

"Save the law library!" called out a tall student, and followed by a dozen others, they gallantly penetrated through the darkness and smoke to the second floor, and, bringing out armfuls of books, deposited them on the ground. A few more daring spirits, headed by a professor,* ventured up to the physical laboratories on the third floor, and were engaged in carrying out the costly apparatus. It was already dangerous in this part of the building. Gusts of suffocating fumes were pouring along the hallways impelled by the fire, and the flames were lapping against the doors of the lecture-rooms.

The fire, meanwhile, steadily advanced, and gained the rotunda of the main building. The immense amount of woodwork here gave the flames a fury and an intensity that is indescribable. The doors and windows were spouting great torrents of fire; the red flames crept steadily along the roof, licking their jaws like ravenous dragons; they caressed and entwined themselves about the columns,† or leaped boldly into space. A terrible roar pervaded the air. The sound was like that of an approaching tornado tearing its way through a forest. A billowy sea of flame mounted into the sky as if impelled by the blast of a titanic furnace. A dense shower of sparks floated off over the town, presenting the appearance of millions of scintillant stars dancing on the bosom of an enormous black cloud.

All at once there came a crash as terrific as the explosion of an arsenal, and the colossal, copper-sheeted dome was blown loose from its fastenings, and fragments were hurled high in air. Several men were in the building at the time. "So violent," says an eye-witness‡ "was the propulsive force of the blast that for a moment the sensation was like the shock of an earthquake. The floors vibrated, and the walls appeared to be swaying in upon us. We fled terror-stricken for our lives." Though at several times anxiety was felt for those in the building, and, though there were several narrow escapes from suffocation and falling walls, no one was seriously injured.

On account of the size and isolation of the building this was one of the most magnificent spectacles ever seen in the state. That great roaring palace of fire with its red-litten windows, its flame-wrapped cornices, its fire-crowned dome, standing out against the black shadows of the night, and the white waste of snow, formed a picture which can never be forgotten.

*Dr. William Shrader, professor of Electrical Engineering.

†These six columns were the only ones left standing after the fire. There is a strong sentiment against their removal.