

**ST. ROCHE: A ROMANCE,
FROM THE GERMAN.
IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II., PP. 1-250**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649714643

St. Roche: A Romance, from the German. In Three Volumes. Vol. II., pp. 1-250 by James Morier

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Cover @ 2017

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JAMES MORIER

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Aunt Anne objects to Corney's going to Foreign Parts

Paalzon, Henriette's edition

ST. ROCHE.

A Romance,

FROM THE GERMAN.

EDITED BY

JAMES MORIER, ESQ.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1847.



LONDON :

Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEM,
Barror House, Shoe Lane.

Director
Webster
8-20-47
59438

ST. ROCHE.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Lionel prepared, on the following morning, to go to his mother, he was more fully resolved than he had ever yet been to inform her of his union with Flora, and entreat her advice and assistance in declaring his marriage. He felt more satisfied with himself, and in better spirits, in consequence of this resolution, and the expression of his countenance had acquired dignity and composure. On entering the room where the *maréchale* passed her mornings, he found her reclining in an arm-chair in the middle of the room, near to the window, at which, on a raised seat, sat *Mademoiselle Louise*, dressed in thin light drapery, her hair partly unloosed, and fancifully adorned with flowers. Opposite to her sat a young man with a pallet and brushes, who was finishing a large portrait of her. The *maréchale* gave but one glance at her son, and instantly divined that he was intending to make disclosures that day which she was determined not to hear. She therefore immediately began talking in an earnest tone of voice, in order to make her

son believe that she was in the middle of a conversation, and merely put out her hand to welcome him, with a smile.

“ I assure you, my good Lesueur, your perpetual quarrels with poor Le Brun are the result of mere fancies ; he has not the slightest intention to undermine you with the king. Yesterday evening only, his majesty said that he had heard of the beautiful portrait you had painted of my daughter, and I obtained permission to have the honour of exhibiting it to him.”

Lesueur received this intelligence with evident delight. He bowed low to the *maréchale*, and Lionel had now an opportunity of approaching the renowned artist, whose admired paintings from the life of St. Bruno, for the Carthusian convent at Paris, had raised him to a rivalry with Le Brun, the splendid genius who had hitherto suffered no competitor. But the unhealthy hue of Lesueur's face already announced the disease which so early terminated his life. His cheeks were sunk, and two bright red spots under his eyes, contrasting strongly with the sallow colour of his skin, too surely betrayed his malady. No one could behold this noble victim of indefatigable labour without sympathy and esteem. Those large expressive dark eyes appeared to bewail the want of physical power to embody the creations of his fertile genius. His thin and slender figure was prematurely bowed, and his clothes, hanging loosely upon him, did not conceal the ravages which illness had already made. His voice was hoarse, weak, and low ; the slightest thing alarmed him, and filled him with nervous

fancies. He thought himself injured and ill-used ; he mistook his success, and fancied that nobody appreciated him or did him justice. Le Brun had, indeed, done much to injure, and nothing to serve him, which it would have been easy for him to do, as he was then the fashionable painter, whose name was oracular. It released the public from the trouble of judging for themselves, and emboldened them to admire, without the necessity of accounting for their admiration ; for the name of Le Brun compensated their deficiency of judgment.

Lesueur had just been complaining to Madame de Crécy of the persecutions of Le Brun,—his morbid state of mind confounding real and imaginary grievances ; and that sagacious lady, following the prevailing fashion of protecting artists and learned men, had been using all her eloquence to soothe and encourage him.

“ Come here, my dear,” said she to her son, “ and lose no time in making the agreeable acquaintance of our renowned Lesueur, and then admire the charming picture of your sister, for which we have to thank him.”

Lionel obeyed with all his natural kindness and cordiality of manner, which gratified and pleased the artist ; but still more pleased was he by the raptures with which Lionel admired the portrait of his dear sister, which, though according to the taste of the time, rather fantastic in composition, could not fail to pass among contemporaries for a master-piece. He invited Lesueur to return to his work, and sat down by his side, watching with interest the progress of the painting.