

TO NANCY

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To Nancy by Frederick Wedmore

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FREDERICK WEDMORE

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To Nancy

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BY

Sir FREDERICK WEDMORE^{LL.D.}

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

"To Nancy" was first issued in *The Savoy*. Then, in a book I shall not, as a whole, reprint. Now, in the form it definitely takes, it stands alone—like the "Dream of Provence" ("Orgeas and Miradou"), from the same volume.

F. W.

London: February, 1906.

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TO NANCY.¹

WEYMOUTH,

29th September.

IT happens that I have seen much of you, Nancy, at an eventful moment—eventful for yourself I mean, in your life and your career—and here, because I like you, and like to think of and reflect on you, there is written down, straight and full, the record of my impression : concealing nothing, though written to yourself : a letter absolutely frank, looking all facts in the face ; for, young though you are, you are intelligent enough to bear them. My letter you may find tedious, perhaps, but at all events unusual ; for letters, even

¹ A letter from Mr. Clement Ashton, the distinguished Painter, to Miss Nancy Nanson, of the Variety Theatres.

when detailed, generally omit much, hide some part of a thought—put the thing in a way that pleases the writer, or is intended to please the receiver. Here am I at the end of my first page, Nancy, and all preface! Well, I shall recall, to begin with, how it was that I met you.

Acquit me, please, of any general love of your over-praised Music Hall. Neither it nor the Theatre counts for much in my life. I like you personally: I imagine a Future for you; but I am not anxious for "the status of the Profession." Life, it is just possible, has other goals than that of being received in smart drawing-rooms—whatever Art you practise, its practice is your reward. Society, my dear, has bestowed of late upon the stage "lover" an attention that is mis-

placed. We are getting near the end of it: and, at afternoon teas, the *cabotin*, in a frock coat, no longer dominates the situation. Youths from the play-house have, in the Past, over the luncheon-table, imparted to me, with patronage, their views about Painting: to me, Nancy, to your old friend, who has painted for thirty years—a full Academician one year since, with but few honours (as men call them) left to gain: few years, alas! in which to live to gain them. Child as you are, your common sense—that neatly balanced little mind of yours, so unusually clear—that neatly-balanced mind assures you that it is not the profession you follow, but what you have been able to do in it, and what you really are, that gives you—I mean of course, gives any one—legitimate claim to be in privileged