

and vice, and yet in his very household already many Christians were numbered. About A.D. 64, Rome was almost destroyed by a conflagration, and the conduct of Nero on this occasion gave rise to an opinion that he was himself the incendiary. Alarmed at the probable consequences to himself if this should gain general credence, he attempted to throw the blame of it on the new sect; and ordered all whom he could discover of that persuasion, "an immense multitude," says Tacitus, to be put to death by the most cruel tortures; till again a curb was put to these proceedings by the indignation of the people; for the punishment of the Christians was considered rather as another instance of the emperor's frantic cruelty, than as a penalty inflicted for any specific crime.*

(To be concluded in our next.)

MENTAL FREEDOM.

BY DR. CHANNING.

It has pleased the All-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurements, to place us in a world where wrong-doing is often gainful and duty rough and perilous, where many vices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor, where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free is to withstand and conquer these.

* Tacit. Ann. lib. xv. c. 45. According to the tradition of the church, both Peter and Paul suffered death during this persecution.