

JANE AUSTEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOTHIC NOVEL

by

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INTRODUCTION

Horace Walpole, nobleman and antiquarian, educated at Cambridge and possessed of the additional culture derived from "the grand tour", early became interested in the stories of chivalric romance and in Gothic architecture. Having both ample means and plenty of leisure, Walpole purchased, in 1747, a little house in Twickenham, situated on the Thames in the midst of a five-acre plot. Later he bought more acres, adorning them with gardens and shrubbery. He enlarged the house, adding towers and battlements to the original structure and, in the course of years, erected a Round Tower, Great Cloister, a refectory gallery, and library. He imported from Italy stained glass for the Gothic windows and embellished nooks and ceilings in imitation of famous palaces or abbeys. The castle was named Strawberry Hill, from an ancient title found in the deed; it was filled with treasures of the past: suits of armor and coats of mail, as well as Indian relics--arrows, bows, spears, which had supposedly been taken by an ancestor in the holy wars. The portraits and miniatures of famous people by equally famous artists, the prints and rare books grew into a fabulous collection. On his own printing press which he had established at Strawberry Hill, Walpole brought out among other beautiful books, an especially illustrated

edition of Grey's poems.

In the midst of this splendor he fell asleep one evening, so he tells us, and dreamt of an ancient Gothic castle, and a staircase with a gigantic mailed hand resting upon its rail. From this beginning he evolved The Castle of Otranto, the first Gothic novel, which he claims to have finished in two months. Printed anonymously, the story was an immediate success, as popular reading and as a literary pattern.

Among Walpole's imitators was William Beckford, who likewise indulged his hobby for creating a mediaeval setting for a highly imaginative life and for collecting books and works of art. He asked an architect to build him a ruined convent with several habitable rooms. Beckford remodeled the family mansion, Fonthill Abbey, employing whole villages of workmen who labored day and night (with the light from huge bon-fires) to construct the edifice as soon as possible. A striking feature of Fonthill Abbey was a tower three hundred feet high which, owing to faulty construction, fell. It was rebuilt but, after Beckford ceased to own the abbey, fell again. Here for twenty years Beckford lived as a recluse, attended by a physician, a major-domo, and a French abbe. A high wall surrounding the grounds shut him from the world, in the years when Walpole was enjoying numerous and lasting friendships and carrying on an immense correspondence.

The fervor for everything Gothic, heightened by the

romance of Strawberry Hill and Fonthill Abbey, called forth a stream of Gothic fiction which, borrowing from the sentimental novels of the same period, grew--in the hands of new writers--in extravagance of fancy. Against such extremities of imagination, Jane Austen in her very first literary attempts expressed a satirical attitude, in the rollicking burlesque of Love and Freindship. Her first novel, Northanger Abbey was a parody upon the Gothic novel. This humorously critical attitude is important as being one of the earliest expressions of anything but praise for these romances, and still more significant in its restraining influence upon her own style.

The tide of popularity flowed so strongly in favor of the Gothic novels that the publisher to whom she sent Northanger Abbey delayed publication for ten years. By 1818, the date of its appearance, the popular taste had changed; but it is to be questioned whether the subtlety of her satire would have had any part in bringing about this change, had Northanger Abbey appeared in 1798 when it was first written.

THE GOTHIC NOVEL

At the time when Jane Austen, in a secluded English village, was producing her first novels, the most widely read type of fiction was probably the Gothic romance. It has been defined as "the eighteenth century novel of terror dealing with mediaeval materials."¹ Although books of this class exhibit a wide variety of treatment according to the purpose or taste of the author, they possess in common certain recognizable traits. For example: the setting is invariably a mediaeval building, castle, monastery, or abbey² containing long, gloomy passages; vaulted chambers, furnished with old delapidated chairs and couches, torn, dusty tapestry--all remnants of former grandeur.

The stock characters are a villainous nobleman whose sole aim is to persecute the beautiful, talented, and virtuous heroine;³ her father, "whose lips are sealed" in⁴

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1. Dorothy Scarborough, The Supernatural in English Fiction, ch. I, p. 6.
 2. Vide: Horace Walpole, in The Castle of Otranto, the first Gothic novel, set the style in using a castle as the scene of his story. He also placed his action in the Middle Ages, but none of his imitators followed this detail.
 3. Vide: Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, Romance of the Forest--The Marquis de Montalt.
 4. Vide: Ibid.--Adeline.

regard to his own obvious but unexplained wrongs; and finally a hero of apparently humble birth, but actually the child of noble parents. Supernumerary characters such as devoted retainers as brave as the hero, yet less likely to get credit for their courage; a garrulous crone who inhabits the castle and supplies plenty of detail about legends flavoring of the supernatural; and monks or nuns sometimes of good intent toward the heroine, often of evil, are all drawn from mediaeval times.

Historically speaking, the Gothic novel originated with Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto, published in 1764. Not until the book had been favorably received did Walpole acknowledge the authorship. In the preface to the second edition he stated that it had been his intention to blend two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern, and that he had consciously created a new type of fiction.

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5. Vide: Maria Regina Roche, Clermont--Clermont, father of Madeline.
 6. Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, --Alleyn, brought up as a peasant is really son of the first baron Malcolm.
 7. Vide: Ibid.--Band of peasants who run all the risks while the hero, Osbert, gets all the glory.
 8. Vide: Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho--Dorothee.
 9. Vide: Ibid.--Monks permit Emily to bury her father's body in the floor of the convent chapel.
 10. Vide: Maria Regina Roche, Children of the Abbey. The nuns shelter Amanda from the villain, Belgrave; while in Mrs. Radcliffe's The Italian an abbess receives the heroine as a prisoner because the Marchessa makes it worth her while to force Ellena to take the veil.

"In the ancient all was imagination and improbability; in the modern, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success."¹¹ He further explains that he tried to make his characters act naturally, but in accordance with his theory that the sensations of princes and heroes are sublime; those of the peasants, naive. He also justifies the use of the supernatural, citing Shakespeare, and insists upon the probability that must underlie its inclusion in romance.

Drawing upon his imagination, Walpole reproduced very successfully the literary atmosphere of the Middle Ages, with its trappings of chivalry, its superstitious fear and credulity.

Really marvellous things occur in The Castle of Otranto. While Manfred's son Conrad is on his way to church for his wedding, a helmet of enormous size falls on him from the air without warning and crushes him to death.¹²

Its plumes nod violently when Manfred is about to succeed in his plot against Isabella, the heroine, and again when the rightful heir approaches the castle. The huge hand and foot of an otherwise invisible specter terrify the servants; a statue bleeds at the nose; and a picture comes to life, descends from its frame and beckons Manfred

11. Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto, Preface to the Second Edition, p. 255.

12. Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle, ch. I, p. 55.

to follow. A final miracle occurs when the castle's walls crumble under some mighty force, the figure of the wronged Alfonso greatly enlarged appears in the midst of the ruin, and is received into heaven by St. Nicholas!

Walpole draws a distinction between the dignity with which the nobility confront the supernatural, and the awful dread which the servants exhibit. He does not attempt any explanation of the supernatural because he considered such occurrences as "natural" to the time in which the story happens.

"Yet since these miracles have little connection with the motives underlying his characters, it is hardly possible for him to build up any true atmosphere of suspense. What there is springs from the constant danger to which Isabella is exposed."¹³

An early and avowed imitator of Walpole was Clara Reeve, who attempted, in her novel, The Old English Baron (1778), to make the supernatural seem more probable. In her preface she acknowledged her debt to Walpole. In practice, however, she failed to follow him, for she utilized only such simple elements as dreams, visions of the dead seen in sleep, footsteps in a corridor, and a prevailing feeling of secret dread. Her special contribution to the Gothic machinery is the haunted suite, but she deliberately leaves the reader in doubt not only as to the

¹³.Eino Railo, op. cit., ch. I, p. 57.

authenticity of her ghosts, but as to the belief that the character himself had in them. Another element she introduces is "enough of the pathetic to engage the heart."¹⁴ She also is the first author to give the ludicrous explanation to the supernatural, and whereas she succeeds in "creating at most the cozy atmosphere of ghost stories told by the fireside,"¹⁵ by disallusioning the reader, she robs her story of the last semblance of artistic plausibility.

The element of chivalry which had been given prominence in the novels of Walpole and Reeve was maintained only to a slight extent in The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, Mrs. Radcliffe's first attempt in the Gothic style. She describes the unsuccessful siege of a castle and emphasizes the part taken by a band of faithful retainers in the siege and in the revenge for wrongs suffered by the hero. Mrs. Radcliffe made some very definite contributions to the Gothic style, however. She made her readers aware of the charm of wild and rugged scenery¹⁶ and of the beauty of a castle in ruins,¹⁷ which her imagination clothed with an atmosphere of mystery and desolation. She utilized nature's elements to create horror and suspense: a chill wind slink-

14. Clara Reeve, The Old English Baron, Preface, p. 13.

15. Eino Railo, op. cit., ch. I, p. 58.

16. Ann Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. I, ch. V. p. 29.

17. Ibid., Vol. I, ch. II, pp. 25-26.

ing through the underground passages or vast halls of a castle blows the flame of a lamp, causing it to cast terrifying shadows on walls and pillars;¹⁸ in the midst of a crime a moonbeam discloses to the murderer that the intended victim is his daughter;¹⁹ or a storm reflects the gloom of the heroine's mind.²⁰

Scott says of her:

Indeed the praise may be claimed for Mrs. Radcliffe of having been the first to introduce into her prose fictions a tone of fanciful description and impressive narrative, which hitherto had been exclusively applied to poetry. Fielding, Richardson, Smollett and even Walpole, though writing upon an imaginative subject are decidedly prose authors. Mrs. Radcliffe has a title to be considered as the first poetess of romantic fiction, that is, if actual rhythm shall not be deemed essential to poetry.²¹

Mrs. Radcliffe also gave more attention to character development, especially to that of the hero and heroine. She showers them with talents, virtues, and charms, with the prodigality of a fairy godmother until they become, in her hands, merely embodied ideals. Plot development is less a matter of complexity than an accumulation of incident, with the use of supernatural incidents to create suspense. It is, in fact, this management of suspense that

18. Ann Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. II, ch.1, p. 9.

19. Ann Radcliffe, The Italian, Vol. II, ch. 4, p. 25.

20. Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. II, ch. 29, p. 23.

