

## ACT ONE

*A studio. Mrs. Cameron washing Mr. Cameron's head. Ellen Terry on the model's throne posing to Watts for Modesty at the feet of Mammon.*

### MRS. CAMERON

Sit still, Charles! Sit still! Soap in your eyes? Nonsense. Water down your back? Tush! Surely you can put up with a little discomfort in the cause of art!

### MR. CAMERON

*in a distressed tone*  
The sixth time in eight months! The sixth time in eight months! Whenever we start for India Julia washes my head. And yet we never do start for India. I sometimes think we never shall start for India.

### MRS. CAMERON

Nonsense, Charles. Control yourself, Charles. Remember what Alfred Tennyson said of you: A philosopher with his beard dipped in moonlight. A chimney-sweep with his beard dipped in soot.

### MR. CAMERON

Ah, if we could but go to India. There is no washing in India. There beards are white, for the moon for ever shines, on youth, on truth, in India. And here we dally, frittering away our miserable lives in the withered grasp of —

*(MRS. CAMERON washes vigorously.)*

### WATTS *(looking round)*

Courage, my old friend. Courage. The Utmost for the Highest, Cameron. Always remember that. *(to Ellen)* Don't move, Ellen. Keep yourself perfectly still. I am struggling with the great toe of Mammon. I have been struggling for six months. It is still out of drawing. But I say to myself, The Utmost for the Highest. Keep perfectly still.

*(Enter Tennyson)*

### TENNYSON

The son of man has nowhere to lay his head!

### MR. CAMERON

Washing day at Farringford too, Alfred?

### TENNYSON

Twenty earnest youths from Clerkenwell are in the shrubbery; six American professors are in the summer house; the bathroom is occupied

2

by the Ladies Poetry Circle from Ohio. The son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

**MR. CAMERON**

Loose your mind from the affairs of the present. Seek truth where truth lies hidden. Follow the everlasting will o' the wisp. Oh don't tug my beard! (*MRS. CAMERON releases him.*) Heaven be praised! At two thirty we start for India! (*MR. CAMERON walks away to the window.*)

A drop needle 502.2  
502.2

**TENNYSON**

Upon my word! You don't say you're really going?

**MRS. CAMERON** (*writing out her sponge*)

Yes, Alfred. At two thirty we start for India – that's to say if the coffins have come. (*MRS. CAMERON gives the sponge to Mary.*) Take my sponge, girl; now go and see if the coffins have come.

**MARY**

If the coffins have come!

**TENNYSON**

My dream? do I dream of bliss?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this  
For my dark-dawning youth,  
Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that ~~dad~~ <sup>dead</sup> man at her heart and mine:  
For who was left to watch her but I?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

SAW 20-30  
502.5-2.8

FASTER NOW!

**MARY**

*Bam*  
*Says 20-30*  
Why, it's the Earl of Dudley who's come. He's waiting for me in the kitchen. He's not much to look at but he's a ~~deal~~ <sup>deal</sup> sight better than coffins any day.

before line now:  
Blank needle 802.5

**MRS. CAMERON**

We can't start for India without our coffins. For the eighth time I have ordered the coffins, and for the eighth time the coffins have not come. But without her coffin Julia Cameron will not start for India! Think, Alfred. When we lie dead under the Southern Cross my head will be pillowed upon your immortal poem *In Memoriam*. Maud will lie upon my heart. Look – Orion glitters in the southern sky. The scent of tulip-trees is wafted through the open window. The silence is only broken by the sobs of my husband and the occasional howl of a solitary tiger. And then what is this – what infamy is this? An ant, a white ant. They are advancing in hordes from the jungle. I hear the crepitation of their myriad feet. They

lx 20 / 502.6

SW 1/2 in 6x21

802.7

will be upon me before dawn. They will eat the flesh off my bones.  
Alfred, they will devour *Maud*!

the whole thing  
is a *devour* word  
→ *score now*  
before Alfred

lx22

lx25 lx27.8

# TENNYSON

God bless my soul! The woman's right. Devour *Maud*! It's too  
disgusting! It must be stopped. Devour *Maud* indeed! My darling *Maud*!  
But what an awful fate! Here are my two honoured old friends, setting  
sail, in less than three hours, for an unknown land where, whatever else  
may happen, they can never by any possible chance hear me read *Maud*  
again. But what is the time? We have still two hours and twenty minutes.  
I have read it in less. Let us begin

lx26

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lip in the field above are dabbled with blood-read heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers "Death."



For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
His who had given me life – O father! O God! –

Ellen

lx30

**MRS. C**

That's the very attitude I want! Sit still, Alfred. Don't blink your eyes.  
Charles, you're sitting on my lens. Get up.

SR lx32-71  
SQ3.6-7

**ELLEN** (*stretching her arms*)

Oh, Signor, can't I get down? I am so stiff.

**WATTS**

Stiff, Ellen? Why you've only kept that pose for four hours this morning.

