

GASTON B. MEANS THE SUPERWISE

Keen-Eyed Secret Agent of Fiction is "Charged with Every Crime in the Calendar" he says, but Convicted Of None — Murder, Bootlegging and International Spying Among These Specifications.

Lindsay Denison in New York World. If Gaston B. Means in his days of smoking catalpa cigars behind the woodshed and reading Nick Carter novels, had been juvenile prophet enough to foresee what the first quarter of the twentieth century was going to be like, he probably would have set himself to just the career into which he was drawn by a force apparently as irresistible as gravity.

We have him in Washington now, looking every inch the keen-eyed secret agent of fiction. He fairly oozes melodramatic joy from his pores as he thumbs over the memorandum books which show how closely he was associated with men whose names are hung up for scandal hunters to decorate with unpleasant trimmings. Study his picture — it is a good picture — and get the calm, cold, mien the gayly adventurous mouth and the glittering eye of the fearless one who cannot be deceived. How did he escape the movies? Nobody knows; maybe the magnates were afraid he would sell Hollywood for them while they were at a party.

Means is not bashful about his reputation good or bad. "I've been accused of every crime in the world," he said on the stand yesterday. In Theodore Roosevelt's time he discovered that the B in Gaston B. Means stood for the famous Bulloch family of Georgia and announced that he was a cousin of Theodore Roosevelt. There were a lot of other things going on just then, including a world war and the seed fell on barren ground. T. R. neither invited him to lunch nor called him a liar. But Means kept on his way; nothing ventured nothing gained.

It was not much later that he was tried for the murder of Mrs. Maud A. Robertson King of no. 1155 Park avenue, at the Means home in Concord N. C. The husband of Mrs. King had died, leaving her a large fortune of from \$10,000 to \$4,000,000. Means discovered a second will of Mr. King leaving the whole \$4,000,000 to the widow. Means devoted himself to the task of proving it valid. Mrs. King became the guest of Means and his wife in North Carolina. In August, 1917 when the will seemed about to be made good, Mrs. King was shot back of the car. First Means said she committed suicide. Then he said she had handled a weapon carelessly "while shooting at a mark." He was acquitted.

The will of Mrs. King left everything to her sister, Mrs. Mary C. Melvin. It was filed in Chicago. Probate Judge Horner in spite of the best efforts of Means said the will was an impudent forgery. There was a lot of litigation. Charges were brought against Means in New York county. Means sued District Attorney Swan and Assistant District Attorney John T. Dooling for maligning him. The suit was dropped out of court, quietly later. Meantime it was found that the estate of Mrs. King, who had seemed to live quietly had dwindled from \$610,000 to \$60,000.

The Boy-Ed Case. The nice round sum of \$1,000,000 always appealed to Means. In the Overman investigation after the war, of German propaganda, Means testified with careless grace that Capt. Boy Ed active head of German intelligence in the United States before the war, once left one million for Means in a package behind a gravestone in Trinity church yard." He said it lightly and passed on to discuss his intimacy with the J. P. Morgan firm and the errands he did about the same time under the direction of Martin Egan of the Morgan house, and John Rathom the battling British editor of Providence, R. I. Means said he had in charge matters in the British interest involving millions of dollars at the same time he was working with Boy-Ed.

Why not? A job is a job. When, in times of world crisis, there is a scarcity of superwise and superdaring secret workers, who was Gaston B. Means that he should shirk responsibility of meeting the supply of such workers by doubling in brass and serving each and all sides with all the loyalty to be expected of a transcendental-mystery-action man?

The same characteristic upheaves his undoubtedly honest efforts to help the committee and his own pending case (charging him with accepting money with which to bribe Mr. Daugherty, Col. Bill Heywood, Major Jno Holley Clarke and others) by telling how close he was to government, visible and invisible, in the period covered by the multifarious investigations now murdering Washington sleep. He was asked by Senator Wheeler if he were the go-between after Jess Smith — whose game had

grown too big for his Main street capacity — shot himself. Wheeler doubtless intended the question to hurt the feelings of Gaston. It did. But not as the man of the sunburnt mountain tons thought it would hurt.

"No?" cried the outraged Means. "Go-between? No! Money carrier?"

That's what he was — the money-carrier! The stern-faced, smiling, man, trusted and feared by millionaire wolves of the commonwealth who trusted him implicitly with millions — and w-e-l-l-t-h-e-y m-i-g-h-t

Asked No Quarter!

