

**JULIA OF BAIÆ; OR, THE
DAYS OF NERO. A
STORY OF THE MARTYRS**

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Julia of Baiae; Or, the Days of Nero. A Story of the Martyrs by John Walker Brown

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JOHN WALKER BROWN

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JULIA OF BAIAE,

OR

The Days of Nero.

A STORY OF THE MARTYRS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER,"
"VIRGINIA," "CHRISTMAS BELLS," ETC., ETC.

Brown, Rev. John Walker

The beauteous souls! Eternity's own band!
Who in Life's battle firm doth stand,
Shall bear hope's tender blossoms
Into the Silent Land.

SALIS.

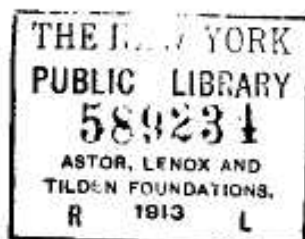
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THE REV. FREDERICK J. GOODWIN, M. A.,

RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, FLUSHING.

MY DEAR GOODWIN:—

I would not take the liberty of dedicating so slight a performance as this to you, were I not assured that the friendship which has so long existed between us, will lead you to look upon its defects with an eye of kindness. Nor should I have ventured upon the offering, were not the subject I have chosen intimately associated with the remembrance of those happy and profitable hours which we have spent together in the most interesting of all historical studies.

In connecting the development of my simple narrative with some of those tragical events which have made the reign of Nero a proverb among men, I have endeavored to give a faithful and condensed view of the history and spirit of the time, avoiding those minute details, which the pen of one of the most profound historians of antiquity has preserved. My design would not permit me to avoid altogether the disgusting

atrocities of the age : but upon these I have touched as lightly as possible, choosing rather to sacrifice somewhat of the interest which might otherwise have been thrown around the narrative, than to sully my page with impurity.

Although the course of the story is strictly connected with historical events, I have availed myself of the liberty allowed to writers of fiction, to deviate somewhat from strict chronological order. In the characters chosen from history, I have endeavored to preserve and develop those traits for which they were distinguished. In Julius Metellus you will perhaps recognize some resemblance to Lateranus, although it was necessary to my purpose to deviate widely from the actual history of the latter. With the character of Flavius the tribune, I have also taken considerable—although I believe not an unjustifiable, liberty. In Epicharis, whose singular enthusiasm, firmness, and contempt of suffering, under circumstances which caused the stoutest hearts to tremble, have been honorably mentioned by Tacitus, I have endeavored to represent one, to whose mind the truth had addressed itself with power, but whose heart, through self-reliance and ambitious zeal, remained unsubdued by the spirit of Christian love and gentleness. Religious fanaticism, the element of ardent and impatient spirits, which are ever prone to imagine that their own cherished enterprizes, however rash or unholy, are sanctioned by heaven, is not inconsistent with character and conduct, which Tacitus acknowledges to have been extraordinary and even noble.

I may, perhaps, be accused of assigning too prominent a position to Christianity in the times embraced within the period of this narrative. That this is not the case, is clear, I think, from the circumstances connected with the persecution which arose immediately after the burning of Rome, to which

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I have alluded in another place. The records of the New Testament will serve to convince us that some of the first triumphs of the Cross were gained among the Roman soldiery, and there is everything to favor the instrumentality by which the knowledge of the truth is represented to have been brought to the mind of the daughter of the patrician, Metellus.

Although the development of the conspiracy of Piso is intimately connected with the course of the narrative, my design has not led me to dwell at length upon the catastrophe of that plot. The fact that the Christians, as such, were not implicated in it, will be a sufficient explanation of this omission.

In the death of Burrhus, and the appearance of Vespasian, as a centurion of the Prætorian guards, you will recognize considerable departure from the strict historical order of events, the reason of which will be evident.

The extract which I have ventured to introduce, at the conclusion of the introductory chapter, from the recent work of Mr. Milman, while it exhibits, with great clearness and eloquence, what I believe to have been the religious aspect of the age, may seem to some readers to dwell too much upon the agency of second causes in preparing the Roman world for the reception of Christianity, while it does not sufficiently recognize the immediate agency of the Spirit of God in scattering the mists of delusion and subduing the proud mind of man to the "truth as it is in Jesus." To those, however, who, like you, are familiar with that valuable work as a whole, it will present itself in a different light, although we may be led to wish that the author had been more decided on these vital points.

But I fear that I am growing tedious; and as the public is

went to judge of a book, not by the design which existed in the mind of the author, but by the manner in which that design is executed, further explanation is unnecessary, and might be presumptuous. With a general acknowledgement, therefore, of the rashness of which I have been guilty in committing to the press so hasty a performance, I trust, my dear Goodwin, that my critics, if I deserve any, will bring to it something of the same kind and excusing spirit with which you will receive it. While with the many friends to whom you are endeared, I lament the protracted indisposition which calls you for a season from our midst, I am happy in the hope that these idle pages may bring to your heart, while sojourning on those distant and beautiful shores where the scene of the narrative is laid, some faint remembrances of your home.

Ever, your friend,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE rapid sale of the first edition of this work, together with the very general approbation it has won from the press, secular as well as religious, furnishes the best encouragement to the author in the prosecution of a long-cherished design;—that of illustrating the history and aspect of Christianity during several of the early persecutions, until the last and fiercest struggle of paganism in the reign of Dioclesian. The present work was merely an experiment, too hastily made; but which, from the intrinsic interest of the subject, has succeeded far beyond his hopes. Conscious, as he is, that it falls very far short of what it ought to have been, the flattering reception which, notwithstanding all its faults, it has received, is sufficient to inspire him with the hope, that he may yet produce something in this way less unworthy of the attention of the public. He feels that he has entered