21. Sir Walter Scott, Preface to the Ballentyne Edition, Vol. X. The Novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, p. iv.

particularly characterizes the work of Mrs. Radcliffe and her imitators.

A third element in the development of the Gothic novel was the German interpretation of the supernatural, and interest in necromancy, Roscrucian philosophy, and occultism. The background was dissolute monastic life. M. G. Lewis shocked the reading public with his story, Ambrosio, The Monk, which depicted life in convents and monasteries as a cloak for sin. The cruelties practiced upon inmates whose sins were discovered Lewis pictured as being unspeakable. It is true that Mrs. Radcliffe had represented Shedoni in The Italian as being cruel and without conscience, but he is caught in the web of his own infamous plans and made to suffer punishment for crimes for which his repentance cannot purchase atonement. Ambrosio, however, is represented as motivated by evil from within; once started on the path of crime, he is the prey of the Devil incarnated in Matilda. Throughout the story he is given a choice, but the powers of Evil know that in the end he will be theirs. Lewis makes the horror of his narrative seem all the more realistic by describing the dungeons and charnel houses of the convents.

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Charles Maturin imitated Lewis in The Fatal Revenge,

22. I have been unable to obtain a copy of any of Maturin's novels, but Eino Railo, op. cit. gives a good account of both novels, ch. iv, "The Criminal Monk", p. 180.

which retains the most obvious traits of The Italian and The Monk and adds a plot of jealousy and revenge similar to the Iago-Othello theme. He also imitates the temptation of Ambrosio by supernatural powers in Melmoth, The Wanderer. The protagonist, Melmoth, has made a bargain with the Devil for eternal life and perpetual youth, which he must keep unless he can persuade someone to buy the privilege from him. Thus the wandering Jew theme enters into the Gothic scheme, and the innocuous dream phantoms of Mrs. Reeve are left far behind.

Of the host of imitators who followed Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe, practically all are forgotten, ²³ and the titles of their books are today likewise almost unknown. A more enduring fame has been accorded to some half dozen through the pages of Northanger Abbey in which Miss Austen's mention of several titles serves to give evidence of her

23. In spite of the fact that the Gothic writers and their volumes are largely forgotten as individuals, their influence is definitely seen in two directions: (1) on the romantic movement of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; (2) on the modern tales of terror. Scott as a young writer was proud of the patronage extended him by "Monk" Lewis (Vide: Diction-ary of International Biography, vol. 33, p. 193). Byron copied from Mrs. Radcliffe certain distinct traits of the "Byronic hero", and the love of untamed nature. Scott also imitated her in his tendency to interrupt action so as to describe with greatest accuracy his natural setting. (Vide: Eino Railo, op. cit. for complete discussion.) Of recent years, Poe and Hawthorne, Conrad and Wells have followed, even when they enlarged upon, the lines of the Gothic novel. (Vide: Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror, ch. X and conclusion, pp. 184-228.)

familiarity with the Gothic novel and to arouse the curiosity of her readers as to the identity of the books.

Isabella Thorpe, the empty-headed little flirt, introduces several current "best sellers" to Catherine Morland, the uninformed heroine of Northanger Abbey

"When you have finished Udolpho, we will read The Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you."

"Have you, indeed," cried Catherine. How glad I am! What are they all?"

"I will read the names directly--here they are in my pocket-book: Castle of Wolfenbach, Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries. 24

24

In his pamphlet, Northanger Novels, Michael Sadlier has completed the identification of the seven titles Isabella recommended to Catherine with the assurance that "they are all horrid." He says:

Within the limits of that brief selection are found three or four distinct make-ups assumed by the novelists of the day for the popularity of their work. And this fact strengthens the suspicion that Jane Austen's pick of Gothic novels was rather deliberate than at random; was made for the stories' rather than for their titles' sake. Chance alone could hardly have achieved so represent-

24. Michael Sadlier, Northanger Novels, A footnote to Jane Austen, English Association Pamphlet #68. Nov. 1927.

ative a choice; the chooser, had she merely wished to startle by violence or absurdity of title, could have improved without difficulty on more than one of her selections; finally, as we know from her letters, "Our family are great novel readers and not ashamed of being so;" and there is actual evidence that the Steventon household read The Midnight Bell, Sidney Owenson's early work, and various other fictions. Wherefore is there good ground for assuming that Miss Austen knew what she was doing when she compiled her seemingly casual list of Northanger Novels. ²⁵

Mr. Sadlier classifies the seven novels under three headings: the rhapsodical sensibility romance; terror novels, which are of pretended German origin; and one of actual German origin, but pretending to be an autobiography. Representative of the first group are: Clermont by Regina Maria Roche, and The Orphan of the Rhine by Mrs. Sleath. Clermont is "the pure distillation of what was mistakenly believed to be the essence of Radcliffian fiction". ²⁶ The heroine, Madeline Clermont, surpasses Emily, in The Mysteries of

25. A list of titles chosen from the publications of Crosby & Co., during the time that Northanger Abbey lay gathering dust in their possession prove Mr. Sadlier's statement that more startling titles might have been found.

1. Alinda, or Child of Mystery
2. Elfrida, Heiress of Belgrave, A novel
3. Castle of Microbier, a Romance
4. Fatal Vows, (by Francis Lathom, the author of Midnight Bell. Vide: English Catalogue, 1798-1820.)

26. Michael Sadlier, op. cit., p. 10.

27

Udolpho, in beauty, talent, and sensibility; and her curiosity goes beyond the limits which Mrs. Radcliffe sets for her heroine. The plot also is less skillfully handled, the number of incidents accumulating to the point of bewilderment and the details serving only to delay the outcome which the reader guesses long before he reaches the end. Mrs. Roche in turn casts her spell over The Orphan of the Rhine,²⁸ in the love scenes told in "elegant verbosity", in the obscure birth of the hero, and in the presence of the vengeful lover. Mrs. Sleath's descriptions differ from those of Mrs. Radcliffe in reflecting first hand acquaintance with the scenes which she describes.

In the second group, comprising the pseudo-German stories are the Castle of Wolfenbach and The Mysterious Warnings, both of which follow the Gothic pattern and are too English to deceive any one in their pretense as to origin. Included with them is The Midnight Bell, a story which boresomely depicts the dissolute life of monks who are summoned to their carousals by a midnight bell. Its faults are partly due to inexperience, but perhaps more to

27. Sensibility was the characteristic trait of every heroine; the term meant luxuriating in emotions, especially dependence upon first impressions. A mark of sensibility was the readiness with which tears flowed, or fear left the heroine faint and speechless. Against this weakness, St. Aubert warns Emily. (Vide: Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. 1, ch. 1, p. 7.)

28. Michael Sadlier, op. cit., p. 23.

the author's too keen sense of humor, that will not admit of his sympathy with the Gothic style, which is entirely devoid of humor.²⁹ The Necromancer or Tale of the Black Forest, the last of the tales showing German influence, exhibits traits similar to the writings of Lewis and Maturin's Melmoth, the Wanderer.

Last of all is The Horrid Mysteries, a translation from the German of the so-called Memoirs of the Marquis of Grosse, but the title marquis and the memoirs are alike fictitious. The story deals with the intrigues of a sect of Illuminati, a device imitated, as we have seen, by Lewis. Like The Monk, Horrid Mysteries contains the "element of voluptuous love-making which, in the opinion of the moralists besmirched many of the productions of the Minerva Press and came in time to be charged (though most unjustly) against the entire school of Gothic romancers."³⁰

This summary, while it pretends to be neither a complete discussion of the Gothic novel as a whole, nor even of the little pamphlet Northanger Novels, is intended to bear witness to the fact that Miss Austen was familiar with the most important phases of development in Gothic style. In Part II of the thesis, reference is made to as many Gothic novels as can definitely be recognized in her satire.

29. Michael Sadlier, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

30. Ibid. p. 19.

The main discussion is based almost entirely upon The Mysteries of Udolpho, as it undoubtedly is the novel Miss Austen had in mind in writing Northanger Abbey.³¹

31. Clara Linklater Thomson, Jane Austen, A Survey, ch. V, pp. 122-124. "Northanger Abbey was published in 1818, but written in 1797-98, three years after the appearance of The Mysteries of Udolpho which it parodies so skillfully. . . it was evidently quite fresh in Miss Austen's memory when she wrote the first draft of Northanger Abbey, and though some of the incidents in that story have been referred to A Sicilian Romance and The Romance of the Forest, there is no need to go further than the Mysteries of Udolpho for the source of the satire."

II

TYPES OF SATIRE IN MISS AUSTEN'S WORK

The first type of satire to be discussed is the unrestrained, which is in the nature of burlesque.

This occurs in the posthumous publications, which fall into three groups: (1) Juvenilia, published in three collections, Volume the First, Love and Freindship and Volume the Third;³² (2) Unfinished novels: The Watsons, Sandition, and Lady Susan; (3) A fragment, written fairly late in life, called Plan of a Novel.

The juvenilia consist of short, witty sketches, charades, a brief nonsensical play (A Mystery), an ironical history of England and several stories told in letter form.³³ It is in the epistolary tales that the satire on the Gothic style is most plainly discernible. In his preface to Love and Freindship, G. K. Chesterton says that the volume was written when Miss Austen was about seventeen,

evidently in much the same spirit in which people conduct a family magazine, for the medallions included in the manuscript were the work of her sister, Cassandra. The whole

32. The full title of this volume is Effusions of Fancy by a Very Young Lady, consisting of Tales in a Style entirely new. Vide: R. Brimley Johnson, Jane Austen, ch. IV, "Genius and Writing," p. 52.

33. I have limited the discussion to the title story.

thing is full of the sort of high spirits that are always higher in private than in public.³⁴

The medallions which Mr. Chesterton mentions are "portraits" of the kings and queens who are so admirably characterized in the History of England. The dedications, most of which rival the sketches in length and cleverness, are made to various members of her family, in which their appreciation of her work is wittily acknowledged. In Love and Freindship, no trick of the Gothic writers has escaped the barb of her satire. A brief resume of the story follows with references in footnotes to the portions of Gothic stories which she satirizes.

35

Laura and Isabel were devoted friends. After marriage they had become separated, but later apparently the friendship had been renewed; and Isabel asks Laura to write the story of her adventures, to be used as a salutary warning to her own daughter, Marianne. It is evident that Isabel had had no part in these curious experiences.