"I ask no quarter and I give none Attaboy. Let anybody appear before the jury which may try him in the Federal court in New York if he does not pull new political and miraculous rabbits out of the tail hat of his benevolent looking, friend patron and boyish-spirited admirer, Col. Tom B. Felder and say he ever tried to conceal his intimate association with the attorney general and all the officials at Washington who might use their power of place to save the mistaken philanthropists of the Glass Coffin Trust from Federal persecution for fraud in selling stock in a coffin factory which couldn't make a coffin much over five feet long that wouldnt crack in two of its own weight.

What if certain miscreants, knowing that Means was ever at the shoulder and ear of Daugherty and others of the potent, did try to hold up the glass coffin merchants by using the name of Means? What other name could they so well use as that of the "Money Carrier?" Sure the yellow dogs! A guy can't get a little prominence in this world nowadays but what somebody tries to exploit him and collect money in his name. Some of us — one of us, anyway — has handled a lot of money; in fact, seldom has handled less than a million but never except on his own statements and when these statements can never be corroborated. Does anybody wonder that William J. Burns, the instantaneous and dauntless verifier of 57 varieties of confessions which solved the Wall Street explosion mystery in 57 different ways, trusted Means as he trusted himself?

The Evening World sent me down to see Col. Tom Felder once with a telegram about one of the devious and sinful things which Means doubtless wrongfully was accused of doing. I cannot now remember what it was. There have been so many. I took with me the original telegraph dispatch and sent it in to Col. Felder as my introduction.

When they let me in to see the Colonel his face was all crinkled up with chuckles and open laughter. He had the telegram before him. He laughed and laughed. In ten minutes he had me at the door, showing me out and I was laughing too. He had been telling me stories about Gaston Means which had nothing to do with the telegram, but the stories were so good I had overlooked that detail. As I remember it the last he said was:

"I surely hope, Mr. Denison sir, they are not going to do anything to that boy. It would be a shame Mr. Denison sir. It would take the joy out of life. I'm going to call you up one of these days, meet you and tell you some real honest-to-goodness stories about him — in confidence, of course sir, as this is."

The Colonel had been a busy man since. I realize that. These persons accused of bootlegging just will take their cases to him, he can't help him. But I do hope that when his own case about the fragile glass coffin industry to which he pleaded not guilty yesterday, is over he will send for me and release some of those confidences.

Lacking them it is necessary to go back to the records of the printed word. Here is the history of Gaston Bullock Means as printed during his public appearances and gained through himself and his varying counsel and not heretofore mentioned.

It begins in 1913 when Means said one Swartz, who saw the war coming engaged him to make investigations, for Germany in 1914. Swartz introduced Means to Boy Ed. The German intelligence man wanted Means to buy supplies. Means dabbled in the business and then retired. It seemed to him to violate the high responsibilities of American citizenship as to neutrality. So he went to work for William J. Burns who was then only the head of the Burns agency a private enterprise.

In this job Means learned that Burns, though he was one of the only honest men in the world, if not the only honest detective as well as the greatest, was accepting commissions from Germany. Burns, means said, he knew was 100 per cent. American and honest; he said it again yesterday. What could the aspiring admirer of Burns do? He went right to work, on Burns order for Germany. Editor Rumley sent him to Fore River to find out if British submarines were being built there. Means didn't find any submarines. Then Boy-Ed put him on special work — \$100 a day guarantees, success or failure — but \$1,000 a week for success.

Some Investigations Burns went into the department of justice as chief of investigations. Means went with him. There's a certain safety in using a man like means on special confidential missions. He may tell the truth all day long — as he may have been telling it yesterday and may be telling it today — but look at the other things he has told.

He told the Senate committee that he got Secretary Mellon as a dealer in liquor permits to illicit handlers of liquor. But as far back as 1919 he told the United States army that he had secret German documents in suit case in a monastery in North Carolina. A Capt Lloyd of military intelligence was sent down to North Carolina with him to get the bag. Capt. Lloyd saw the bag. He saw that it was full of papers. But by advice of Means he stayed in North Carolina looking for another smaller bag while Means brought the first bag to Washington. And when the bag carried by Means was delivered it was empty. Well what did they expect, when Capt. Lloyd let Means take it all the way back to Washington without anybody to help guard it?

Then again Means sued the Southeastern Express Company for \$7,000 he had sent from the south in a bag to Roy D. Keenan, an attorney representing himself and Mrs. Melvin in Chicago in 1921. Means said that the bag contained only wooden blocks when it was delivered to Keenan.

There's one thing about Means. He is not a selfish public servant. As he said yesterday, he doesn't mind lying if the public interest demands it or admitting that lie if the public interest demands a change of front.