**ELLEN**

Only four hours! It seems like centuries. Anyhow I'm awfully stiff. And I  
would so like to go for a bathe. It's a lovely morning. The bees on the  
thorn. (*Ellen clammers down off the model's throne and stretches herself.*)

Ellen must be uncomfortable

Rel open window SQ3.5

**WATTS**

You have given four hours to the service of art, Ellen, and are already  
tired. I have given seventy-seven years to the service of art and I am not  
tired yet.

**ELLEN**

O Lor'!

**WATTS**

If you must use that vulgar expression, Ellen, please sound the final *d*.

**ELLEN** (*standing beside Tennyson*)

Oh Lord, Lord, Lord!

**TENNYSON**

I am not yet a Lord, damsel; but who knows? That may lie on the lap of  
the Queen. Meanwhile, sit on *my* lap.

Maud had a garden of roses,  
And lilies fair on the lawn

ell jump down

ell x in to end lx32

ell 1/2 SQ3.8

fair on the lawn SQ3.9

**ELLEN**

O how usual it all is. Nothing ever changes in this house. Somebody  
always asleep. Lord Tennyson is always reading *Maud*. The cook is  
always being photographed. The Camerons are always starting for India.  
I'm always sitting to Signor. I'm Modesty today – Modesty crouching at  
the feet of Mammon.

ending  
jump on

w/2nd dip lcl lx359

**MRS. CAMERON**

Another picture! A better picture! Poetry in the person of Alfred Tennyson adoring the Muse.

**ELLEN**

But I'm Modesty, Mrs. Cameron; Signor said so. I'm Modesty crouching at the feet of Mammon, at least I was ten minutes ago. But Mammon's big toe is out of drawing. Of course Signor with all his high ideals couldn't pass that. So I slipped down and escaped. If I only *could* escape. (*She wrings her hands in desperation.*) For I never thought when I married Mr. Watts that it was going to be like this. I thought artists were such jolly people – always dressing up and hiring coaches and going for picnics and drinking champagne and eating oysters and kissing each other and – well, behaving like the Rossettis. As it is, Signor can't eat anything except the gristle of beef minced very fine and passed through the kitchen chopper twice. He drinks a glass of hot water at nine and goes to bed in woolen socks at nine thirty sharp. Instead of kissing me he gives me a white rose every morning. Every morning he says the same thing – "The Utmost for the Highest, Ellen! The Utmost for the Highest!" And so of course I have to sit to him all day long. Everybody says how proud I must be to hang for ever and ever in the Tate Gallery as Modesty crouching beneath the feet of Mammon.

see ladder lx36

(see climb ladder lx37)

see down ladder lx38

see stand table lx39

see introd. ladder lx39.5

crouching

see floor from under camera lx40

mammon sq4.5

**MRS. CAMERON**

Yes. But now you're the Muse. But the Muse must have wings. (*MRS. CAMERON rummages frantically in a chest. She flings out various garments on the floor.*) Towels, sheets, pyjamas, trousers, dressing gowns, braces – braces but not wings. Trousers but no wings. What a satire upon modern life! Braces but no wings! (*MRS. CAMERON goes to the door and shouts:*) Wings! Wings! Wings! What d'you say, Mary. There are no wings? Then kill the turkey! (*MRS. CAMERON shuffles among the clothes. She exits.*)

see shirt

2nd door slam lx41

**ELLEN**

But I'm an abandoned wretch, I suppose. I have much awful thoughts. Sometimes I actually want to go up on the stage and be an actress. What would Signor say if he knew? And then, when I'm dressed like this, all in white and crouching there under Mammon's big toe, it suddenly comes into my head that I should like somebody to fall in love with me. And, what's much worse – oh, it's so unspeakable that I can't think how I've the face to go on crouching any longer – somebody *has* fallen in love with me. At least I think so. It happened like this. Signor and I were picking primroses in Maidens Lane. Suddenly I heard the sound of galloping hoofs, and a horse and rider sprang right over our heads. Luckily, the lane was very deep, or we should have been killed. Luckily, Signor is very deaf and he heard nothing. But I had just time to see a beautiful, sunburnt

wait 11 off ladder

see lx41.9

much worse

lx42 sq4.7

primroses

sq4.8

horse

sq4.7



whiskered face and to catch this. *(She takes out a piece of paper and reads.)*

lx43

Come into the garden, Nell,

I'm here at the gate alone.

Tuesday, Midday, Craig.

Tuesday! Midday! Craig! It is Tuesday. It is just half past eleven. But who's Craig?

Snd x hnd Vol

lx44

**TENNYSON** *(to Ellen)*

You're a very beautiful wench, Ellen!

**ELLEN**

And you're a very great poet, Mr. Tennyson.

**TENNYSON**

Did you ever see a poet's skin? *(He pulls up his sleeve and shows her his arm.)*

**ELLEN**

Like a crumpled leaf!

**TENNYSON**

Ah, but you should see me in the bath! I have thighs like alabaster!

lx50 / SQ 5.5

**ELLEN**

I sometimes think, Mr. Tennyson, that you are the most sensible of them all.

