over a blank hum, nothing more. The conviction grew that something was wrong at Shadowbrook. Over and over she repeated, "Number please." And then, "Can I help you?" For almost three minutes there was no answer. She thought of plugging in the police, but some faint background noises which sounded different than mere static kept her on the line. Over and over she repeated, "Can I help you?" She picked up another plug and was about to ring the police when suddenly she heard a faint but distinct voice, "It's filling with smoke!" She said, "I'll call the fire department." "Thank God! I must go now." And the receiver clicked into place.

Mary rang the fire house which is only two doors down from the exchange and at the same time she plugged in the special telephone that lay on the night table in the bedroom of Oscar R.

Hutchinson, Senior, the fire chief of the town of Lenox.

Oscar Hutchinson has been fire chief since the brigade was formed in 1909, following a disastrous fire on Easter Sunday in the center of the town. He is a large man, slow moving and deliberate in his speech, but his record as a fire fighter is highly thought of among Lenox people. Years of habit have made it a reflex for him to wake fully alert, his hand reaching for the receiver at the first ring of the night phone. He answered simultaneously with Eddie (“Cap”) Conklin, who was on duty at the firehouse.

Mary Shalley spoke quickly: “I just got a call from Shadowbrook. It’s on fire!” Cap Conklin didn’t believe her. To a Lenox man the old Stokes mansion was part of the countryside—one did not expect unmannerly conduct from the Lenox countryside. It was as if she had announced that Baldhead had erupted like Vesuvius. Instinctively he said, “Aw, you’re kidding, Mary.” But Hutchinson cut in, his voice fuzzy with sleep: “Take the Buffalo and get down there, Cap. I’ll be right over.”

Ed Conklin went to work immediately. He pulled the alarm whistle, jumped into the small Buffalo ladder truck and drove, wheels screaming, out of the firehouse, made a sharp left turn and shot down the incline of West Street toward Shadowbrook.

Conklin in his haste blew the whistle incorrectly. Instead of indicating a fire at the novitiate, it actually blew “25” which was the signal for the section adjacent to Shadowbrook and which included the Tanglewood property. When the fire whistle goes off at night it starts a flood of phone calls. Volunteers, swinging out of bed, rush to the phone to find out where precisely they are called. People who are worried about their property, the curious, the excitable, the concerned, all reach for their phones. Mary Shalley started handling a jammed switchboard and the traffic would continue for two more hectic days.

The calls with first priority, of course, were those from Chief Hutchinson. One to his son, who is Deputy Chief of Lenox, ordering him to get down to the firehouse and get out the large La France truck; one to Chief Stockwell of Stockbridge, who was Hutchinson’s own deputy for twenty-seven years before taking

the Stockbridge post. He would be the man in charge of the fire fighting since Shadowbrook lay over the Stockbridge line. And one to his own subsidiary station at Lenoxdale. Then he hung up, dressed, rushed out to the chief's car and drove off towards the center of town.

Mary Shalley reported to the Pittsfield exchange that there was a fire at Shadowbrook, so that they could take care of anyone calling in that area merely to find out information. Miss Iola Drum, who is the supervisor of the Lenox exchange, was awakened by the fire whistle and phoned in to Mary to find out what the trouble was. When she discovered that the fire was at Shadowbrook, she realized that extra help on the switchboard would be needed before the night was out. She asked Mary to call the operators and ask for volunteers. The entire winter staff—Cora Mackey, Phyllis Leydet and Helen Albert—all reported and stayed throughout the night handling calls that soon began to come in from all parts of the country.

Over at Cranwell everyone was in bed. After a school day in the middle of March when the exhausting proximity to energetic boarding students has gone on for months, the fathers and scholastics sleep soundly indeed. Only one man heard the alarm. Brother Kelly sat up in bed and counted the signal. It sounded to him something like the Shadowbrook signal, but it had been so many years since he had lived at Shadowbrook he was no longer sure. He got out of bed and walked downstairs to the phone. When he had his fears confirmed by Mary Shalley he ran up to the minister's room and shook Father Lawrence Ryan awake.

Father Larry Ryan is the oldest of the four Ryan brothers in the province, one of whom, as we said, was Father Martin Ryan, who probably at the moment his brother was being shaken awake was tying sheets together in Father Carroll's room.

The father of the Ryan brothers had been a fireman for forty years and all of the Ryans are something of fire enthusiasts. Father Larry is the most confirmed addict of them all. In fact, even if it had not been Shadowbrook, but promised to be a big fire, it is probable that Brother Kelly, knowing his minister, would have awakened him. The minister in a house of the Society is the

man in charge of the practical details. He is the one to look out for food, supplies and maintenance for all the intellectual drones of the hive whose natural impracticability has been cosseted by years of dependent living. So when Father Ryan heard the news of a fire at Shadowbrook his mind began immediately churning with detail! First, of course, he must go over and find out how bad it was; then should it be really serious and the community burned out, there would be need for shelter. The Cranwell gymnasium would be large enough, perhaps, but where would he find beds for one hundred and fifty men?

All this while he was shrugging into his clothes. He told Brother Kelly to wake the rector of Cranwell, Father Keane, and let him know the news: "Tell him, too, that I've gone over there and that I'll call him up when I find out how bad it is and what has to be done."

He snatched a flashlight off his desk and the keys for two of the house cars. On the way out he stopped into the room of Father Burke, the headmaster of the academy, woke him up and asked him to get dressed and take the other car to Shadowbrook.

In all this activity there was inevitably something of the excitement proper to a dedicated fire buff. Father Ryan did not yet know how bad the Shadowbrook fire was, and though he was urgent and more than usually concerned by the realization that this fire involved people who were close to him, still the realization was blurred by his activity, and it was with an undercurrent of faintly pleasurable thrill that he hurried out onto the back porch.

Here he looked west just before stepping off to cross the yard to where the cars were parked, and abruptly his mood changed. Off to the left where in autumn and winter the sunsets could be seen burning through the stand of fir which bordered the front lawn of the Cranwell property, the sky was alight. It looked like one of those sunsets. And it was now for the first time that a sense of dread entered his consciousness, for now he first remembered that his brother Marty lived at Shadowbrook. With something very like terror he backed out the car and sent it hurtling along the narrow road heedless of the hard-packed icy snow.

Ten years ago Dave Herrick started a furniture store in his native Lenox. He bought an old Congregational church which stood on the short street that runs behind the Curtis and parallel to Main Street. The old church was adequate to his needs. He knocked out the front walls and installed plate glass, and the ground floor of the church has served satisfactorily as a showroom ever since. But it is a very crowded showroom—and what with the differing tastes of summer people and permanent residents, he has had to stock everything, from the most antiseptic little thing of bent pipe and plastic to plump mohair affairs whose billing is “traditional American.” Dave has not done badly but his ancient wooden store, chock-a-block with expensive combustibles, has given him some uneasy nights. Rarely does the fire signal go off at night without Dave Herrick sitting up in his bed, counting.

Tonight, though, he was already awake. The rest of the family had gone to bed, but he had decided to stay up reading. He heard the whistle, of course, and with relief he recognized it as some other district than the center of town. Curiously he stepped outside. The sky off to the west was bright and glowing. It looked like Tanglewood or Shadowbrook, and certainly it was one “helluva” fire. He went in and called the operator. Mary Shalley told him that it was Shadowbrook and that she had just learned that it was quite serious. Quickly he became concerned; many of the fathers at the novitiate were friends of his. He was head of the Shadowbrook Drive in Lenox. He tried briefly to wake his wife, but she was sleeping soundly. She would probably be irritated in the morning that he did not wake her, for her concern would be, if anything, greater than his; but he decided to let her sleep. He grabbed a jacket and set out in his car toward West Street.

The engines had begun to arrive when he drove up to the fork by the Shadowbrook gatehouse, and the road was very icy. He parked a little way up the hill on the Richmond road and got out. Almost immediately he slipped and fell on the ice. He fell twice more while teetering down Rosary Lane before he turned the corner by the lamppost and saw the flames now towering out of the western wing and the crowded driveway where silhouetted figures were rushing about.

The Red Cross had begun its annual drive for funds in

Berkshire County shortly before this, towards the beginning of March. Miss Anna Mahony (“Yes, no *e*. That’s the proper Irish spelling!”) is the executive director of the Berkshire chapter. She is a Boston girl originally and a graduate of the old Teachers’ College who abandoned the classroom for professional Red Cross service. She served throughout the war in Alaska and the Pacific Theatre. That night she had attended a fund meeting in Lenox and only returned to her home in Lee, where she lives with her mother, some parakeets and a cocker spaniel, some time after eleven. Some people might find fund meetings dull and exhausting, but Anna Mahony — without the *e* — is a girl who thrives on all aspects of organizational work. Still she was tired with a quiet, replete sort of weariness—the meeting had not gone badly at all—and she went to bed soon after coming in.

It did not seem long afterwards that she heard the telephone in the downstairs hall ringing away. She got up and answered it. It was Gert Cuddler (Mrs. Gertrude), who is the lady in charge of volunteers in the county. Mrs. Cuddler had been called by Mrs. Tillotson, the branch chairwoman of the Red Cross in Lenox. Mrs. Tillotson, herself, had been awakened by her daughter who saw the sky glow out her window, and she had found out from the phone operator what the trouble was. Mrs. Tillotson had called Mrs. Cuddler to tell her that she was going to organize the Lenox branch for relief work and asked her to get in touch with Anna Mahony, for it would be Anna’s decision that could bring in the Red Cross on a county basis.

Miss Mahony knew that the Lee operators customarily monitored her calls at night so she asked the operator to confirm the news. Calls had already begun in Lee and the operator was well informed. She told her it was true and that the fire was, no doubt of it, very serious, that the entire community would probably be burned out. Miss Mahony’s mind, after years of specialized thinking, moved immediately into the proper organizational grooves.

According to the Red Cross charter, granted by Congress, there are two types of disasters: individual and institutional. The first type is “compulsory,” that is, the Red Cross is legally bound by virtue of its official establishment to offer relief when some

tragedy of disaster proportions strikes individual citizens. It must move to provide shelter, food, clothing and do what is possible toward rehabilitating the individual, restoring him to the state he was in before the disaster as far as that is humanly possible. In the case of institutions, however, the Red Cross may or may not, as it sees fit and the ability of the institution to provide for itself appears, offer its services. Fire at Shadowbrook clearly was a “permissive” type of disaster. And how were the funds at this moment? The policy of the Red Cross is always to pay for the food and clothing it provides during disaster, never to impose on the generosity of merchants, and so that question had some point.

These were automatic instinctive preliminaries to decision, neatly filed thoughts. They went through her mind in a single swift ruffle, and with barely a pause she said to Mrs. Cuddler: “All right, Gert, we’ll go in. Get out the service wagon. It’s parked at Mrs. Moser’s. I’ll be right over as soon as I can organize things around here. You go down to Shadowbrook and try and set up a canteen.”

She immediately made a phone call to alert the Lee group of workers, then hurried through her dressing—regulation uniform, of course. As she drove through Lee, she stopped at an all-night diner to place an order for all the coffee they could make. And driving off, she felt the customary internal glow which told her that everything for now was shipshape, that another shapeless, untidy tragedy was about to yield to a good woman’s talent for battening the hatches.

The Goulds had not been asleep. Since their retirement to Mahkeenac Farm they had found it more comfortable to follow any whimsical schedule they chose, and tonight they had both stayed up reading. The “25” signal startled them for it meant a fire either at Tanglewood or their own property. Mrs. Gould ran to the back window on the third floor which looked out toward Tanglewood. The winter night was undisturbed. Her husband, who had run to the front of the house, was calling her, and she went along the corridor quickly, afraid that their hay barn which faced the Shadowbrook gatehouse had somehow caught fire. But it was further over.

From where they stood at the third-floor window the

flickering red sky through a pattern of black, bare trees was a baneful *Walpurgisnacht* fantasy. And they knew now where the fire was. Bundling quickly into coats, they set off together down Rosary Lane.

The fire truck came along the lane before they reached the house; and when they finally turned into the driveway before the house, Cap Conklin had already set the ladder up against the northwest corner and a man in shorts was being helped down. A broken rope of sheets dangled out of one of the other windows. Father Corcoran had just climbed down from his window and came running across the area towards them on his way to get the cars from the garage.

Mr. Gould ran over to help with the ladder, but Mrs. Gould stopped Father Corcoran. "Is there anything I can do to help?" "Yes," he said, "get sandwiches and coffee. The kids will need something hot, and there'll be more firemen, I suppose."

The Gould home was soon the scene of great activity. One of the first to arrive was Iola Drum. She had been to the exchange and decided that, in order properly to coordinate the movements of the fire fighters and rescue squads and to keep information flowing, a communication center close to the fire would be necessary. Two telephone lines come into the Gould farm, and if they would consent she would have all calls that needed immediate reply by someone at the fire itself routed through them. Mrs. Gould, from the midst of her sandwich fashioning, gave a brusque consent.

Mrs. Cuddler, driving down in the disaster wagon, had also thought of the Goulds'. It would be ideal as a base of operations for the Red Cross. When she arrived she found the kitchen humming and sent word that they would use this place as their center.

Continually throughout the night, people were coming and going. Red Cross workers, uniformed and un-uniformed, policemen from almost every town in the vicinity as well as state police, civil defense people from Pittsfield, reporters looking for a phone, the curious, the cold, they all came through the farmhouse at some time or other. Byrne Bauer, the manager of the Red Lion Inn, left his pile of blankets here before he rushed back to open

his hotel. Anna Mahony alighted here several times between organizing flights, encouraging and congratulating. And over it all rang the voice of Mrs. Gould (nee Higginson), imperious, tart, urgent with concern.

When some time afterward those fathers who knew her for one of the grand dames of Yankeedom watched her hobbling over the ice along Rosary Lane, shawled like some old peasant woman, and bent under the weight of two immense pots of coffee, with tears running down her cheeks, they saw her as a moving symbol of the old, never exhausted mystery of human kindness.

John Mahanna is an old Lenox boy and presently County Editor of the *Berkshire Eagle*. He was the first newspaperman to get the story which soon was headlines as far away as Japan. A Lenox woman had looked out of her bedroom window at twelve forty-five and decided that Tanglewood was on fire. She called Mahanna at his home. He thanked her and went to look for himself. It was hard to understand how the Tanglewood shed with all that steel in its construction could be causing such a glow, but he called his photographers and reporters and sent them to West Street. "It's something in that area anyway." Then he checked with Mary Shalley:

"Oh, no, John, it isn't Tanglewood. It's Shadowbrook. This is terrible. They are jumping out of windows and many are on the ledges and can't get to the ground. I don't know how many are trapped. Maybe six or seven are dead by now. Ambulances from all over are on the way."

