train that carried his order to Rearden Steel. When the train arrived, the doors of the Quinn Ball Bearing Company's plant were closed.

Nobody traced the closing of a motor company in Michigan, that had waited for a shipment of ball bearings, its machinery idle, its workers on full pay; or the closing of a sawmill in Oregon, that had waited for a new motor; or the closing of a lumber yard in Iowa, left without supply; or the bankruptcy of a building contractor in Illinois who, failing to get his lumber on time, found his contracts cancelled and the purchasers of his homes sent wandering off down snowswept roads in search of that which did not exist anywhere any longer.

The snowstorm that came at the end of January blocked the passes through the Rocky Mountains, raising white walls thirty feet high across the main-line track of Taggart Transcontinental. The men who attempted to clear the track gave up within the first few hours: the rotary plows broke down, one after another: The plows had been kept in precarious repair for two years past the span of their usefulness. The new plows had not been delivered; the manufacturer had quit, unable to obtain the steel he needed from Orren Boyle.

Three westbound trains were trapped on the sidings of Winston Station, high in the Rockies, where the main line of Taggart Transcontinental cut across the northwest corner of Colorado. For five days, they remained beyond the reach of help. Trains could not approach them through the storm. The last of the trucks made by Lawrence Hammond broke down on the frozen grades of the mountain highways. The best of the airplanes once made by Dwight Sanders were sent out, but never reached Winston Station; they were worn past the stage of fighting a storm.

Through the driving mesh of snow, the passengers trapped aboard the trains looked out at the lights of Winston's shanties. The lights died in the night of the second day. By the evening of the third, the lights, the heat and the food had given out aboard the trains. In the brief lulls of the storm, when the white mesh vanished and left behind it the stillness of a black void merging a lightless earth with a starless sky—the passengers could see, many miles away to the south, a small tongue of flame twisting in the wind. It was Wyatt's Torch

By the morning of the sixth day, when the trains were able to move and proceeded down the slopes of Utah, of Nevada, of California, the trainmen observed the smokeless stacks and the closed doors of small trackside factories, which had not been closed on their last run.

"Storms are an act of God," wrote Bertram Scudder, "and nobody can be held socially responsible for the weather."

The rations of coal, established by Wesley Mouch, permitted the heating of homes for three hours a day. There was no wood to burn, no metal to make new stoves, no tools to pierce the walls of the houses for new installations. In makeshift contraptions of bricks and oil cans, professors were burning the books of their libraries, and fruit-growers were burning the trees of their orchards. "Privations strengthen a people's spirit," wrote Bertram Scudder, "and forge the

fine steel of social discipline. Sacrifice is the cement which unites human bricks into the great edifice of society."

"The nation which had once held the creed that greatness is achieved by production, is now told that it is achieved by squalor," said Francisco d'Anconia in a press interview. But this was not printed.

The only business boom, that winter, came to the amusement industry. People wrenched their pennies out of the quicksands of their food and heat budgets, and went without meals in order to crowd into movie theaters, in order to escape for a few hours the state of animals reduced to the single concern of terror over their crudest needs. In January, all movie theaters, night clubs and bowling alleys were closed by order of Wesley Mouch, for the purpose of conserving fuel. "Pleasure is not an essential of existence," wrote Bertram Scudder.

"You must learn to take a philosophical attitude," said Dr. Simon Pritchett to a young girl student who broke down into sudden, hysterical sobs in the middle of a lecture. She had just returned from a volunteer relief expedition to a settlement on Lake Superior; she had seen a mother holding the body of a grown son who had died of hunger. "There are no absolutes," said Dr. Pritchett. "Reality is only an illusion. How does that woman know that her son is dead? How does she know that he ever existed?"

People with pleading eyes and desperate faces crowded into tents where evangelists cried in triumphant gloating that man was unable to cope with nature, that his science was a fraud, that his mind was a failure, that he was reaping punishment for the sin of pride, for his confidence in his own intellect—and that only faith in the power of mystic secrets could protect him from the fissure of a rail or from the blowout of the last tire on his last truck. Love was the key to the mystic secrets, they cried, love and selfless sacrifice to the needs of others.

Orren Boyle made a selfless sacrifice to the needs of others. He sold to the Bureau of Global Relief, for shipment to the People's State of Germany, ten thousand tons of structural steel shapes that had been intended for the Atlantic Southern Railroad. "It was a difficult decision to make," he said, with a moist, unfocused look of righteousness, to the panic-stricken president of the Atlantic Southern, "but I weighed the fact that you're a rich corporation, while the people of Germany are in a state of unspeakable misery. So I acted on the principle that need comes first. When in doubt, it's the weak that must be considered, not the strong." The president of the Atlantic Southern had heard that Orren Boyle's most valuable friend in Washington had a friend in the Ministry of Supply of the People's State of Germany. But whether this had been Boyle's motive or whether it had been the principle of sacrifice, no one could tell and it made no difference: if Boyle had been a saint of the creed of selflessness, he would have had to do precisely what he had done. This silenced the president of the Atlantic Southern; he dared not admit that he cared for his railroad more than for the people of Germany; he dared not argue against the principle of sacrifice.