My father was a native of Ireland, and an inhabitant of Wales; my Mother was the Daughter of a Scotch Peer by an Italian Opera girl.--I was born in Spain and received my Education at a Convent in France.³⁶

34. G. K. Chesterton, Preface to Love and Freindship, pp. x-xi.

35. Cf: Romance of the Forest, op. cit., ch. XVII, pp. 408-427--the friendship between Clara and Adeline.

36. Jane Austen, Love and Freindship, p. 2. Vide: The Italian. By various complicated steps Ellena is proved to be not the daughter of the monk Schedoni, but his niece.

When I had reached my eighteenth Year I was recalled by my Parents to my Paternal roof in Wales. . .

One Evening in December as my Father, my Mother and myself were arranged in social converse round our Fireside, we were, on a sudden, greatly astounded by hearing a violent knocking on the outward door of our rustic Cot.

My Father started--"what noise is that," (said he) "It sounds like a loud rapping at the door"--(replied my Mother) "it does-indeed," (cried I). "I am of your opinion;" (said my Father) "it certainly does appear to proceed from some uncommon violence exerted against our unoffending door....."

"(There) is another point" (replied he;) "We must not pretend to determine on what motive the person may knock--tho' that some-one does rap at the door, I am partly convinced."³⁷

Her father was evidently correct in his surmise, for presently, after much more conversation like the above, the servant girl introduces "the most beauteous and amiable Youth" Laura had ever seen.

The noble youth informed us that his name was Lindsay--for particular reasons I shall conceal it under that of Talbot.³⁸

The young man tells how he has become lost in Wales in going from Bedfordshire to Middlesex! and asks at the end of his (mock) pathetic recital,

37. Love and Freindship, pp. 5-7.

38. Ibid., p. 7.

"When may I hope to receive that reward of all the painfull sufferings I have undergone during the course of my attachment to you, to which I have aspired? Oh! when will you reward me with Yourself?"

"This instant, Dear and Amiable Edward," (replied I) We were immediately united by my Father, who though he had never taken orders had been bred to the church.³⁹

The misfortunes of the lovers begin at once. First they visit Edward's aunt Phillipa. Edward's sister, who is visiting there, asks him if he thinks their Father will "ever be reconciled to this imprudent connection."

"I thought you had a better opinion of me, than to imagine I would so abjectly de-grade myself as to consider my Father's Con-currence in any of my affairs, either of consequence or concern to me. . . ."

"My Dear Brother, since you were five years old, I entirely acquit you of ever having willingly contributed to the satisfaction of your Father."⁴⁰

When she hints that, in spite of Edward's independence, their Father will probably contribute generously to Laura's support, he replies she can live on love. Presently, Sir Edward arrives. The haughty young bridegroom accuses him of coming to reprimand him about the marriage, and without giving his father an opportunity to reply, stalks from the room, and uses Sir Edward's coach to carry him and Laura away.

39. Love and Friendship, p. 9.

40. Ibid., p. 11.

Laura and Edward then go to live with Edward's friend, Augustus, and his wife Sophia who, having

so nobly disentangled themselves from the Shackles of Parental Authority, by a Clandestine marriage, determined never to forfeit the good opinion they had gained in the World, in so doing, by accepting any proposals of reconciliation that might be offered them by their Fathers--to this farther tryal of their noble independence however they were never exposed.(as Edward's father disowned him.) 40

At the meeting between their husbands, the sensibility of Laura and Sophia was so far overcome that they "fainted alternately on the sofa."

Until it is spent, they live on a sum of money which Augustus had "gracefully purloined from his father's Escritoire", but because "they would have blushed at the idea of paying their debts" the beautiful Augustus is arrested and thrown into Newgate prison. Edward follows to assist him and the wives, in order to escape the bailiff, set out by post-chaise for London. Laura "inquired of everyone they met if they had seen her Edward," but the chaise travels too fast to admit of a reply. Since Sophia cannot bear to hear her husband's misfortune spoken of, much less to visit him, they travel back and forth between London and the country until Laura recalls that she has a cousin named Macdonald, in Scotland. Having dispatched "an elegant note" informing him that they are coming to

spend several months with him, they set out immediately. They stop enroute at an inn, and are just about to depart when Laura notices an elderly gentleman descending from a coroneted coach.

"At his first appearance, my instinctive sympathy whispered to my Heart that he was my Grandfather."⁴¹

Following him into the inn, she throws herself at his feet and begs him to acknowledge her.

"Acknowledge thee! Yes, dear resemblance of my Laurina and Laurina's Daughter, sweet image of my Claudia and my Claudia's mother, I do acknowledge thee as the Daughter of one and the Granddaughter of the other."⁴²

In similar high phrases he accepts Sophia, as a second granddaughter, and two youths, who appear at this opportune moment, as his grandsons. He then "inquires if he has any more grandchildren in the house," and on receiving the reply that he has not, gives each of them a fifty pound bank note and immediately leaves. Indignant astonishment causes the ladies to swoon, and when they have revived, they find that the youths have fled with all four banknotes.⁴³

They proceed to Macdonald's where they repay the "wretch" for his kindness by arranging an elopement for his daughter with a rascally fortune-hunter, and by filching

41. Love and Freindship, p. 23.

42. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

43. Ibid.; pp. 24-25.

bank notes from his desk. Caught in the act, they are ordered to leave at once and begin the journey to London on foot.

They sit down to rest in a spot

suited to meditation. A bed of full-grown Elms sheltered us from East--. A Bed of full-grown Nettles from the West--. Before us ran the murmuring brook and behind us ran the turnpike road.⁴⁴

Their silence and meditations are equally melancholy; Sophia cannot bear even to look at the sky because it reminds her of Augustus' blue waistcoat. They are interrupted by an accident "truly apropos." A phaeton overturns, leaving the occupants, two elegantly dressed young men, "low and sprawling in the dust." A closer examination shows that they are also "weltering in their gore" and that they are--Edward and Augustus!⁴⁵

Sophia immediately swoons, and Laura runs mad, each passing from one fit into another for an hour and a quarter, until they are aroused by a groan from Edward. Augustus is dead, though the author does not bother to inform us of the fact; accordingly they run to Edward and ask him to tell all that has happened since he left them. He says,

44. Love and Freindship, p. 33. This passage may be compared with the long descriptive passages of which Mrs. Radcliffe is so fond. Vide: The Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. 1, ch. XIX, p. 108.

45. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

"I will," and immediately dies. Again Laura runs mad and Sophia faints until the latter, warned of danger from the evening damps, suggests that they take refuge in a (conveniently near-by) cottage. Here two days later Sophia dies. Her parting instructions to Laura are:

"Beware of fainting-fits. . . Though at the time they may be refreshing and agreeable, yet believe me they will in the end, if too often repeated at improper seasons, prove destructive to your Constitution. . . . Beware of swoons, dear Laura. . . . A Frenzy fit is not one quarter so pernicious; it is an exercise to the Body and if not too violent, is I dare say conducive to Health in its consequences--Run mad as often as you chuse; but do not faint--"⁴⁶

Such were the words of the expiring Sophia to the afflicted Laura; and there are modern critics capable of adducing them as a proof that all society was in a swoon in the first decade of the nineteenth century. But in truth, it is the whole point of this little skit that the swoon of sensibility is not satirized because it was a fact, even in the sense of a fashion, but satirized solely because it was fiction. Laura and Sophia are made ludicrously unlike life by being made to faint as real ladies do not faint.⁴⁷

Mr. Chesterton further describes Love and Freindship as having the gigantic inspiration of laughter, and prefers, if a choice were necessary, to be permitted to piece together its clever bits to have for a scrap-book to laugh

46. Love and Freindship, p. 40.

47. G. K. Chesterton, op. cit., pp. vii-viii.

over, than to preserve Lady Susan, an early unfinished novel which had come to light before Love and Freindship.⁴⁸

Only a few words need be given to Lady Susan. As a heroine, Lady Susan is totally unlike any others in Miss Austen's work. She is an adventuress, willing to stoop to any deed, even murder, to obtain the lover she desires. She treats her daughter with a cold indifference which develops, through jealousy, into cruelty. She puts her own matrimonial interests before those of her daughter. While the story is certainly intended as a satire, it lacks the light, humorous touch which has been given to other characters who are also unprincipled, such as the unfilial Edward; Augustus, who scorns to pay his debts; and Laura and Sophia, both of whom consider it clever to steal from their host.

Sandition and The Watsons are satires which give promise of Jane Austen's later novels, for the situations and types of character remain fairly constant in all her writings. Inasmuch as neither of these contain references to the Gothic novel, no further discussion of them is necessary.

One of the highlights in Jane Austen's literary career was the recognition of her work by His Majesty, George IV.

48. G. K. Chesterton, op. cit., pp. ix-xv.

He liked her novels so much that through his librarian, the Reverend J. S. Clark, the king gave her permission to dedicate a book to him. In the correspondence that ensued, Mr. Clark urged Miss Austen to write a historical romance, or a story dealing with a clergyman, whose character Mr. Clark outlined at length.

Miss Austen accepted the invitation and dedicated Emma to the king, but to the suggestions in regard to the historical romance she replied that though she might never again succeed in the field she had chosen, she knew she could do so in no other.

On the margin of the manuscript of Plan of a Novel we find the statement that it has been derived from suggestions made by friends and members of her family.

Whether the statement is to be taken literally or not, the Plan exhibits an excellent collection of the traits which she always avoided in her serious work. May it not possibly reflect Mr. Clark's suggestion treated humorously?

