THE TELEPHONE SITUATION.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8.

residences in Buffalo of $24, and $30 for limited service.

Mr. Allen: How many calls does that entitle residences to?

General Meany: Four hundred calls.

Mr. Pollock: What is the lowest rate you have to offer Richmond?

General Meany: Eighteen dollars a year, I think, for residences, with a limited number of calls.

Mr. Allen: That would not amount to anything; we calculated that before. In Buffalo you say it is 400?

General Meany: Yes, sir. But in Buffalo we adopted the sliding scale of charges for additional messages over the guaranteed number of the original contract; it runs from 7 cents down to 4 cents a message, according to the number that the subscriber takes in excess of his original contract.

Mr. Allen: Even at your present rate—400—that would give forty-eight messages to a 'phone.

General Meany: It gives one and a third messages per day, outward messages; no charges made, of course, for inward messages.

Mr. Allen: Does that take into calculation the extra messages sent, too?

General Meany: We took into consideration there that, with the increased number of subscribers we would secure in the exchange, the volume of business would grow, and we would be able to make it profitable.

Mr. Allen: Do you mean that the rate for those residences was not more than $24?

General Meany: No, sir; I say that is the lowest rate; the lowest guarantee—that is, we would not place a telephone in a customer's house unless he would agree to take at least 400 messages a year, for which we would charge him $24.

Mr. Allen: Don't you think one and a third messages a day for a house is a very small number to be allowed?

General Meany: No, I think not; but I want to qualify my statement by this: There are many residences which make contracts with us for outward service only, having no inward service. It depends entirely upon the demand of the resident for service. In some residences one and one-third calls a day would be a low average. You will find in some averages, however, that the calls are not in excess of that. That is proven by the fact that there has been no charge made against their telephones for excess messages; and it seems to cover the amount of service they want. I think it is low, generally speaking; yes, sir; but it reaches a class of people who want to pay a low rate for a small amount of service.

Mr. Allen: I do not see what a telephone, with only one and one-third messages a day, would be worth to anybody.

General Meany: Of course, that is governed largely by your own personal experience.

Mr. Allen: You could not make your marketing with less than two or three messages.

General Meany: Well, we have made a study of the average number of calls at every station in this country, and we can arrive very accurately at what a fair average would be for an exchange the size of Richmond. I have not that data with me. I will get it, however, by our next meeting—based on experience in similar places.

Mr. Allen: Well, without the data, we know, looking at it in a practical way, that a 'phone, with one and a third messages a day would not amount to anything in a house.

General Meany: My answer to that is that a great many people think differently that take a contract of that kind and are satisfied with it. It would not suit you and it would not suit me, but it does seem to fill the wants of a great many people.

Mr. Allen: They are very modest in their wants.

General Meany: Under this new schedule, which we present, they can have as many calls as they please if they pay 3 cents a call.

Mr. Pollock: Do I understand you that your lowest rate in Richmond is $18?

General Meany: Yes, sir. I did not expect so entirely to go into details of this. I am speaking generally of the results of this system from our experience in other States, and that is why we are led to believe we would be successful with it here. As to the question of maximum rate, we are not prepared to state now what we can furnish unlimited telephone service for to any one in Richmond or anywhere else. Our experience in the past has led us to believe that it is a pernicious system of charge. Our experience in the past has led us to believe that it is not a proper system of charging. Our experience in the past has led us to believe that under that system the development of the telephone business has been long deferred. We think this new method of charging is the proper method, because it is the method that men are in the habit of following in all business maters. I do not know of any person, or corporation, or government engaged in furnishing a public service, that will undertake to furnish such service for five, ten, twenty, or thirty years in advance at a fixed price. I think we can look some distance ahead. I hope we can. If we do not do it we will make some mistakes in development, but we are in no position to-day to say what will be the cost of labor in the telephone business. Seventy-five per cent. of our gross income—and an examination of the printed reports of the companies will show that I am not far away—75 per cent. of the gross income of the telephone companies of the Bell system is expended in maintaining and operating the plant. A very large portion of that expenditure is for labor; practically all of it is based upon the cost of labor—all that we buy and all that we use.

Mr. Allen: Is not that the case with everything that is produced?

