

*A satire and some
one-act plays by
Mr. Jones.*

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, the veteran English playwright, has commemorated his last winter's

visit to the United States by the publication of three one-act plays and a burlesque narrative, in a volume called "The Theatre of Ideas" (Doran). The little dramas have all the ready cleverness of technique that Mr. Jones's long practical experience with the stage has perfected. Their reader will not expect or find in them much stimulus in the way of thought, or much revelation of new methods in character study (although in the brief Cornish tragedy, "Grace Mary," there is real human feeling beneath the banal story); their author has lived through his experimental period, and shows himself here as an accomplished craftsman rather than as an unwearied and growing artist. Indeed, in the burlesque which gives the book its title, he reveals himself quite definitely and intention-

ally as the good-naturedly cynical foe of the intensely self-conscious younger school of dramatists who study parliamentary Blue-Books to find material for their plays and who seem to Mr. Jones to be merely rocking energetically back and forth on a hobby Pegasus and hacking wildly with blunt wooden swords at whatever ancient convention or human tradition comes within reach of their arms. Universal suffrage, universal peace, universal panaceas of all sorts, he mocks in a serio-comic style, so much heavier than witty in its general effect that it hardly prepares one for the swift concluding explosion that wrecks the Theatre of Ideas, the School attached to it, and all its votaries. The ridicule is neither bitter nor pointed enough to leave a sting; its neutral tone is perhaps but the inevitable reflection of the American atmosphere in which Mr. Jones conceived and wrote it as a half-jesting expression of some of the follies he hopes to see destroyed by the Great War.