Book to open with a father and daughter conversing in long speeches, elegant language, and a tone of serious sentiment. . . Heroine and father never above a fortnight in one place: being driven from his curacy by the vile arts of some totally unprincipled and heartless young man desperately in love with the heroine, and pursuing her with unrelenting

49. Austen, Leigh, W. and R. A., Life and Letters of Jane Austen, ch. XVII, pp. 323-324.

50. R. B. Johnson, op. cit., Appendix A, p. 206.

passion. No sooner settled in one country of Europe than they are necessitated to quit it and retire to another. . . . Often carried away by the anti-hero, but rescued either by father or hero. Often reduced to support 51 herself by her talents and work for her bread; continually cheated and defrauded of her hire; worn down to a skeleton and now and then starved to death. At last hunted out of civilized society, denied the poor shelter of the humblest cottage, they are compelled to retreat into Kamtschatka, where the poor father, quite worn down, finds his end approaching, and after four or five hours of tender advice and parental admonition to his miserable child, 52 expires in a fine burst of literary enthusiasm. Heroine unconsolable for some time, but afterwards crawls back towards her former country, having at least twenty narrow escapes of falling into the hands of the anti-hero; and at last, in the very nick of time, turning a corner to avoid him, runs into the arms of the hero himself.⁵³

From the above examples, it will be seen that in those writings not intended for publication, Miss Austen drew freely upon all those devices used by writers of Gothic romance which she considered extravagant or foolish, and made them the objects of her satire. In the section that follows, which treats of the satire in Northanger Abbey, I shall try to show how she managed, even though her enjoyment of her art was not lessened, to confine her satire within certain limits of humor and raillery. The satire

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51. Vide: The Italian, op. cit. Ellena makes exquisite embroidery and earns money by selling them through a Convent, thus maintaining a lady-like anonymity.
52. Vide: Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. I, ch. VII, pp. 39-41.
53. Ibid., Vol. II, ch. XXXVIII, p. 80; also Vol. II, ch. LI, p. 136. Plan of a Novel is quoted in R. B. Johnson, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

centers around the description, character, and deeds of the heroine whom Miss Austen introduces, as follows:

No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be a heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother were equally against her.⁵⁴ Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected or poor, and a very respectable man though his name was Richard,⁵⁵ and he was not in the least given to locking up his daughters.⁵⁶ Her mother was a woman of useful plain sense with a good temper and, what is more remarkable, with a good constitution.⁵⁷

54. Few romantic heroines were provided with both a father and a mother. Emily, in The Mysteries of Udolpho, has both at the opening of the story, but her mother soon dies. Vide: Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. I, ch. I, p. 13.
55. In one respect, judged by the present standard in fiction, Jane Austen's work assuredly is "commonplace." No novelist was ever less troubled in search for names. She merely took those of people she heard or met, preferring the common to the unusual. Bennet, Dashwood, Eliot, Price, Woodhouse--names that the modern "popular" novelist would reject at sight, served her turn, a Darcy or a Tilney being her highest flights in nomenclature.--W. H. Helm, Jane Austen and Her Country House Comedy, ch. II, p. 74.
56. "Attend to what I say--accept the duke or quit this castle and wander where you may."
Such were the words of her cruel father to Julia, the beautiful and persecuted heroine in A Sicilian Romance, op. cit., p. 127.
57. She had not died when Catherine was born, but had lived to rear ten children. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. I, p. 13. Vide: Romance of the Forest, op. cit., ch. III, p. 55. Adeline lost her mother at the age of seven. Children of the Abbey, op. cit., ch. III, p. 20. Amanda's mother dies when Amanda, the second child, is born.

As to appearance, she (Catherine) had a thin awkward figure, a sallow skin without color, dark, lank hair, and strong features. . . . 58

Her natural inclinations as a child were totally unlike those of a heroine. She liked all boys' games, preferred cricket to dolls or pets, and was noisy though not quarrelsome; she was kind to her smaller brothers and sisters, disliked cleanliness and staying indoors, and loved nothing better than to roll down a little slope at the back of the rectory.

Catherine's abilities--for a heroine--were likewise extraordinary. "She could never learn or understand anything before she was taught, and sometimes not then, for she was often inattentive and occasionally stupid." 59

To rival the perfection of a Gothic heroine she . . .

58. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. I, p. 13. Compare with the Gothic heroine Emily. In person Emily resembled her mother, had the same elegant symmetry of form, the same delicacy of features, and the same blue eyes full of tender sweetness. Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. I, ch. I, p. 7.
59. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. I, p. 14. A description of Emily St. Aubert, heroine of The Mysteries of Udolpho provides the charms and perfections which Miss Austen was satirizing:

But lovely as was her person, it was the varied expression of her countenance, as conversation awakened the nicer emotions of her mind, that threw such a captivating grace around her. . . . St. Aubert (her father) cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. He gave her a general view of the sciences with every part of elegant literature.

Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. I, ch. I, p. 7.

change in many ways. Miss Austen, however, assures the reader that:

At fifteen appearances were mending; she began to curl her hair and long for balls; her complexion improved, her features were softened by plumpness and colour, her eyes gained more animation and her figure more consequence.⁶⁰

Her parents were able now to observe that Catherine looked "almost pretty," and such words are high praise to a girl who has been plain all her life. From her fifteenth to seventeenth years, Catherine was in training for a heroine, and she

read all such books as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations which must be read to supply their memories with those quotations which are so serviceable and so soothing in the vicissitudes of their eventful lives.⁶¹

So far her improvement was sufficient, and in many other points she came on exceedingly well, for though she could not write sonnets, she brought herself to read them; and though there seemed no chance of her throwing a whole party into raptures by a prelude on the pianoforte of her own composition, she could listen to other people's performance with very little fatigue. Her greatest deficiency was in the pencil--she had no notion of drawing, not enough even to attempt a sketch of her lover's profile that she might be detected in the design.

60. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. I, p. 14.

61. Ibid., pp. 15-16. Miss Austen quotes Gray, Pope Thompson and Shakespeare, but we know from Northanger Novels that the heroine read a variety of Gothic novels.

There she fell miserably short of the true heroic type.⁶²

The truth is, Catherine had no lover, since in the neighborhood there was no foundling reared by a compassionate family,⁶³ no lord or baronet,⁶⁴ no squire's son,⁶⁵ who "might arouse her sensibility."

But when a young lady is to be a heroine, the perverseness of forty surrounding families cannot prevent her. Something must and will happen to throw a hero in her way.⁶⁶

The happy circumstance which threw a hero in Catherine's way was that she was invited to accompany Mr. and Mrs. Allen to Bath, the fashionable resort, whither the

62. Ibid., ch. I, p. 16.

Cf. Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., vol. I, ch. I, p. 8. Through her father's instruction, Emily became "an early proficient." A special room was provided for her books, drawings, and musical instruments. In one of her frequent conversations with her father she recited a long poetic effusion on The Glow-Worm, and found refuge on occasions of "pleasing melancholy" in composing a sonnet or an ode. Her musical talent was equally remarkable:

To relieve or perhaps indulge the sensitive temper of his mind he (her father) bade her bring forth the lute she knew how to touch with such sweet pathos.

63. Vide: Ann Radcliffe; The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne Alleyn, presumably a peasant's son, is identified through a strawberry mark, by his mother the Baroness as her long-lost son, Phillip.

64. Vide: Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. II, ch. 34 p. 61. Du Pont, a nobleman living near her father's home, is revealed late in the story as an unknown admirer of Emily's.

65. This has no counterpart in the Gothic novels I have read, but it is a part of Jane Austen's realism. Her story deals with the gentry of England.

66. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. I, pp. 16-17.

former had been sent on account of his health. Mr. Allen owned most of the land around Fullerton, the village in which Catherine lived.

Mrs. Allen was one of that numerous class of females whose society can raise no other emotion than surprise at their being any men in the world who could like them well enough to marry them.⁶⁷

She was well-fitted to introduce Catherine into the society of Bath because she liked to go everywhere, and "her passion was dress."

When Mrs. Morland parted with her daughter, her advice, instead of taking the form of warnings against the machinations of wicked noblemen (of which she knew nothing), consisted of a reminder to wrap up her throat when she came from the Rooms at night, and to keep some account of her expenditures.

The journey itself was uneventful; "Neither robbers nor tempests befriended them, nor one overturn to introduce them to the hero."⁶⁸ Upon their arrival, they take lodgings in Pulteney Street, and when Mrs. Allen's vanity has been temporarily satisfied by two or three days' shopping, they

67. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. II, p. 20.

68. Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit. Valancourt, mistaken for a robber, is shot by St. Aubert, and thus the heroine meets the hero.

In Children of the Abbey, op. cit., ch. X, p. 87, Oscar Fitzallen has met Adela, but he saves her father from injury when his horses run away.

attend the Ball given at the Assembly Room. Arrived at the ball, they found the room too crowded for comfort, but Mrs. Allen's diligence procured them a place from which they could overlook the dancers. At last, Catherine began to feel that she was at a ball, but in the room was not a single person whom either of them knew.

Mrs. Allen did all that she could do in such a case by saying very placidly now and then, "I wish you could dance my dear, I wish you could get a partner."⁶⁹

Even though they moved with the crowd to get tea, still they found no friend and Mrs. Allen continued to wish calmly that they "had a large acquaintance here." In fact the entire evening passed without Catherine's having enjoyed a single dance. Seldom is it the fate of a heroine to be so
70
bored!

The second time they visit the Assembly Room, fortune is kinder. The Master of Ceremonies introduces to Catherine a young man of about twenty-five years of age, Henry Tilney (the long-promised hero). He was tall, of pleasing

69. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. II, p. 21.

70. Vide: Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. I, ch. XIII, pp. 66-67.

Also: A Sicilian Romance, Vol. I, p. 35.

The Marchioness received them with a mingled smile of condescension and politeness and immediately the whole attention of the company was attracted by their elegance and beauty. . . .

"The ball was opened by Ferdinand and Lady Matilda Constanza." p. 38.

countenance, an intelligent and lively eye, and very nearly handsome.

The "lively eye" is indicative of his sense of humor which immediately removes him from the genera of romantic heroes.⁷¹ His witty conversation Catherine could hardly understand, for she had so little sense of humor that she was not always sure when he was serious and when he was joking.

After chatting for some time on such matters as naturally arose from the objects around them, he suddenly addressed her with, "Madam, I have been very remiss in the proper attentions of a partner here. I have not yet asked how long you have been in Bath, whether you were here before, whether you have been at the Upper Rooms etc. . . and how you like the place altogether;" and, affectedly softening his voice, he added with a simpering air, "Have you been long in Bath, Madam?"

"About a week, sir," replied Catherine, trying not to laugh.

"Really!" with affected astonishment.

"Why should you be surprised, sir?"

"Why, indeed," said he, "but some emotion must appear to be raised by your reply, and surprise is more easily assumed, and not less reasonable than any other. . . . Now let us go on."⁷²

71. The Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. I, ch. 14, p. 79.

"Tears again interrupted his voice and Emily wept with him."

72. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. III, pp. 25-26.

After more nonsense of the same sort he adds, "Now I must give one smirk and then we may be rational again." Catherine here was at a loss to know whether or not she should laugh, so in true heroine style, she turns her head.

