

**COMEDIES OF
WORDS AND
OTHER PLAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649552443

Comedies of Words and Other Plays by Arthur Schnitzler & Pierre Loving

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ARTHUR SCHNITZLER & PIERRE LOVING

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BY

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

ENGLISHED FROM THE GERMAN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

PIERRE LOVING

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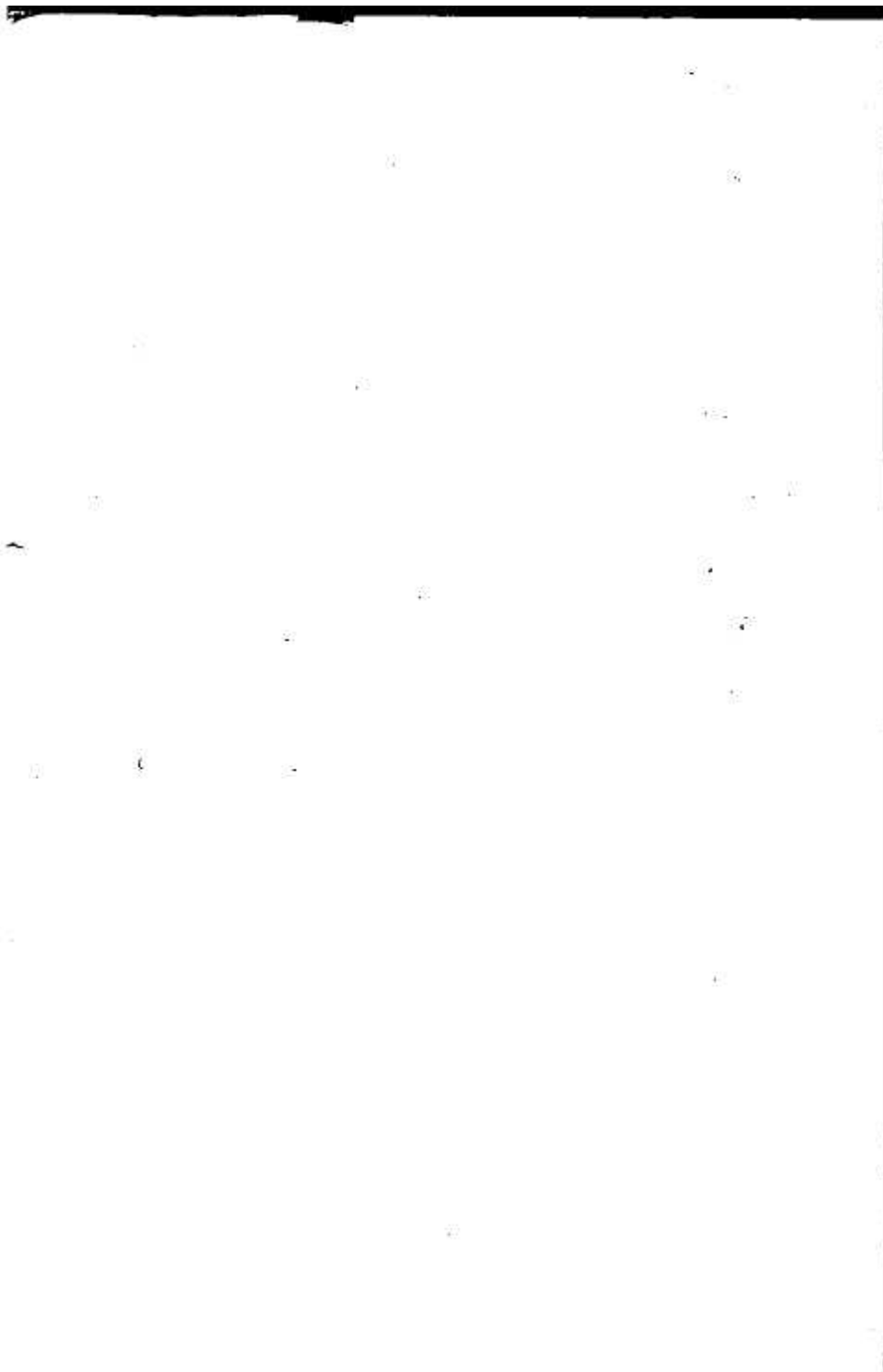
STEWART & KIDD COMPANY

1918

To *The International* my acknowledgments are due for permission to reprint several of the translations contained in this volume.

