



The Burning of the University.

BY GEORGE ARMSTRONG WAUCHOPE.

It happened on Saturday evening, January 9, 1892. The ground was covered several inches deep with freshly fallen snow. The great building was standing stately and beautiful in the semi-darkness. The dome loomed up against the gray sky in colossal outline.

The work of the day was over; the professors and students were at their various homes scattered over the town; the hour for tea was past. About six o'clock several employes entered the building to open up the chapel for an entertainment to be given by the Athenæan literary society. The engineer* and a janitor† went at once with a lantern to inspect the wires in the basement, where pipe-fitters had been at work a few hours before. About seven, the great bell in the tower of the College of Agriculture clanged out on the crisp night air, summoning the public to the open session. As soon as the bell began to ring the janitor opened the doors to the chapel, and in about ten minutes the engineer turned on the lights. The gas jets in the hall and along the chapel walls were also lighted. "After the lights were turned on," said the janitor, "I stayed in the hallway on the first floor, and the young men were calling on me to get them things out of their hall on the third floor. In probably about fifteen minutes the first alarm of fire which I heard was given by George Venable, who called my attention to a little blaze of fire around the sun-light. I then ran to the basement and cut off the light. While I was in the cellar, the sun-light fell. There were two distinct wires for this which ran up the library floor without crossing; there were four wires for the other lights, and two switches."

*G. W. Lanigan. †Joseph Zumsteg.