**TENNYSON**

I am sensible to beauty in all its forms. That is my function as Poet Laureate.

**ELLEN**

Tell me, Mr. Tennyson, have you ever picked primroses in a lane?

**TENNYSON**

Scores of times.

**ELLEN**

And did Lady Tennyson ever jump over your head on a horse?

**TENNYSON**

Emily jump? Emily jump? She has lain on her sofa for fifty years and I should be surprised, nay I should be shocked, if she ever got up again!

lx51 / SQ 5.9

**ELLEN**

Then I suppose you were never in love. Nobody ever jumped over your head and dropped a white rose into your hand and galloped away.

**TENNYSON**

My life has been singularly free from amorous excitement of the kind you describe. Tell me more.

**ELLEN**

Well you see, Mr. Tennyson, I was walking in a lane the other day picking primroses when –

1 w/25

for Ellen

lx92 l566

**MRS. CAMERON** *(re-entering)*

Here's the turkey wings.

**ELLEN**

Oh, Mrs. Cameron, have you killed the turkey? And I was so fond of that bird.

**MRS. CAMERON**

The turkey is happy, Ellen. The turkey has become part and parcel of my immortal art. Now, Ellen. Mount this chair. Throw your arms out. Look upwards. Alfred, you too – look up!

**TENNYSON**

To Nell!

**WATTS**

I do not altogether approve of the composition of this piece, Julia.

**MRS. CAMERON**

The Utmost for the Highest, Signor. Now, keep perfectly still. Only for fifteen minutes.

last w/ life

lx92

**MR. CAMERON** *(looking at the marmoset)*

Life is a dream.

206.8

**TENNYSON** *(much startled)*

I thought you were asleep!

(down bend down ladder lx94)

**MR. CAMERON**

It is when our eyes are shut that we see most! I slept and had a vision. I thought I was looking into the future. I saw a yellow omnibus advancing down the glades of Farringford. I saw girls with red lips kissing young men without shame. I saw innumerable pictures of innumerable apples.

down x window

lx55

down x window

lx56

down x BS

lx57

Girls played games. Great men were no longer respected. Purity had fled from the hearth. The double bed had shrunk to a single. Yet as I

down x window lx58

wandered, lost, bewildered, utterly confounded, through the halls of Alfred Tennyson's home, I felt my youth return. My eyes cleared, my hair turned black, my powers revived. And (*trembling and stretching his arms out*) there was a damsel – an exquisite but not altogether ethereal nymph. She was a dancer. She snatched me by the waist and whirled me through the currant bushes. Oh Alfred, Alfred, tell me, was it but a dream?

**TENNYSON**

Rather a wet one, Charles.

**MR. CAMERON**

All things that have substance seem to me unreal. What are these? (*He picks up the braces.*) Braces. Fetters that bind us to the wheel of life. What are these? (*He picks up the trousers.*) Trousers. Fig leaves that conceal the truth. What is truth? Moonshine. Where does the moon shine for ever? India. Come my marmoset, let us go to India. Let us go to India, the land of our dreams (*He walks to the window. A whistle sounds in the garden.*)

**ELLEN**

I come! I come! (*She jumps down and rushes out of the room.*)

**MRS. CAMERON**

She's spoilt my picture!

**TENNYSON**

My picture too.

**MRS. CAMERON**

The girl's mad. The girl's gone clean out of her wits. What can she want to go bathing for when she might be sitting to me?

**TENNYSON** (*opens Maud and begins reading*)

Well:

Come into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone –

**WATTS**

Alfred, tell me. Is your poetry based on fact?

**TENNYSON**

Certainly it is. I never describe a daisy without putting it under the microscope first. Listen.

For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
And left the daisies rosy.



Why did I say "rosy?" Because it is a fact —

MR. CAMERON

I thought I saw something which many people would call a fact pass the window just now. A fact in trousers; a fact in side whiskers; a handsome fact, as facts go. A young man, in fact.

MRS. CAMERON

A young man! Just what I want. A young man with noble thighs, ambrosial locks and eyes of gold. *(she goes to the window and calls out:)* Young man! Young man! I want you to come and sit to me for Sir Isumbras at the Ford. *(She exits. A donkey brays. She comes back into the room.)* That's not a man. That's a donkey. Still, to the true artist, one fact is as much the same as another. A fact is a fact; art is art; a donkey's a donkey. *(She looks out of the window.)* Stand still, donkey; think, Ass, you are carrying St. Christopher upon your back. Look up, Ass. Cast your eyes to Heaven. Stand absolutely still. There! I say to the Ass, look up. And the Ass looks down. The donkey is eating thistles on the lawn!

Exit 1x80  
Ellen & George 1x81  
Donkey 1x82  
Ass 1x83

TENNYSON

Yes. There was a damned ass praising Browning the other day. Browning, I tell you. But I ask you, could Browning have written:  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
The murmuring of innumerable bees.  
Or this, perhaps the loveliest line in the language — The mellow ouzel fluting on the lawn? *(The donkey brays.)* Donkeys at Dimbola! Geese at Farringford! The son of man has nowhere to lay his head!

