

# "NUMBER 17" DONE IN BEST GUILDIAN STYLE

## Theater Guild Players Give Convincing Performance of Difficult Mystery Play

By Rutheda L. Pretzel

"Better than 'The Bat' or 'The Cat and the Canary.'" That seemed to be heard many times after performances of "Number 17," the mystery play presented along the north shore recently by the North Shore Theater Guild. Although it was one of the most difficult plays to stage or to act, "Number 17" flowed along with the same efficiency and ease characteristic of all North Shore Theater Guild productions. A larger number of stage hands shifted the five different scenes in record time, and all of the mysterious noises were timed to the minute. This was the second play of the season, and was coached by the Guild's new director, David Owen.

### Otis Is Star

The honors for acting go to Samuel S. Otis, one of the "old timers" of the Guild. Mr. Otis was quite out of the amateur class as the slightly inebriated cockney sailor, "Ben," with a sense of humor and a great aversion for "haunted" houses. He had worked out his characterization in his unique, original way, and kept the audience chuckling between chills. Mr. Otis always gives the impression that the lines in a play are adapted to whichever personality he cares to assume, instead of the other way around. As comedy characters are apt to do, though, he encroached occasionally on the rights of the other actors, yet one didn't seem to mind it. He has such an engaging way about him.

J. Williams Macy, another "old timer," again displayed his ability to live a part convincingly. As Gilbert Fordyce, the detective, he moved through the intricacies of mysterious noises and situations with freedom, holding the play together. One can always count on Mr. Macy to give the best interpretation of a part.

### Extremely Well Cast

The play concerned itself with the presumably vacant house, Number 17, which is discovered to harbor an alleged corpse. Fordyce meets Ben running out of the house in a London fog, saying he has found a presumably murdered man in the attic. Fordyce insists upon investigating, and forces the ridiculously frightened Ben

to accompany him. The house is discovered to be a rendezvous for criminals, who are shipped out of the country by way of an underground railroad under the house. A girl from the house next door, played effectively by Zoe Comer, drops in from the sky-light, in search of her father, the body disappears, and at 4:30 in the morning three strangers enter. M. Hawley Mertz as Mr. Brant, George W. Bartlett as Henry, and Mary Harding as Mr. Brant's niece, were excellently cast, keeping well to their characters as crooks.

A master criminal, played by J. Lincoln Gibson with skill, almost gets the upper hand, but the end of the play finds him, Brant and Henry forcibly exiting via the underground railroad. The girl, a victim of circumstances, renounces her life and, with the help of Fordyce plans to go straight. The "murdered" man, taken by Eugene E. Macy, proves to be the father of the girl next door. He was merely "knocked out." And just before the curtain goes down, Ben produces a diamond necklace which he has "lifted" from the pocket of the master criminal, and which he hands over to the detective, Fordyce. "Number 17" was well worth seeing.

### SCHOOL TO REVIVE PROM

The School of Speech at Northwestern university is planning to revive its prom which has not been given for some years. The affair will be held on the evening of April 13, and will be a recognized university party. Miss Naomi Merlin is chairman of the committee for the affair and assisting her are Miss Mary June Fellows in charge of the music; Miss Pauline Fitzgerald, programs and favors; Miss Gladys Pfeffer, refreshments; Miss Helen Thielen, decorations; Miss Katherine Hicks, business manager, and Rolley Myers, publicity.

## Local Wellesley Club to Hear Alumnae Report

Reports from the alumnae council to be held at Wellesley early in February, will be brought to the meeting of the North Shore Wellesley circle February 21, at the home of Mrs. Richard Lake. Mrs. Earl White and Mrs. Ralph Brown will attend the council and bring the report to the local meeting.

There will be a meeting of the Wells College club of Evanston, Tuesday, February 7, at the home of Mrs. Horace Dawson. At this plans will be furthered for the series of Lenten lectures on books and reading to be given by Mrs. Anthony French Merrill at the Country club under auspices of the Wells club. The order of these was announced in a recent REVIEW. Saturday members attended the card party at the Stevens hotel which the Chicago Wells club sponsored.

The North Shore Oberlin Woman's club will have its February meeting the 27th at the home of Mrs. Robert K. Clark, 780 Lincoln avenue, Winnetka.

### OCCUPIES NEW HOME

Charles E. Olewine, north shore builder, has moved into his new home at 225 Lincoln drive, Glencoe. He was formerly located at 732 Park avenue, Wilmette.

### LOSES BROTHER BY DEATH

Mrs. Lewis Williams of 770 Rosewood avenue was called to St. Louis Saturday of last week by the sudden death of her brother, G. W. Fox. She returned home last week-end.

The North End branch, Friends of Chicago Junior school, is to give a luncheon and card party at Mrs. Peck's tea room, 738 Sheridan road, Chicago, Thursday, February 9.

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