That did it: it was a story and a big one. He called the city and news editors of the *Eagle*, and it was agreed to send a whole corps of reporters to Shadowbrook and let them dig up the sidelights and special stories. The feature news story could be handled by the regular reporter of the Lenox-Lee-Stockbridge area, Frank McCarty. The decision was a good one. The *Eagle* is an evening paper and for that reason, of course, McCarty had an advantage over his more driven brothers from the Boston and New York papers and the boys from the wire services, but the fact remains that the most comprehensive, careful and readable account of the nationwide story was carried under his by-line in the *Eagle*.

The Pittsfield police and fire departments had been

notified; and Sgt. Mike Woitkowski alerted every news source in the area. "I knew they could use all the help they could get in covering a story this big." And from that time on the Lenox exchange was clotted first with calls from nervous voices demanding "the story," and then toward morning, from voices, pathetically anxious, of relatives and friends just demanding news.

Woitkowski also roused Mayor Harvey of Pittsfield, who came down to Shadowbrook and stayed until morning, and William L. Plouffe, chief of civil defense in Pittsfield. Plouffe unleashed his whole organization and expressed great gratification the next day with the numbers and efficiency of their response. There was, in fact, little that they could do by the time they arrived.

For by the time they arrived, the fire was leaping from every window and bounding along the entire length of the structure, all who were saved were already out of the building, and there were many more fire hoses than there was water to fill them. Much of the equipment and most of the volunteers who came skidding along the frozen roads were inevitably forced into the position of being mere friends of the deceased, comforting by presence rather than actual assistance. The great concourse that stood and watched from the slope of Baldhead behind the house was there for the most part to demonstrate how deeply the old Stokes house had entered the affections of Berkshire County and how much, without realization, I think, on either part, the Jesuits and the Berkshires had over the years grown fond of one another. And the people of the County had only just begun to demonstrate that fondness.



## CHAPTER SIX

*The Dormitories*

When Father Corcoran had startled awake to find Fathers Sullivan and Carroll shouting at him about a fire in the house, he had gotten out of bed promptly enough but mussily, his mind fighting for realization. Father Sullivan had left the room first, but Father Carroll still stood there almost hysterically repeating his message. The rector's mind under the constant repetitions was rapidly focusing while he automatically drew on his pants and shoes and tied the laces. By the time he had straightened up, Father Carroll had gone to rouse the fathers' corridor, and his mind was clear and thinking. The first thing to do was to call the fire department, then run to the juniors' dorm and get them out of the house. There was no smoke in his room, nothing but the clear memory of those two shouting fathers standing by his bed to tell him that there was serious danger. He hurried to the phone on his desk. As he picked it up he heard Father Tribble's voice and someone answer. So that was taken care of.

He stepped over to his door and opened it. He experienced the same shock so many experienced this night; the staircase hall was impenetrable with smoke and hot gusts, packed into the huge area until they were like solids. He could not advance further than a few feet before he was driven back into his room. He shut his door and ran over to his back entrance. This was at the end of

a narrow corridor-like room which, in the time before the Jesuits took over the house, used to be a porch. It had been walled and windowed and served the rector's room as a closet, storage room and back entry. It opened onto the second-floor landing of the brothers' stairs and was now, of course, impassable. Through the windows of the door to the landing, Father Corcoran could see flames licking and crackling against the glass.

He turned back to his room, determined now to go out the window. He grabbed his overcoat from a hook inside the door to his back entrance hallway, his glasses and the car keys off his desk, but when he got to the window he saw the novices and juniors come streaming out around the side of the house from the sacristy porch and start running across the driveway. The tight fist which had knotted in his stomach unclenched. He relaxed and sat on his window sill for a moment breathing quietly.

The shouting of Fathers Carroll and Sullivan in the second corridor was what had awakened Father Tom Kelly on the third. He lived diagonally opposite the elevator shaft and when he opened his door he was struck by a murderous blast of heat. As he stood helpless in his thin pajamas, Father Sullivan came running up the stairs towards the attic room. He yelled at him, he supposes; he does not remember. Father Sullivan went clattering up past him, and now, after his moments of bewilderment, he went into action.

He whirled and banged on Brother Bourrie's door, which was only one step away and directly across from the elevator shaft. Brother Bourrie answered immediately. Father Kelly ran on a short distance to his left through the threshold of a former door which once had divided the servants' quarters from the master bedrooms that now were the novices' ascetories. Father Jim Hanlon lived in a small room just off the novitiate since he was the socius, or assistant to the master of novices, in charge of discipline among the novices. Father Kelly did not knock on Father Hanlon's door but crashed in.

Father Hanlon is a small man, almost entirely bald. Sitting bolt up right in bed he gave Father Kelly a fleeting, incongruous impression of the exophthalmic figure of farce—the



A section of the Big Dorm on the third floor, where most of the novices slept. The windows were required to be kept open even in cold weather and there were stories of novices who slept under seven blankets and, if they slept near the windows, awoke to find snow collected on their pillows.

situation was one of midnight alarms and excursions, like a chapter from Fielding; and Jim, without his spectacles, startled and tousled in his night clothes, looked like an illustration, classically Hogarthian. But Father Hanlon was awake, thank God: “Jim, there’s a fire in the house.” The warning was deliberately underplayed—Father Tom Kelly is a gentleman whose mildness seems to be distilled from hidden intensity. He was driving himself to calmness. His quiet words did not shock Father Hanlon into any sense of urgency, for he sat some minutes after Father Kelly had left his room on the edge of his bed, and then in a foggy sort of leisure began to dress.

Meanwhile, Father Kelly made a quick dart into Brother Bourrie’s room—he lived in what must have been formerly a linen closet next to Father Hanlon—and made sure he was awake too. Father Kelly thought of the rest of the third corridor, but he must get the novices out first—one of the others, Brother Bourrie, perhaps, would wake the corridor. He dashed back to his own room for his overcoat.

It had only been moments since he had run the few steps needed to wake Father Hanlon and Brothers Bourrie and Bousquet, but the difference in the atmosphere was incredible. Now he could scarcely move along the hallway. There seemed no air left at all, just smoke, man-shaped billows of it, armed with a thousand fists that reached out, caught at his legs and arms and crammed their crooked fingers down his throat.

He snatched his coat from the closet and started running as hard as he could along the lines of sinks in the novice hallway. There were no lights and he fell once. He coughed and the cough became a violent retching as the merciless smoke probed deeper. At the far end of the hallway, where it widened to the open area which the novices used as a barber shop, the air was somewhat clearer. He had run about a hundred and fifty feet and the smoke was only just beginning to penetrate this far into the eastern wing. He paused a minute to even his breath for he did not wish to panic a dormitory full of fifty sleeping men. When he was slightly calmer he pushed open the door of the big dorm and bent down over the manuductor's bed which was just inside the door by the light switch.

A manuductor in the novitiate has, as we mentioned before, extraordinary powers. It has been said with some justification that the novice manuductor is the most absolute monarch since Ozymandias. St. Ignatius, in order to hold together the huge and sprawling enterprises of the Society he had founded, relied greatly on the willingness of the talented and so naturally cocksure men he wished to recruit to obey. Ignatian obedience, as is well known, should be a fairly absolute thing. His ideal of obedience has been maligned, of course, partly occasioned by Ignatius' own use of the traditional monastic metaphors of "a dead body," "an old man's staff which serves him who holds it in his hand where and for whatsoever he pleases." Ignatius is said to have wished the superior to dominate his subject, as the hypnotist his, to have desired to crush normal initiative and transform men into pious zombies. Since this is no place to offer a refutation and since it has been done often enough before, for brevity's sake we shall employ the dignified retort that Ignatius was a Christian and Christianity does not crush. If, however,

such canards ever have been sincerely proposed, I suspect it was by some former Jesuit novice who found it difficult to forgive his manuductor.

Authority and obedience in the Christian context are difficult correlatives. Subtle and nuanced, mysterious with the deep mystery of the divine in the human, which is the core of Christianity, they demand for their understanding and proper practice prayer, psychological skill and above all mature experience. These qualities are not ordinarily found in the novice. A manuductor has, of course, no authority except by delegation from the master of novices, but in the small details of novitiate living (and they are really the whole surface of the novitiate) his power is extensive. The master cannot concern himself with daily assignments to the kitchen, ward-robe, and so forth; these he leaves to his manuductor. It has not been unknown that the spirit of Prussianism hovered over the circle of novices gathered outside the broom closet on the third corridor for the *manualia* assignments.

I have no personal knowledge of the novice who was manuductor at the time of the fire, Brother Charlie Hancock, and I certainly would not attempt to judge him from the short letter I received from him. If he was a Prussian as a manuductor, well, many have been so before him and he will grow out of it. If he was not, he has a rare ability to adapt to a situation, for if one thing was essential that night to avoid panic, it was the calm voice of the autocrat, and he used it effectively:

“That night Father T. J. C. Kelly woke me up and said, ‘Get the novices up and down the tower stairs. There is a fire in the house.’ I remember that there was no odor of smoke in the dorm so I thought it was only a small fire. I turned on the lights and said, ‘Get up and go down the tower stairs.’ I didn’t even think of giving a reason for the order.”

Those are the authentic tones of the novitiate’s understanding of the great mystery of Christian authority. Thank God for it that night. The entire novitiate rose immediately and in complete order filed down toward the narrow doorway to the tower.

Wisps of smoke were coming in the doorway to the attic

high up on the west wall of the dormitory where the junior choir used to sing on Christmas Eve. Only a few noticed them. Brother Doyle suddenly spoke. He saw the smoke and knew there was a fire in the house. Since he had no idea how long they would be forced to stand outside, he said, "Brothers, you better take a blanket with you. It's cold outside. There is a fire in the house, but don't forget your particular examen and your additions. It's only a small fire." Except for this piece of quietly spoken advice, there was absolute silence.

Father Kelly, when he saw that the dormitory was being satisfactorily cleared, thought to ask the manuductor whether there were any more novices other than those in the big dorm. The manuductor told him there were six or seven asleep in the polar dorm over the main entrance. Father Kelly turned back out into the corridor and retraced his steps to the polar dorm. Conditions in the corridor had grown rapidly worse and he had to crawl.

Brother Michael Connolly in the polar dorm had awakened just before this. He smelled smoke, but having stumbled over to the large gothic window he could see nothing unusual outside and was on the point of falling back to bed again when Father Kelly burst open the door.

It had been some minutes now since Father Kelly had sleepily watched Father Sullivan rush up the brothers' stairs past him, on the way to the attic. Father Sullivan had only rarely had occasion to visit the attic during the ten years he had taught at Shadowbrook and had very hazy ideas of its layout. It was a vast area and under the peak of the sharply pitched roof it looked like a huge gothic barn. Somewhere two small rooms had been walled off in which lived Brothers Murphy and Frost. Father Sullivan stumbled around in the ghost-colored light of the moon which two or three areas of glass tile, that seemed to fascinate everyone who wrote up the Stokes mansion before 1912, let fall on the rough, broad-planked floor. Fortunately he turned left toward the east, though he was not at all sure that the brothers lived in that direction, for it was not more than half a minute later that the hot gases which poured from the top of the elevator shaft ignited, and the uninhabited west wing of the attic was sealed off

by flame.

Brother Murphy's room was directly in Father Sullivan's path once he had luckily turned to his left. It was a wall-boarded box, about opposite the doorway to the tower battlements in the middle of the house where the novices and juniors kept watch for planes, and Father Sullivan came upon it quite easily. And so, actually it did not take too long for him to find Brother Murphy's room, although the black, uncertain seconds he spent looking for it had unnerved him.

Brother Murphy thought this was an awful lot of pother for the middle of the night, but as a refectorian who had for some years listened to fathers describe their individual formulas for the boiled egg, he had developed an impenetrable acquiescence to their reverences' demands. It appeared that there was a fire and that Father Sullivan wanted to see Brother Frost about it. Well, then, why didn't he get Brother Frost? Oh, of course, he doesn't know where he lives. Go straight ahead past the tower door and turn in. The door is on your left. Yes, of course, Father, he would get up himself, Father, sure thing!

Brother Murphy started in on the grim business of shoes and socks, doggedly and with great yawns.

The heat was becoming intense. Since the attic was the terminal of the elevator shaft, most of the rising gas and smoke from the kitchen corridor was being driven up here. Father Sullivan found that now he could barely see. He tried to follow the directions which Brother Murphy had given even though he had to feel his way. He found a door handle, threw it open and stepped inside. The door closed behind him and he was left in utter darkness. It was a closet and no child of ten was ever more terrified. He banged and beat the walls of his confinement until again he found the doorknob and stepped out—shouting.

Brother Murphy, when he heard Father Sullivan's shouts, came rushing out of his room. Off to the right he could see flames jetting out of the top of the elevator shaft and smoke rolling toward and around him. Now sudden terror was in him, too. He ran to the sound of Father Sullivan's voice, found him and led him quickly to Brother Frost's room.

Brother Frost, as can be judged simply from the number



The entering class of 1953, who were juniors at the time of the fire. (*Jesuit Seminary News* photo)

of times it has been necessary to mention him in this narration before he has even come on stage, was one of those few men a community cannot exist without. Specifically his assignment was the boiler-room, but he was also the house electrician, buyer, part-time cook, fill-in infirmarian, sacristan, mechanic, gardener, and, by the law of nature, the heaviest sleeper in the house. They shook and they shouted. Father Sullivan, his terror of the closet still alive within him, kept shouting, “Get a flashlight.” Brother Frost, as he stroked up to consciousness, made much the same judgment as Brother Murphy had, that it was some fire scare he was being called upon to investigate—if, indeed, his sleep-mulled brain was capable of what can be called a judgment. When Brother Frost had finally heaved his big bones up to the edge of the bed, Father Sullivan and Brother Murphy went rushing out. They had put on the light in his room when they came in and now Brother Frost wincing against it groped stolidly around his desk, chair, table, looking for his flashlight. That was what he remembered, that was the important thing—get a flashlight.

Neither Father Sullivan nor Brother Murphy knew how to get out of the attic except by the brothers’ stairs. They ran a short way down in that direction, until they saw that they were entirely impassable. They burst back into Brother Frost’s room, shouting that they were trapped in the attic.

At last, with a snap, Brother Frost woke up. He grabbed his bathrobe and a pair of slippers and ran out ahead of them.

The iron stairs really ended just below the attic level, but a small oddly cut door about two and a half feet high, through, which a man could pass crouching, gave on to them from the attic. Once the community wardrobe had been in this section of the attic at the head of the iron stairs, and the novices of my own time knew the door well. But in recent years, since the wardrobe was moved to the cellar, few novices, it seems, ever went higher up the spiral than to their own quarters on the third floor. To have climbed further merely to indulge curiosity would have been in the words which asceticism has adapted from Qoheleth and Kempis “a vanity.” Consequently, few knew that door. Which, in its way, was a pity; for it was a door rich in imaginative possibilities. Its little height, its strange rhomboid shape, the fact that from one side it gave onto a stairway which spun down into blackness, and on the other to a vast echoing vault of a room hung with cobwebs and the disgusting odor of disuse—these made it a door of mystery and excitement. I remember that as a junior I was a devotee of Lewis Carroll (under the impression, as I recall, that all the good “lit’ry people” liked *Alice in Wonderland*.) I always pictured that door as the one the mushroom-grown Alice could not get through.