When Means was called for trial in New York, Col. Felder reported him sick. At about that time there were loud cries for Means in the veterans' bureau investigation scandal in which he had a hand. Means said he went to Mr. Crim, the chief investigator, and Mr. Crim told him he wasn't wanted yet. So, says he, he went to his home and stayed there — "sick."

There is another indictment against Means besides the funny glass coffin tragedy case. It has to do with a number of persons who say they partied with tents and hundreds of thousands of dollars to get whiskey moved higher and you and released at profitable intervals, and that Means was the boy who was making official holes in the Volstead act for them. So far the government had been able to prove that whiskey did move as stated but that the people who thought they em-

ployed Means got no profit out of the moving. Means said he was "being jugged for exposing the ring."

"Who did Means ever expose?" asked a skeptic. And to let a person then Jolo Holley Clarke had to admit that the smoothness and keenness and intelligence of Means had brought about the indictment and conviction and imprisonment of the La Montague brothers, the aristocratic Calumet club members who recently finished a jail term for bootlegging. The trouble seems to be that Gaston Means — and maybe I am violating that confidence of the learned Col. Felder when I say this — always tells the truth as his overgrown bad boy dreamer soul sees it, and once in a while he sees unpleasantly straight.

EARLY HISTORY OF WATAUGA CO

Brief History of Watauga County From Early Days Compiled by Col. Fred A. Olds.

The county was created by the General Assembly by an act ratified January 27, 1849, which directed that it be "composed of parts of Ashe, Wilkes, Caldwell and Yancey, beginning at the state line, (where North Carolina and Tennessee join) in Emanuel Wilson's plantation and running in a northerly direction two miles with the state line, then running as near as may be in a direct line to leave Thomas Wilson in the county of Ashe to the top of the Big Bald Mountain; to the Deep Gap of the Blue Ridge; to Elk Creek at the Widow Hampton's; to the top of White Top Mountain; to the top of the Blue Ridge nearest to the Yadin spring, along the extreme height of the Blue Ridge to the top of Grandmother Mountain," etc., Charles H. Doughton and Reuben Mast were named to survey this line.

The Assembly ordered that the first county court of Watauga should be held at the house of Jordan Council, on the third Monday in May 1849. It also named Charles H. Doughton of Ashe, James Gwyn, Jr. of Wilkes and John McErroy of Yancey, commissioners to locate the county seat on a site between Reuben Hartley's and a point half a mile west of Willis McGee's and between John Pennell's and Howard's Knob, the land to be not less than 50 acres, the locating to be done between May 10 and

June 10. Jonathan Horton, Jordan Council and Noah Mast were appointed to lay off and sell the town lots. The county was named for an Indian tribe, the proper spelling of the name of the latter being "Watagi" (meaning unknown). The county seat Boone, was named for America's first and greatest pioneer and explorer, Daniel Boone whose hunting camp was for 10 years where Boone now is there being a monument to him erected by a descendant and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The first county court was held in May 1849 in a barn on Jordan Council's farm a mile from where Boone now is, and it was opened by E. C. Bartlett, sheriff of Ashe. The first clerk of the county court was George Bingham, register of deeds, Rev Joseph Harrison; sheriff Michael Cook. The first clerk of the superior court was E. C. Bartlett, who was appointed by Judge Anderson Mitchell. The first jury was drawn by James W. Horton, who has attended all sessions of the courts of the county up to 1867, and the superior courts since. In 1850 the first court house was built in Boone of brick, and it was burned in 1873 by reason of carelessness, all the records being destroyed. The second court house was built in 1874 and in 1904 was converted into a bank and store when the present one was completed. The will and deed books begin in 1874. (In 1868 an attempt was made to get the general assembly to make Reuby Fork the county seat and a campaign was put on in which Marcus Holselaw who favored the removal, was elected by one vote. He got the bill through the House of Commons, but it never got to the senate.

The county has furnished a Superior court judge, Leonidas L. Greene, its first representative in the general assembly was Jonathan Horton, (1851). It has had the following delegates in state constitutional conventions: J. W. Council, (1861); George W. Bradley (1865); Harvey Bingham (1875). In Congress it has had a member, Edmond S. Blackburn.

Indian Population is 344,303. Washington.—The Indian population of the United States, according to the latest tabulation of the bureau of Indian affairs, is 344,303, an increase during the past year of 1,144. Oklahoma continues to lead among the states with a total of 119,280, Arizona being second with 43,015.

91, Walks Mile Every Week to Sunday School

Rockville, Md.—Edward W. Horner, ninety-one years old, the "oldest boy" in this place, has a remarkable record. He did not miss one Sunday school class last year, notwithstanding that he lives more than a mile from the church and must walk the distance in all kinds of weather.

