

localities to which I am about to direct your attention ; but I must do the best I can without it to make myself intelligible.

You may well suppose that those great monumental landmarks of nature—the hills which I have mentioned—still exist to define the exact site and position of each remarkable object of former days ; and so they do. Time, however, has wrought great changes among them ; and their general character and appearance are very different from what they were, not only in the times of Kings and Consuls, but even in the later period of the Empire. There have been in fact several destructive agencies at work, which, more than the slow effect of time, have contributed to the ruin of ancient Rome. In the first place it has suffered frequently from extensive conflagrations. The earliest on record, I believe, was when the Gauls captured, sacked, and burned it. But the greatest of these calamities was that under Nero ; which he most foully and falsely attributed to the Christians ; making it the occasion of his cruel persecution of them. History has, however, avenged the scandalous insult on those unoffending and persecuted men, by boldly charging back upon the infamous Emperor himself the perpetration of that deed. It may be that he was, in reality, as little obnoxious as the others to that charge, but his name has come down to us branded with the crime, and a long black catalogue of others, which were beyond doubt committed by this atrocious tyrant. This fire of which we now speak, like the great fire of London, destroyed a large part of the city : but it continued burning double the length of time of the other, raging, as Suetonius informs us, during six days and six nights.* The devouring flame was at length arrested at the foot of the Esquiline hill, by the levelling to the ground the surrounding houses, and thus depriving it of fuel. A similar expedient was also resorted to in the great fire of London, by blowing up the houses with gunpowder. A fire also occurred in the reign of Tiberius, which reduced Mons Cælius to ashes ; and another very destructive one in the time of Titus, which raged for three days and as many nights, and destroyed many public as well as private buildings. Inundations of the Tiber, too, have acted their part in the work of destruction. Horace, who witnessed one of these, gives us reason to believe that their effects were most disastrous :

Vidimus flavum Tiberim, retortis
Littore Etrusco violenter undis
Ire dejectum monumenta regis,
Templaque Vestæ.

We saw driven back from the Etruscan shore
The yellow Tiber rushing on again ;
Sweeping down regal monuments of yore—
Sweeping before it Vesta's sacred fane.

To these causes must be added the fury of civil wars ; and the invasions of the Goths and Vandals, who, under Alaric, A. D. 410, and Genserik, A. D. 455, plundered and laid waste the city. It was during its occupation by Alaric that the splendid villa and garden of Sallust, on the Pincian hill, were destroyed. Among other devastations of this kind, from which Rome has suffered, may also be mentioned those which took place by the Normans under Robert Guiscard and his Saracen allies of Sicily, A. D. 1084, "when the whole space from the Lateran to the Coliseum was consumed by flames."† Later still it was stormed by the Constable of Bourbon, A. D. 1527, when it suffered more from the pillage and destruction of those who esteemed themselves good Catholics than from the barba-

* Suetonius Nero XXXVIII. Tacitus Ann. XV. 40, 41.

† Gibbon, lib. 56.