

## ***Northanger Abbey – A Lesson Learnt***

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

[...]

—————“Trifles light as air,

“Are, to the jealous, confirmation strong,

“As proofs of Holy Writ.” (17)

(Shakespeare, *Othello*, III, iii, 323-5; also quoted by Ann Radcliffe in her *Romance of the Forest*, 1791)

*[Catherine examining the cabinet at Northanger abbey:]*

Catherine’s heart beat quick, but her courage did not fail her. With a cheek flushed by hope, and an eye straining with curiosity, her fingers grasped the handle of a drawer and drew it forth. [...] Well read in the art of concealing a treasure, the possibility of false linings to the drawers did not escape her, and she felt round each with anxious acuteness in vain. (160)

*[Catherine pondering over General Tilney and his dead wife’s portrait:]*

Here was another proof. A portrait—very like—of a departed wife, not valued by the husband! —He must have been dreadfully cruel to her! [...]

[...] His cruelty to such a charming woman made him odious to her. She had often read of such characters; characters, which Mr. Allen had been used to call unnatural and overdrawn; (171)

*[Eleanor and General Tilney showing the Abbey to Catherine:]*

They set forward; and, with a grandeur of air, a dignified step, which caught the eye, but could not shake the doubts of the well-read Catherine, he led the way across the hall, [...] into a room magnificent both in size and furniture—the real drawing-room [...] her indiscriminating eye scarcely discerned the colour of the satin; [...] the costliness or elegance of any room’s fitting-up could be nothing to her; she cared for no furniture of a more modern date than the fifteenth century. (172)

Wherever they went, some pattered girl stopped to curtsy, or some footman in dishabille sneaked off. Yet this was an abbey! How inexpressibly different in these domestic arrangements from such as she had read about—from abbeys and castles, in which, though certainly larger than Northanger, all the dirty work of the house was to be done by two pair of female hands at the utmost. (174)

*[Catherine thinking about the monument to the memory of Mrs. Tilney:]*

Catherine had read too much not to be perfectly aware of the ease with which a waxen figure might be introduced, and a supposititious funeral carried on. (180)

The visions of romance were over. Catherine was completely awakened. (187)

Among the Alps and Pyrenees, perhaps, there were no mixed characters. There, such as were not as spotless as an angel might have the dispositions of a fiend. But in England it was not so; among the English, she believed, in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad. (188)