Brother Frost knew it, of course. But as he started to lead the others to it, the little bug-lights he had just thrown on burned out and they were left in complete blackness. Brother Frost had not found his flashlight. The undersides of the beams and struts soaring up to the high ridge tree hidden in the darkness above them were mottled with the moving light from the flames back by the brothers’ stairs. Father Sullivan and Brother Murphy began to shout again.

Father Kelly, coming just then out of the polar dorm on the third floor below them, heard their shouts. He ran to the iron stairwell and put on the light at the third floor level. The little Alice-in-Wonderland door was open to the attic, and the three of them suddenly saw deliverance, as a small bright rhomboid flared up in the darkness off in front of them and slightly to the left.

Brother Frost got the other two onto the stairs and told them to go all the way down to the first floor to St. Joseph’s Aula.

He was going to check the novice dorms. One of them should hold open the door to the aula because he would probably send some of the novices down that way.

As he ran out of the stairwell on the third floor he saw Father Kelly running back to the big dorm. The draft created behind his head by his movement apparently ignited the hot gases in the hallway because a delicate fireball, like St. Elmo's fire, floated behind his neck.

Brother Frost went into the polar dorm. The novices, already alerted by Father Kelly, were dressing. He told them to hurry and led them to the iron stairs. He sent four of them down before Father Sullivan called up from the first floor that it was becoming too dangerous down in the aula. The rest he told to go out through the big dorm and down the tower stairs. Just to make sure that they got there and that there were no men wandering around the corridor, he followed them into the big dorm.

He found the dormitory clearing rapidly. He turned and went back out into the corridor. He had the suspicion that there should be other novices asleep in a small room off the large St. Mary's Aula. As a matter of fact, it had been several years since that room which used to be used as the trial dorm had been employed as a novice typing room. There was no one in it, of course; Brother Frost then decided to go down the iron stairs himself, although Father Sullivan had told him it was too dangerous on the first floor. It was a fortunate thing for Brother Bousquet that he did so.

Brother Bousquet, after he had been awakened by Father Kelly, had dressed with urgency but no sense of immediate danger. When he went out of his room he first tried to go down by the brothers' stairs as he was accustomed. The area out in front of them was filled with flame. He then tried to make it down along the same corridor through the novitiate which Father Kelly had found difficult some minutes before. He fell twice. And on the second fall he experienced much the same sensations which Father Campbell had felt on the second corridor by the recreation room—he was dying, there was nothing to be done except go out peacefully. Then he heard Brother Frost call out: "Is everybody out now?"

Brother Frost had stopped by the top of the iron stairs and given this shout just before he started down. The reply Brother Bousquet was able to manage was weak enough: "I'm lost!"—barely a whisper. Brother Frost by this time had breathed quite a bit of the smoke himself: He got down on his hands and knees and in the slightly better air and greater visibility (for he hadn't been able to tell where the voice came from) he was able to see Brother Bousquet on the floor some six or seven feet away, crawl to him and lead him back to the iron stairs.

From this point it becomes increasingly difficult to follow the movements of Brother Frost. Ten or a dozen different stories have him at least bi-located during the next twenty minutes or so, and his own recollections—perhaps he did whiff too much smoke—are not very clear; so for the first time in this narrative I must attempt to construct what must have happened though it may well be that only my intention is historical.

With Brother Bousquet before him gripping the railing and half sliding down the narrow spiral of the stairs, Brother Frost went all the way down to the first floor and out to St. Joseph's Aula. There was no light burning but they could see clearly, for the fire had spewed out of the kitchen corridor and now swarmed over the napkin boxes outside the refectory door. Father Sullivan, Brother Michael Connolly and the other novices from the polar dorm were still in the aula. Brother Frost called to them to help him and ran towards the chapel. Just before the chapel entrance off to the left there was a small ladies' powder room. In it, on a rack beside the mirror, there was one of the new fire hoses. Brother Frost grabbed its nozzle, pointed to the valve and ran out leaving the others to play out the hose and turn on the nozzle. He ran with the hose up to the stairs outside the chapter room which mounted to the first-floor staircase hall when he was brought up short. Someone back at the valve had turned on the water full blast while the hose was still running out under the door of the ladies' room. It swelled and caught in the jamb while the most miserable of little trickles was all that came out of the nozzle in Brother Frost's hands. The flames against the refectory wall were a solid, copper-colored mass that shook defiance. There seemed little chance of pushing them back

even with a full stream of water. Brother Frost dropped the hose and ordered everyone out of the house.

He did not go outside himself, but ran again up the iron stairs to the second floor. Suddenly remembering his blessed ability to sleep through sleet and storm and dark of night, he had thought of the juniorate. Had anyone got the juniors out of bed?

The rooms on the second floor were not lofty, cavernous halls, remembering the world, like those on the first. Their ceilings were no more than two or three feet taller than those of a modern house, and so Bellarmine Hall, the corridor leading into the dormitory and the dorm itself were all choked with smoke.

When he got to the dormitory the lights were burned out, but it had the feel of being empty. The juniors were, in fact, already out. Walter Young, the sub-beadle, slept beside the doorway to the tower stairs and he had heard the commotion when the novices began filing down them. One of them stepped into the juniors' dormitory and leaning over told Mister Young in the hushed voice used for "necessary speech" during sacred silence that there was a fire upstairs, a small one, of course, but that it might be a good idea to get the juniors out of the house. Young had gone over to Ed O'Flaherty's bed by the main door, woken him up and told him to put on the lights.

With the weak night lights burning in one half of the dormitory—the lights in the other half were still not working—smoke could be seen hanging like an overcast about three feet underneath the ceiling. Young announced that there was a small fire in the novitiate and all should quickly but quietly leave the house by the tower stairs. There was no panic and, as in the novitiate above them, no talk. Jerry Starratt went out into the corridor to go to the washroom. He was driven back by the denser smoke and came hurrying again into the dormitory. Everybody seemed to be getting out quickly and, since he did not wish to alarm them, he told no one that this must be more than "a small fire in the novitiate." Joe Devlin's bed was near Ed O'Flaherty's by the door and apparently he had inhaled smoke before he woke up, for he sat up when the lights went on and was sick beside his cot. The novices still coming down the tower stairs stood back with a nice regard for religious seniority on the steep stone rises

which would only permit descent in single file in order to allow the juniors, their elders in religion, to pass.

At the foot of the tower stairs a door led out to a short flight of stairs to the ground. It could not be opened. Two days before, Brother Perry had taken the handle off it in order to repair the lock and had not yet put it back. Since it opened in and blocked the stairs it was just as well that it did not work, because it would have only served to bottleneck the stairwell. Each man would have had to close it after him to let the next man down to where he could get out. But someone tried to open it and his voice calling up the hollow-sounding tower: "The door is stuck!" chilled everyone in the dark stone shaft. Someone else calmly said: "Go out through the sacristy," and the ripple of panic smoothed out.

Most of the juniors brought down blankets because Father Kelly, who had come down with the novices, stood at the tower doorway to the juniors' dormitory and shouted that no one was to dress, but simply take a blanket and come quickly. He also called out that each man should check the bed beside him.

The juniors, then, had all gone, teary-eyed and coughing, by the time that Brother Frost came running in from the corridor. Father Kelly was still at the tower door shouting and banging the cot nearest to him to make sure that no one had overslept. The lights were no longer working and the smoke was now very heavy. Brother Frost knew he could not stay long in here, so quickly he went around lifting up beds and dropping them, shouting: "Clear out! Clear out!"

In every dormitory there is one phenomenal sleeper. Here it was Richard Cleary. Over in the lakeside corner of the dorm he still buzzed away, curled, innocent and unperturbed. This was the side where the lights were not working, and in the darkness, despite all the precautions, he had been overlooked. When he first became conscious he heard Brother Frost and thought he must have slept over late in the morning. Fuzzily he rolled up to a sitting position. There was a heavy fog in the room and he felt a good deal more miserable than he had ever felt previously in the first bleak moments of a new day. His face was tacky with sweat; his arms and legs ponderous and adhesive—Lord, he was tired.

Slowly he dressed. It seemed that everyone had left and that never had happened before, but then, he never remembered Brother Frost coming into the dormitory before. It was not until he stood up that he began to realize that these clouds were not fog merely, but in some way or other, danger. He as yet did not recognize them for smoke but was vaguely apprehensive. He did not go out through the main door, but picked the shortest way: through the tower. When he arrived in the sacristy, Father Kelly was just going out into the chapel to remove the Blessed Sacrament. It was between seven and ten minutes after the others had cleared out of the dorms and another minute of questions and explanations before Dick Cleary realized what had happened.

Brother Frost was not aware that he had awakened Cleary. He had gone swiftly through the dormitory, thinking it already empty and only banging beds as he went simply for a final perfunctory reassurance. He kept moving, and since then, naturally, he had stayed on the move. When he went down the tower stairs he did not stop off at the sacristy but continued on into the cellar. Four juniors, Joe Appleyard, Arthur Kane, Ed O'Flaherty and Bill Mulligan, had gone down also into the cellar just before. They intended to fetch up a heap of coats and hats from the juniors' lockers, but they had not gone farther than the novice lockers when they decided to turn back. The novice lockers were in the main cellar corridor outside the bottom of the iron stairs and about twenty feet closer than the juniors'. There was no heavy smoke down here; but thin clouds had begun to seep along under the ceiling. There was some sort of machine clattering like a windmill around the bend in the corridor. They had never heard it before, although everything in the cellars was familiar to them, and in the dimly-lit cavernous corridor with its ancient arches and threatening areas of shadow, they began to be afraid. Someone suggested that the lights might go out as they had in the dormitory upstairs, then one of them cautioned that they should go back, and gratefully they did. They did not, of course, take the novices' jackets, for they had no permission to do so. Perhaps they returned to the sacristy before Brother Frost came down, perhaps they passed him in a dark section of the corridor without seeing him; anyway, neither party remembers

seeing the other.

Brother Frost had come down to check the boilers. For some time now while he was rushing around upstairs, the fear that the fire might have started in the large boiler room which was off the cellar corridor, diagonally opposite the foot of the iron stairs, had kept recurring as a very disturbing thought. The boilers were his responsibility. Over and over again he checked his memory of last evening. Had he shut them off? Was there anything he had forgotten? But he found the boiler room just as he had left it the night before, with the lights burning on the cheerful red-tile floor and all his tools prim and shining on their hooks and shelves. It seemed impossible that the floors above were choked with killing clouds of smoke, that only a short time previously he himself had stumbled around a pitch-black attic and heard it echo to shouting, harsh voices.

He shut off the feed lines to the oil tanks that were buried out in back of the house behind the kitchen. If the fire did finally penetrate to the boiler room, a spark in the lines could cause a tremendous explosion outside, particularly in this month when the tanks, after the winter, were almost empty and full of fumes. He thought of pulling the main light switches, but then remembered that on the floors above someone might still be trapped and needing light to find his way. That thought brought him back to the realization that the cheerful normality of this familiar room was sham, that danger, maybe death, had entered the building, walked the customary corridors.

He rushed out and made a dash farther down the cellar corridor around the bend into the west wing. He wanted to reach the secondary shut-off to the oil tanks which was under the kitchen area. But as he got down near the bottom of the elevator shaft, he found that the smoke was becoming too thick. There was no flame, but enough smoke had been created now to back down against the draft into the cellars and the whole length of the building was rapidly filling. He turned around and started running back to the tower stairs.

When the juniors first came down into the sacristy, Bill Russell, who was the master of ceremonies, had thought of the Blessed Sacrament. No one else yet realized how serious the fire

was, and Bill Russell was not too sure himself. He remembered from a conference given by Father Post when he was a novice that anyone could, in danger of profanation or destruction, remove the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle. It would be quite a distinction to be the only junior who had ever opened the tabernacle door, almost as though he were already a priest. Mr. Russell is a man naturally attracted by distinctions, but he had not scrutinized his weaknesses during two years of novitiate for nothing. Sternly he put that thought aside as frivolous. A great crowd of novices and juniors were at the windows which looked over toward the west wing. Some had gone outside and were running across the driveway, but most had remained in the sacristy since they had no desire to go out into the March night in only pajamas and a blanket. From the sacristy windows there didn't seem to be much danger. Flames could be seen through the grimy storm doors of the small back porch which gave on to the kitchen corridor near the brothers' stairs and was known as the "express porch," but no one could seriously consider that a fire way off over there would ever threaten the chapel and sacristy. At this distance it seemed a small, even comforting, fire which would quickly be extinguished. Still, it was getting smoky even here. Russell got out a surplice and the great gold humeral veil used for solemn feasts—if he was going to be forced to remove the Blessed Sacrament, he would do it in proper style.

He had just decided to go into the chapel, in fact he had already vested himself, when Father Kelly, having delayed in the juniors' dormitory to make sure it was emptied, came down the tower stairs. Bill Russell felt just a touch of disappointment when he saw him, but his general feeling was one of relief.

Father Kelly, after the excitement and driving urgency which had ridden him since that first stunned moment outside his room, was inclined to relax in the atmosphere of calm he found in the sacristy. It was like the nursery scene in *Peter Pan*, with all the boys in their nighties, sitting on the window seats, looking out through the curtains. If there was apprehension, it seemed (after the pressing dread he had felt up to this) like the apprehension of children before a summer storm. But then Brother Frost came bulking out of the tower, red-eyed and

panting like the giant from his castle, and everything became grim again.

Brother Frost curtly ordered everyone out of the sacristy. He forbade anyone even to stop to take the vestments or the vessels. "Of course, Father," he told Father Kelly, "remove the Blessed Sacrament. I'm afraid this fire won't be out for hours. It could even burn down the whole house."

So Father Kelly, with Bill Russell attending him, went into the chapel, removed the Blessed Sacrament and, hunched in the great cope, stumbled up the dark and slippery path to Campion Cottage where he locked it away in the second-floor chapel.

As the novices and juniors spilled out from the sacristy the La France hose-truck from Lenox turned in the driveway from the Richmond Road and came wailing down the hill past Campion. Brother Frost ran, arms waving, to point out the hydrant halfway up the hill towards the cottage. But the truck parked down in the driveway before the house, and the men quickly began to run hose back up the hill. Brother Frost and Brother Vincent Connolly, a novice, with some others grabbed the hose at intervals to help drag it along.

The men in the lead went right by the hydrant. Brother Frost tried to call them back. But Chief Hutchinson had inspected the water outlet months before this and decided that he could get a stronger flow from the town hydrant on the Richmond Road, should he ever have a fire to fight at Shadowbrook. Brother Frost, however, was sure they would come back and sent some novices running to the garage to get shovels in order to clear the snow away from the hydrant. Then he ran back towards the house.