In the course of the evening, the more responsible of her two chaperones, Mr. Allen, learned by inquiry that Henry Tilney was a young clergyman of a respectable family and accordingly considered that Catherine's acquaintance with him was entirely proper. Everything seems arranged for the progress of the love affair between hero and heroine. Instead, during the next three or four days, Tilney is absent from all the fashionable rendezvous. Catherine is disappointed, but she consoles herself with the milder excitements of new scenes and shopping tours, and seems far from romantic despair.

It is at this point in the story that Miss Austen departs from the general plan of the Gothic novel and boldly introduces a companion for Catherine, Isabella Thorpe, who threatens to outrival the heroine in beauty, and apparently does surpass her in knowledge of the fashionable world. Catherine is very much bewildered by Isabella's pronouncements about men:

73. Vide: The Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. I, ch. XV, p. 84, ch. XVI, pp. 88, 100. Under similar disappointment Emily is torn between "pleasing melancholy" and "melancholy reverie," which find expression in composing poetry.

"The men think us incapable of real friendship, you know, and I am determined to show them the difference. Now if I were to hear anybody speak slightingly of you, I should fire up in a moment, but that is not at all likely, for you are just the kind of girl to be a great favorite with the men."⁷⁴

Isabella's mother had been a school friend of Mrs. Allen's, and her one pride is in her children, especially the eldest, John. He arrives in Bath, accompanied by James Morland, Catherine's brother. They are in a gig, drawn by a fast horse which John has been driving almost beyond its endurance, merely for love of show. They meet Isabella and Catherine on the street, and as soon as introductions are over, John begins to boast about his horse and carriage. Catherine thinks his horse looks overheated, but he replies,

"Hot! He had not turned a hair till we came to Walcot church, but look at his forehead; look at his loins; only see how he moves; that horse cannot go less than ten miles an hour; tie his legs, he will still get on. What do you think of my gig, Miss Morland? A neat one is it not? Well hung; town built. . . curricule hung you see; seat, trunk, sword-case, splashing board, lamps, silver moulding, all, you see, complete; the iron-work as good as new or better."⁷⁵

As a rival to Henry Tilney, John is not formidable, for Catherine in true heroic fashion has eyes only for the hero. He does, however, "promote the general distress of

74. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. VI, pp. 40-41.

75. Ibid., ch. VII, p. 46.

the work. . . and reduces poor Catherine to the desperate wretchedness of which a last volume is capable" (far more than the placid, ineffectual Mrs. Allen, of whom the phrase was ironically used). With the luck granted in a Gothic novel to an undesired suitor, he contrives, between boastings, to solicit Catherine as a partner for the evening Assembly. But when the time comes for dancing, he is absent during two sets, as he is talking of falks and horses to some sporting friends. Henry Tilney, arriving late with his sister Eleanor, asks Catherine to dance, and she is compelled to undergo the suffering (since that is the common lot of the heroine) first of seeming to be without a partner for the evening, and worse, of having to forego the pleasure of dancing with Tilney.

"Catherine had fortitude, too; she suffered, but no murmur passed her lips."⁷⁶

The following day, John took Catherine for a drive, accompanied in another gig by James and Isabella, between whom, owing to a previous acquaintance, a friendship was growing. Because of his conduct at the dance, Catherine was surprised that he kept his engagement. During the drive, he "quizzed" her about the Allens; he learned how wealthy they were, that they had no children, and immediately concluded that Catherine is Mr. Allen's god-daughter

76. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. VIII, p. 53.

and heir. In spite of her efforts to persuade him to the contrary, John apparently pays no heed to her explanation.

Once more she is made to suffer embarrassment at his hands. In the evening, while she and Henry Tilney are dancing together, John standing behind her said,

"Heydey! Miss Morland! what is the meaning of this? I thought you and I were to dance together."

"I wonder you should think so, for you never asked me."

"That is a good one, by Jove! I asked you as soon as I came into the room, . . . what chap have you there? Tilney, hum, I do not know him, a good figure of a man, well put together. Does he want a horse?"⁷⁷

Fortunately, Henry's courtesy is able to compensate for such rudeness; during the evening he introduces his father to her, and he and Eleanor plan to take a walk the following day and ask Catherine to accompany them. Alas! the next morning is rainy, and the disappointed heroine has about concluded that the weather has kept the Tilneys at home, when John Thorpe arrives to take her to Blaise Castle. Yet even the belief that streets were too muddy for walking, coupled with the temptation to see a real castle, could not have persuaded her to go had not Mr. Thorpe assured her that he had seen Henry and Eleanor

77. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., Vol. I, ch. X, pp. 75-76.

riding in the opposite direction.

Deep was her chagrin, when after riding a few blocks, she saw the Tilneys walking toward Pulteney Street, glancing back in surprise at Catherine in the gig. In vain did she beg John to stop. No heroine carried away by ruffians could have suffered more anguish by the knowledge that she had been duped by John's lies, and by the conviction that the Tilneys must believe her false to her word.⁷⁸

In the scheme of Miss Austen's satire, Thorpe is a burlesque upon the "anti-hero." In The Mysteries of Udolpho, this role is filled by Count Morano; but whereas he schemes openly to get possession of Emily's fortune, or to keep Montoni from obtaining it, Thorpe is only interested in Catherine's prospective dower in a blundering, mischief-making way. Opposition to his suit whets Morano's desire to marry Emily; but Thorpe's passing interest in Catherine quickly subsides when the love affair between James and Isabella ends. His blunt proposal Catherine feigns not to understand.

"Did you ever hear the old song 'Going to one wedding brings on another?' I say, you will come to Belle's wedding? I hope . . . and then you know we may try the truth of this same old song."⁷⁹

78. Vide: Romance of the Forest, op. cit., ch. XI, pp. 242-244. Abduction of Adeline by the Marquis of Montalt.

79. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., ch. XV, pp. 122-123.

In this manner, Miss Austen substitutes crudity for villainy, and boorishness for cruelty.

General Tilney, likewise, is a thumb-nail caricature of the Gothic villain. His first solicitous care for Catherine's pleasure and comfort is the exact opposite of Montoni's inconsiderate commands to Emily. Instead of villainy, he possesses only an exaggerated self-importance which makes his every wish law in his household. The check which age and dignity often put upon youth is responsible for his children's restraint in his presence. How different from the quaking fear with which Emily awaits a summons to Montoni's presence.

In continuing her plot, Miss Austen skillfully parodies the incidents of The Mysteries of Udolpho and motivates the principal actions through Catherine's passion for the Gothic novels. In fact, under the tutelage of Isabella Thorpe, Catherine's interest in the imaginary joys and terrors of the Gothic novel supersede those of the actual enjoyments of Bath. Her conversation is almost wholly on the subject of Udolpho and its thrills; her judgments are wholly formed by the impressions she receives from her reading. She is almost overwhelmed with astonishment and delight when General Tilney invites her to visit Northanger Abbey.

80. Mysteries of Udolpho, op. cit., Vol. II, ch. XXX, pp.23-25.

Northanger Abbey! These were thrilling words and wound up Catherine's feelings to the highest point of ecstasy. Her grateful and gratified heart could hardly restrain its expression within the language of tolerable calmness. . . . With all the chances against her of house, hall, place, park, court and cottage, Northanger turned up an abbey, and she was to be its inhabitant. Its long, damp passages, its narrow cells and ruined chapel were to be within her daily reach, and she could not entirely subdue the hope of some traditional legends, some awful memorials of an injured and ill-fated nun.⁸¹

In frequent conversations with Catherine, Henry has discovered her romantic passion for abbeys, and his sense of humor will not permit him to disillusion her; for Northanger Abbey is a modern dwelling built on the site of an ancient abbey, with, perhaps, some of the original edifice incorporated in the present building.

At the general's request, she finishes the latter part of the journey from Bath to Northanger with Henry, in his open gig. This arrangement provides him with the opportunity for "quizzing" Catherine on her love of romantic and terrifying stories. His conversation, quoted from chapter twenty of Northanger Abbey, is an excellent parody on the Gothic devices.

"You have formed a very favorable opinion of the abbey," (he said).

"To be sure I have. Is it not a fine

81. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., Vol. II, ch. 2, pp. 140-141.

old place just like what one reads about?"

"And are you prepared to encounter all the horrors that a building such as 'what one reads about' may produce? Have you a stout heart? Nerves fit for sliding panels and tapestry?"

Unable to catch the fun in Tilney's remarks, Catherine soberly replies that she will not be afraid because there are so many people in the house, and because it has never been deserted for years at a time. Tilney agrees that they will not have to grope their way through unlighted passages or sleep in unfurnished rooms, and continues:

"But you must be aware that when a young lady is (by whatever means) introduced into a dwelling of this kind, she is always lodged apart from the rest of the family.⁸² While they snugly repair to their own end of the house, she is formally conducted by Dorothy, the ancient housekeeper,⁸³ up a different staircase, and along gloomy passages into an apartment never used since some cousin of kin died in it about twenty years before. Can you stand such a ceremony as this? . . . Will not your mind misgive you, when you find yourself in this gloomy chamber, the walls hung with tapestry, exhibiting figures as large as life. . . with its bed of dark green stuff

82. Cf. The Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. I, ch. XIX, p. 111.

"Do you know which is my room?" said she (Emily) to Annette as they crossed the hall.

"Yes, I believe I do, ma'amselle; but this is such a strange rambling place; . . . they call it the double chamber over the south rampart.

. . . My lady's room is at the other end of the castle."

83. Cf. Ibid., Vol. II, ch. XXVII, p. 75.

She was also interested by Dorothee the housekeeper, who attended them; whose appearance was almost as antique as the objects around her.

or purple velvet, presenting even a funereal appearance.⁸⁴ Will not your heart sink within you?"

"Oh! but this will not happen to me, I am sure."

"How dreadfully will you examine the furniture of your apartment? And what will you discern? Not tables, toilettes, wardrobes, or drawers, but on one side perhaps the remains of a broken lute,⁸⁵ on the other a ponderous chest which no efforts can open, and over the 86 fire-place, the portrait of some handsome warrior

84. Cf. The Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. II, ch. XLII, p. 94.

"That tapestry used to be greatly admired at; it tells the story of some famous book or other, but I have forgot the name," (said Dorothee).