General Meany: Yes, sir; but I do not know of any one who is willing to say what will be the price of any commodity in five years or ten years from now. I don't know what it will be. We do expect that the price of labor will go up. It has with us; but we think also that the result of the development of the business will place us in position to keep in close line with it, and not be compelled to increase our rates to meet that increased expenditure; but if we are not, and the expenditure increases, we expect to charge a fair and reasonable profit upon our investment and for our labor; and we do not wish to place ourselves in a position where we will be agreeing to do a thing that we cannot do. I think, however, we can look forward with reasonable certainty to the charges for telephone service being reduced, and not increased, in the future. The highest price telephone service that I can bring to mind is the service in very small communities—places that have 50, 100, or 150 telephones—where the facilities for using the telephones are so meagre that almost any price you pay for it is too much. I do not think, however, that the charges of the companies that are operating large exchanges will ever get higher. I think they will all go lower. They are going down in Buffalo. That is the result of ten years in Buffalo. They are going down in New York, and they are likely to come down in Richmond. This question of rates has been before a great many of the legislatures of the different States of the United States. I have had the pleasure of appearing before fifteen or sixteen on this question, and it has been very exhaustively studied, and the opinion has been, both of committees and commissions appointed for the purpose of examining into this question, that to undertake to regulate rates for telephone service at this time would be unreasonable and unfair, and would throttle the development of the telephone business. The power, however, to regulate these rates, you have. It is in the Legislature, and the Legislatures, as a rule, act when there is good reason for action. It has been the case with railroad companies; railroad commissions have acted; practically all the States in the Union have acted on regulations of railroad rates. They will act on the regulation of telephone rates, if they become oppressive and unreasonable.

We are willing to present to the Council a schedule of rates; it has not been adopted for Richmond alone; it is not a special pleading for this city, but it is a schedule of rates to apply to seven Southern States—for Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. We have divided up the exchanges into classes, and prepared schedules to fit those classes. I think that they will fit. In Norfolk and Atlanta, and other cities in the South, where we are trying to develop and increase our business under these schedules, we find we are successful with the telephone customer. Of course, we have a great many criticisms upon our rates, but these criticisms I find seldom come from men who have used and do use the telephone. That has been my experience before the legislative bodies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and other States in the North, and States in the West, during the period of attack upon telegraph and telephone rates. We found that few of the people who were paying for telephone service appeared there to contest the rates we were charging. Of course, every one likes to get things as cheap as he can; and we like to sell them as cheap as we can, commensurate with fair profit. Other companies have offered to do this business at lower rates than we have. The field is open to them to do it. If they make a successful financial basis they will succeed in getting the business. If they do not, I think you should be satisfied that there is some one here to do it. The history of telephone rates has been thoroughly analyzed, and you will find that we have had as much experience as any one in that field. The rates of the Bell Company, so-called, charged in the infancy of this business, were as low, and in most instances very much lower, than the rates now charged by competing companies. We found that we could furnish a certain kind of business for these rates. It was not what the people wanted; they were not satisfied with it, and they didn't want it at any price. That was our experience with very low rates. Without drawing any parallel between the quality of the service that the competing company is rendering and ours, I am just stating that the quality of the service we rendered was very inefficient. We are prepared to go into details of the rates we have here for Richmond at any time you wish to take them up, and go into the matter fully. They are subject to the closest scrutiny and criticism. If you can find some one who will give us some more light on the subject, and will help us to make out a better schedule, we will, of course, be glad to consult them. The schedule of rates prepared for Richmond was prepared to go into effect August 1, 1900. That is the date that was fixed for the schedule to go into effect throughout the South. There are upwards of thirty different kinds of rates offered to the telephone user in the city of Richmond, running from $6 a month to $1 a month; and then a combination by which two or more people can get lower rates—a combination by which two persons occupying the same office or adjoining offices, and not wishing two telephones, can make a combination by which they can reduce that rate of $6 apiece, and make it $4 apiece for the two making the combination.

