

A METEORIC CAREER.
The Louisiana Bond Frauds Direct Attention to Major Burke,
EX-TREASURER OF THE STATE.
A Man Who Always Rose Above Depressing Circumstances.
THE PROSPECT OF A STRUGGLE AHEAD

SPECIAL TELEGRAM TO THE DISPATCH.
NEW ORLEANS, October 5.—The disclosures recently made in connection with the robbery of the State Treasury of Louisiana of a vast, and as yet, indefinitely known sum, represented by bonds of the State which were commanded by the Legislature to be destroyed, but which have in some mysterious manner, found their way into circulation, brings to the unpleasant notoriety one of the boldest, brainiest and most meteoric figures that have flashed across the Southern political sky since the close of the civil war.
This is none other than Major E. A. Burke, ex-Treasurer of Louisiana, ex-Director General of the World's Exposition at New Orleans in 1885, ex-Administrator of Improvement and the city of New Orleans, ex-State Tax Collector of the richest and most populous district in the State of Louisiana, ex-proprietor of the Times-Democrat, the largest daily newspaper of this city and section, ex-political manager and "boss" in general of the Democratic party of Louisiana, and, finally, ex-plotter and planner of the bold scheme by which, in 1878, Tilden lost the Presidency and South Carolina, Louisiana and Florida secured local self-government.
Burke has been a truly conspicuous figure in Louisiana and the city of New Orleans, and he came to make this State his home few know, and though he has never sought to preserve a mysterious silence about his earlier life and history, there are a half-score of men in the State to-day who have any definite knowledge of who he was and what he had done previous to his appearance in this city.

HIS NAME IS NOT BURKE.
He declares that his father's name was O'Bourke, and he himself was christened Edward. As he grew in power and influence, and his wonderful talents and resources gave him a glimpse of the political greatness that lay before him, he changed O'Bourke to Burke, and added the middle name "Austin." From Celtic Ned O'Bourke he thus became the simple American, Edward Austin Burke.
The most authentic story of his birthplace makes him a native of Louisville, Ky. How old he is no one knows. He seems to be 50. He has a fine presence, and is of a pleasant and winning manner, a good writer and an eloquent speaker. Versatile, genial, brainy—a man who thinks upon his feet and follows thought by instantaneous action—it is no wonder that he has been a leader of men.
But to return to what is known of his life history. At the age of 13 Ned O'Bourke, as his true name was, was going to school in Louisville. His father had moved westward to Texas. One morning, while young Ned was engaged in learning the alphabet of the telegraph operator in the school of telegraphy, he received a dispatch from his father saying that he had failed in business, and that the son must give up all idea of an education. But the fellow had no thought of giving up, and that best of all educations which consists of a knowledge of the world and of men. He laid aside his books, it is true, but he

WENT TO SCHOOL TO EVENTS,
and in that grand university achieved a first-class grade. He did not want his way to Texas, but went straightway to a leading railway official in the city of Louisville and asked for something to do. He could use the telegraph instrument to a limited extent and was given a small station on the line. Here he remained for some time when he was promoted to the agency at a larger point, and finally at the age of 17 became Division Superintendent of the road, with more than 500 men under his control.

When the war cloud seemed about to burst, young "Burke," for such he had then become, hurried to Texas, where his father was living. He was then 19 years of age. For a few months he was in the employ of one of the Texas railroads, but soon joined the army of the Confederacy, his military career beginning at that age and lasting but four years in that section of the country could hardly be expected to furnish many incidents for a biographical sketch, yet even here opportunity was found for the display of his peculiar aptitude for overcoming the insuperable. The Trans-Mississippi Department was deficient in means of transportation. Young Burke, then a private soldier, was one day in the room of the commanding General, who was hearing the fact that no wagons or carts could then be procured in Texas. The 20-year-old beardless boy, standing by, declared that he could build the wagons and carts if the money to pay for them was forthcoming. His very words charmed his superior, and he was bidden to go at once and within 60 days provide 100 wagons and an equal number of carts, with the necessary harness and mules.

HIS FIRST CONTRACT.
Sufficient funds for the work were placed at his disposal, and promptly at the appointed time young Burke drove up, and behind him trailed out 100 wagons and the same number of carts. He was at once made master of transportation of the Trans-Mississippi Department, and at the close of the war delivered to General E. Kirby Smith, at Shreveport, La., the largest property account of any officer of the Confederacy. His receipt from General Smith for the property thus turned over, and a complimentary letter from that officer, are among Major Burke's most treasured possessions, which he is never weary of exhibiting to his friends.