Soon the Richmond Road was crisscrossed with hose lines. The water jetting from hose couplings coated the road with a thin frosting of ice, and Johnny Loubard of the Lenox department was stationed by the hydrant to warn cars away. A skidding car could break the vital flow to the nozzle.

And the cars were coming in. They already stretched down past the fork at the end of Rosary Lane and would soon be parked along both sides of the road to well below the Tanglewood entrance. Policemen, volunteers, Red Cross, civil defense,

reporters, excitement-seekers and mourners, attracted by the sky glow, called by the whistle or informed by a midnight phone call—the people of the Berkshires were gathering to witness the death of one of the giants of the county, going up like Agamemnon on his pyre.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

*The Third Floor*

All of the novices and juniors were safely out of the building now—all, that is, who slept in the eastern wing. But there were still some on the third floor of the western wing, and like everyone else on the third floor, except Father Kelly and Brother Bousquet, they were trapped.

The three novices on trial that month, Brother John Redgate, Brother Frank Bergen and Brother Richard Wolf, were sleeping in the little dormitory on the driveway side of the house approximately above Father Sullivan's room. Brothers Redgate and Wolf woke up at precisely the same instant. There was a loud sound of thumping and crackling in the hall. Brother Pete Gabriel, after he had broken out of his window, ran around and around the house, shouting up to the windows of the third floor. Redgate and Wolf remember that, in addition to the ruckus in the corridor, there was a good deal of shouting outside. For perhaps fifteen or twenty seconds they sat up in their beds bewilderedly staring at each other. Then, again together, they hopped out and ran to the door.

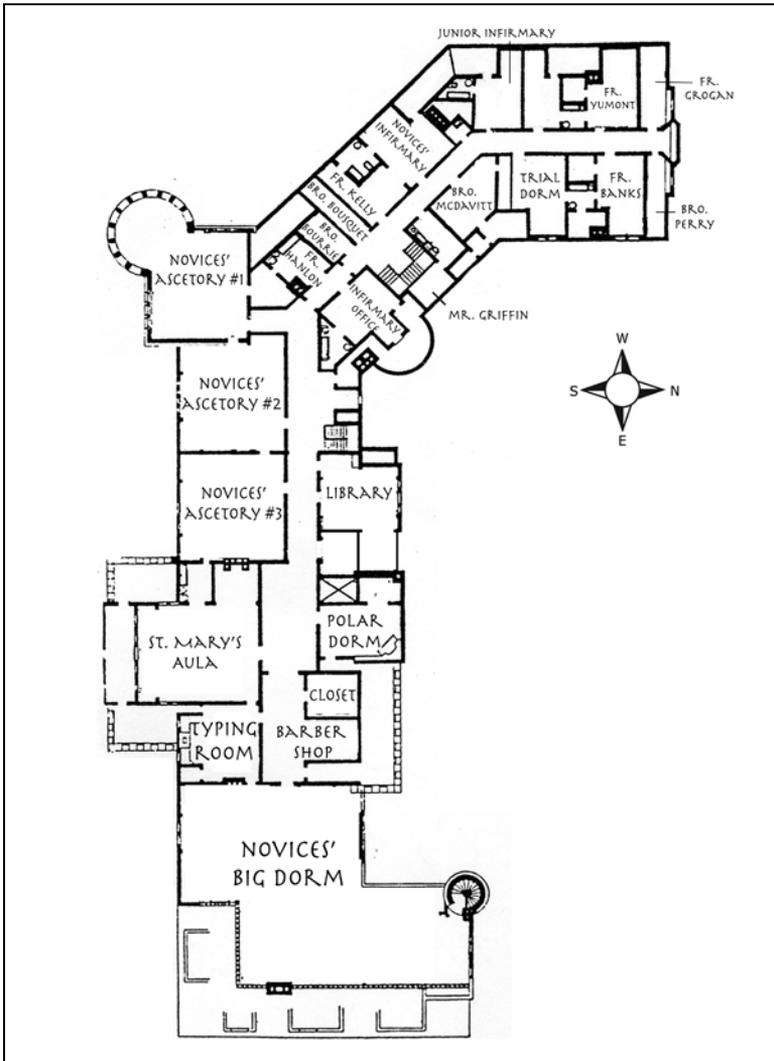
Brother Wolf, as the senior novice, was in charge of the dormitory, and his bed was nearest the door. He switched on the lights and looked at the dormitory alarm clock, which was on a chair beside the door. It was thirteen minutes to one. He opened the door while Brother Redgate poked his head over his shoulder.

They stood there peering out. The room was just beyond a bend in the corridor, and so they could not see down to the elevator shaft, where the flames were. But grey rolls of smoke, like a school of tumbling porpoises with red underbellies, turned and rolled in the corridor, lit with an eerie light; and the heat draughting into the opened door behind them stirred their hair like a gale.

Someone seemed to be down around the bend, fighting the flames, for there were huge manlike shadows on the wall opposite them and the sounds of grunts and oaths. Brother Redgate called twice: "Hey, Brother, which way out?" No one answered, and Brother Wolf by this time realized that these were sounds and shadows made by the fire itself, that there was no way out along the corridor.

They closed the door and turned around to see Brother Bergen just getting out of bed with fear beginning to contort his face. All three began rather wildly to exhort one another to stay calm, not to worry about a thing, to keep their heads; and as they jumped into shoes and pants, they assured each other furiously, and repeatedly that everything would be fine, all right, dandy, if "we just stay calm now." They ran to the windows and saw Mister Bill Griffin break out of his room with the fire behind and around him. They looked down below the three high stories to the driveway and saw the upturned faces of novices and juniors, who were running across from the sacristy, shocked, frightened, despairing.

They had told each other to stay calm, but that did not mean they had to hope blindly, and hope at this moment was a dead, cold lump. Of course, they could tie sheets. It was about forty feet to the ground, and the sheeting from the three beds would never reach all the way. There was a chest, though, with extra blankets: they might be enough. Brother Wolf lashed one end of a sheet around the center post of the casements while the other two knotted blankets and sheets on to the other end. He pulled it tight and yanked against it to see if it held, but all the while he felt like an actor—they only did this sort of thing in movies, it would never work, and look at the "potting" things, ripped, frayed. But then, he was senior and must not express his doubts.



The third floor, where the novitiate was located.

He finished tying his end of the sheet to the window frame and went over to the door to try and close the transom. Smoke was pouring in through it, and they could hardly breathe. The old thing probably had not been closed in ten years; for all he could do, despite straining, was burn his hands on the now hot metal rod. The transom did not budge.

Their rope of assorted blankets and sheets was finished, and they dropped it out the window. It reached to about six feet from the ground. Now that it was done, it seemed they must use it. No other rescue was in sight.

Brother Redgate turned to Brother Wolf and asked, "Who goes first?" The poor senior was not anxious that any of them go, but it seemed as though the counsels of desperation must be heeded. He told Brother Redgate to go, and he gave him careful instructions. He was not to trust those rags too far: he should slide down them as quickly as possible and not attempt to go hand over hand. Brother Redgate clambered out on the roof and disappeared down behind the overhang. Seconds later he called up that he had landed safely, but the rope had broken down near the bottom.

Brothers Bergen and Wolf hauled it up and ran to the chest for more blankets. They tied another two on to the end. While they were working on the knots, the lights burned out; and only the hot faces of the flames jumping up above the transom permitted them to see. It was now almost impossible to breathe. Smoke and now waves of fear drove them both out on the roof.

Crouching on the tilting roof, they held on to the window frame and carefully lowered their rag rope down again. Brother Wolf told Brother Bergen to go next; and down he went, while Wolf himself leaned out over the edge to watch the descent. The rope held, and Bergen landed in a blanket which some of the other novices were holding below the swaying line of sheets. Brother Wolf was part of the tradition that the captain is the last to leave his ship and up to this time had felt through his fear a sort of glow of competence. But now he began to regret that he had watched the operation. The ground and the tiny figures below seemed things seen through the small end of a telescope. Between him and safety plunged a sickening slope of nothingness. Their rope was a bad joke of bunches and knots. He began calling down: "O.K. All clear? All right?" Three or four shouts were all he could use to excuse delay before his fear became shamefully manifest. He sucked in a reluctant deep breath, put his fist around the sheets, and called almost sulkily, "O.K. I'm coming."

But the sheets had had enough. Fifteen or twenty feet

from the ground they pulled apart. He fell free, hit the blanket off its center, jerked it out of the hands of the man on that corner, and slid off into snow, unhurt and nearly sobbing with terror.

Cap Conklin saw him fall. He had just turned the Buffalo into the driveway a few seconds before. He saw flames shooting up behind the windows in the corner of the house where the two wings met and knew they were in for a night of it. He radioed back to Chief Hutchinson, who was driving into the fire barn, and told him that they would need all the help he could get, that there were people jumping, and that he could see some trapped on the ledges of the roof. Then he scrambled out of the truck and started to unhook his ladder.

Bill Griffin had jumped a short time before Cap Conklin arrived, while Brothers Wolf, Redgate and Bergen were knotting sheets in the trial dormitory. He lived in a small room directly behind the brothers' stairs on the third floor. He had been in bad health for some months and had not attended classes. Since he could not seem to sleep soundly, he had been given a private room.

He awoke to the noise of eating. Someone, some monstrous nightmare creature was eating, for there was a sound of moving jaws, slurping, slavering, entirely disgusting. He looked out the half-glass door of his room into the passage where the stairs turned up to the attic. The whole passage from wall to wall was a riot of flame. Bill Griffin is an imaginative, sensitive young man with a touch of fey in his makeup. He remembers being immediately frightened, of course, but his predominant sensation was simple bewilderment touched with amusement: what was happening here? and wasn't it ridiculous, anyway?

He opened the door, was immediately seared, and the flames came in after him, hooting and waving their arms. He fled to the window and utterly without thought burst out through it. His foot caught in the gutter of the roof which dipped down around the windows of the third floor. He stood there in the gutter holding on to the inside of the window frame while the room filled with flames.

He saw the novices in the trial dormitory put their heads out the window and he started to shout: "Hey, what's going on

here. Hey, I'm burning to death."

The rector's window was diagonally below his and he saw Father Corcoran looking up at him and shouting. His hand inside the window was burning, but the unreality of the whole sequence struck him again. "Hello, Father Rector," he said, and tried to smile. Some novices had stretched out a blanket below him and the rector asked him to jump. The blanket was far out from the building, he thought, and seemed the size of a dust cloth. "No, I can't. I'm burning, Father."

The rector had tied sheets together himself, and they hung out the window below him. Scooping them up, he threw the end up to Mister Griffin, who caught it but then dropped it when he felt the skin of his burned hand rub off against the cloth. "I can't hold it, Father. My hands are burned."

"Then you have to jump, Mister. There's no other way." Griffin bent down, picked up some snow from the roof, and tossed it out towards the blanket. It flaked and drifted apart in all directions. He drew a breath as though he were going under water and leaped out. He hit the blanket squarely and rolled out into the snow. Then he found he could not move—all his body was hot and throbbing. Father Pat Sullivan had just been ordered out of the house by Brother Frost, and as he ran out from under the porte cochere at the front door, he saw Griffin jump. He came over and picked him up in his arms.

The small Buffalo truck which Cap Conklin drove into the yard was equipped with several short length of ladder and one two-section extension ladder framed in steel with aluminum rungs. While he, with Brother Murphy and some others helping him, unhooked the metal extension, some of the juniors took off one of the small ladders and ran it over to the rector's window. Father Corcoran came down the ladder and went immediately to the garage. He had seen Father Carroll lying motionless on the ground; and he was concerned about Mr. Griffin, who, leaning on Father Sullivan, had disappeared in the direction of Campion. He backed out the black Pontiac and had Father Carroll stretched out in the back seat. Tom Martone, a junior, drove off with him.

Father Peter Dolin, who lived in the first -floor room of the stucco tower directly below the rector, had awakened to

a thunder storm, with lightning flashes and frighteningly close thumps of thunder. He lay there hoping to drop back to sleep. Just as he first became conscious of the enormous heat in his room, the window near his bed smashed in. Mistery Young and Bob Braunreuther put their heads inside and yelled for him to come out. He was now on the ground, wandering around, a dazed old man of over seventy, lamenting the lost things.

Cap Conklin had work for his aluminum ladder. There were still seven people trapped on the third floor. Immediately above him as he climbed down from the cab of the Buffalo, on the northeast corner of the west wing he could see two figures clinging to the steep snow-covered roof. They were over to the right of where Wolf had just plunged from the breaking rope of sheets, almost at the corner of the building above the garage. In the near-freezing night one of them was dressed only in his shorts. He hung there naked, helpless and ugly like a just born bat, and as pitiful.

Brother McDavitt was the man in clothes on the roof. He had awakened in the room next to the novice trial dorm about five to ten minutes before this. His room was full of smoke, but like so many others that night, his immediate thought was of routine. The slow first motions of the fuzzy brain had no place for smoke. They persisted in recognizing only the familiar. There was noise in the hall, heat in the room; therefore, it was late. A tingle of apprehension, not fear of fire but of missing morning visit, swept him into full consciousness. And, as his smoke-filled room took on its true significance, he found himself through a momentary panic at a lesser evil prepared to act calmly in face of a greater. He opened his door to the horror of flames, shut it quickly, and began to dress.

The Jesuit brother is not, as in some other orders, ordinarily asked to undertake academic work of any kind. Though, of course, the brother is subject to the same "no conditions" vow of obedience as the priests and scholastics, ordinarily his assignments are to the unglamorous, essential and sanctifying tasks of kitchen, scullery, sacristy, refectory and the like. As the *Constitutions* in a rare essay at metaphor put it, the brother is "to be content with the role of Martha"—a floury-armed lady, it seems,

given to bustle and impatient efficiency. The brothers are not any more a typical group than the priests, as a matter of fact, and I think there must be fully as many brothers employed in clerical work as there are farmers and boilermakers; but, because the human mind is fashioned to form abstractions, to smear differences, inevitably there has arisen an archtypical image of the Jesuit brother. According to this image, he is a large, expansive man, cheery, perhaps boisterous, a mean hand with machines, and possessor of a bone-crushing handshake. To the small extent this image is justified, Brother McDavitt must be judged an atypical brother. He is just about medium height, but slender and finely drawn. His voice is thin and his pronunciation almost excessively nice.

Brother McDavitt, however, is another example of what almost became a law of inverse nature that night: that the natural heroes were allowed little scope while the meek inherited the perils. For this clerkish man became a one-night steeplejack and saved the life of Father Banks.

Father Banks was the man in his shorts. He had been one of the few who had awakened calmly this night. The smoke seeping into his room beneath his ill-fitting door told him when he first became conscious that there was a fire in the house, and he sat up quickly and began to dress. Father Banks lived two rooms down from the novice trial dorm (where Brothers Bergen and Wolf were, about this time, shouting futilely into the empty corridor) and three rooms down from Brother McDavitt. His room was the last but one from the northwest corner of the house. Brother Perry's was the last.