Now we have gone all over that question of fixing a system of rates that will reach the person who wants the telephone service. Unless we can come to Richmond and increase our number of customers here to 3,000 or 4,000 telephones, we do not look for large results in the schedule. It will take a large number of customers to create a sufficient volume of business to make it pay. We think we can do it, and we think it is a fair schedule of rates. We are willing to bind ourselves not to change that schedule for a period of five years, and make a contract with any customer for that period of time. We will take that chance. We are willing, further than that, to have incorporated in that ordinance a provision that the rates charged for telephone service in Richmond will not be greater than the rates for similar service in cities approximating the population of Richmond. I think that the city should be satisfied to be on the same line and be dealt with in the same way as other cities. I should think that, if we did not deal with you fairly, we would not have very much business anywhere.

We are willing, as I say, to put an underground plant in—bind ourselves to install a modern exchange and underground plant in certain prescribed limits of the city that you gentlemen will define; and deposit in the hands of your City Treasurer bonds of your own State to be forfeited in case that plant is not completed within a year. We will keep our promise or forfeit a large sum of money for not doing so.

Mr. Pollock: What would it cost to install that exchange?

Mr. Meany: I should say $250,000.

Mr. Mosby: What revenue would the city derive per year?

General Meany: The city would derive from taxes on gross receipts, I figure out, about $10,000 a year. Of course, where you would lose on the number of poles taken down—which would probably be 60 per cent. of the whole number in the city—your tax on gross receipts would many times pay the difference.

Mr. Mills: At the completion of your franchise, what disposition do you propose to make of the plant?

General Meany: That question occurred to me to-day, Mr. Mills, and I would like to hold that in abeyance for the present. It is not altogether a new question to me; but it struck me more forcibly to-day, and I would like to look into it more fully. I have no doubt you have your views as to what should be done with it, and I want to see if we cannot harmonize our views on that point.

Mr. King: What would be the capitalization of your company in this city? Would $250,000 represent the entire capitalization?

General Meany: The Southern Bell Telephone Company, operating in seven Southern States, has a capitalization of $1,000,000. It has a debt now contracted during the last four years of $2,000,000, represented by the building of new plants and the new toll lines throughout the South. There is absolutely not one drop of water of any kind in the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company's stock or bonds. To prove that statement, any broker in New York or elsewhere, who deals in telephone securities, can give you all that information.

Mr. Pollock: I don't know whether it is a proper question or not, but do you mind telling what dividends have been declared on that stock?

General Meany: The Southern Bell Telephone Company has not declared any dividends in the last three years. Its average dividends in the past twelve or fifteen years—I have the matter well in mind, because I collected data to go before the Railroad Commission of North Carolina—was less than 8 per cent.

Mr. Mills: Is that schedule of rates that you have there, and which was published in 1900, the only one you offer now for Richmond?

General Meany: Yes, sir.

Mr. Mills: And according to that schedule the maximum charge is $72?

General Meany: $6 a month, yes, sir; it is equal to the same equipment they have in New York.

Mr. Mills: Does that include the long distance?

General Meany: No, sir; the charge is for local service.

Mr. Mills: But the same 'phone can be used?

General Meany: Oh, yes; any 'phone we put in can be used equally as well for the ong distance service. We will make the plant in Richmond one of the terminals for the long distance system. It is not so now.

Mr. Mills: Is it proposed to make it the full metallic circuit?

General Meany: Yes, sir; full metallic circuit, and with the latest safety devices that we know of.

General Meany: I offer this schedule of rates with every feeling that it is a proper one for the business community of this city. If it is not, our enterprise falls and our investment is thrown away.

Mr. Mosby: as that schedule of rates been adopted in any other section of this State?

General Meany: Yes, sir; we have a schedule based upon the population. Lynchburg, Petersburg, and so on. We have schedules for Savannah, and for smaler cities. This schedule is somewhat lower than the schedule for Atlanta Ga., by reason of the fact that there is no charge made in this schedule for mileage of lines.

Mr. Mosby: That schedule is lower than the schedule now in use in Atlanta?

General Meany: Yes, sir; as there is no charge for extra mileage of lines. There is a provision here for two miles from the central office that these rates will apply; but I am perfectly willing to have that changed to apply to the present corporate limits of the State. That is one of the things that I understood was very unsatisfactory here to many of the people—the mileage charge—and the area of your city is not so great for your population. A good many other cities with less population have a much larger area, and we are perfectly willing to make that change i nour ordinance to provide that there will not be any charge for mileage in the city of Richmond. We thought we were practically doing that in this ordinance.