Donkey 1x84  
Geese 1x85  
and then human caravans 1x90

*(Watts slowly advances into the middle.)*

WATTS

Praise be to the Almighty Architect — under Providence, the toe of Mammon is now, humanly speaking, in drawing. Yes, in drawing. *(He turns to them in ecstasy.)* Ah, my dear friends and fellow workers in the cause of truth which is beauty, beauty which is truth, after months of work, months of hard work, the great toe of Mammon is now in drawing. I have prayed and I have worked; I have worked and I have prayed; and humanly speaking, under Providence, the toe of Mammon is now in drawing.

Barnoff chair 1x91  
Barnoff table 1x92  
Barnoff books 1x93  
Barnoff shoes 1x94  
new pladder 1x95  
etc etc 1x96  
Barnoff 1x97  
Barnoff 1x100

TENNYSON

It sometimes seems to me, Watts, that the toe is not the most important part of the human body.

WATTS *(starting up and seizing his palette again)*

There speaks the voice of the true artist! You are right, Alfred. You have recalled me from my momentary exaltation. You remind me that even if I have succeeded, humanly speaking, with the great toe, I have not solved

the problem of the drapery. *(He goes to the picture and takes a mahlstick.)* that indeed is a profoundly difficult problem. For by my treatment of the drapery I wish to express two important but utterly contradictory ideas. In the first place I wish to convey to the onlooker the idea that Modesty is always veiled; in the second that Modesty is absolutely naked. For a long time I have pondered at a loss. At last I have attempted a solution. I am wrapping her in a fine white substance which has the appearance of a veil; but if you examine it closely it is seen to consist of innumerable stars. It is in short the Milky Way. You ask me why? I will tell you. For if you consult the mythology of the ancient Egyptians, you will find that the Milky Way was held to symbolize – let me see, what did it symbolize – *(He opens his book.)*

SR lx110-200, SR 9-10

apex show

lx110 / 900

### MRS. CAMERON

Let me see. Time's getting on. Now let me think. What shall I want on the voyage to India?

### MR. CAMERON

Faith, hope and charity.

### MRS. CAMERON

Yes and the poems of Sir Henry Taylor; and plenty of camphor. And photographs to give to the sailors.

### TENNYSON

And a dozen or two of port

lx112

### WATTS

Horror! Horror! I have been most cruelly deceived! Listen: *(He reads.)* "The Milky Way among the ancients was the universal token of fertility. It symbolized the spawn of fish, the innumerable progeny of the sea, and the fertility of the marriage bed." Horror! Oh Horror! I who have always lived for the Utmost for the Highest have made Modesty symbolize the fertility of fish!

### MR. CAMERON

My poor old friend. Fish. Fish. Fish.

### CURTAIN

long drop needle	lx114 / SR 9.8
2nd hand things	
couple's	lx114
earlier couple's split	lx118
curtain going up	lx120
for in a room in	lx122
1st time dancing	lx124
hands together	lx126
trap open	lx128
for in a room in	lx130
gman	lx132
kel'er	lx134
curtain drops	lx200 / lx10

## ACT TWO

*The Needles. Ellen Terry and John Craig are sitting in bathing dresses on the Needles.*

32/50  
**JOHN**

Well, here we are!

**NELL**

Oh, how lovely it is to sit on a rock in the middle of the sea!

**JOHN**

In the middle of the sea?

**NELL**

Yes, it's a sea. Are you the young man who jumped over the lane on a red horse?

**JOHN**

I am. Are you the young woman who was picking primroses in the lane?

**NELL**

I am.

**JOHN**

Lor'! What a lark!

**NELL**

Oh you mustn't let Signor hear you say that – or if you do, please pronounce the final *d*.

**JOHN**

*D* – be damned! Who's Signor?

**NELL**

Who's Signor? Oh he's the modern Titian.

**JOHN**

Titian?

**NELL**

Yes. Titian. Titian. Titian.

**JOHN**

Sneezing? I hope you haven't caught cold!

**NELL**

No. I feel heavenly. As warm as toast – sitting in the sun here. You can't think how cold it is sitting for Modesty in a veil.



**JOHN**

Sitting for Modesty in a veil? What the dickens d'you mean?

**NELL**

Well, I'm married to a great artist. And if you're married to a great artist, you do sit for Modesty in a veil.

**JOHN**

Married? You're a married woman? You? Was that old gentleman with a white beard your husband?

**NELL**

Oh everybody's got a white beard at Dimbola. But if you mean, am I married to the old gentleman with a white beard in the lane, yes, of course I am. Here's my wedding ring. *(She pulls it off.)* With this ring I thee wed. With this body I thee worship. Aren't you married too?

**JOHN**

I married? Why I'm only twenty-two. I'm a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. That's my ship over there. Can't you see it?