Father Banks had only just stripped off his pajamas and wiggled into his shorts when the door of his room burst open. Father Yumont, his across-the-hall neighbor, stood there shouting what he already knew: that there was a fire in the house. Father Yumont, who had crossed the corridor which no one else had found navigable since Father Tom Kelly had run off to the novitiate some ten minutes before, had panicked. He stood there only a few seconds, a shrill voice and a dark form, hooded in smoke, and he was gone again. But the clangor of his fear still rang in Father Banks' head. Yumont had left the door open, and

now the heat and fumes poured into the room in a great gelatinous mass. Father Banks' calmness shattered, and he scrambled through the window, out onto the slippery tiles, and hung there, terrified, clinging to the sill.

Brother McDavitt had gained the roof some seconds before this and squatted outside his window. He watched Mr. Griffin burst out and shouted encouragement to him. He had seen the novices from the trial dorm lower their sheets and decided he would edge over carefully and go down with them when they had finished. But when he saw Father Banks appear, naked and terrified, some thirty feet down the roof, he changed his plans. He called down to Father Banks that the gutter would hold a man's weight, he thought, that father should slide down to it and hook his heels into it. There was no response. Father Banks simply clung where he was, his feet continually slipping from under him with a frequency that was almost like a slow motion dance. Brother McDavitt had up to this point acted like the careful man he is, but now he turned daredevil. He slid to the gutter and began to walk along it. He passed the rope of sheets. Brother Redgate had just gone down, and Bergen was sliding down to the edge of the roof. McDavitt wished him luck and moved on. Seven or eight confident Bunyanesque strides took him along the thirty or so feet of shaky sheet metal to below Father Banks' window. He threw himself up towards the sill, and stretching out full length against the slope of the roof, he could just reach to the sill. He pulled himself up beside the shivering priest.

Nothing would persuade Father Banks to move. He would not even release his grip sufficiently to put on a coat. He fastened onto the window sill, and Brother McDavitt could do nothing but help hold him there.

Two of the novices from the trial dorm had gone down the rope of sheets successfully; Brother Wolf now leaned over the roof edge and prepared to go down himself. Father Banks suddenly wanted to jump. There was no point in waiting, and the heat blasting from the window was becoming overpowering. Desperately Brother McDavitt reasoned with him: at least try to get over to the sheets. It became a grim struggle and a losing one. The drowning man was about to overcome his rescuer. They had

turned out toward the driveway, and now saw the flashing red light from Conklin's truck coming down Rosary Lane. Father Banks slid down to the gutter, with McDavitt, still at the window sill, lowering him.

Perhaps a minute went by while the ladder was moved over to the wall. The gutter at this place was choked with ice, and Father Banks' bare feet could seem to find no firm grip. McDavitt stayed where he was, holding on, with one hand, to Father Banks' arm and, with the other, gripping the hot sill.

The ladder did not reach to the roof. Carefully Brother McDavitt let go of the sill and slid down beside Father Banks in the gutter. Father Banks lay back against the roof and seemed temporarily secure. He had become very calm. This last disappointment, it seemed, had even aroused his sense of humor, and he began to make the whole situation a joke.

Brother McDavitt crouched over the roof. The two-piece extension ladder had fallen back to a single length. It wavered back and forth some twenty feet below him. Conklin, on the ground, heaved up the extension for the second time. The tips came shooting up toward the roof, and fell back again. This time seven or eight feet short. The catch had not held. Conklin pushed the ladder upright, stepped up on the second rung, reached up and pushed mightily at the extension once again. The whole ladder veered crazily and smashed up against the wall, but this time it was only four or five feet short. One more heave and it sprung out at last to full length, the top barely resting on the edge of the gutter.

Brother McDavitt helped Father Banks down.

Around the back there was still great commotion. People had been rushing from one side of the house to the other calling up encouragement and advice to Father Grogan whose room was in the center of the north side facing the lodge. Father Yumont was faced out towards the west on the northwest corner; Father Hanlon clung beside Brother Bourrie to the window of his room far down the west side near the large tower. But most concern was beneath the window of the novice infirmary where, between the rifts in the clouds of smoke pouring out of the window and up from the windows on the second floor, they could see the anxious

face of young Brother Robert White.

Brother White had awakened to shouts in the corridor, perhaps those of Brothers Wolf and Redgate calling to the shadows they mistook for human. He dressed quickly, but when he got to his door, he could not hear anything except the bubbling and spitting of fire. He stood shouting to the voices he had heard, but received no answer. He was afraid to open the door because he was sure there must be flames right outside it, but finally, curiously, he did. A blast of heat scythed off his hair in a moment and drove him back, swinging on the knob. The momentary glance into the corridor convinced him there was no hope of escape that way, and even though he had slammed the door shut, the smoke, coming in the transom and around the lintels, sent him running to the windows.

He flung open the casements and kicked out the screen which someone had forgotten to take down in the fall. Sitting on the sill, he gasped for fresh air, but the smoke funneling up from the smashed windows of the second floor made breathing as difficult as though he were sitting behind an exhaust pipe.

At first there seemed to be no one below him on the ground, though with the smoke it was difficult to see. Further down the roof he could see Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie lying back along the pitch of the roof with their heels caught in the gutter. He shouted down to them, not with any purpose but merely as an expression of the desperate camaraderie of danger. Father Hanlon, concerned, shouted back instructions: if he could get his feet in the gutter as they had, perhaps he could move along it further down the roof and away from the smoke which was all around him. He lowered himself out the window, hanging by his hands; but there was no gutter. This room had been carved out of one originally much larger, one that had proved too prodigal with space after the Jesuits exchanged gracious living for utility; and this window, which had been thrown up between two of the gables, dropped directly off to the ground.

Brother White hung from the sill until he was sure his nervous kicking was not going to meet any gutter; then hastily he hoisted himself back in.

Now there were people below him. He could mistily see

them running down towards Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie with a ladder. It was the short ladder which some novice had found in the subcloister and it was the same ladder that they had used to take Father Ryan off the wall as he came out on sheets from the window of Father Carroll's bathroom. Brother White could not see the ladder very well; but Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie from their less smoky perch could, and they knew it was far too short to be of any use to the third floor. Father Hanlon called down that they would jump. But the man on the ground refused to allow them and told them to wait at least a short while longer.

By this time Brother White's own shouts had told the people on the ground that he was there and trapped. He called out that it was becoming impossible to breathe. Someone made the suggestion that he lash sheets and blankets together and attempt to come down to where they could at least see him and perhaps catch him in a blanket. He turned back into the infirmary, which by this time had filled completely with heavy clouds of smoke. He fumbled over to his bed, holding his breath, but he could only tear off one blanket before the need to breathe became desperate. He whirled around clutching the blanket, but now could not see the light from the window through the churning, thick-broth smoke. Dizzy, he fell to the floor and, crawling squint-eyed in the direction of the faint draft of fresh air which slid along the boards, he managed to find the windows again.

Now the men on the ground were calling to him to jump since they could see that there was scant hope he could survive very much longer in the black clouds which poured out around him. Six men held a blanket down in the floor of the subcloister, and five more stood around another blanket at the edge of the subcloister wall on the ground level about six feet above. With these two nets they felt sure they could catch him. But Brother White could not see them any more than they could see him. He shouted that he did not know where to jump.

The youngest man in the first year novice class, Brother White seems to have been a likeable and biddable youngster—in fact, his jump, when he finally made it, was an act of faith in which he threw himself, loose-limbed and relaxed, down four

stories to thin blankets he could not see. Had he fallen stiff with doubt and fear, he would have, according to the doctors, driven his legs up through his chest. But at the present he had no stomach for jumping. There must be some other way than such an insane leap. Again he yelled that he didn't know where they were.

Father Martin Ryan, who was one of those holding the higher blanket above the subcloister, had refused to encourage Brother White's jump. He knew in simple realism that it was the only chance, but so desperate a chance that he could not bring himself to encourage Brother White to take it. He absolved him (Bob Braunreuther heard him praying for him), he held the blanket, yet he could not tell him to jump. But now as the smoke from the second floor streamed up to the infirmary window, black and thick as though from the stack of a locomotive, Father Ryan finally shouted: "You have to jump, Brother. We'll catch you, but you must jump."

Still Brother White did not. Coughing, terrified, he remained peering through the momentary rifts for some other rescue. And it came. The aluminum extension ladder had taken down Father Banks and Brother McDavitt from the roof out in front of the house and, circling around back, it had already been used to rescue Father Yumont. And now it came jogging around the bend behind the kitchen porch with six or seven attendants carrying it, jiggling and jocund, like the central float in a harvest festival. Gleaming through the smoke, it came and went right past Brother White. The men on the ground, concentrating on the smoke-obscured infirmary window, did not see it, and the men carrying the ladder saw only Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie further down the roof.

Brother White almost despaired for a brief moment, but he, as a good religious, was trained to think of the needs of others; and the need to get Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie down—they had been out on the roof now nearly a half hour—was too evident to need argument. Just then the picture window in the refectory alcove which faced out to the west blew out, and Brother White could see a red glare, slick on the snow. For some reason, despite the terrible moments on the floor of the infirmary when he thought he would not get back to the window

again, despite the choked agony of the fifteen or twenty minutes he had fought for air hanging out in clouds of smoke, it was not until he saw the fire glow on the snow outside the tower that he actually realized that there was no alternative to escape except death. And for some reason buried in the psychology of Brother White, perhaps in the Councils of God, this realization calmed him. He watched the ladder being set against the house beneath Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie. It did not reach. So he was decided.

He called down to the blankets that he was coming. He threw down the blanket he had managed to rip from his bed as a marker and asked where it landed. It had hit the blanket on the floor of the subcloister, dead in the middle. "All set?" And he jumped.

Mr. Braunreuther, standing on the inside corner of the upper blanket, his back to the house, leaned back, craning his neck. He saw a shape coming hurling out of the smoke; it was the blanket. There was only a few seconds pause and Brother White came down. A bundle of shapeless cloth—for an instant he was sure it was another blanket—it suddenly grew arms and legs that pinwheeled and flapped uncontrollably. And, dear God! he was not going to hit the blanket at all. From the first moment the body broke out of the smoke, everyone knew it. Involuntarily, Braunreuther turned away.

Father Ryan, with a horror that was like nausea, saw Brother White's body tear through the edge of the blanket he was holding as though it were a Kleenex, slap against the wall, lightly but with an audible, meaty sort of impact, bounce off one of the men holding the blanket on the subcloister floor, and fall to the concrete. Father Ryan jumped down beside the crumpled Brother White, who lay with his legs crooked as a carpenter's rule, and tearfully gave him absolution once more and the apostolic blessing for the dying. It was then with utter astonishment that he heard him speak: "My leg is broken, I think."

Both legs were broken, as a matter of fact, and the right kneecap was smashed where it had cracked against the wall. All of his teeth had split when his chin bounced off the wall, but he was alive by the favor of God and courage of Brother Michael

Connolly. For it was Mike Connolly, another first year novice, who had broken his fall before he hit the concrete of the sub-loister floor. When he had first seen Brother White's body come plummeting out of the smoke, he knew instantly that he was not going to hit either of the blankets but fall between them. While the others automatically turned away, Connolly stepped directly underneath the hurtling body, trying to jerk the corner of the blanket he was holding around to catch him. White landed on his shoulder, smashing him to the ground and nearly tearing off his ear. Stopping square under a falling man is not an instinctive reaction; that moment of determined courage saved Brother White's life.

The ladder, as we said, had already taken down Father Yumont, who had spent some time forcing himself by syllogisms (no less!) to wait for it.

He had been in a tunnel, long, inky black, with an intermittent gleam of a fiery-red opening far, far off at the end of it, and a tunnel almost unendurably hot and oppressive. Three or four times the same dream repeated itself—a senseless, overheated tunnel, with himself buried deep in it unable to get out. And so, when he finally awakened to full consciousness, he was greatly annoyed. For a minute he was sure that the radiator was to blame, that the heat had not been turned off that night; but then, swiftly, realization came. There was the unmistakable sound of fire in the corridor, and small curls of smoke were rising along the mopboards.

He jumped out of bed, pulled on bathrobe and slippers while shouting and running over two or three times to pound on the wall behind his bed. Finally he heard Father Grogan in the next room answer that he was awake. He had been all action for a few moments, but suddenly he became indecisive. What was he supposed to do now? He was afraid, from the sounds outside his door, that the entire corridor was aflame and that, if he opened his door, the flames would rush in. Yet, he was not sure whether anyone else was yet awake. At last, with a curiosity like Brother White's and the realized need to do what he could to warn the others, he opened the door. The heat and smoke were, if anything, more intense than the others, who had done the same thing, expe-

rienced; for it was now after ten minutes to one. He ran across the corridor to Father Banks' room and gave warning, with the results that we know; then he returned to his own room.

He had suddenly been gripped by an incongruous anxiety. The new glasses he had bought a few days ago had cost forty-five dollars. He must get them before he went any further. At the same time he picked up his watch. Then back to the corridor again with the vaguely realized purpose of warning others and getting out himself some decent sensible way, like the stairs. He had not gone more than three or four steps before he once more was driven back to his room.

This time he headed for his windows, tripping over his typewriter case on the way, and knocking the slipper from his left foot. A push, made superhumanly strong by the force of the panic that was now rising in him, sent the storm window flying from its hasps out into the back driveway, and he hung out the window gasping.

Mr. Michael DeAngelis was out there, on the fire escape, not ten feet away. The fire escape came up to the junior infirmary where DeAngelis was living, finishing a year's convalescence from tuberculosis. He urged Father Yumont to crawl along the rain gutter to the escape and come down with him.

Now Father Yumont began his syllogisms: If he went along the gutter, he would be putting too much trust in a few inches of sheet metal. If he only trusted the gutter to support him for a few feet, he could then catch hold of the TV antenna from the fathers' recreation room that stood up out of the roof not far beyond the reach of his hand. But then, of course, just how much support could he expect from the frail antenna pole? On the other hand, he could not last long here, for the smoke was becoming suffocating. It was obvious that he would be forced to jump; and since it was better to jump now, while he was relatively clear-headed and thinking, than later, when perhaps he had panicked and would be unable to select a landing place three stories down with proper care and intelligence, he had better climb up on the sill and jump.

Father Yumont is a man with one of those strange, utterly rational senses of humor which is amused by the incongruous,

simply because it is incongruous. He is a living proof Schopenhauer's theory of laughter. He now takes great delight in telling about his "syllogisms." In reality, of course, they were mere enthymemes of panic—pure, wild, irrational suggestions, prompted by terror. But at the time he did not think so. He remembers congratulating himself on the lucidity with which arrived at the conclusion that he should promptly go out the window in a forty-foot leap to the rock-hard frozen ground. And his amusement with himself becomes intense when he describes how cleverly and rationally he rebutted his own argument.