Emily now rose to examine the figures it exhibited, and discovered by verses in the Provençal tongue, wrought underneath each scene, that it exhibited stories from some of the most celebrated ancient romances. . . . It was some time before Emily perceived through the dusk the bed on which the marchioness was said to have died: when, advancing to the upper end of the room, she discovered the high canopied tester of dark green damask, with the curtains descending to the floor, in the fashion of a tent..

85. Ibid., Vol. II, ch. XLII, p. 95.

In a large oriel window of painted glass stood a table with a silver crucifix, and a prayer book open; and Emily remembered with emotion (the countess') custom of playing on her lute in this window, before she observed the lute itself lying on a corner of the table as if it had been carelessly placed there by the hand that had so often awakened it.

86. In the same room, described above, was a picture of the dead countess, whose resemblance to the miniature which Emily had found among her father's possessions, and to Emily herself, causes her and Dorothee to conjecture as to the possible explanation of this singular fact. Still more terrifying is the "picture" (vide: Ibid., Vol. I, ch. XIX, p. 112) hidden behind the black veil in the castle of Udolpho. Upon seeing it Emily faints; and the long-delayed explanation of her fright amply excuses her swoon. It is a wax figure of a body partially decayed, which had been set up as a form of penance to a former owner of Udolpho.

whose features will so incomprehensibly strike you that you will not be able to withdraw your eyes from it."

Fully enjoying Catherine's ready response to his teasing, Tilney conjures images of every Gothic horror--unquiet slumbers, a dreadful storm; waving tapestry which covers a secret door; endless passages that compel exploration; a dagger, drops of blood on the floor, and unknown terrors which the almost expiring lamp perforce leave undiscovered!

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87. Romance of the Forest, op. cit., ch. VIII, pp. 175-176.

Adeline retired early to her room which was . . . spacious and lofty, and what little furniture it contained was falling to decay. . . . She was unwilling to go to bed, lest the dreams that had lately pursued her should return; and determined to sit up till she found herself oppressed by sleep. . . .

The wind was high, and as it whistled through the desolate apartment, she perceived the arras, with which the room was hung, were more strongly agitated in one particular place than elsewhere. . . she felt about the tapestry, and perceiving the wall behind shake under her hand she discovered a small door. . . . The door was held only by a bolt, having undrawn which, and brought the light, she descended a few steps into another chamber; . . . her foot stumbled over something on the floor. . . and she perceived an old dagger. . . . She was about to leave when she saw something falling gently among the lumber.

It was a small roll of paper, tied with a string and covered with dust. Adeline took it up, and on opening it perceived a handwriting . . . but the part of the manuscript she looked at was so much obliterated that she found reading difficult.

Henry's amusement at the interest he had aroused in his imaginative listener overpowers his gravity, and he laughs heartily at Catherine's half-frightened response. By the time they reach the abbey, she is ready to expect anything gruesome in the way of adventure.

While Catherine is still day-dreaming in the land of romance, the carriage passes rapidly up the driveway between the two modern lodges that flank the gates. A sudden shower directs her attention from the awful thoughts that should arise as she enters an abbey to the protection of her new bonnet. Thus she fails to realize that the abbey is a modern dwelling until she is shown into the drawing room. Glancing about her, she notices that, as General Tilney had said, the windows have been preserved in their true Gothic shape, but the heavy carvings which should have ornamented them have been reduced to lighter supports. The vast fire-place with its huge mantle has been supplanted with a smaller unornamented grate. Not a speck of dust nor a cobweb testifies to the antiquity of the building.

Still she was in an abbey, where her lively imagination could supply the touches of romance that were lacking, and a persistent hope provide exciting adventures such as she had encountered in her reading.

The first sign of encouragement came when she was shown to her room. True, it was not large, and vaulted, and it contained neither tapestry nor velvet pall; and in

fact was not at all like the chamber Henry had so graphically described. The furniture, however, was fascinating, especially an old chest, fitted with silver handles that had been broken, and ornamented with a faded design in which the letter T was still discernible. True to form, it resisted her first efforts to raise the lid, but when at last it yielded she beheld at the bottom--only a white counterpane. The entrance of Miss Tilney at this moment to accompany Catherine to dinner threw her into some confusion, but Eleanor's simple explanation, that the chest though old had been left for a receptacle for hats, helped her to cover her embarrassment.

Upon returning to her room, Catherine proceeded with her survey of the furniture, confident that it would yield an adventure. A cozy fire shut out the realization that a storm was in progress outside, and everything was soon forgotten in the discovery of a black and yellow Japan cabinet. It sufficiently resembled the one Henry had described to encourage her belief that here she would find a mystery. Imagine her delight upon discovering in one of its numerous drawers, a roll of paper which she instantly decided was the hoped-for manuscript. She was snuffing her candle preparatory to reading its gruesome contents, when she accidentally extinguished the flame and had to prepare for bed in total darkness.

For hours she lay awake listening to the wind and rain,

her imagination picturing adventures yet to come. But a sleepless night did not in the least dull her interest in the cabinet. Next morning, springing out of bed, she hastily examined the roll, which consisted of separate sheets instead of the anticipated length of parchment. A careful scrutiny of their contents informed her that they were only old laundry lists!

Two such humiliating experiences should have taught Catherine her lesson, but she permitted her incorrigible imagination to weave a story about General Tilney. From conversations with Eleanor, she learned that Mrs. Tilney had died suddenly while Eleanor was away from home. Hints suggest that she had been unhappy. The general, who conducted Catherine over the grounds and part of the abbey, avoided frequenting the path that had been his wife's favorite walk; and since her death has not opened her rooms. All these details recall the cruelty of Montoni⁸⁸ toward his wife, or the Marquis of Mazzini in a Sicilian Tale,⁸⁹ and she concludes that the general either has poisoned Mrs. Tilney, or may at this moment have her confined in a remote part of the abbey.

Curiosity, which is the doubtful possession of all heroines, carries her away. She asks questions that verge

88. Cf. Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. II, ch. XXVIII.

89. A Sicilian Romance, op. cit., p. 159.

on rudeness; and Eleanor, unconscious of the motive back of them, gives ready answers. Her mother's picture has been hung at Eleanor's request in her room since General Tilney considers it too poor a likeness to occupy a place either in the drawing room or in his apartment. This cruelty Catherine considers equal to conviction, and she is not satisfied until she has gazed upon the portrait, trying in vain to trace either unmistakable likeness to Eleanor, or evidence of sorrow and suffering which it must have been the fate of the unhappy wife to undergo.

Eleanor undertook to show Catherine Mrs. Tilney's rooms, but as they were about to enter the suite, her father called Eleanor in so dictatorial a tone that she hurried away, leaving Catherine to find her way to her own room unattended. Nothing daunted, Catherine seized the first opportunity to explore the apartment alone and succeeded in arriving there undiscovered. The bright newness of the furnishings, the gay sunshine pouring through, and the entire absence of any reminders of its deceased owner brought her to a realization of her offense in trespassing, and she scurried away hoping that she would not be seen by a servant.

As she reached the staircase, she came face to face with Henry, returning unexpectedly after a two days' absence.

"Mr. Tilney!" she exclaimed in a voice of more than common astonishment. He looked astonished too. "Good God! she continued, (swearing in true heroic fashion) "how come you here?--how came you up that staircase?"

"How came I up that staircase!" he replied, greatly surprised. "Because it is my nearest way from the stable-yard to my own chamber; and why should I not come up it? . . . and may I not, in my turn," said he, as he pushed back the folding doors, "ask how you came here? This passage is at least as extraordinary a road from the breakfast-parlour to your apartment, as that staircase can be from the stables to mine."⁹⁰

Thrown into confusion, Catherine hesitatingly told him her errand. His keen questioning elicited her fanciful ideas in regard to his father, and though his words of reproach were few, they were effective. Humbled and ashamed, Catherine hurried away in tears.

The final situation in Northanger Abbey is a satire upon the baseness of the villain. General Tilney, who has been absent for several days, returns suddenly from London and sends a much-embarrassed Eleanor to inform Catherine that she must leave his house in the morning. He gives no explanation for the command, and sends her away, unchaperoned,⁹¹ in a public coach. The journey is performed in safety,

90. Northanger Abbey, op. cit., Vol. I, ch. IX, pp. 194-195.

91. Cf. Romance of the Forest, op. cit. Adeline twice suffers abduction at the hands of her uncle, the Marquis of Montalt, who does not know that she is his niece.

as uneventfully as the first trip from Fullerton to Bath. The hero, acting with a promptness quite contrary to the vacillation of a Valancourt, hastens to her home, declares his love, and is accepted with unheroine-like promptness.⁹²

In selecting the above excerpts from the satires I have tried to differentiate between the rollicking fun and exaggeration of Love and Freindship and the carefully executed parody of Northanger Abbey. In the former no effort is made to maintain plausibility; in fact, the satire gains in effect through the use of violent and disjointed action. In the latter, Miss Austen's characters are intended to correspond in number and relationship to the principal ones in a Gothic novel and each is a mild burlesque on its prototype. The plot parallels the events in any Gothic romance, though the similarity to The Mysteries of Udolpho is obvious. Miss Austen renders the satire more effective by reducing the plot to a scale trivial and inconsequential when compared to the tragic possibilities of Gothic episodes.

92. Cf. The Mysteries of Udolpho, *op. cit.* Valancourt declares his love for Emily and receives assurance of her returning his affections Vol. I, ch. XI, p. 55, but he is not accepted until Vol. II, ch. LIII, p. 139. The number of pages separating these two important events, fails to suggest the numerous sufferings and sad adventures that both endure meantime.

III

THE EFFECT OF THE SATIRE ON THE STORY OF NORTHANGER ABBEY

Granting that Northanger Abbey is more skillfully and artistically constructed than the broader satires, which apparently Miss Austen never intended for publication, a question arises as to the enduring value of the story itself. Raleigh has said:

Parody is, for the most part, a weak and clinging kind of tribute to the force of its original. Very perfect parodies which catch the soul, as well as the form of the models that they imitate, almost lose their identity and become part of that which they were meant to ridicule. . . Poor parodies are even more conspicuously dependent on the vogue of the original. . . The famous parodies (so to call them) are not parodies at all; their freedom from the servility of parody is what has given them their place in literature. . . The breakdown of these parodies is always due to the same cause--the appearance on an artificially designed scene of real character.⁹³

While the critic is not speaking of Northanger Abbey in these lines, they are, nevertheless, applicable to the story. For in spite of any faults the story may have which arise from the burden of satire or from the inexperience of the author, it is still very enjoyable reading. It serves as a reminder of the novel which it satirizes more than it depends for its fame upon The Mysteries of Udolpho.

