

## Thirteen Questors in search of a play

THE latest production at the Questors Theatre, Ealing, is Luigi Pirandello's "The Rules of the Game," better known to those unfortunate enough to be acquainted with it as "Thirteen Characters in Search of a Plot." The piece continues until December 12, after which date drama enthusiasts may again safely venture into the Mattock-lane district.

Act One begins by introducing us to a curly-headed, plump young man with a wearily cynical smile. He is played by Geoffrey Sasse, but in the text he inevitably answers to the name of Guido and is the lover of Silia (Gwen Grounds), a feminist cross between Ann Whitefield and Simone de Beauvoir, though possessing the wit and wisdom of neither.

### Elegant beard

Next enters an elongated and elegant beard, which on closer inspection proves to be Vincent McQueen in the role of Leone, Silia's husband.

Leone, as written by the author and portrayed by Mr. McQueen, is a kind of flagellating Fanny Cradock. Wearing a lordly watch-chain, a snazzy waistcoat and a cadaverously derisive leer, he sees life as a masochistic sport requiring the rigorous suppression of emotion, rather like Postman's Knock.

His own analogy, however, is cooking—especially the cooking of eggs: and as befits a philosopher for whom the world is no yoke, he loves nothing more than to quote Bergson while whipping up a quick batter pud in the kitchen.

### Stage bore

He is, in short, a prize example of the thorough-going stage bore, the sort of chap immediately calculated to make a Saturday-night spectator wish he were sitting in front of the goggle-box viewing Perry Mason.

During the rest of the evening, the convolutions of this infernal triangle are punctuated by jarring interludes of farce.

Laurence Nixon as Leone's servant and culinary tutor, instructing his master to "Beat that egg!" in the tones of an aged rock 'n' roller, does manage to amuse; but only because of his wholly justified exasperation at the behaviour of his superiors.

From Cocteau, Lorca, Pinter or Ionesco, the mixture might have seemed tragi-comic. From Pirandello, it merely seems soporific. Nor do the Ealing producers (Clifford Webb and Shirley Butler) help matters by forcing their cast to bang on imaginary doors and open imaginary windows, through needless awareness of the "in