*(Nell looks.)*

**NELL**

That? That's a real ship. That's not the kind of ship that sinks with all we love below the verge.

**JOHN**

My dear girl. I don't know what you're talking about. Of course it's a real ship. The *Iron Duke*. Thirty-two guns. My name's Craig. Lieutenant John Craig of Her Majesty's Navy.

**NELL**

And my name is Mrs. George Frederick Watts.

**JOHN**

But haven't you got another?

**NELL**

Oh plenty! Sometimes I'm Modesty. Sometimes I'm Poetry. Sometimes I'm Chastity. Sometimes, generally before breakfast, I'm merely Nell.

**JOHN**

I like Nell best.

**NELL**

Well that's unlucky, because today I'm Modesty. Modesty crouching at the feet of Mammon. Only Mammon's great toe was out of drawing and

so I got down; and then I heard a whistle. Dear me, I suppose I'm an abandoned wretch. Everybody says how proud I ought to be. Think of hanging in the Tate Gallery forever and ever – what an honor for a young woman like me! Only – isn't it awful – I like swimming.

**JOHN**

And sitting on a rock, Nell?

**NELL**

Well it's better than that awful model's throne. Mrs. Cameron killed the turkey today. The Muse has to have wings, you see. But you can't think how they tickle.

**JOHN**

What the dickens are you talking about? Who's Mrs. Cameron?

**NELL**

Mrs. Cameron is the photographer; and Mr. Cameron is the philosopher; and Mr. Tennyson is the poet; and Signor is the artist. And beauty is truth; truth beauty that is all I know and all we ought to ask. Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever. Oh, and the utmost for the highest, I was forgetting that.

**JOHN**

It's worse than shooting the sun with a sextant. Is this the Isle of Wight? Or is it the Isle of Dogs – the Isle where the mad dogs go?

**NELL**

The apple trees bloom all the year here; the nightingales sing all the night.

**JOHN**

Look here, Nell. Let's talk sense for a minute. Have you ever been in love?

**NELL**

In love? Aren't I married?

**JOHN**

Oh but like this. (*He kisses her.*)

**NELL**

Not quite like that. (*He kisses her again.*) But I rather like it. Of course, it must be wrong.

**JOHN**

Wrong? (*He kisses her.*) What's wrong about that?

**NELL**

It makes me think such dreadful thoughts. I don't think I could really dare to tell you. You see, it makes me think of – beef steaks; beer; standing under an umbrella in the rain; waiting to go into a theatre; crowds of people; hot chestnuts; omnibuses – all the things I've always dreamt about. And then, Signor snores. And I get up and go to the casement. And the moon's shining. And the bees on the thorn. And the dews on the lawn. And the nightingales forlorn.

**JOHN**

'Struth! God bless my soul! I've been in the tropics, but I've seen nothing like this. Now look here, Nell. I've got something to say to you – something very sensible. I'm not the sort of man who makes up his mind in a hurry. I took a good look at you as I jumped over that lane. And I said to myself as I landed in the turnip field, that's the girl for me. And I'm not the sort of man who does things in a hurry. Look here. (*He takes out a watch.*) Let's be married at half past two.

**NELL**

Married? Where shall we live?

**JOHN**

In Bloomsbury.

**NELL**

Are there any apple trees there?

**JOHN**

Not one.

**NELL**

Any nightingales?

**JOHN**

Never heard a nightingale in Bloomsbury, on my honor as an officer.

**NELL**

What about painting? D'you ever paint?

**JOHN**

Only the bath. Red, white and blue. With Aspinalls enamel.

**NELL**

But what shall we live on?

**JOHN**

Well, bread and butter. Sausages and kippers.



**NELL**

No bees. No apple trees. No nightingales. Sausages and kippers. John, this is Heaven!

**JOHN**

That's fixed then. Two thirty sharp.

*John's reflection  
for his head*

lx 210

**NELL**

Oh but what about this? *(She takes her wedding ring off.)*

*rel popup*

9014

**JOHN**

Did the old gentleman with a white beard really give you that?

**NELL**

Yes. It was dug out of a tomb. Beatrice's. No, Laura's! Lady Raven Mount Temple gave it to him on the top of the Acropolis at dawn. It symbolizes – let me see, what does this wedding ring symbolize? With this ring I thee wed; with this brush I thee worship - It symbolizes Signor's marriage to his art.

*9014 212-530*

*9014 14.5-14.7*

**JOHN**

He's committed bigamy. I thought so! There's something fishy about that old boy, I said to myself, as I jumped over the lane; and I'm not the sort of chap to make up his mind in a hurry.

**NELL**

Fishy? About Mr. Watts?

**JOHN**

Very fishy; yes.

*lx 212 / 80 14.5*

*(A loud sound is heard.)*

**NELL** *(looking around)*

I thought I heard somebody sighing.

**JOHN** *(looking around)*

I thought I saw somebody spying.