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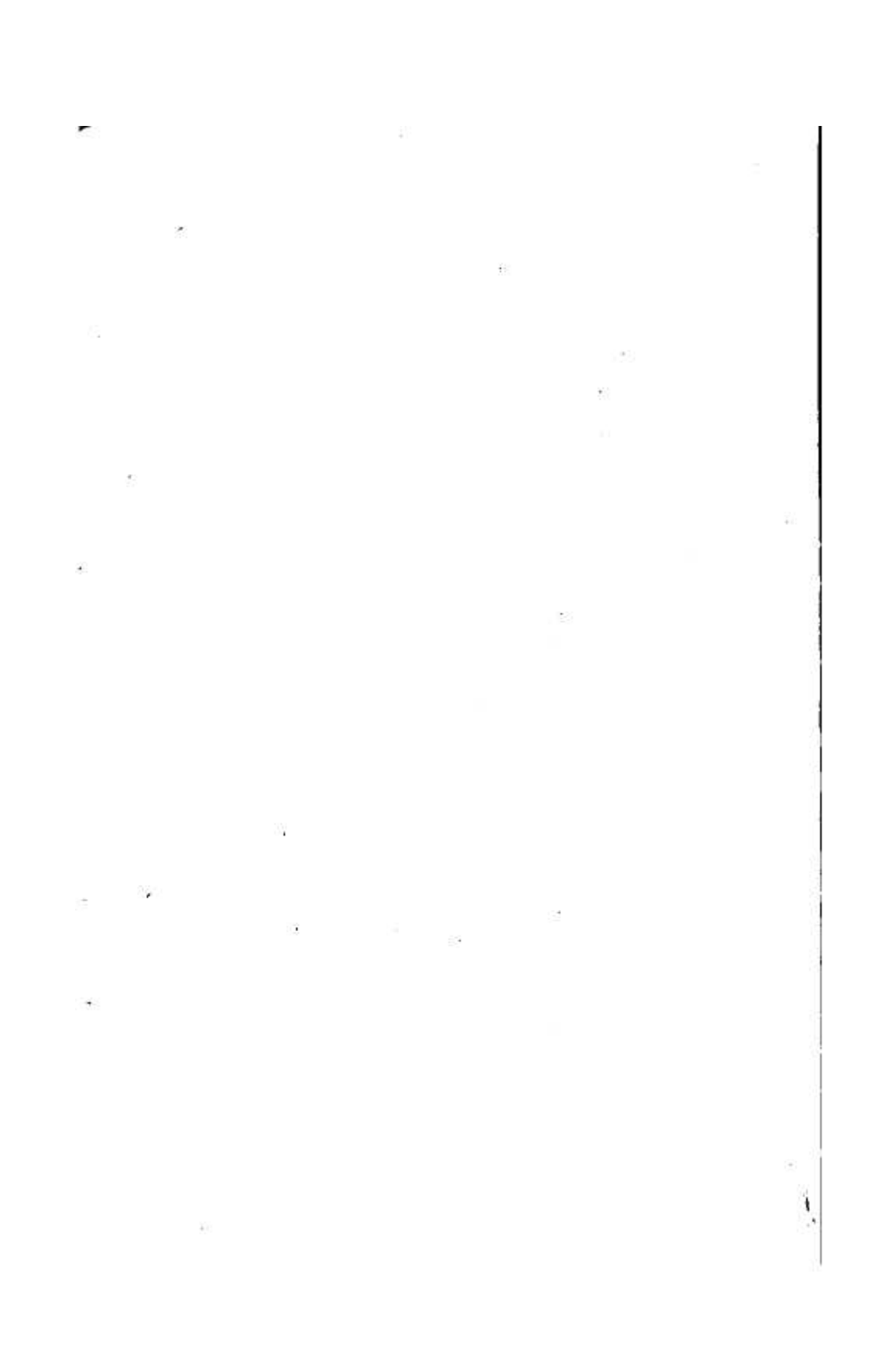
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INTRODUCTION

To the great mass of the American public Arthur Schnitzler, admittedly the finest psychologist in the theatre today, is still as it were something of a far half-remembered country upon whose bourne the proverbial tired pedestrian seldom touches. As a people, whether intensively or extensively, we haven't as yet cultivated the habit of turning up the lamp after coffee and liqueurs for the purpose of abandoning ourselves without reserve to a refined spirit, a subtle mind reaching out with infinite circumspectness and tact. Tact has its peculiar morality in the same way that art has its implied ethics. This tact when applied to the province of thought may simply mean that the world is not an affair of sharp lines, rules or data. It is this quality emanating from just such a spirit and mind that we find uppermost in Arthur Schnitzler.

In Europe Schnitzler's dramatic pieces are ranked on a par with those of his German confrères, Hauptmann and Wedekind. The keenly discerning Berlin and Munich audiences, not wholly free from an acute national consciousness, concede him a place immediately after these two in their affections. But in view of the fact that Schnitzler is uniquely abreast, if not a few hurdles ahead, of his time in handling that vein of character analysis which utilizes most effectively the latest discover-

INTRODUCTION

ies of psychic and psychological research, it is not at all improbable that the ultimate tribunal of playgoers will insphere him higher than either Hauptmann or Wedekind. As long as men and women will continue to be intrigued by the elusive enigma of life, by subtle states of the soul, by problems of the subliminal self, so long, we may venture to predict, will the plays of Arthur Schnitzler compel attention from the truly great audiences of the world which, as Whitman realized, are the indispensable abettors of progress in every art.

Arthur Schnitzler was born in 1862. His father, Johann Schnitzler, was a famous laryngologist. Following in his father's footsteps or rather compelled to follow, he studied medicine and obtained his degree from the University of Vienna in 1885. He was appointed assistant physician at the Clinical Hospital, one of the largest of its kind, in 1889. Meanwhile he was acting as contributing editor to his father's medical review *Wiener Klinische Rundschau*. At this period we notice that he also contributed poems, stories and sketches to other publications. He seems to have applied himself whole-heartedly to investigations in psychic phenomena, for he published an article about this time on the treatment of certain diseases by hypnotism and suggestion. Then followed a trip to London, not altogether for pleasure, for it bore fruit in the shape of a series of "London Letters" contributed to his father's review and exclusively devoted to medical subjects of wide range and variety. His original writings and collaborations on these subjects, together with his