

**THE ALBIGENSES, A
ROMANCE, IN FOUR
VOLUMES, VOL. IV**

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The Albigenses, a romance, in four volumes, Vol. IV by Charles Robert Maturin

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CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN

**THE ALBIGENSES, A
ROMANCE, IN FOUR
VOLUMES, VOL. IV**

THE ALBIGENSES,

A ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BERTRAM," A TRAGEDY:
"WOMAN; OR, POUR ET CONTRE," &c.

Sir, betake thee to thy faith,
For seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.
SHAKESPEARE'S All's Well that Ends Well.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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THE ALBIGENSES.

CHAPTER I.

— We cannot disjoin wedlock,
'Tis of heaven's fastening: well may we raise jars,
Jealousies, stifes, hearthburning disagreements,
Like a thick scurf o'er life, as did our master
Upon that patient miracle.

MIDDLETON'S *Witches*.

THE bridal of Sir Paladour de la Croix Sanglante and the lady Isabelle was held with a magnificence suitable to the state and wealth of the bride, and the merit and valour of the bridegroom. After the marriage ceremony, performed by the Monk of Montcalm, there was a gorgeous feast; and then the company assembled in the hall of the castle to dance, the bride and bridegroom, according to the custom of the times and of many following, being the leaders in the

ball. The feudal hall presented a rude and grand consistency:—the fire supplied with vast blocks went roaring and blazing up the wide and grateless chimney; the chimney-piece, a noble work of antique art, adorned with rich sculptures in wood of men and animals, demons and saints, fruits and foliage, heraldic emblems and sentences from Scripture, wrought with rich and fantastic luxuriance of ornament, rose like a monument to the height of thirty feet; its stories (as they might be called), with their entablatures and flourishments, tapering as they ascended, till the topmost carving almost touched the cornice of the hall, loaded like it with heavy, fantastic, but most rich sculpturing in wood, “all made out of the carver’s brain.” There was not, perhaps, a right angle in the walls of the apartment; but, of its polygon figure, every pannel was either hung with rich tapestry, or framed of wood so polished and wrought, that the eye turned with delight from gold and gaudy figures, to repose on the dark hue and strong relief of the alternate compartment.

A "liveried army" of domestics, stationed in recesses, held waxen torches, whose light, like banners in a field, streamed forward or backward with the movements of the dancers and the impulse with which they swayed the air; and those movements so stately, yet so expressive—the sweeping robes of the ladies, the gentle tread of the knights, the sonorous rustle of the long-depending garments on the inlaid floor, from which the rushes had here and there been swept, mingled with the clank of the small spurs which their partners wore even on that occasion, made meet accompaniment to the strains of the minstrels; who leaned from their carved and gilded gallery amid the pillars of the lordly hall, to witness that luxury of motion which they participated while they inspired. And the vast uncurtained window, on whose gorgeous and emblazoned panes the admitted moon shed her full light, tinting them with purple, vermillion, and gold, and then resting in pale and placid glory on some uncoloured pane, seemed to make heaven a joyous wit-

ness of that festival : and within the deep recesses of those windows, on high-piled and costly cushions, sank beauty, panting from the delicious exercise of the dance ; while youthful knights, “ all on the wanton rushes laid them down,” and pointing to the felicity of Paladour and Isabelle, did then most effectively plead for the completion of their own : while, through the low-arched doors that opened in sundry directions, was often caught, by the light of iron cressets, or the flash of torches borne by passing domestics, the sight of the menials of the household dancing in groups, to strains more homely and with steps less graceful, but with hearts as light as any in that gay assembly.

The Lord of Courtenaye, seated in his chair of state, whispered courteous words to every lady as she passed him in the dance. The Monk of Montcalm, seated at a small trivet, furnished with a bason of holy water, with which he was to sprinkle the bridal-bed that night, was coming over his night-spells and benisons for the prosperity of the wedded pair : beside him stood the lord’s falconer, with

a hawk on his wrist, hooded to quell her screams; and the lady Isabelle's huntsman held a pair of snow-white hounds in a leash of gold tissue, broidered with names of the bride and bridegroom; and the all-licensed fool made jests on the allusion, and shook every bell on his cap in chorus to his own drollery, and joyous burthen was borne by the laugh of all the domestics, who that night were not reprov'd for their mirth by their lord. He was engaged with other thought, for ever as he glanced towards the Monk of Montcalm he muttered,—“Thou art the master of a powerless spell: they whom I rule have forespoken thee already.”

The bride had danced one round, and was seated in her chair of state, arrayed in cloth of silver, and a transparent veil falling over her lovely brow, as if to hide her from the gaze of the throng.—“It is she,” they said, “for whom Sir Paladour de la Croix Sanglante challenged and overthrew Simon de Montfort—him whom fifty lances had not shaken in his saddle-seat in the lists that day. It is she for whom he undertook and