**NELL**

That's only one of those dreadful reporters. The beach is always full of them. They hide behind the rocks, you know, in case the Poet Laureate may be listening to the scream of the maddened beach dragged backward by the waves. *(The porpoise appears in the foreground)* Look. Look. What's that?

*9014.7*

**JOHN**

It looks to me like a porpoise.

**NELL**

A porpoise? A real porpoise?

SQ15

**JOHN**

What else should a porpoise be?

**NELL**

Oh I don't know. But as nightingales are widows, I thought the porpoise might be a widower. He sounds so sad. Listen. *(The porpoise gulps.)*

Lx213/SQ15.3

Oh, poor porpoise, how sad you sound! I'm sure he's hungry. Look how his mouth opens! Haven't we anything we could give him?

SQ15.4

**JOHN**

I don't go about with my bathing drawers full of sprats.

**NELL**

And I've got nothing – or only a ring. There, porpoise – take that! *(She throws him her wedding ring.)*

before stand

Lx214

when ring would land

SQ15.5

**JOHN**

Lord, Nell! Now you've gone and done it! The porpoise has swallowed your wedding ring! What'll Lady Mount Temple say to that?

**NELL**

Now you're married to Mr. Watts, porpoise! The utmost for the highest, porpoise! Look upwards, porpoise! And keep perfectly still! I suppose it was a female porpoise, John?

SQ15.6

**JOHN**

That don't matter a damn to Mr. Watts, Nell. *(He kisses her.)*

SQ15.7

Kiss

Lx216

gm + kiss break/kiss

Lx300/SQ15.7

hand jump

Lx302

hit window sill

Lx303

entrance

Lx304

head phone

Lx305

clock

Lx306/SQ15.8

end clock

Lx307

SW door trap

Lx308

23rd ch - p

Lx309

to slam bar

Lx310

trump before tray down - p -

Lx310.5

photo

Lx311

donkey

Lx312

exit

Lx314

El Land lamp - the window

Lx316

decamer w/ photo

Lx317/SQ15.9

2nd to 2nd note

Lx320

needed down

Lx322/SQ15.9

2nd to 2nd peg down before

Lx330

**ACT THREE**

*The studio as before. Tennyson reading Maud aloud. Tennyson reads aloud for some time. Then the door opens and Watts comes in, hiding his head in his hands. He staggers across the room distractedly.*

**TENNYSON**

4407 "Come into the garden Maud,  
For the black bat night has flown;" –  
Come into the garden Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone,  
I am here at the gate alone.  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad  
And the musk of the roses blown  
For the breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves,  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in the light and to die.  
Come! Come! Come into the garden Maud,  
For the black bat night has flown,  
Come into the garden Maud  
I am here at the gate alone.  
I am here at the gate alone.  
I am here at the gate –"

before sun 332 lx 332

earlier  
toment. lx 334  
Barnes → lx 336

A x 338 → lx 338

SW x 340 lx 340

BLANKET 1 1/2 x 342 lx 342

SW 1/2 lx 342

Allen lx 350 / SQ 16.5

**WATTS**

Ellen! Ellen! My wife – my wife – dead, dead, dead!

**TENNYSON**

My God, Watts. You don't mean to say Ellen's dead?

**MRS. CAMERON**

Drowned? That's what comes of going bathing.

**WATTS**

She is dead – drowned – to me. I was behind a rock on the beach. I saw her – drown.

**MRS. CAMERON**

Happy Ellen! Gone to Paradise.

**MRS. CAMERON**

Oh but this is awful! The girl's dead and where am I to get another model for the Muse? Are you sure, Signor, that she's quite dead? Not a spark of life left in her? Couldn't something be done to revive her? Brandy – where's the brandy?

**WATTS**

No brandy will bring Ellen to life. She is dead – stone dead – to me.

**MR. CAMERON**

Happy Ellen; lucky Ellen. They don't wear braces in Heaven; they don't wear trousers in Heaven. Would that I were where Ellen lies.

**TENNYSON**

Yes. There is something highly pleasing about the death of a young woman in the pride of life. Rolled round in earth's diurnal course with stocks and stones and trees. That's Wordsworth. I've said it too. 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. Wearing the white flower of a blameless life. Hm, ha, yes let me see. Give me a



pencil. Now a sheet of paper. Which shall it be?

Alexandrines? Iambics? Sapphics?

(He begins to write. Watts goes to his canvas and begins painting out the picture.)

### WATTS

Modesty forsooth! Chastity! Alas, I painted better than I knew. The

Ancient Egyptians were right. This veil did symbolize the fertility of fish.

(He strikes his brush across it.) What symbol can I find now?

SB lx 351-355.5

### TENNYSON

Ahem. I have written the first six lines. Listen. Ode on the death of Ellen

Terry, a beautiful young woman who was found drowned.

(Enter Ellen. Everyone turns round in astonishment.)

for Kelenker

lx 351

Kelship on sill

lx 352

→ ! Bump w/ tongue just after

lx 354

### MR. CAMERON

But you're in Heaven!