Mr. Allen: You have done that. I do not think the city is over three and half miles long, is it Colonel? A radius of two miles will practically cover the corporate imits of Richmond, will it not?

Colonel Cutshaw: Yes; a radius of two will make a diameter of four. The area is between five and six square miles.

Mr. Allen: What is the length of the city?

Colonel Cutshaw: About five miles.

Mr. Allen: Then a radius of two miles will practically cover it. It is not over a mile on the average.

General Meany: We had in view that this would cover it. If not, we will have the ordinance to provide for it.

Mr. Allen: That will practically cover it.

General Meany: I think, gentlemen, that is a brief presentation of our case. I am here to give any information that is in my power.

Mr. Mills: I notice that in section 1, line 10, you want the condut system to be bounded on the north by the north side of Broad street. Would that necessitate the erection of poles on the north side of Broad street?

General Meany: As I remember it, I took these boundaries from the ordinance this committee reported favorably some four years ago for the American Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company. If you think the underground district should be extended, it is largely an engineering problem; probably we are willing to meet you on that. We are willing to extend it beyond Broad street, and go beyond the Jefferson Hotel, to the other side of the park, but, as I remember it, these boundaries are based on the ordinance you passed in 1895—the general underground ordinance. We meant to meet your views as to how much underground we should put in.

Mr. Allen: All that will come in the details to be discussed when the ordinance comes up.

Mr. Mills: I just asked for information; I do not want to see any poles go up on Broad street.

General Meany: I am ready, gentlemen, to have you take up with me any details.

Mr. Allen: I had intended to reply to the representative of the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, but I see now that all these questions will come up in the discussion of the ordinance and I shall reserve my reply until then, as the matters will have to be considered seriatim, and we will all have to present our views at that time. We cannot go into any general discussion now, and there is no use in doing it, in fact, until we can act on the ordinance itself. We generally go to supper here about half-past seven o'clock, so if it is the pleasure of this committee to go into this question to-night, I move that we adjourn until half-past 8 o'clock.

Mr. Mosby: I hope that motion will not prevail. I think it is due to Captain Guigon that he should be heard now on behalf of his company.

At this point the committee adjourned to meet again at 8:30 o'clock.

The committee was called to order after supper at 8:45 P. M. by Chairman Allen.

Mr. Pollock: I move that Captain Guigon be heard.

Motion carried.

Captain Guigon: As my predecessor failed to read from any of his data, except the very briefest extracts, I do not know what the danger of these data may be. I would have liked it if he had read more at length, because it would have give nthis committee light on a great many matters that, I take it, they would be glad to be informed of. Certain it is that it would have afforded me, as the representative of the oppoinsg interest, some information upon which I would have been able to more satisfactorily base the argument I shall make. I have some data, however, and with every disposition to facilitate this work to-night and to spare you I will be at pains to read you, with your permission, a good deal of mine. Now, before I go into this discussion, Mr. Chairman, which I think is one of great moment to this community, as well as to the parties in interest, want to preface what I have to say in the way of criticism or condemnation of the company, which my distinguished friend so ably represents, by a very earnest and emphatic assurance to him and to this committee, that whatever I may say must not be considered as personal to him. I join with the chairman of this committee in assuring the other members of it that there is no man, I take it, within the range of this gentleman's acquaintance who more enjoys his social side than I; who more appreciates the very perfect Chesterfieldian consideration which he has always shown me, and so, it is with real regret that I shall say anything, if I do say anything which may sem haresh to the company he represents. I wish that he were on my side of this matter instead of on the opposing side, which I must attack. With that preface, Mr. Chairman, I want to start at, what seems to me to be, the beginning. A there is a true, though humble, adage which says, "You may judge the future by the past," it seems proper that the consideration of this matter should begin with a little recital of history, which may be fresh in the minds of some of you, but which some of you may have forgotten and some of you may not know anything at all. I do remember the exact date the franchise of the Bell Company, in this city, was granted, but I think it was about 1880, or probably before that. It was given substantially in these terms. It was no tlimited as to time nor as to rate, except there was a qualification that the Council could repeal the franchise, the said appeal to take effect twelve months after the date of the action of the Council. In December, 1894, if I mistake not, the Council took that action. It is probably not within the distinct recollection of many members of this committee why the franchise of the Bell Company was recalled and it s proper that you should be reminded of it.

