

dria seemed to him great, astonishing, and easy. But the days of his dominion had passed, and even those who shared in his former crimes began to look on him as a madman.

The death of Vindex, and disagreement in the revolting legions seemed, however, to turn the scale to his side. Again new feasts, new triumphs, and new sentences were issued in Rome, till a certain night when a messenger rushed up on a foaming horse, with the news that in the city itself the soldiers had raised the standard of revolt, and proclaimed Galba Cæsar.

Nero was asleep when the messenger came; but when he woke he called in vain for the night-guard, which watched at the entrance to his chambers. The palace was empty. Slaves were plundering in the most distant corners that which could be taken most quickly. But the sight of Nero frightened them; he wandered alone through the palace, filling it with cries of despair and fear.

At last his freedmen, Phaon, Sporus, and Epaphroditus came to his rescue. They wished him to flee, and said that there was no time to be lost; but he deceived himself still. If he should dress in mourning and speak to the Senate, would it resist his prayers and eloquence? If he should use all his eloquence, his rhetoric and skill of an actor, would any one on earth have power to resist him? Would they not give him even the prefecture of Egypt?

The freedmen, accustomed to flatter, had not the boldness yet to refuse him directly; they only warned him that before he could reach the Forum the people would tear him to pieces, and declared that if he did not mount his horse immediately, they too would desert him.

Phaon offered refuge in his villa outside the Nomentan Gate. After a while they mounted horses, and, covering Nero's head with a mantle, they galloped off toward the edge of the city. The night was growing pale. But on the streets there was a movement which showed the exceptional nature of the time. Soldiers, now singly and now in small groups, were scattered through the city. Not far from the camp Cæsar's horse sprang aside suddenly at sight of a corpse. The mantle slipped from his head; a soldier recognized Nero, and, confused by the unexpected meeting, gave the military salute. While passing the pretorian camp, they heard thundering shouts in honor of Galba. Nero understood at last that the hour of death was near. Terror and reproaches of conscience seized him.