When the war closed E. A. Burke became a cotton broker in Houston, Tex. He was a bold speculator, and for a time made money, but one day the collapse came, and with \$30 in his pocket he left Galveston for New Orleans. He remained in the city with \$10 in his pocket. For several days he walked the streets trying to secure work until his money had all disappeared. One night he slept on a bench in a public square, having no means to get a lodging place. He strolled up Poydras street, not far from the heart of the city, and entered a marble yard to ask for work. He was given the job of removing a number of marble slabs from the pavement to the yard, and his wages were fixed at \$1 a day.
Within two weeks he was made superintendent of the yard and his pay increased to \$30 a week. It was not long before the

Jackson Railroad, then and now the most important railway entering the city, discovered the wonderful organizing talent of the young man, and he was sought as the general freight agent of the line. In this position he had room to develop his marked ability as an organizer and commander, and becoming at the same time a popular member of the favorite company of the volunteer fire department, always the source of great political power in this city, he soon became known to the community as a man of cool judgment, of marked ability and unflinching courage.

A RISE IN THE WORLD.
In the year 1872, less than three years after he had spent a night on a bench in a public park because he was utterly penniless, Burke was made the regular Democratic nominee for Administrator of Improvements of the city of New Orleans. The nomination of an independent candidate divided the conservative vote, and James Lewis, a negro and Republican, was elected. But in 1874 Burke was again nominated for the same position and elected by an overwhelming majority. He thus became the dispenser of a greater amount of political patronage than any man in the State, not even excepting the Governor. It is due him to say that friends and enemies alike commend the thorough efficiency and economy of his administration of the office, in which he made a record never equaled before or since. The city of New Orleans was clear for two years at least, and Burke made it so.

In the days of the struggle between John McEnery and Kellogg for the Governorship, Burke took a prominent part in behalf of the Democracy. It was the time when troops had been ordered to the State, by the National Government, and things looked equally dark for the Democracy. On the 14th of September, 1874, had brought a blood battle between the two parties, a police officer supporting Kellogg and a body of citizens supporting McEnery.
On this day and at all times Burke was, if not the master spirit, at least not far from the leadership. It was by his well-devised and cleverly executed plot that the troops ordered from Holly Springs, Miss., on the day of the historic battle were delayed long enough to give the citizens the victory, which, although not immediately effective, was the beginning of the end of the Kellogg government. During the hotly contested campaign of 1876, Major Burke served as chairman of a committee appointed to act as a check upon the Republican Returning Board, and upon his figures and data was based the claim of Tilden to the vote of the State as cast.

AN ASTUTE DIPLOMAT.
After the election and during the period of the electoral commission, he went as the representative of the Democratic State Government to Washington, where his astute diplomacy won for him the recognition of an informal agreement that the Republican government should be left to stand or fall as it could, unaided by military force. This was the long-remembered agreement in favor of the Democrats, and Packard, the Republican claimant for the Governorship, threw up the sponge.
In 1877 Burke, now on the topmost wave of political influence and financial prosperity, received the appointment of State tax collector of the richest district in New Orleans, an office worth from \$50,000 to \$50,000 a year. This he relinquished the following year to become State Treasurer, to which position he was elected in 1878. This office he held for ten consecutive years, being defeated for re-nomination in 1888, after a bitter factional campaign, in which he espoused the cause of the McEnery party, which was overthrown by the Nicholas faction at the Democratic primaries throughout the State.

Major Burke's reputation as a political leader is not confined to Louisiana. At the Cincinnati Convention which nominated Hancock he led the delegation from this State, and at Chicago he not only controlled his own delegation, which was, from first to last, almost unanimous for Cleveland, but took an active and influential part in the discussion of all the issues that came before that body, being one of the three appointed to draft the important tariff resolutions. It was but natural that a man of Burke's power and influence should seek to enter journalism. In 1879 he bought the New Orleans Democrat, and later, in 1881, the daily Times, and consolidated them under the name of the Times-Democrat, now one of the leading journals of the Southwest, if not of the Union.

CAPACITY FOR WORK.
But the crowning work of his life, the acme of his ambition, as he has often said to his friends, was in the great New Orleans Exposition, held in 1885, of which he was made Director General. Here his capacity for work seemed enormous. He wore out everybody about him; but though a thousand fell by the way he kept steadily on. Nothing escaped him; nothing of value to the Exposition was neglected. He came out of the Exposition with world-wide prestige, it is true, but with health and fortune gone.

And it was during these days of arduous labor for the development of the South through an exhibition of her resources that the bonds now fraudulently circulated were taken from the State treasury. How this was done no one knows or can know until Major Burke returns from London on this State. For several months he has been in the English capital seeking to dispose of some mining concessions in Honduras to an English company. It is not known here how far he has succeeded in his efforts.

Public opinion in the State is divided as to Burke's guilty knowledge of the abstraction of the bonds. His friends are standing firmly by him, while his enemies are crying "I told you so." But until he actually sets foot on the soil of Louisiana, and makes his own defense, no one can tell what will be the outcome. He is a fighter, and neither asks nor gives quarter, and it is probable that there will be some interesting developments when he begins to talk. If he fails, he will bring many men high in public places down with him.

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