The Chamber of Commerce of your city took action, as the representative of the business interests of the community and requested at the hands of this Council that the franchise of the Bell Company should be repealed on the ground that it hal failed and refused to reduce its exorbitant charges or to improve its wretched service. I do not propose to quote the exact language but that was the substance of it, and the complaint of the people of this community at the time.

I have heard it stated by representatives of the Bell Company that the reason that the franchise was repealed was because it refused to give free service to the municipal offices, or to make what the municipal authorities thought an adequate reduction. Now, that I think it absolutely negatived by the action of the Chamber of Commerce in the premises. There is no doubt about the fact that there was a controversy between the city of Richmond and the Bell Company on the ground that it did not make any reductions or supply any free service to the city. I believe it, and I believe that everybody who knows what happened at the time will bear me out, that that was not the real cause, but only one of the many instances leading to that result.

After the franchise was repealed—and I neglected to state that before the repeal measure was passed the matter was considered very earnestly and very thoroughly by the committee and by the Council and I believe, but I am not sure, but I believe the repeal was opposed by the representatives of the company. I am sure, however, as to this statement, that after the date of the repeal of that franchise not one single effort has ever been made to the date of the filing of this petition to-night to procure a franchise or any consideration at the hands of this committee. "Defiance," said one to-night, if there can be more absolute defiance than the Bell Company showed after the repeal of its franchise, I would like to know in what it could consist. Not once did one single emissary from or representative of that company come before your body, or any branch of it, and say, Give us a hearing; give us a franchise. Let us talk this matter over and see if, after all, we cannot better agree than we have in the past. Not a single prayer for consideration, for a franchise for relief, but absolute cold, disdainful silence. And that silence was continued during the period when the company I represent and another company came to you in response to your invitation and offered as applicants for this franchise which we now hold. That silence continued until the city of Richmond, after the partial establishment of the Richmond Telephone Company in your midst, undertook or was about to undertake and it was so understood and known by the community at large—was about to undertake harsh measures in order to reduce this recalcitrant company to its proper place—was about to order the City Engineer to cut down its polis and remove its wires from the streets as a trespasser upon the thoroughfares of this community. Not until then was it heard to utter its voice or seen to lift its hands, but did it come face to face to you and say, Gentlemen, we recognize that we have warred against you unwisely. Did it come to you and say, Let us consider this matter again and see if we cannot come to some reasonable adjustment of our differences? Did it admit that the city of Richmond was in existence, except as a defendant in the United States Courts to which it dragged it forthwith? e think the notice that this petitioner took of the city of Richmond to bring it into the United States tribunal and say, Stop; I have rights on your streets which you cannot control or limit; I defy you and demand the protection of the United States Government in that defiance. Was the word defiance improperly used this evening in the face of those facts? It went to the Federal Courts and said, We have reason to believe the city of Richmond is about to put its firm, strong hand upon us and crush us out of existence because we refused to obey it, and we tell this Court that we will not obey it. We tell this Court that it has no control or jurisdiction over us. It cannot drive us out of its streets. Was that defiance? And if it was not defiance, what constitutes defiance of a municipal government?

Now, gentlemen, do you remember anything about the course of that litigation? Do you remember that it went from court to court? And the lower courts of the Federal jurisdiction sustained the contention of the Bell Company, that it was above and beyond municipal control; that it was above and beyond State control, and that no power in this free country could control it but the United States Government and the United States laws. Was that defiance of your municipality, and if it be not defiance, what constitutes defiance? And the Federal courts, as I say, sustained it in that contention and stated that it came within the provisons of the so-called Telegraph Statute passed in 1886, and could not be driven out of Richmond and that Richmond should be tied hand and foot and forbidden from interfering with the company in the discharge of those interstate duties which it had assumed.