93. Raleigh, Walter, "Introduction" to The Heroine, in the volume containing The Heroine by Eaton Stannard Barrett. p. xv.

The effect of the satire on the story of Northanger Abbey is, however, in the opinion of critics, debatable, so that it may not be amiss to consider some of these when estimating the literary value of this early novel of Jane Austen's. In his introduction to Northanger Abbey, Mr. Austin Dobson speaks humorously but enthusiastically of the satire:

Even at this distance of time the genuine devotee of Jane Austen must be conscious of the futile but irresistible desire to "feel the bumps" of that Boeotian bookseller of Bath who--having bought the manuscript of Northanger Abbey for the price of ten pounds--refrained from putting it before the world. . . .⁹⁴

His solution to the question is that either he was insensible to the charm of the sentence

Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard, and he had never been handsome. . .

or that he was an "impenitent and irreclaimable adherent of the author of the Mysteries of Udolpho."

Mr. Dobson, it seems, has put his finger on the reason for any high praise that might be bestowed upon Northanger Abbey. It must come from "a devotee of Jane." In this opinion he is supported by G. E. Mitton, who says in his biography of Miss Austen:

94. Austin Dobson, "Introduction" to Northanger Abbey, p. vii.

Perhaps Northanger Abbey may be described as the book which real Austenites appreciate most, but which the casual reader does not admire.⁹⁵

He qualifies this, however, by the statement that the story is not interesting; that

Catherine is rather irritating than attractive; it is the form and flashes of insight in the book that make it so enjoyable.

A further objection has been made that the book shows immaturity; the characters are character sketches, such as are found nowhere in her later work. This is especially true of General Tilney, "who is hard to understand as a Radcliffe parody; (as such he is not incisive) and if a real person, he is a half hearted performer in the part of the heavy father."⁹⁶

Mr. O. W. Firkins considers that in three ways the story is injured by the satirical treatment. First, the character of the heroine is overloaded; she is made to carry the double role: as an antithesis to the Radcliffe heroine, and as an illustration of the flightiness of a Radcliffe reader.

Miss Austen's art seems to me unwieldy and thrifty in the appointment of the same

95. G. E. Mitton, Jane Austen and Her Times, p. 193.
 96. Adolphus Jack, Essays on the Novel, pp. 252-254.

person to two parts.⁹⁷

Her purpose in so doing is to "reprove the romanticism of a fiction-reading young girl."⁹⁸ But the motive obscures the story, especially in the presentation of the heroine's character. "She is unromantic, but she is romantistic."⁹⁹ That is, she is not depicted like a romantic heroine but her actions are controlled by the ideas she has learned from reading romances. The delusions are the least pleasing part of the tale.

It seems to me, on the other hand, that Henry Tilney and John Thorpe share this double role with Catherine. Henry expresses open admiration for the Gothic novels, even though later he uses them as a means of teasing Catherine. In this, he helps to render more plausible her silly school-girl actions at Northanger Abbey. Coarse John Thorpe, while pretending to despise novels in general, approves of The Mysteries of Udolpho. Aided further by the conversations of Eleanor and Isabella, Miss Austen achieves consistency in the group of principal characters.

A second way in which the satire affects Northanger Abbey is in its effect upon the plot. Mr. Firkins considers that it has so little bearing upon the plot, that

97. O. W. Firkins, Jane Austen, ch. III, "Northanger Abbey," pp. 51-52.

98. Ibid., p. 49.

99. Ibid., p. 51.

the two are entirely independent, so far as motivation is concerned. Yet because the satire is present, a distinct break occurs in the action. The incidents which take place in Bath are full of interest partly because they are seen through the eyes of the unsophisticated heroine, partly because of the varied group of characters who participate in them. They include the vacant but amiable Mrs. Allen, the flighty, hypocritical Isabella and her blustering brother John, and the gay, humorous Tilney.

When the story is transferred to Northanger Abbey, several plot threads are left loose: the love affair between James and Isabella, the flirtation between Isabella and Captain Tilney, and the attempted pursuit of Catherine by John Thorpe. These have to be taken up later by the artificial device of letters and unravelled to our satisfaction.

Of course there is the satire on romance to supply a motive, but if the satire on romance is to furnish us no better amusement than we find at Northanger Abbey, I think the ghost of Mrs. Radcliffe is avenged.¹⁰⁰

Mr. Firkins' final objection, like that of other critics, is to the characterization of John Thorpe and General Tilney. While he considers the portrayal of Thorpe as a "loud-mouthed and bullying young Englishman" excellent,

100. O. W. Firkins, op. cit., p. 57.

he thinks the connection between him and General Tilney entirely too slight to be probable. Both are perverted from naturalness simply to carry on the satire. As for Tilney's ready credence to Thorpe's stories he says:

Now John Thorpe's bluster hardly imposes on the artless Catherine whose ignorance at eighteen is abysmal; General Tilney is a man of the world; yet in a matter vital to his interest, General Tilney reposes implicit faith in the word of a stranger whose blackguardism is vociferous. 101

After such severe criticism, it would hardly seem possible that Mr. Firkins could find anything to commend in Northanger Abbey, but, surprisingly, he finds Catherine the most winning of all Miss Austen's heroines.

I think I am drawn to Catherine by the fact that she is the one of the heroines who acts like a young girl. Anne Elliot's youthfulness is past; she already wears the willow, and her attitude imitates its droop. Emma, Elizabeth, Elinor (they run to E's like the early Saxon kings) are not really young. . . . Marianne's conversation is ten years older than her behavior. But Catherine Morland is young in the fashion of young girls whom I actually know, simple, warm-hearted, pleasure-loving, diffident between her impulses and eager behind her shyness. . . . There is little to Catherine, perhaps, but what there is is firm. 102

101. O. W. Firkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

102. *Ibid.*, ch. III, "Northanger Abbey," p. 58.

IV

THE EFFECT OF JANE AUSTEN'S SATIRIC ATTITUDE ON HER LATER NOVELS

From Jane Austen's humorously satiric attack on the Gothic novel, we should naturally expect that she would herself avoid the extravagances she satirizes. That she did so is evident from a careful study of her later novels. Always she limits her scenes to the part of England with which she is familiar: a village with a few families of the upper-middle class constituting her ideal setting and choice of character. By restricting herself to the well-to-do class, she avoids extremes of poverty with its attendant sorrow, as well as high rank which she evidently did not worship even in stories. In a similar fashion she never represents people who are eminently good or utterly vicious. In truth, there is considerable similarity in the types of character that she delineates, and the wonder is that in so limited a scope she can achieve so much variety.

When she has several characters of the same profession as Henry Tilney,¹⁰³ Edward Ferrars,¹⁰⁴ and Mr. Elton,¹⁰⁵ all of whom are clergymen, she is true to the age in representing them as not too seriously concerned with the duties of their parish, but each is an individual. Tilney is gay and humorous, a dutiful son and companionable brother; Ferrars'

103. *Northanger Abbey*, op. cit.

104. *Sense and Sensibility*, Vol. I, ch. XVII, pp. 127-135.

105. *Emma*, Vol. I, ch. XV, pp. 124-133

dutifulness renders him weak and indecisive; Elton is ambitious and somewhat hypocritical.

The perfection of her art in delineation lies in her portraits of two sisters, a favorite character group as Marianne and Elinor Dashwood, in Sense and Sensibility; or Jane and Elizabeth Bennett, in Pride and Prejudice. In both stories both sisters are disappointed in love, yet the way in which each conducts herself under such circumstances is in accordance with a nature which can in no way be mistaken for any of the others. Such skill eludes analysis.

When Miss Austen wishes to give her readers a personality that is somewhat out of the ordinary, again she is 106
eminently successful. An excellent example is Mr. Collins, whose servility to Lady Catherine De Brough runs to the opposite extremity in a sense of his own importance. He so far allows his "honored patron" to dictate his thought that he urges her sanction, secured aforesaid, as a serious reason for proposing to Elizabeth Bennett, and considers her approval a sure argument for the girl's acceptance. Even when we might become bored by an unpleasing character, she saves the situation by an ever refreshing fund of humor.

It is this delightful sense of humor, which the Gothic writers lacked entirely, that makes Jane Austen's stories so delightful. The people who fill her pages are funny, but she has the artist's ability to present them funnier than they really are. Miss Bates, the garrulous but well intentioned news monger; Mrs. Bennett a-flutter over the

almost simultaneous acquisition of three son-in-laws; and Aunt Norris, who manages everyone's affairs until she brings down upon herself an undesirable punishment--all are made to give themselves away in conversation, of delightful and often ironical humor.

Satirical situations continued to delight Miss Austen from first to last. The opening sentence of Pride and Prejudice at once sets the tone of the story and lays the foundation for all the action.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

Similarly, the initial situation in Sense and Sensibility crystalizes the disappointment which nearly all the characters are to suffer during the course of events; not one is to have his desires realized in just the way he anticipates. Mr. John Dashwood, wishing to keep his promise to his now deceased father, mentions to his wife that he intends to settle upon his sisters and step-mother the sum of three thousand pounds. Mrs. Dashwood, by adroit management, reduces the amount to a much smaller figure, which her husband suggests be made into an annuity. Pointing out to him the inconvenience of having to meet such payments year after year, she finally reduces the gift to the offer of assistance in getting the family located in smaller, cheaper quarters and to a promise of game in season.

A thorough romanticist may find the restraint that Miss Austen imposes upon herself somewhat disappointing in the handling of love plots. While she kept the conventional happy ending, almost without exception allowing the heroine to marry the suitor destined for her from the opening pages, Miss Austen never dealt at length with emotions. She leads up to the climax of the love affair but does not tell what happens. After years of association as a friend, Mr. Knightley haltingly declares his love for Emma Woodhouse. A few broken sentences suffice for the purpose; not a word of Emma's reply are we given.

She spoke then on being entreated. What did she say? Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does. 107

In the last novel written, Persuasion, satire is almost wholly lacking. The circumstances so unpropitious for the heroine's happiness are almost like the "irony of fate" rather than artistic satirical maneuvering. The obstacles are cleared away partly through a satirical touch when the "inconsolable" Captain Benwick, first drawn to Anne Elliot through a mutual love of literature, finally supplants his dead fiancée by his marriage to Louisa Musgrove. Miss Austen's sympathy throughout is with Anne, who in spite of her foolish weakness in following other

people's advice, finally makes her decision in the face of greater difficulties than she had been confronted with seven years earlier. In this manner, Miss Austen divests her important characters of satiric treatment and whatever of satire remains in the action, devolves upon minor characters.