He had just reached the point where jumping seemed the only possible conclusion from a careful consideration of all the alternative when someone below him—perhaps Father Campbell, perhaps Father Ryan—smashed out a window. He heard the glass shattering on the ground and he reasoned: "Lord, I can't jump down into broken glass. I've lost my slipper."

And with that brilliant conclusion of the scholastically trained practical reason, his mind reached a *quies mentis*: he simply must wait until someone could get there with a ladder; it was his only chance, as, indeed, it was.

Once more, after Father Campbell, down on the ground now, had shouted up a suggestion that he try to get to the fire escape, he attempted to fight his way through the corridor again down to the juniors' infirmary. It was hopeless after two steps down the hall. He ran back to his window and just held on to the conviction that someone would eventually come with a ladder.

When Cap Conklin did get to Father Yumont's window, the priest could not be seen from the ground, but someone managed to cross the wires in one of the old farm trucks parked out in the kitchen yard; and in the bounce-light from its headlights, his arms, desperately waving, could be glimpsed through the smoke. In stretching his foot down to the ladder (for it did not quite reach the third floor, and Cap Conklin had to hold it upright with no support from the building wall while Father Yumont climbed down), his other slipper fell off. When he got to the ground, he stood on a blanket, still rather sillily, perhaps, terrified of broken glass, shivering, his eyes and nose running; and while hordes of competent people went rushing past him,



The novices who entered in 1954. No photo exists of the class that entered in 1955, the summer before the fire. (Jesuit Seminary News photo)

he stood alone, with a hateful need to weep and weep, surging shamefully up his throat. But then, some novice or junior ran up excitedly to tell him that Brother White had jumped from the third floor and lay dying, that he must come and administer the last rites. For one fraction of time more he hesitated—that glass he had heard and his bare feet! And then, at last, the chrysalis of horror which had bound him cracked apart; he functioned again as a man and a priest without the tremble of those strange dream-like “syllogisms” that had directed his actions and saved his life. He ran off towards the subcloister.

Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie lived in adjoining rooms on the third corridor. Brother Bourrie is a Canadian brother who had come to Shadowbrook about ten years before to build up the Holstein herd. He had administered a prize herd in one of the Canadian houses; and when it was decided to sell it off, the then minister of Shadowbrook requested his services for the Shadowbrook farm. He is a dedicated and intelligent farmer and in the ten years he had been at Shadowbrook had built up a herd of registered cows and become well known among farmers and breeders of Holsteins all over New England. A positive man, he was affectionately called “the pope” by the novices and juniors who sweated under him pitching hay, cleaning up cow droppings, and trying to match his wit—a hopeless task, that last, for Brother Bourrie has a voice with a sword’s penetration and indomitable

will. Like all farmers I have ever met, he can give the impression of cryptic taciturnity on first encounter; but, work with him for a day, and you will find him an indefatigable gaffer, his raillery constant and persistent. A novice learning the brand-new lesson of Christian humility, which to the tyro assumes the lineaments of diffidence, was no match for his high-spirited clobbering.

A pose Brother Bourrie loved was that of the wise old man, knowledgeable and experienced in all things. Among his fund of vivid stories one was preeminent: The Time I Escaped from a Fire Which Razed a Canadian Scholasticate. I, myself, never knew the name of that scholasticate and, though I knew it would not be difficult for me to investigate its history in order to use it here, I decided to leave the facts, wrapped in their epic drapery and crowned with their nimbus of distant, mythic heroics, the way they first came to me from Brother Bourrie's tongue one day some ten years ago on the back of a hayrick. It is not that I fear history would contradict my remembrance of art; it is simply that I felt it would be an indignity even to attempt to test his narrative art by history—a lack of trust and a shocking aesthetic *gaffe*. Well, the point is that while many woke up in their beds that night shocked, unbelieving, and at least temporarily incapacitated, one man hopped out alert, brisk, an old hand at fires—Brother (the Pope) Bourrie.

That is, at least, the way he tells the story now, and no one who has witnessed his competence at barn and sawmill will feel inclined to question him. Yet, such is the irony of reality that, as clear-headed and experienced as he was, he could do practically nothing during the fire itself.

His room, as I mentioned before, was between Father Kelly's and Father Hanlon's on the west side of the third floor and directly opposite the elevator shaft. Only seconds after Father Kelly had banged on his door and run down towards the novice dormitories, the gas and smoke pouring out of the shaft ignited; and the hallway outside Brother Bourrie's room writhed with flame. Brother had been sitting on the edge of his bed, pulling on his boots and quickly scanning the various courses of action open to him. As he straightened up from knotting a lace, he saw the little eyespace of the keyhole red and glowing, then watched

a thin line of red stitch itself in the spaces where the door did not quite fit the jamb. He knew immediately that it would be fatal to open the door and that he must go out the window. All the plans for best rousing the house, for most effectively fighting the fire, which had gone charging through his mind in the past few moments, were routed. The one thing his experience told him clearly was that he could not go out that door. With the sad realization that a good man with fires was lost to the rest of the house, he snatched his bathrobe off the hook on the door, picked up a chair, and began to beat out the window glass. The collar of the robe was warm against his neck, and later he found it charred where it had rested against the heated door panels.

Only a few minutes after he had climbed out on the roof, the window of Father Hanlon's room was thrown open, and Father Hanlon put his head out, calling that the smoke was unbearable in his room. Brother Bourrie, lying back along the pitch of the roof with his feet in the gutter, told him to come out onto the roof. Father Hanlon scrambled through the window, and, squatting, came sliding down the pitched tiles to the gutter. He stood bolt upright in the frail copper trough to peer over the side and almost gave Brother Bourrie heart failure. "Lie back along the roof as I am, and use the gutter only to catch your heels in, Father."

Then the two of them stayed there. There was nothing to be done: the three-floor drop offered them either the stone stairway to the novice toilets or else the concrete floor of the subcloister as possible landing places. There was no possibility of climbing down, though the thought of scrambling across the roof to the large tower did occur to them and was rejected as fantastic. The rough stone work of the tower might have allowed a human fly to climb down it, but it was obviously out of the question for an elderly breeder of Holsteins and a balding clergyman.

They heard the sound of smashing glass when Father John Post broke through his window; and in the crisp March night his soft grunt, as he broke his back, came clearly up to their perch. There were the wild shouting attempts to get Brother White out of his clouds of smoke and onto the roof, and the short-lived hope that the ladder with which the novices and juniors were

running back and forth could reach up to them. But mostly it was waiting.

In the beginning they had been alone, perhaps for ten or twelve minutes. Then there were people scurrying aimlessly below them; but, after the first comfort of knowing that others were aware of their plight, the sight of them safe on the ground only made their sense of loneliness more intense because it pointed out how frighteningly hopeless their position was. Brother Bourrie's bastioned confidence began to spring leaks. He had asked for absolution when they first came on the roof. They had both prayed, at first, in simple altruism, for those who might be still caught inside, unable to gain a quiet corner of the roof as they had; but later, as the minutes went by, a thin line of desperation seamed their prayers, which were still the silent prayers of men who, even if religious, find it difficult to manifest piety. Brother Bourrie asked again for absolution. And later, again, until Father Hanlon asked quietly, "And who absolves me, Brother?"

They had planned their jump: it would have to be off to the left and quite far out. If they could get enough drive with their feet from the gutter without the gutter giving way, they should be able to miss the stone stairwell and land on the ground outside the refectory windows. From this height there was probably not much to choose anyway.

Then the ladder came. They had been told it was coming, but after nearly a half-hour of desperation and cold they had thought grimly that it was only a kindly fiction. They had made themselves think of jumping and braced their wills against the thought, and the sight of the ladder jouncing towards them out of the night was simply too like the United States Cavalry to be credible. But it came, was handed upright with wondrous dispatch, and did not reach. Brother Bourrie, now as careless of his weight on the gutter as Father Hanlon had been earlier, leaned over shouting: "Put her on the gas tank. Stand it on that gas tank there."

About three feet tall, squat, shaped like a circus strongman, the gas tank fed the kitchen stoves. There was a nest of them underneath the overhang of the subcloister, more shapely affairs like a grouping of candles; but this one stood outside on

the ground, and why it had been set there, instead of below with its more graceful brothers, no one seems to know.

The width of the ladder just about measured the width of the tank, and placed on top of the tank the ladder reached to just below the gutter where they were lying. It had to be held onto the sloping sides of the gas tank, but Cap Conklin proved strong enough for that. And down they came.

Everyone was now out of the house but Father Grogan. The ladder crew had passed him by when they ran from the northeast corner of the western wing where they had taken Father Banks and Brother McDavitt down from the roof around to Father Yumont's window on the northwest corner. They started back for him now.

The ladder crew had gone by Father Grogan's window because he told them to. Many who were in the fire have reproached themselves since because they did not do something other than what they did in the excitement and press of the emergency, others have claimed they were calm and thinking throughout, but after talking to scores of witnesses, I am convinced that the accolade for coolness must go to Father Grogan before anybody else.

Father Grogan, string-thin and sickly looking with a little clown's tuft of hair in the center of a naked forehead, looks like a nineteenth-century satirical engraving, a Tenniel illustration for Bob Cratchit or one of Dicken's other wage slaves. His unhealthy appearance was come by honestly, for during his theology studies he was violently ill and nearly died. Being despaired of by doctors seems at least in his case to have a tonic effect, for he is now a man of preternatural calm.

He woke to noise and smoke and got up. He opened the door only a crack and knew that he was not going out into that hallway. From that point on he did everything, as he always does everything, deliberately. Father Yumont was yelling at him from the next room; so he answered that he was fine, everything was fine. Brother Gabriel was yelling outside the window, and there was a good deal of smoke in the room; so he opened the small sliding pane in the storm window and poked out his head. Brother Gabriel called to him that the fire was very serious and told him to smash out the storm window so he could get air. He

carefully unhooked the window and stood leaning out, holding it awkwardly in both hands. Brother Gabriel told him to drop it. But Father Grogan thought that, when all this noise and excitement was finally over and the fire extinguished, the minister would prefer to have his storm windows intact. He inquired whether the brother thought it really necessary. Told it was; he dropped it, wincing slightly at the crash.

He had dressed, of course, suit, hat, overcoat and rubbers, and debated whether to take the Hamilton or not. It seemed clear that, should he finally be forced to vacate the building before the fire was put out, it would be by ladder, and the Hamilton (a famous watch in the New England province—Father Grogan’s maternal care of his timepiece was one of the better known eccentricities of Ours) could easily be jarred on the descent. He decided to leave it, and it perished alone and unattended.

Now there was nothing to do but wait, head out the window in the smoke that was becoming increasingly difficult to bear as it poured out around him from the room behind and funneled up from the windows below, in which, as those on the ground could see, flames had already begun to blossom. The smoke soon became so thick that Father Grogan, like Brother White on the other side of the house, could only be glimpsed at intervals, while the rest of the time his head and shoulders were completely hidden in the black clouds.

There were so many people running back and forth in the road behind the house that Father Grogan was sure he would not be forgotten; but after a time, coughing and distinctly uncomfortable, he began to wonder how serious this all was, and whether, in fact, he might not be unable to get out at all. It was a disturbing thought and forced him, against his inclinations, to disturb others.

He pulled out his handkerchief and began apologetically waving it to attract attention: “Doctor, say, doctor. Oh look, doctor, if you get a chance would you see about getting a ladder around here sometime? It’s getting very smoky here.” And as the novice or junior rushed off: “Take your time, doctor.”

The small ladder which had been used to pluck Father Ryan from the wall, and unsuccessfully for Father Post, had gone

past on the road several times, now in the hands of an excited crew who were running back and forth looking for people in second-floor windows. But not once had they glanced upward and seen him. Regretfully he began semaphoring again with his handkerchief: "Hello. I'm up here. Hello."

Someone stopped and craned up. "Can you hold out a while longer, Father? We'll get there."

"Sure thing, doctor. It's a little smoky here now, though."

So the aluminum ladder, too, went past him, and only when Fathers Yumont and Hanlon and Brother Bourrie were on the ground did it return.

By this time his window was erased entirely in a black smudge of smoke, and no one was sure where to set the ladder. Father Grogan, now able to breathe only in quick little gasps through the arm of his overcoat crooked before his face, had taken to waving his handkerchief with outrageous impatience almost continually. He saw the gleaming top of the ladder come poking up through the smoke and rest about two feet to one side of his window. With nearly an athlete's grace he stepped over to it and started down.

Those on the ground saw him emerge from the billows, an Ichabod Crane with skinny, angular shanks, walking awkwardly down the rungs the wrong way, but with, in the midst of the bedlam of burning, great dignity, hatted and gloved, collared and rubbered—a moving sight of courage and comedy.

One of the juniors started up the last few rungs and offered him his shoulder. "Save it for *manualia*, doctor," he said, patting him down ahead of him. "Is everybody out?"



## CHAPTER EIGHT

*All But Four*

The hill behind the house had filled with Berkshire people watching the fire destroy this brash, arrogant, and relatively young house, which had become an object of affection for even the dourest and most tradition-minded Yankee there. As the aesthete might at this distance feel affection for Barnum or the most socially conscious undergraduate for Rockefeller's dimes, the house had become part of his scene, a slice of his personal history.

Down in the driveway, firemen, shapeless in their rubber coats, scurried around directing the pitiful streams of water into what were now massive towers of flame, invincible and exultant. The Stockbridge brigade had arrived as well as trucks from Lenoxdale, a ladder truck from Pittsfield, and trucks from Lee, Dalton, Lanesboro, West Stockbridge, Interlaken and Glendale. There was really nothing they could do. Three hoses were now hooked on the Richmond Road hydrant, and two more were drawing a thin trickle from the house hydrant which Brother Frost had uncovered. But nothing was going to stop the fire.

At one-fifteen there was an explosion from the kitchen corridor behind the express porch. Twenty gallons of paint in five-gallon drums had been delivered only two days before and were stored temporarily in the corridor until someone had opportunity to bring them down to the cellar paint shop. It is



The building in flames, taken from the southeast side of the building. (*Berkshire Eagle* photo)

supposed they caused the explosion which blew out the windows of the express porch and sent the fire leaping past the fire wall in the middle of the house into the parlor area on the first floor and juniorate library on the second. From that point on there was nothing to be done, except pour on the little water available and watch.

Father Corcoran, after he had been assured by Father Sullivan that Mr. Griffin had been taken to the hospital by Jim Quinn of Lenox, had run to the back of the house where Brother White and Father Post were lying.