### TENNYSON

Found drowned.

### MRS. CAMERON

Brandy's no use!

### NELL

Is this a madhouse?

### MR. CAMERON

Are you a fact?

### NELL

I'm Ellen Terry.

WATTS (Advancing, brandishing his brush)

Yes Ma'am. There you speak the truth. You are no longer the wife of George Frederick Watts. I saw you –

### NELL

Oh you did, did you?

### WATTS

I was on the beach, behind a rock. And I saw you – yes, abandoned wench, I saw you, sitting on the Needles; sitting on the Needles with a man; sitting on the Needles with your arms round a man. This is the end, Ellen. Our marriage is dissolved – in the sea.

beginning

lx 355

before the play

lx 356

**TENNYSON**

The unplumb'd salt, estranging sea. Matthew Arnold.

**NELL**

I'm very sorry, Signor. Indeed I am. But he looked so very hungry; I couldn't help it. *She* looked so very hungry, I should say; I'm almost sure it was a female.

**WATTS**

A female! Don't attempt to lie to me, Ellen.

**NELL**

Well, John thought it was a female. And John ought to know. John's in the Navy. He's often eaten porpoises on desert islands. Fried in oil, you know, for breakfast.

**WATTS**

John has eaten porpoises fried in oil for breakfast. I thought as much. Go to your lover, girl; live on porpoises fried in oil on desert islands; but leave me – to my art. *(He turns to the picture.)*

**NELL**

Oh well, Signor, if you will take it like that – I was only trying to cheer you up. I'm very sorry, I'm sure, to have upset you all. But I can't help it. I'm alive! I never felt more alive in all my life. But I'm awfully sorry, I'm sure –

**TENNYSON**

Don't apologize, Ellen. What does it matter? An immortal poem destroyed – that's all. *(He tears up his poem.)*

**NELL**

But couldn't you find a rhyme for porpoise, Mr. Tennyson?

*Styx 956-370  
80 17, 17 1*

**TENNYSON**

Impossible.

**NELL**

Well then, what about Craig?

**TENNYSON**

Browning could find a rhyme for Craig.

**MRS. CAMERON**

Ah, but in my art rhymes don't matter. Only truth and the sun. Sit down again, Ellen. There – on that stool. Hide your head in your hands. Sob. Penitence on the stool of –

**NELL** (*standing at bay*)

No, I can't, Mrs. Cameron. No, I can't. First I'm Modesty; then I'm the Muse. But Penitence on a Monument – no, that I will not be.

(*a knock at the door*)

**MARY**

The coffins have come, Ma'am. The coffins, I say. And you couldn't find a nicer pair outside of Kensal Green. As I was saying to his lordship just now, it do seem a pity to take them all the way to India. Why can't you plant 'em here with a weeping angel on top?

**MRS. CAMERON**

At last, at last the coffins have come

**MR. CAMERON**

The coffins have come.

**MRS. CAMERON**

Let us pack our coffins and go.

**MR. CAMERON**

To the land of perpetual moon shine—

**MRS. CAMERON**

To the land where the sun never sets.

**MR. CAMERON**

I shan't want trousers in India —

**MRS. CAMERON**

No that's true. But I shall want wet plates —

(*Tennyson, who has been out of the room for a moment, returns with something between his fingers.*)

**TENNYSON**

It's all right, Julia. Look. I have bored a hole with my penknife. Solid oak. No ant can eat through that. Hearts of oak are our ships. Hearts of oak are our men. We'll fight 'em and beat 'em again and again! You can take *Maud* with you.

Well there's still time; where did I leave off? (*He sits down and begins to read Maud.*)

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed;  
My dust would hear her and beat,

Rel jump down lx356

Rel exit lx358

after 3rd line tl + down lx360/SQ 19

Knock lx362

SQ 19.1

for gmx window lx370

into gmx lx372



Had I lain for a century dead;  
Would start and tremble –

**MR. CAMERON** (*who is looking out of the window*)

Ahem! I think that's a fact in the raspberry canes.

**TENNYSON**

Facts? Damn facts. Facts are the death of poetry.

**MR. CAMERON**

Damn facts. That is what I have always said. Plato has said it. Radakrishna has said it. Spinoza has said it. Confucius has said it. And Charles Hay Cameron says it too. All the same, that was a fact in the raspberry canes. (*Enter Craig.*) Are you a fact, young man?

Sub lx374, 376

**CRAIG**

My name's Craig. John Craig of the Royal Navy. Sorry to interrupt. Afraid I've come at an inconvenient hour. I've called to fetch Ellen by appointment.

**MRS. CAMERON**

Ellen?

**CRAIG**

Yes, Chastity. Patience, the Muse, what d'you call her.

top of page →  
before the Supergill lx374

(*Ellen re-enters in trousers, suitcase in hand*)

**CRAIG**

Ah here she is.

**TENNYSON**

Queen Rose of the rosebud garden of girls.

had to be

**MRS. CAMERON**

Why it's Ellen Terry, dressed up as a man!