THE EFFECT OF MISS AUSTEN'S SATIRE ON THE VOGUE
OF THE GOTHIC NOVEL

When we come to the effect of her satire on the Gothic novel, we are confronted with the evidence of literary history. The Mysteries of Udolpho appeared in 1794, and rather convincing proof exists that Northanger Abbey was completed in 1797-1798. It was sold to a bookseller in Bath, presumably Crosby and Company in 1803, but lay unpublished for ten years. At length Miss Austen asked to have it published, and offering to supply a new manuscript if the original had been lost. She also threw out the suggestion that she would try to publish elsewhere if Crosby did not care to print. She had written under an assumed name, and the publisher, not knowing her identity, replied that he had paid for the book, but was not under obligation to publish, and would bring suit if the attempt were made. In 1814, her brother, acting for Miss Austen, negotiated the re-purchase of the volume at the original price, ten pounds. Perhaps due to her failing health, the book was not brought forth until 1818, after her death.

108. Austen-Leigh, W. and R. A., Life and Letters of Jane Austen, ch. XII, pp. 230-231.

109. Ibid., ch. XVIII, pp. 333-336.

Such statements by critics as, "The good-natured laughter of Northanger Abbey was like a draught of fresh air. It blew out the candles and brought daylight back to English fiction,"¹¹⁰ are false, unless the critic means that for each generation she extinguishes the candle-light of romance. Certainly her work had no influence upon the thought or attitude of her contemporaries.

Still less important to her time are the juvenilia, Lady Susan, and Plan of a Novel, all of which have appeared within very recent years. In these early and posthumous sketches it is possible to see traces of her later powers, the change in her method of satire, and the refinement of taste that develops without injuring the effect of her wit. As a matter of fact no one will deny that the art in these volumes is less consummate than in the later novels. It is interesting to speculate as to the effect that either the mild or unrestrained satire would have had upon the Gothic novel.

Compared to other satires of approximately the same period, hers is less of a burlesque on the Gothic than any of them. The Female Quixote by Susan Lennox, published in 1752, Miss Austen knew and made use of, modelling some of the adventures in Love and Freindship on those of Arabella. Like Cervantes, Arabella has passed the border of sanity

110. William Lyon Phelps, Advance of the English Novel, p.89.

through reading silly novels of romance and chivalry. Every man is a villain in disguise, bent upon the destruction of her virtue; there is no more heinous sin than to address her on the subject of love, unless it be failure to conform to the language and customs of chivalry. Although it is much more of a burlesque than some of the later satires, and though it antedates the first Gothic novel by twelve years, it did not, apparently, have any effect upon the stream of romances and terror novels that followed The Castle of Otranto. Miss Austen's enjoyment of it is apparent through the similarity of the adventures of Arabella with those of Laura and Sophia in Love and Freindship.

It appears somewhat surprising that the writers of sentimental and Gothic novels now and then wrote satires. Whether they were groping for reality or merely amusing themselves is an interesting question. For example, in her collection of Moral Tales, Maria Edgeworth seriously undertook to provide an antidote for the kind of reading that was offered to children. ¹¹¹ Angelina, the most famous tale, offers a parallel to Northanger Abbey in parodying ¹¹² The Mysteries of Udolpho, except that it is more condensed.

Under the assumed name of Miss Jacquetta Agneta Mariana

111. Maria Edgeworth, Tales and Novels, Vol. II, pp. 5-62.

112. Maria Edgeworth, Moral Tales, pp. 7-62.

Jenks, William Beckford, the author of Vathek published in 1816-1818 two such satires. He succeeded so well in his purpose that Thomas Moore, the compiler of Living Authors, assumed that Azemia and The Elegant Enthusiast had been written as protests against the sentimental novels of his sister, Mrs. Harvey.

A still lengthier work, Romance Readers and Romance Writers, by Sarah Green, had appeared in 1810. It also, judging from all available accounts of the work, had little or no effect upon the prevailing literary taste.

Satire characterizes nearly all the novels of Thomas Love Peacock--satire not only against foolish fiction, but against the popular theories of social reform, and the current craze for necromancy. Nightmare Abbey, whose very title is farcical, is devoted to a mock proof of the reality of ghosts. Headlong Hall, still more rollicking, is designed to prove certain scientific pronouncements, also bound up with the supernatural. Pompous paragraphs that make a pretense of expounding high sounding truths total exact zero in common sense, and the whole concludes with a Greek phrase which, freely translated, says that the

113. Edith Birkhead, op. cit., ch. v, "The Oriental Tale", p. 97.

114. I have been unable to get either Azemia or The Elegant Enthusiasts by Beckford, or Romance Readers and Romance Writers by Mrs. Green; hence I have had to rely upon accounts of these satires.

whole experiment "descends into the shades" or in other words, "goes to the devil."

In Miss Austen's letters there is a definite reference to The Heroine by Eaton Stannard Barrett. (1813) She said she and her brother were reading it, and expressed her enjoyment of it. It is even more extravagant than Peacock's novels and surpasses in nonsense the language and situations of Love and Freindship.

Having had her head completely turned by romances, Cherubina decides that she is of noble, but unknown parentage. Accordingly she sets forth to establish her relationship to Nell Gwyn, the actress, which she bases on the discovery of a letter and a miniature that she has found in her father's desk.

Her adventures involve association with a rough Irishman, a third-rate actor, a crack-brained poet, two villains, and countless other characters of equal variety. With a few stout Irish knaves armed with sticks she defends a ruined castle until Lady Gwyn will yield her own to Cherubina, whose according to her reasoning it is. The story ends through a masque-like farce in which the heroine is completely disillusioned, and she returns home willing to marry the hero, who has been ever-present in the background, like a protecting knight.

Mr. Barrett's language is an excellent burlesque on the romantic phraseology. In the words of Cherubina,

A heroine is a young lady rather taller than usual, and often an orphan; at all events, possessed of the finest eyes in the world. Though her frame is so fragile that a breath of wind might scatter it like chaff, it is sometimes stouter than a statue of cast iron. She blushes to the tips of her fingers, and when other girls would laugh, she faints. Besides she has sighs and half-sighs at command, lives a month on a mouthful, and is addicted to pale consumption. 115

Later she writes to her former governess:

I tripped upstairs, and glided into the room. You must know I have practiced tripping, gliding, flitting and tottering with great success. Of these, tottering ranks first, as it is the approved movement of heroic distress. 116

Compared to the satire of Peacock and Barrett, that of Northanger Abbey is gentle irony. Most critics are content to make the conjecture that this novel was unpublished because it flouted public taste. 117 The most positive statement is that Northanger Abbey caused Mrs. Radcliffe to refrain from publishing Gaston de Blondville, her last work which was not put forth until several years after her death. 118 Perhaps the best expression of opinion regarding Miss Austen's satire is that of an author who was primarily interested in horror tales:

115. Eaton Stannard Barrett, The Heroine, p. 39.

116. Ibid., p. 50.

117. Vide: R. M. Lovett, op. cit., p. 167.

118. Eino Railo, op. cit., ch. I, "The Haunted Castle," p. 76.

In Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen had deftly turned the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe to comedy; but even if her parody had been published in 1798 when we are assured it was completed her satirical treatment was too quiet and subtle, too delicately mischievous to have disturbed seriously the popularity of the novel of terror. We can imagine the Isabella Thorpes and Lydia Bennets of the day dismissing Northanger Abbey with a yawn as "an amazing dull book" and returning with renewed zest to more stimulating and "horrid" stories. 119

With so many satires it seems as if the days of the Gothic novel would have been shortened, and we are told that the attitude was fairly prevalent.

The notable thing is that this attack upon the novels of the day was not an isolated protest; it expressed the general mind and echoed current opinion. Miss Austen with more suavity and art had long before (The Heroine 1813) said the same thing. The romance was declining. . . . If anyone had been rash enough in the year 1814 to prophesy the future of literature, he would have been justified in saying that, to all appearances, the prose romance was dead. . . the hand of Eaton Stannard Barrett had killed it.

Such a prophet would have been approved by the Edinburgh Review and all the best judges of the time. He would have been wrong, for he could not foresee the accident of genius. Walter Scott, like Cherubina, (whose adventures he read and applauded) had fallen a victim to the fascinations of the writers of romance. . . . He proved that the old romantic stories are convincing enough if only the blood of life flows through them. . . and as if Cherubina's unhappy experiences had not

119. Edith Birkhead, op. cit., ch. VII, "Satires on the Novel of Terror," p. 133.

been in vain, there is always a heroine.
 . . . Cherubina was deposed, and in her
 place there reigned the Bride of Lammer-
 moor. 120

Thus it is seen that the reign of popularity which the Gothic novel had long enjoyed was not ended through the influence of extravagant burlesques that had been written with the intent to ridicule. Rather its sovereignty merged into the rule of its literary descendant, the historical novel.

120. Sir Walter Raleigh, "Introduction to the Heroine," quoted from the preface to The Heroine by Eaton Stannard Barrett, p. 20.

CONCLUSION

I have showed through a brief history of the Gothic novel that it was not only a popular type of fiction, but that it exerted a remarkable influence upon English literature. Certain of its features were reflected in the writing of the Romantic period: the love of nature, interest in mediaeval theme and setting; and the literary figure known as the "Byronic hero."

Still more important from the point of view of this thesis is its influence upon Miss Austen. The Gothic novel called forth the satire of her first writing, the juvenile sketches as well as her first novel, Northanger Abbey. Its influence upon her later work is of still greater value, for guided by a keen sense of humor, she saw and avoided all the extravagances of Gothic style. The result was a form of realism from which all sordidness is omitted, and in which her literary art finds fullest expression.

The effect of Miss Austen's satires upon the Gothic novel must remain purely conjectural, since neither the juvenilia nor Northanger Abbey were published during the vogue of the Gothic novel. A number of satires, appearing over a period of years, were necessary to change the current of popular favor. Finally the satire of Northanger Abbey and Love and Freindship is too mild to have acted as

a check upon the flow of Gothic fiction, had they been published when they were first written.

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