When Father Post had fallen, he lay on the ground in the sure knowledge that his back was broken. One of the novices, Brother Joe Doherty, rushed down to him and asked him whether he could get up. He replied that perhaps it would be better if he remained where he was until he could be moved. But in a short while, embers shooting up out of the flames which had broken through the roof on the other side of the house began to shower down into the subcloister, and pieces of tile began to fall from the roof. It was felt that he must be moved. Mr. J. Gould, who had run

over from his home when he first saw the flames, and some of the novices dragged Father Post along the concrete floor of the sub-loister to the edge of the stairs. They left him lying with his head on the third stair and his broken back stretched over the points of the first two. He had been there now for about twenty minutes watching the rescue of Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie and agonizing through the drama of Brother White's leap. He had asked Brother Doherty to say the rosary with him, "... since," he apologized, "I can't seem to concentrate, Brother, and there are people in danger who need prayers."

After Brother White had jumped and Father Hanlon was safely on the ground, Father Post told the novices around him that Father Hanlon would be in charge from now on and that they were to do whatever he told them. From this point on there were moments when he lost consciousness briefly, but for the most part he remained alert and in pain.

When Brother Frost arrived at the back of the house, he decided that Father Post should be left at the edge of the stairs until an ambulance could come with a stretcher. Four ambulances came to Shadowbrook that night—the Red Cross ambulances from Lee and Lenox, the town ambulance from Lanesboro and the Civil Defense ambulance from Pittsfield—but such was the jam of cars and fire trucks along the road that not one of them got through to the house. Everyone who went to the hospital eventually went in private cars.

About five minutes past one it became evident that because of the falling tiles and embers Brother White and Father Post would have to be moved without waiting for special equipment: Brother Frost was also concerned about the underground oil tanks which were buried only a few feet away. He wished he had been able to close that second shutoff. He and Brother Vincent Connolly, a burly ex-marine novice, threw themselves against the cellar bulkhead door, trying to get in to the second shutoff valve and also to find some lengths of board from which to improvise stretchers. But the stout door, unlike the ones in the "tough guy" detective novels, would not yield. Then Brother Frost remembered that the small pickup truck which was parked just out behind him in the shadows had an old plank thrown over the back which

might do. It, did not quite match Father Post's length, and his feet hung down on either side. But they managed to get him over to the truck.

The pickup had recently been used to transport some pigs to the slaughterhouse, and the leavings made the back of the truck something less than hygienic, but it would have to do. There were no keys for the truck, but they crossed the ignition wires, and it drove off with Brother Frost at the wheel and Brother Manning in the back with Father Post.

Brother Connolly called on his remembrance of marine training and constructed a makeshift stretcher out of blankets to carry Brother White on. Young White was moaning quite loudly until the men carrying him told him that they were forced to hurt him to get him away from that spot. He quieted immediately. They had been told that the Cranwell station wagon was out in front of the house, so they carried him out around front, slowly, carefully shuffling along to reduce the number of jounces. But Father Banks, hearing that there were injured in the back of the house, had already driven the station wagon back out to the Richmond Road where he was now trying to navigate the entangled hose lines and skidding ice. So they had to put Brother White in the back seat of a car belonging to Mr. William Gregory of Lenox, cautiously easing his crumpled legs into the cramped space.

With the injured gone to the hospital, the drama slowly subsided to tableau. The firefighting went on in a hopeless sort of ritualistic mime, but the crowd, tiered along the ledge, simply stood watching, their faces ruddy in the spilled light from the thunderous spectacle of destruction. There was a proud splendor to the death of his house which, I think, would have pleased old Anson Stokes—nothing but “the largest private residence in America” could have splashed its colored defiance so splendidly across the winter night. Anna Mahony, on one of her many hasty trips in and out, overheard one schoolboy say to another in reverent tones: “Gosh, what a composition this is going to make!”

The adults, too, were not impervious to the magnificence of the fire; but, being adults, they were capable of tragedy.



The ruins the next day. (*Berkshire Eagle* photo)

Edna Millay, one of the latest of the Berkshire poets, tells us: “Childhood is a kingdom where nobody dies . . .”; for children, who only know the world as it exists at their own nerve-endings, never know loss. One must be able to transform sensation into thought before a bridge is built between man and man, for only by reflection can one know another’s pain for his own. Truly to define loss, we must learn to love because love, the precious pain of mature men, is the only thing that compels us to reflection.

The crowd that stood that night in the snow on the slope and ledges behind Shadowbrook or climbed among the rocks of the Lourdes shrine that faced the porte cochere spoke mostly in whispers, breathy with sympathy and loss. The groups of Red Cross workers, going about with cups of coffee and sandwiches for the firemen, seemed to create a kindliness that was as earthy, practical and as welcome as everyman’s cliché memories of home—here brisk and hearty, here the poor, bracing joke, here a mere smile or silence. They used all the ancient, tender tropes in the rhetoric of sympathy and used them with a deeply felt, unobtrusive eloquence. Men and women, one after another, approached the fathers, who stood in slippers or with their

bare feet in flopping rubbers, some dressed in habits, some in mismatched pants and coat, others hunched under blankets covering the sunbursts, sailboats or palm trees on their thin and unmonastic pajamas, to offer jackets, scarfs, coffee, the use of their cars, their homes. At least a dozen of the fathers and some of the novices and juniors were told how many extra beds could be spared in homes in nearly every town for miles around. Mrs. Gould told Father Corcoran she was ready to turn the Higginsons' ancestral farmhouse into a dormitory where she, her daughter and her staff would cook the meals. The number and names of these generous people have been lost unfortunately in the ruck of that night's confused memories; and those offering money, clothes, food, sympathy to every bewildered, smoke-blackened Jesuit they met were so many it can be doubted they could ever be recalled even had the circumstances been tranquil. It was the first sluice of a cataract of charity whose full tide would not be known until the rest of the Berkshires woke tomorrow.

There was only one note out of harmony, for, it seems, a young man with the loud, eternally childish voice of the village atheist chose this moment gauchely to boast his captaincy of soul. None of this religion muck for him, and look where it's brought these birds with their rosaries and mutterings!

St. Ignatius had an acid test for holiness (and rarely has a test been more acid). No one, according to his tough-minded realism, can be said to understand and live Christianity unless he accepts insult and contumely in silence and with the joy which Christ, knowing that such was His salvific work, accepted the mindless jeers of Herod's court. The fathers passed one half of Ignatius' test that night on the firelit hill, but Father Martin Ryan frankly admits that he at least miserably flunked out when it came to joy. He was raging. He dug his nails into his palms, and perhaps was only saved from retorting by the intervention of state trooper Eugene Burns, who angrily told the young Voltaire to "shut his trap or beat it." For it was now about two-thirty and the fathers knew that four men were dead.

For some reason Father Muollo and Brother Perry had been missed almost immediately after the first men had gotten out of the house. Attempts were made to get into both rooms.

One of the short ladders from the truck which Ed Conklin drove was up against Father Muollo's second-floor window, while the other was still being used for Father Grogan's descent. Brother Frost first attempted to get in the room but was driven back by the smoke. Then trooper Burns, who had put on a respirator and taken one of the firemen's large, battery-powered trouble lamps, climbed up the ladder. He reported that the smoke and heat were so intense that he could not enter the room at all, but he did manage to make sure that it was empty. The heavy smoke was shifting sufficiently so that standing at the window he was able to shine his lamp into all corners. He knew it would be impossible to go further into the house than this room for, even standing outside as he was, the blast of heat was beginning to melt the metal parts of his respirator.

When Father Grogan had reached the ground, Ed Conklin tried to get into Brother Perry's room. The long extension ladder was put up again at the same corner of the house where he had rescued Father Banks and Brother McDavitt because Brother Perry lived in the room adjacent to Father Banks' toward the north. This time the ladder slid up to position smoothly and Ed Conklin scrambled up it. He went past the second floor and was driven back by the smoke. Chief Hutchinson gave him a respirator and he tried again—all the way to the top and up the slippery roof tiles until he could clutch the window frame with one hand while he smashed in the glass with the other. Chief Hutchinson and the others on the ground watched his work anxiously.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to recapitulate the feats of Cap Conklin. He had been at the fire now about twenty minutes; and in that brief, action-filled period he had rescued six men who without him were surely lost: Father Banks, Brother McDavitt, Father Yumont, Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie, and Father Grogan. And it was a ladder from his truck which was used to take Father Corcoran down. A burly, powerful man, he had little help at first in yanking the extension ladder from the hooks on the truck and throwing it up against the side of the building to bring down Brother McDavitt and Father Banks. When the ladder catch did not work, it was his controlled, desperate heaves that finally shot it to full length and his strength which mainly



Rev. Stephen A. Mulcahy, S.J., who taught Latin and Greek to the juniors.



Rev. Arthur B. Tribble, S.J., foot. who was Minister of the Shadowbrook community.

braced it against Father Yumont's weight when Father Yumont leaped on to it before it had been set against the wall. He held it on top of the curved gas tank to get it up to Father Hanlon and Brother Bourrie and directed it blindly through the dense smoke pouring around Father Grogan's room. There was an impression around during the days following the fire that he was able to do much that he did because the aluminum ladder was so light and easily handled. May I call attention to the fact that the upright struts of the ladder are structural steel? I know because, with Johnny Loubard a dourly amused witness, I attempted one day in the Lenox fire barn to hoist one end of the ladder off its stanchion on the side of the small Buffalo. One of the minor sorrows of my high school days was my lack of athletic accomplishment; still I am no weakling. With a fairly hefty heave which let my midriff know it had been in a contest, I did manage to get it into the air about a

foot. Eddie Conklin was on vacation during the time I was in Lenox. After tracking him for several days, I found him late one afternoon riding in on the back of a hayrick from the fields (not his own) where he was working. I had, of course, heard most of the details of his rescues from other witnesses, but I hoped he would be able to fill me in on the stories and make them more vivid. His is the one story I can repeat almost verbatim.

"Sometime before one o'clock Mary Shalley called me up and told me they had a fire at Shadowbrook. I didn't believe her, so I said, 'Aw, you're kidding, Mary.' She had Hutch on the phone at the same time and he said, 'Go down there in the Buffalo, Cap. I'll be right along.' So I took the Buffalo and drove down there. When

I got into the yard I saw that it was going to be a bad one, and there was somebody coming down a sheet off the third floor. He fell maybe twenty feet when the sheet he was on broke. And I saw some others sitting on the roof. I radioed Hutch to bring all the help he could get. Then I got out the metal ladder, and we got the two on the corner of the house down. Then they told me there were some more trapped on the roof in the back. So we got them down. By that time the La France had hooked up to the Richmond Road hydrant. So we poured water on it, but it didn't do much good."

Asked to amplify, to give details, any little thing he remembered, Ed Conklin added that one of the men on the roof was sitting out there with nothing on but his shorts. I told him I would have to bill him as a modest hero, and under the hay dust he blushed—unless it was the slant rays of the sun which happened to color his face. Chief Hutchinson, after forty-five years of training and directing Lenox firemen, calls Ed Conklin "a good fireman"—an accolade in the long tradition of Yankee meiosis, but spoken with an un-Yankee-like emphasis.

When Cap Conklin had broken the glass of Brother Perry's window, the heat came driving up against him with the force of a gale. He fought into it and got one leg over the sill before he realized, as Gene Burns had done in Father Muollo's room, that it was impossible to go further. The room was almost pitch black and he could see nothing. The heat drilling in through his rubber coat and burning around the edges of his breathing mask convinced him that no one was alive who had been in this room more than a few minutes. So he backed out, slid down the roof to



Bro. Henry A. Perry, S.J., who was a carpenter and in charge of the physical plant.



Rev. Henry B. Muollo, S.J., the community treasurer.

the ladder and climbed to the ground.

Father Muollo and Brother Perry, then, were known to be dead. The little group of fathers standing around Father Corcoran underneath the Lourdes shrine were sick with helplessness and nagging memories. The flames rampaging now through the entire west wing burned in their eyes and seared deeper. They knew that some were still inside among them and would never leave.

Some time shortly after one-thirty the rector asked where Father Tribble was. He was awake, he had heard him on the phone. And Father Mulcahy? Had anyone seen him?

The next hour was a hell of inquiries, search, contradictions and hopes that rose hectic as fever and guttered out until they died around half past two. And the total was established at four.

Father Sullivan was positive that it was too high. He had awakened Father Tribble before anyone else; the minister was certainly out of the house. He had talked with Father Mulcahy in the corridor before he ran upstairs; there was plenty of time for him to escape. Neither of them could possibly be still there: they had gone to the hospital in someone's car, they had accepted some kind offer to go home with someone and get warm, or possibly they were stunned and wandering around the woods. Father Sullivan gradually weakened in his certainty of Father Mulcahy's safety—perhaps, because of his hip injury, he had fallen. But it was two days before he gave up all hope that Father Tribble would be found. "He had so much time!" No one there had heard Father Carroll's story yet, and no one then realized how long Father Tribble stayed in his room pleading into a dead phone for the help he finally won for others.

But Father Corcoran knew his minister, and he was much more ready to accept the fact that Father Tribble had not escaped than anyone else. His argument was simple and eventually irrefutable: "If Arthur got out he'd be in the middle of things right now."

A check was made of the novices and juniors. The manuductor, leaning against the fender of one of the fire trucks, wrote out the names on an old piece of cardboard. They were all safe.

One of the juniors was sure he had seen Father Tribble; he recognized his stocking cap. But it proved to be one of the volunteer firemen. Someone saw Father Mulcahy limping around the back of the house. A trick of the flickering light. A wild story that Brother Perry was in the porter's lodge trying to call up the fire department. But no one could find who began it, and the porter's lodge was red with flames.

Up and down, giddy as the colored globes which burst behind closed eyelids when the dark remembers light, these fancied hopes came and went, less and less strong until, at around two-thirty, their hour was over; and for the fathers standing in the orange brilliance of the huge blaze, everything went finally dark: four had died, Fathers Mulcahy, Muollo and Tribble, and old Brother Perry.

There is a dullness to tragedy. When catastrophe is happening, the activated glands, I suppose, send blood charging around, stimulate the nerves and reflexes; and a man feels alive—sometimes (this must be the allure for adventurers) brilliantly so. But let the great event wink out, let a pause come for reckoning, and all the thrills turn tawdry like memories of spent youth. So the fathers stood and watched the burning house, dully, sated with spectacle and heavy with sorrow. Perhaps something like these precise biographies were passing through their minds, only much more personal ones and poignant, while the persistent taunt of past possibilities, which is the core of human sorrow, picked at their consciousness. "Could I have done something I did not do?" "Was there any chance, if I had only ...?" And, "Dear God, give them rest."

The fire, like a knife, sheared off the entire chapel ceiling in a single stroke. And the expanse of quartered oak, carved in whorls, fell like a collapsing canopy in a glitter of flames and embers. But it meant nothing to the men on the hill, except that now the entire house was surely lost and it was time to leave. The west wing was rapidly burning itself out. Nothing but the masonry, massive yet somehow pathetic, remained; and here and there, through chinks where the mortar had been baked and crumbled, flames could be seen still burning behind it as through the frets of a brazier. The large tower stood alone, cracked and

slightly tipsy with fallen debris aflame at its base. And now with the fall of the chapel ceiling, the east wing was doomed.