**WATTS**

Ellen, Ellen, painted, powdered. Miserable girl. Unmaidenly! Unchaste! Impure! Out of my sight! Out of my life!

lx374, lx376

lx376

**CRAIG**

And into my arms.

**WATTS**

My wife in trousers in the arms of a youth, In trousers in the arms of a Youth! I could have forgiven you much. I had forgiven you all. But now that I see you as you are-painted, powdered-unveiled-

**TENNYSON**

Remember, Watts; the ancient Egyptians said that the veil had something to do with -

SB 3221

**WATTS**

Don't bother about the ancient Egyptians now, Alfred. Vanish with your lover. Eat porpoises on desert islands.

**CRAIG**

Hang it all, Sir. I've a large house in Gordon Square.

**WATTS**

Have you indeed, Sir. And where pray is Gordon Square?

**CRAIG**

W.C. 1/

nightie?

can u w/ group.

3221

**TENNYSON**

Young man, have a care, have a care. Ladies are present.

**WATTS**

Go then to Gordon Square where the sanctity of the marriage vow is no longer respected, where veils are rent and trousers....

**ELLEN**

Here's your veil. I intend to wear trousers in the future. I never could understand the sense of wearing veils in a climate like this.

SB W380-440  
82 22-23.7**WATTS**

You have no ideals. No imagination. No religion. No sense of the symbolical in art. The veil you cast asunder symbolizes purity, modesty, chastity-

**TENNYSON**

-And the fertility of fish. Don't forget that Watts.

**ELLEN**

I don't understand a word they're saying. But, then I never did. Can't we escape to some place where people talk sense?

xv?

W380

land jump.

lx 282

(Enter Mary)

- time to say goodbye. W380/5022

**MARY**

The coffins are on the fly, Ma'am.

**MRS. CAMERON**

The coffins are on the fly.  
It is time to say good-bye.

**MR CAMERON**

We start for India!

(CRAZY INDIAN MUSIC BEGINS)

**Mrs. CAMERON**

Where the sun always shines. Where men are naked.

**Mr. CAMERON**

Where the women are beautiful and damsels dance among the currant bushes.

music plays up

lx388

begin forehands

lx390

bushes

sq22.1

(A dance?)

**Mr. And Mrs. CAMERON**

Farewell to Dimbola:

Freshwater, farewell

lx off stage

lx400/sq22.3

*Exit Mr. and Mrs. CAMERON with a slam*

*Music stops*

**CRAIG**

They're all cracked.

Come Nell. It's time we're off. You can't keep a horse tied up at the gate all day in this weather.

**ELLEN**

We're off to WC 1

*Mrs. CAMERON Re-enters*

**Mrs. CAMERON**

Wait, Wait. I have left my camera behind.

(seeing Ellen)

**Mrs. CAMERON**

Take my lens. It is my wedding gift Ellen. I bequeath it to my descendents. See that it is always slightly out of Focus.

2 brkts after door close

lx410/sq 23

*Exit Mrs. CAMERON*



*(Tennyson begins reading Maude as Watt's begins a new painting, Mary sleeps beautiful music plays)*

**ELLEN**

Oh how usual it all is. Nothing ever changes in this house.

**CRAIG**

Come Nell.

*(Ellen and Craig depart, horse whinny and hoof falls as Ellen and Craig Depart)*

**TENNYSON**

They have left us, Watts.

**WATTS**

Alone with our art.

*(horses are again heard off)*

**TENNYSON** *(going to the window)*

God bless my soul, They're coming back!

**WATTS**

Don't tell me, Alfred! Don't tell me they're coming back! I couldn't face another - fact!

**TENNYSON**

She is coming, my dove, my dear;

She is coming, my life, my fate.

The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near" -

**MARY**

Her Majesty the Queen.

exit

lx412

2 bent after reassignment lx414/5023.3

at 2600h

lx420/5023.5

theresa lagina

lx430/5023.7

Atakout paper lx431

top of last note lx440

**THE QUEEN**

We have arrived. We are extremely pleased to see you both. We prefer to stand. It is the anniversary of our wedding day. Ah, Albert! And in token of that never to be forgotten, always to be remembered, ever to be lamented day –

**TENNYSON**

'Tis better to have loved and lost.

**THE QUEEN**

Ah but you are both so happily married. We have brought you these tokens of our regard. To you, Mr. Tennyson, a peerage. To you, Mr. Watts, the Order of Merit. May the spirit of the blessed Albert look down and preserve us all.

sq 441-460  
sq 24 x 25

**WATTS**

The upmost for the highest.

**TENNYSON**

The comedy is over.

**CURTAIN**

hit table 1	lx 441
comedy is over	lx 450 / sq 24
DS in 8	lx 451 / sq 24.2
hit table 1	lx 452 / sq 24.4
hit table 2	lx 453 / sq 24.6
top of x DS for jump	lx 454
begin jump	lx 455 / sq 24.8
in clear	lx 460 / sq 25

Monitors!