

FIVE ONE-ACT COMEDIES

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Five One-Act Comedies by Lawrence Langner

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LAWRENCE LANGNER

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COMEDIES**

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By
LAWRENCE LANGNER

Introduction by
ST. JOHN ERVINE



CINCINNATI
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TO
ESTELLE LANGNER

I wish to thank my friend Philip Moeller, of the Theatre Guild of New York, who produced most of these plays, for his helpful advice and suggestions.

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PREFACE

Lawrence Langner, the author of these plays, is a typical American: he was born in Europe; and like all typical Americans, he is not happy outside New York. If he were a casual American, one who is American merely through accident of birth, he would probably prefer to spend his time in London or Paris, mugging-up European culture in the hope that some of it might stick to him, but since he is a typical American and has wished for Americanization instead of having it wished on him, he spends his time at the unfashionable end of Fifth Avenue, trying to develop a culture which derives, not from Europe, but from Cape Cod. He will not live to see an American culture which does not derive from the Old World, but at least he and the group, whose most interesting member is Mr. Eugene O'Neill, are doing much to make the way easier for a more definitely American culture to establish itself. There are obvious dangers which may overwhelm these pioneers, such as arrogance and argumentativeness and smugness and self-satisfaction and a disproportionate view of things and, above all, a tendency to imagine that the new and disorderly thing is better than the orderly and old; but if the pioneers have sound constitutions, they will survive them. It is easier, perhaps, for an Irishman to be aware of these dangers than for anyone else because he sees them manifested so clearly in his own country where pettifogging patriotism has