"It's getting too cold to stand here any more, Tom." Father Corcoran, noticing that Father Kelly was shaking, suggested, "Let's get out of here."

So a word of thanks to the firemen and they drove off, down along the inside road around the lake to the causeway opposite and facing Baldhead, where they could see the fire brilliant on its ledge platform curveting against the mountain. They watched it a few minutes in silence; then Father Corcoran turned the car around and headed it towards Cranwell. It was just after three-thirty.

They expected to find the novices and juniors bivouacked in the Cranwell gymnasium. During the anxious hour when they had been trying to establish who was missing, Father Larry Ryan had come to Father Corcoran and suggested that he get the novices and juniors away from the scene since most of them were not dressed against the cold. He told the rector that he would take care of all arrangements and see that they had heat, something warm to drink and were put to bed. Father Ryan hadn't a clue as to how he was going to accomplish all these things, but they needed doing and that is why the Society has ministers. Cranwell had very few extra beds. Chief Hutchinson had told him that he had the authority to open the town hall for emergencies and he would be very glad to do it if shelter was needed. Father Ryan gratefully refused because he already decided on the Cranwell gym. He made one more quick trip to the school, turned on the lights and the heat in the gymnasium, reported to Father Keane, the rector of Cranwell, on the situation; and firmly insisted over Father Keane's protests that it would be much more useful if the rector stayed at the school answering the phone calls which the Lenox exchange had begun diverting to Cranwell. He could also call the provincial. As Father Ryan drove back to Shadowbrook, he was still concerned with the problem of beds. Where was he ever going to find enough beds for one hundred and fifty men? And how was he going to transport so many to Cranwell? He supposed that he could find enough cars with willing owners, but it proposed to be a messy job. And transporting them in small

lots like that would make it difficult to check on the missing—the way those kids were running around it was going to be hard enough anyway.

This was the problem foremost in his mind as he inched his car in through the clutter of cars to the Shadowbrook gatehouse again. So when he ran into Dave Herrick, the first thing he said was, “Dave, where could I get some buses this time of night?”

“Chick Fuore, Father. Hey, Chick.” And Chick was standing, like a character in a badly written play, about five yards away. He was a volunteer fireman and proprietor of Chick’s Garage in Lenox, where the town’s school buses were kept. He took Dave’s car and drove off for the buses.

Father Larry then told Father Burke to contact the manufacturer and the junior beadle and tell them to round up their people, check them and come down to the gatehouse at the end of Rosary Lane. And he went off, still concerned about beds.

Anna Mahony had not been inactive. She was just braking a snorting car at the gate, having returned from another trip to Lee where she had opened the Congregational Church as an emergency kitchen and possible shelter. It was the shelter problem she intended to face now. Chick brought in the buses while Anna was making a brief survey of the activity over at the Gould farmhouse; and when she returned, the novices and juniors were boarding them with Father Ryan overseeing the operation. She inquired what his plans were. Told that the only thing necessary was beds, she said, “All right, that’ll be my problem, Father,” and set out again for her still warm car.

But a policeman who had been listening in during the first part of the conversation now walked over from a car he just finished questioning and told Father Ryan that the owner of the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge offered his hotel as shelter for the whole community. There would be no need of makeshift and “boy-scoutery” in the barn-like gymnasium; it was a perfect answer. Father Ryan happily agreed and ran out to catch Anna Mahony before she jetted off into the night.

Byrne Bauer was the Red Lion Inn’s proprietor and also the Red Cross disaster chairman in the town of Stockbridge.

Doctor Campbell of Stockbridge had been alerted, as had most of the nearby doctors, and his wife thought to call Byrne Bauer. She told him that apparently the entire community was out in the cold and that they needed blankets before anything else. That call was what had brought Bauer, his station wagon loaded with blankets, over to the Shadowbrook gate and a fortuitous questioning by the policeman who had overheard the discussion between the worried Father Ryan and the competent Miss Mahony.

“What’s your business here, sir?”

“I’m Byrne Bauer, officer. I run the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, and I have some blankets in the back there.”

“The Red Lion, huh? Fine. Go back and open up your hotel. These kids need shelter.”

And that is how the Shadowbrook community was moved to the Red Lion Inn. No one has been able to identify the disposing policeman who managed the whole affair. A god out of the machine, disguised like a cop, he has faded away back to his empyrean. And the badly plotted drama reached its happy ending.



## 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.



The morning after the fire, novices in surplus army overcoats walked from the Red Lion Inn to attend Mass at St. Joseph's Church in Stockbridge. (*Berkshire Eagle* photo)

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)

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 manuductor 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 manuductor, 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 Champion 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.

was greeting the dozens of people who had come with boxes and piles of clothing and shoes, telling them what had happened and trying desperately to remember all

their names in order later to thank them formally—a hopeless task, it proved. And he did not even notice the arrival of the provincial and his assistant. Father Sullivan saw them but could only wave abstractedly for he was manning the telephone at the registration desk, talking to reporters and anxious families who had just heard the news. It was slightly disconcerting to their administrative souls to find such high-keyed normality where they expected hysteria.

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 eighty-three, 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



Shadowbrook community members who were sent to the novitiate/juniorate at Wernersville, Pennsylvania, after the fire. No photos exist of the other two groups, who were sent to Plattsburgh, New York, and Poughkeepsie, New York.

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.



## EPILOGUE

**I**t was in July that I visited Shadowbrook to gather material for this report. Except for one brief visit six years before, it was the first time I had returned since my own novitiate.

The hills were hung with swelling summer, the air heady with the odor of growth and future things, but I had come for elegy. I remember that on that previous brief visit I had reveled in recollection. Each bend and turn along the ready-made perspectives and memory-shortened distances had proffered recognition, and my single steps beat out assent. But now all my senses rejected every sight, every occasion. The ragged, hip-deep lawns brought protests, and the ratty gardens. But the house, where nothing but its lonely porte cochere still stood, was a dump of twisted, rusted metal, which-way heaps of rocks that once had soared, and dirty, evil-smelling rubble. The first reaction at the sight was swift, unthinking outrage, then a swell of awful pathos. The pity of this fall involved more than a long-dead architect, and his purse-proud client: somehow with the smashing of these pretensions I was less, and all who had lived here and loved its grandeur, no matter how qualified their love had been, were smaller than they were.

I sat down on the white stone steps which once connected the lower terrace to the massive porches. It was about eight o'clock of a midsummer's evening, the light appropriately crepuscular,

and a small, pale curl of moon grew brighter in the eastern sky as the darkness moved towards Stockbridge Mountain. Mahkeenac was gray and still, and I sat there inevitably picturing impossible days of gaiety when it giggled beneath a technicolored sun. For elegies are built, like desperation, on a past which memory falsifies.

The novices of future years would live in an efficient, undistinguished building of a vaguely “contemporary design” and never know the mixed blessings of dwelling in the midst of mouldering splendor. I pitied them. I let my mind wander: the cotillions of Victorian balls whirled again to music incongruously Viennese, while Father Rector ordered eggs from smiling novices in a Christmas morning dining room, which, hung with ropes of laurel rich against the quiet wood, offered through cineramic windows a snowscape of travel-poster pines and distant sculptured mountains.

I tired of this self-indulgence, finally. The old house was opulent with memories, true, but the many facets of its rich, short life would never yield to sophomoric reverie. I was a reporter concerned with surfaces and must be content to let the gathered facts make what patterns they were able.

I lit a cigarette and began to walk around the ruins, pacing off distances, reconstructing the movements of the night when Fathers Kelly, Sullivan, Carroll and all the rest had groped along the raging corridors of the dying mansion. Suddenly, with a return of futile rage I threw down my cigarette and ground it to the gravel.

## POSTSCRIPT

When the fire occurred, fundraising was already underway and architectural plans were in hand for a new and larger novitiate and juniorate, to be built on open farmland and pasture some 400 yards west of the old building. Construction was put on an accelerated timetable and in the late fall of 1958 the new Shadowbrook received its first group of novices. The building was spacious and charmless, with a non-descript brick and concrete exterior and much painted cinderblock inside. Its scale made it seem even less homelike since it was conceived for an expanding number of vocations, which never became a reality.

The building served as a novitiate for only a dozen years. Vatican II set in motion currents of change in the church and religious orders quickly speeded up their own pace of renewal. The documents of the Jesuits' 31st general congregation, which ended in 1966 just after the council, emphasized that Jesuit formation is for apostolic ministry and contained a carefully worded set of statements that amounted to saying that novitiates should not be remote from the world where young Jesuits are going to work. This official encouragement reinforced—perhaps, more accurately, responded to—the desires already bubbling up from below for a less isolated and rural Jesuit formation.

In 1969, the juniorate program was moved to Boston College and the scholastics lived in several Boston locations. In 1970, the novitiate was relocated to the largely vacant building in Weston, Massachusetts, where the philosophy and theology studies programs had been (the former by now at Boston College

and the latter in Cambridge). A year later the novitiate moved to Boston's Back Bay. The new Shadowbrook stood empty until, in 1983, it was finally sold to Kripalu, originally an ashram community with roots in Indian religious tradition, now a secular yoga and wellness center. Since Cranwell prep school, on the other side of Lenox, had closed in 1975, with the sale of the Shadowbrook property the Jesuits' institutional presence in the Berkshires came to an end.

~ J. A. A.

## JESUITS ASSIGNED TO SHADOWBROOK AT THE TIME OF THE FIRE

### **Administrators and Faculty**

- |                                                                         |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fr. Francis O. Corcoran, rector                                         | Fr. Martin E. Ryan, Latin and English teacher                     |
| Fr. John R. Post, master of novices                                     | Fr. Patrick A. Sullivan, dean of studies, Latin and Greek teacher |
| Fr. Arthur B. Tribble, minister                                         | Fr. Alphonse C. Yumont, Greek and German teacher                  |
| Fr. Robert F. Banks, Latin and Greek teacher                            | Bro. Joseph Bourrie, farm manager                                 |
| Fr. Robert W. Campbell, French teacher, spiritual father of the juniors | Bro. Eldor I. Bousquet, receptionist, assistant refectorian       |
| Fr. William A. Carroll, Latin and English teacher and choir director    | Bro. Augustine J. Burns, wardrobian                               |
| Fr. Peter J. Dolin, spiritual father                                    | Bro. Timothy J. Cummins, baker                                    |
| Fr. Thomas F. Grogan, history teacher                                   | Bro. William A. Frost, maintenance manager, electrician           |
| Fr. James P. Hanlon, assistant to the master of novices                 | Bro. John G. Furey, sacristan, infirmarian                        |
| Fr. Henry B. Kelly, Latin and Greek teacher                             | Bro. Peter J. Gabriel, assistant cook                             |
| Fr. Thomas J. C. Kelly, assistant minister, Latin teacher               | Bro. James P. McDavitt, tailor, assistant maintenance manager     |
| Fr. Stephen A. Mulcahy, Latin and Greek teacher                         | Bro. Cornelius C. Murphy, buyer, refectorian                      |
| Fr. Henry B. Muollo, treasurer                                          | Bro. Henry A. Perry, building manager, carpenter                  |

**Juniors: Rhetoric Year  
(2nd year)**

George A. Blair  
Robert J. Braunreuther  
Americo M. DeAngelis  
H. William Griffin  
William J. Kennedy  
Thomas C. Manning  
M. Thomas Martone  
John F. Mullin  
Edward M. O'Flaherty  
William C. Russell  
Richard M. Stevens  
George O. Winchester  
Alfred O Winshman  
Walter J. Young

**Juniors: Poetry Year (1st year)**

Joseph A. Appleyard  
Donald M. Barry  
Charles N. Bent  
Robert B. Clark  
Richard T. Cleary  
Richard J. Clifford  
Denis R. Como  
David M. Connor  
J. Vasmar Dalton  
Joseph D. Devlin  
Kevin D. Fallon  
Paul D. Fleming  
John A. Hanrahan  
Charles J. Healy  
Alfred J. Hicks  
John J. Higgins  
Kenneth J. Hughes

Arthur W. Kane  
John D. Morrissy  
William L. Mulligan  
Armand P. Paradis  
Robert V. Paskey  
John P. Rahilly  
John J. Ronayne  
Robert J. Starratt  
Joseph G. Trinkle

**Novices: 2nd Year**

Michael M Bright  
Clarence J. Burby  
Arthur M. Chai  
Michael J. Connolly  
William J. Cullen  
Frederick F. Czupryna  
Richard A. Decesare  
George A. DeNapoli  
Joseph E. Doherty  
Peter B. DuBrul  
Gerald F. Finnegan  
George E. Haborak  
Charles B. Hancock  
Donald L. Larkin  
John C. L'Heureux  
Edward F. Madden  
Robert E. Manning  
Ernest A. Maté  
James F. McDonald  
John J. McGrath  
Basil E. McMorris  
Paul A. Messer  
Gregory F. Meyding  
Robert J. Muldoon

Ronald J. Papp  
 James A. Rowan  
 Raymond J. Shea  
 Donald G. Wilson  
 Richard J. Wolf

**Novices: 1st Year**

Franklyn J. Bergen  
 William J. Burke  
 Vincent F. Connolly  
 Joseph D. Cronin  
 Joseph L. Dalton  
 Francis J. Doyle  
 Richard L. Eisenmann  
 Joseph R. Fahey  
 John R. Feegel  
 Thomas J. Fitzpatrick  
 John J. Galvani  
 Paul F. Harman  
 Alan N. Higgins  
 James J. Hosie  
 William A. Hurley  
 Thomas J. Joyce  
 Walter J. Kane  
 John J. Lane  
 John B. Leonard  
 John R. Moynihan  
 Francis E. Murphy  
 John F. Murphy  
 Victor J. Newton  
 Neil P. O'Keefe  
 John H. Redgate  
 William J. Sheehan  
 James F. Talbot  
 David O. Travers

Herbert F. Webb  
 Robert E. White  
 John R. Willis

*Novices Peter B. DuBrul, Donald L. Larkin, and Basil E. McMorris were not at Shadowbrook at the time of the fire. In March it was their turn to spend a month working as orderlies at Boston City Hospital, one of the regular experiments or "trials" that were meant to test the novices' vocations.*



In 1943, F. X. Shea entered the Jesuits at Shadowbrook, the former home of Andrew Carnegie that had become the novitiate for the Jesuits of the New England region. In March 1956, he was studying theology at Weston, Massachusetts, and preparing for ordination when a fire destroyed Shadowbrook, killing four members of the community. Shea wrote this account of the fire in the following months. Subsequently, he received a doctorate in English literature from the University of Minnesota and taught at St. George's College in Jamaica and at Boston College. He was executive vice president of Boston College and president of Saint Scholastica College in Duluth. In 1974, he left the priesthood and the Jesuits, married Susan Gussenhoven, and became chancellor of Antioch College in Ohio. He died in 1977. He is also co-author of *The Role of Theology in the University* (1967).