

future, dared not express hopes or wishes; they hardly dared to feel or think.

But he went on living only in the theatre and music. Instruments newly invented occupied him, and a new water-organ, of which trials were made on the Palatine. With childish mind, incapable of plan or action, he imagined that he could ward off danger by promises of spectacles and theatrical exhibitions reaching far into the future. Persons nearest him, seeing that instead of providing means and an army, he was merely searching for expressions to depict the danger graphically, began to lose their heads. Others thought that he was simply deafening himself and others with quotations, while in his soul he was alarmed and terrified. In fact, his acts became feverish. Every day a thousand new plans flew through his head. At times he sprang up to rush out against danger; gave command to pack up his lutes and citharæ, to arm the young slave women as Amazons, and lead the legions to the East. Again he thought to finish the rebellion of the Gallic legions, not with war, but with song; and his soul laughed at the spectacle which was to follow his conquest of the soldiers by song. The legionaries would surround him with tears in their eyes; he would sing to them an epinicion, after which the golden epoch would begin for him and for Rome. At one time he called for blood; at another he declared that he would be satisfied with governing in Egypt. He recalled the prediction which promised him lordship in Jerusalem, and he was moved by the thought that as a wandering minstrel he would earn his daily bread, — that cities and countries would honor in him, not Cæsar, the lord of the earth, but a poet whose like the world had not produced before.

And so he struggled, raged, played, sang, changed his plan, changed his quotations, changed his life and the world into a dream absurd, fantastic, dreadful, into an uproarious hunt composed of unnatural expressions, bad verses, groans, tears, and blood; but meanwhile the cloud in the west was increasing and thickening every day. The measure was exceeded; the insane comedy was nearing its end.

When news that Galba and Spain had joined the uprising came to his ears, he fell into rage and madness. He broke goblets, overturned the table at a feast, and issued orders which neither Helius nor Tigellinus himself dared to execute. To kill Gauls resident in Rome, fire the city a second time, let out the wild beasts, and transfer the capital to Alexan-