direction, the crowd, panic-stricken, turned and fled up the hillside, little heeding briers or fences. When, panting, and with clothes wet and torn by the blackberry vines, we stopped to look around, we saw the spot we had just quitted, a perfect hell of fire. The writhing masses of black smoke were streaked with reddish flames and white steam from the little pools of water. The area of the fire rapidly extended and soon loud explosions in quick succession told that the two nearest tanks had caught. These tanks, surrounded by fire, in turn boiled and foamed, and the heat, even at a distance, was so intense that the workmen could not approach near enough to dig ditches between the remaining tanks and the fire. All force was now concentrated in the endeavor to keep the oil from the little river. Ineffectual attempts were made at a place just above the tanks to turn the main flow of the water through a long unused bayou away from the fire. The men would rush into the water, work with might and main for a few minutes, till they could no longer stand the heat, then retreat to some shelter.

At the same time a surface dam and sluice-ways were being built across the stream below the fire, so that when the oil got on to the water it, floating on top, should be held back while the underflowing water could escape through the sluices below.

The oil continued to spread, running into all the little depressions, thus giving greater surface for combustion; and the heat increased till at last the nearly completed dam below had to be given up. A new one was started farther down in a less favorable spot, but this labor was in vain, for the oil at last finding a little gully, poured out upon the river. Now it burned with increased fierceness, sputtering and sending up clouds of steam. On it swept, pausing only for an instant at the two dams, and then flowing into the belt of woodland below. The course of the stream was well shown by the forked flames waving above the tree-tops. Beyond the woods the water spread out into a mill-pond. Here the stone dam with its water-soaked booms, held back most of the oil, the little escaping being consumed before it did much damage below. But the old mill was doomed; and although a steam fire-engine was at hand, little could be done; for, with the river on fire, water could only be had from the springs.

To a spectator on the hill-top the sight now must have been grand indeed; from the three burning tanks, surrounded by flaming pools, stretched a belt of fire one half mile long to the broad mill-pond, with blazing mill and lumber piles.

By this time arrived the long looked for cannon; for oil fires, like battles, are fought by artillery. Since the great destruction is caused by the oil becoming overheated, foaming and being projected to a distance, it is usually desirable to let it out of the tank to burn on the ground in thin layers; so small cannon throwing a three inch solid shot are kept at various stations throughout the region for this purpose. The cannon was placed in position, aimed at points below the supposed level of the oil and fired. The marksmanship at first was not very good, and as many shots glanced off the iron plates as penetrated, but after a while nearly every report was followed by an outburst. This shooting caused more uneasiness among the farmers than the oil fire, and with some cause, for in one case a stray ball went through a small house, knocking the cooking stove into junk, and scaring the old housewife, who was working over it, almost into convulsions. The oil in the three tanks was slowly drawn down by this means and did not again foam over the top, and the supply to the river being thus cut off the fire then soon died away.

The oil continued to burn fiercely during the next day and that succeeding, when unfortunately a stiff gale sprung up, blowing the flames over towards the three remaining tanks, setting fire to them in succession.

It was not till the sixth day from that on which we saw the first tank ignited that the columns of flame and smoke disappeared from the valley. During this time 180,000 barrels of crude oil had been consumed, besides the six tanks, costing each $10,000, destroyed.