He has been presented with a badge of honor by Frank Higgins, superintendent of the Sunday school.

Mr. Horner attributes his longevity to the fact that he never married.

Gifts for U. S. Men Who Are Overseas

Washington.—Over 50 Christmas bags filled with good cheer and useful gifts for the American soldiers and sailors overseas were dispatched from the district chapter of the American Red Cross recently after volunteers under the direction of Mrs. Charles Lynch, chairman of the comfort section, had arranged the contents.

Each bag contained the name and address of the person who had filled it, and pinned to each one was a Christmas card from the district chapter.



Never neglect a cough

PUT an end to it once with Dr. Bell's Pine-Tar Honey. Loosens hard, clogged phlegm, soothes inflamed throat, restores normal breathing. Made of the same medicines your own doctor prescribes, combined with the good old grandy—pine-tar honey. You'll like its taste, too. Keep Dr. Bell's on hand for all the family.

All druggists. Be sure to get the genuine. DR. BELL'S Pine-Tar Honey

Charity's Millions Well Spent Abroad, Noted Tourists Find



Above in circle—Ex-Gov. Henry J. Allen Below—A future leader for his people

Call Results Worth \$80,000,000 Cost Of Work

ARE AMERICAN relief measures, which in the past 5 years have cost this country more than \$6 million dollars in the Near East alone, worth while? This question is answered affirmatively, as far as the Levant is concerned, by a group of prominent Americans who during the past year have made a close study of the Near Eastern situation and completed a first hand survey of what the dollars contributed by American charity in relief and reconstruction in that part of the world have accomplished. More than one million lives have been saved, according to the most conservative estimates. But the



This map shows the areas of operation of the Near East Relief, where more than \$80,000,000 has been spent in relief work in the past eight years. Arrows indicate the route of evacuation of 20,000 Christian orphans from Turkey as well as the direction of flight of Turkey's Greek and Armenian populations since the Smyrna disaster.

feature of relief activities which has attracted the widest attention is the care of the Levant's vast army of orphans. Sixty thousand of these waifs of war and famine are now being sheltered, fed and trained in Near East Relief orphanages. In these youngsters, and others that the same organization is caring for in homes and refugee camps, American visitors see the material for leadership which will eventually bring peace and progress out of the present discord, turmoil, and suffering of the Near East.

Henry J. Allen, former Governor of Kansas, spent several months and visited six different near eastern countries in a thorough study of relief work. "The principal constructive work in that part of the world is being done by Americans," he declares. "The seed which we are sowing will eventually bring forth the only fruit for the salvation of a complicated situation. We are the one voice that is speaking for a square deal. We must carry on what we have begun for we have not reached the point where we can lessen our effort. To cease now would be to sign deliberately a death warrant for those who not merely are dependent upon us, but who are the real hope of the future in a sorely troubled part of the world."

George M. Reynolds, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Continental and Commercial Bank of Chicago, the largest financial institution west of New York, makes a similar statement. He says:

"The greatest work, however, is that which is being accomplished with the children. Americans nowhere are doing any work that, in my judgement, can compare with that in the Near East Relief orphanages. These youngsters will be the future leaders among the men and women of that part of the world. Give those boys and girls three or four years of experience under American teachers in orphanage schools, where they are being as carefully and diligently taught as children in our schools at home, and they will soon become self-supporting. "Such work is the only hope in an otherwise hopeless situation. If order and progress and prosperity are to be brought out of the present, the work of the Near East Relief must go on. I appraised the work not with the eye of the maulin sentimentalist but from the point of view of an American business man. I feel it worth while."

The work that relief agents are doing in Beirut to establish older

orphans brought out of Turkey following the Smyrna disaster so captured the imagination of William H. Danforth, a prominent manufacturer of St. Louis that he contributed \$5,000 towards establishing industries that would give youthful artisans employment.

American methods of distributing relief to adult refugees by making them perform some labor bringing lasting good to the community and paying them in food has also aroused interest among the tourists. All of them were impressed by the constructive accomplishments of the relief dollar. The results obtained by American physicians and nurses in stamping out epidemics under almost impossible conditions is another aspect of the work which has aroused the admiration of those who have seen it.

Among other prominent Americans, besides those mentioned, who have endorsed the work of the Near East Relief after personal inspection are Senator King of Utah, Senator Ladd of North Dakota, Congressman Fear of Wisconsin, Dr. John Finley, editor of the New York Times, Alice Hegan Rice, the author, Oliver J. Sands, president of the American National Bank, of Richmond, Va., Frank P. Graves, Commissioner of Education of New York, and Bishop James Cannon, Jr., of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.