

**HER MAJESTY THE
KING: A ROMANCE
OF THE HAREM**

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Her Majesty the King: A Romance of the Harem by James Jeffrey Roche

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JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE

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Her Majesty the King



HER MAJESTY
THE KING

A Romance of the Harem

*Done into American
from the Arabic*

By

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE

With Illustrations by
OLIVER HERFORD



CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1915

LV

DEDICATION.



*To the lineal descendant of the Lady
Kayenna, who told me this true history,
the while I could but marvel and admire
the teller ; for, of a truth, since Schehere-
zade there hath been none to approach
her in goodliness and wit and wisdom and
all comeliness of mind and person and, es-
pecially, in a proper and intelligent appre-
ciation of*

THE ILLUSTRIOUS AUTHOR.

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CONCERNING THE AUTHOR.

IT sometimes happens that a genius, passing, leaves more in the hearts of men than in their minds. Brilliant though he may have been, his friends remember him not for the work that he has done, but for the touch of his hand, the warmth of his smile, the chivalry of his soul. It is the good fortune of James Jeffrey Roche thus to be remembered.

By the necessities of life confined to an editorial desk, unable to give full scope to his genius, he left behind him comparatively few volumes, of which this one ranks as his best humorous effort. Indeed, competent judges say that this book is among the first half-dozen volumes of American humor.

Yet, though it received a warm welcome from the critics, it gained no wide public audience. Who can tell why, can solve all mysteries. It is republished in the hope that a recognition deferred during the author's lifetime may be granted now. And this preface is written that something may be known of one of the wittiest and most lovable of men.

James Jeffrey Roche, historian, wit, poet, hater of shams and frauds, was born in

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Mountmellick, Queen's County, Ireland, May 31, 1847. While an infant his parents emigrated to Prince Edward's Island, and it was there that he was educated. While still a boy he went to Boston and entered business. Soon he began contributing to newspapers and magazines. In 1883 John Boyle O'Reilly invited him to take the associate editorial chair of the Boston Pilot. There he remained until O'Reilly's death in 1890, when he assumed the chief editorship, a position that he held until his appointment by President Roosevelt, in 1905, to the consular service. He served first at Genoa and later at Berne, where he died, after a long illness, on April 3, 1908.

No greater lover of America ever lived. His poems of the sea, which brought him his first fame, are lessons in patriotism. Yet he never forgot the land of his birth, and other poems and writings are a rebuke to those who today affect a scorn of the so-called hyphenated American, who forget that man may love his wife and yet cherish his mother.

He was the friend of freedom. He had the spirit that animates the leaders of lost causes. All his writings show a contempt for snobbery, for meanness of any kind, for race or religious prejudice. Broad and generous, he was never too busy to spare time for an assault upon unfairness, whether it were directed against Jew or Protestant or Catholic, against the white man or the black.

Concerning the Author

He had the gift for friendship. Few men possessed such a wide range, not of acquaintances, but of friends. From the convict in jail whom he helped, to the man in the White House, all loved him. Editor of a Catholic weekly, no creed bounded his regard. Warrior in the field of freedom, he wanted freedom for all, not for one. And he was as far from being a "professional Irishman" as Lafayette was from being a Hessian mercenary.

Indeed, so busy was he waging warfare against prejudice of all kinds, and in attending to the editorial duties that were his living, that his pen found time for only occasional ventures into fields that would have gained him greater profit. He was ten years writing "Her Majesty The King."

In fact, the book was grown, rather than written. Little by little it was evolved from its central character, that of Shacabac, whose satirical wisdom is often but an expression of the author's self; and, completed, it makes one wonder how he could have enriched the world's library of humor had he been able to devote himself solely to the writing of books.

But it was not possible, and much of the bubbling mirth that endeared him to his friends is lost in the files of newspapers, spent on editorial pages, or cherished in the memories of those who loved to draw him out and listen to the brilliancies that sparkled but never burned. For he was gentle in all his

Concerning the Author

wit and satire, save when he approached a sham, an hypocrisy — then his wit was caustic.

He was more than the soul of honor; his friend's honor was his own, and his friend could do no wrong. He was often deceived because, incapable of deception himself, it never occurred to him that his friend could deceive. When he gave, he gave with his whole soul and there were no reservations.

Yet withal, as his writings prove, he was not easily gulled. He knew the hypocrite and the liar from afar, and the point of his pen pricked many a pompous fake that fooled men supposedly more wise. No windy promiser could gain the support of his editorials, which had a circulation far wider than his own paper.

Idealist, lover of freedom, staunch, loyal and perfect friend; it is so that he is remembered. Yet his work entitles him to more than that — great though that may be — to a place in letters commensurate to his worth. He attained that with editors, with critics, but his work is all too little known to the public. It can only be explained on the theory that the man overshadowed the writings.

Let it be hoped that this republication brings a greater acknowledgment of the genius of Jeffrey Roche, a most generous gentleman, who had the brain of a man and the heart of a child.

ARTHUR S. ROCHE.