It is not the first time in the history of this country that the people have had reason to thank God for a Supreme Court. It is not the first time in the history of this country that that Supreme Court has rallied to the support of the people in its construction of the laws. And it said with a unanimous voice, and with no uncertain sound, It is preposterous. When the telegraph statute was passed, no such thing as a telephone had been heard of. There was no patent on the books governing the transmission of sound by this method, and that statute cannot be construed to include in its provision an art which had not then been discovered. Now, Mr. Chairman, the Supreme Court said, "That is a great question." It was brought up because it was a question of great national import. We have considered it and we are unanimous in our decision that, so far as the Federal statute is concerned, this company is without redress. And the city of Richmond has maintained its contention. There are other claims in the pleadings of the plaintiff company (the Bell Telephone Company in this case), touching the question whether it had a franchise or a vested right under the State laws; whether it had a vested right under the municipal ordinances and its franchise. Those are local questions, said the Supreme Court; let them be considered by the local court; this court will not consider them; it is unnecessary. And the case was sent back for trial. Now, what happened? I am not attempting to give you a technical description, and I am not pretending to give the language of the court, but I am giving you the substance of what the court did. The Circuit Court of the United States, Judge Goff presiding, said, when the matter was brought before it: This court was of the opinion, and clearly of the opinion that, under the statute of 1866, the city of Richmond was prohibited from interfering with the Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company, but the Supreme Court has said that there is absolutely nothing in that contention, and that the interpretaion of the law given by this court was wrong. There remains nothing but the consideration, of whether there are rights under the State laws or the city laws.

The Chair: Will counsel just allow me one moment? You said you were not certain about these statements, and I would suggest that the city attorney is here and he is well informed on the matter and can correct you, if necessary.

Mr. Guigon: By no manner of means. I am as absolutely clear about these statements as of anything in my life. If I am mistaken in any point, the City Attorney will correct me. Iam equally sure that before you gentlemen finally act in this matter you will hear from the City Attorney fully.

The Chair: The only reason I suggested that the City Attorney could correct you was that I understood you to say you were not sure as to that.

Mr. Guigon: Judge Goff said: The balance of your case is worthless, and we sustain under the ruling of the Supreme Court the contention of the defendant, the city of Richmond. They took an appeal to the Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Circuit Court of Ap-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE TEN.)

The Big Values Attract the Masses.

Notwithstanding the backwardness of the season and the unfavorable condition of the weather, the interest manifested in these big bargain values on sale at this store in fashionable Spring Suits for men and young men proves conclusively that the people realize the worth and choiceness of the goods, and the big savings, together with best results as far as their best interests are concerned regarding sightliness of patterns—comfort in make, style in cut and service of cloth. Everybody knows that a Burk garmet, bearing a Burk label, is a thoroughly dependable garment in every way, shape, and form. The label alone signifies that it has undergone the Burk process of manufacture, cut by the Burk custom cutters, tailored by the Burk skilled toilors in their own tailor-shops on their own premises, and have undergone every care in the make-up and finish only bestowed upon the best and highest-cost merchant-tailor-made garments that figure double and treble the ready-to-wear prices indicated on the price tags, and positively don't fit nor wear better.

SUITS AT
$5, $7.50, $8.50, $10, $12.50, $15, $18, $20.

Boys' Attire--Brilliant Offerings
Money-Saving Values.

Boys' Suits---Gems of Goodness and Cheapness.

98c. Boys' Double-Breasted Suits of dark cheviots—two excellent designs—remarkably well made and lined—pants with full wide double seat and knees and every other strength-giving improvement—all sizes to 16—blustering advertisers would term them two-fifty values at one-fifty—we plainly state them matchless offerings at only ninety-eight cents.

$1.47 Handsome Blouse Suits, neatly braided collars and ornamental shields, pretty Vestee and Double-Breasted styles—in solid colors and pretty mixed effects—made up in every respect for durability and good service as well as neat and dressy appearance—suits which at most stores would command nearly double the price charged here—all sizes to 16—choice one forty-seven.

$1.98 Boys' Suits, made from pure wool cheviot and cassimere, in excellent assortment of plain and fancy effects, neat and dressy Suits, matchless under three dollars anywhere else. The Big Store's Peerless Offerings for choice of sizes to 16, only one ninety-eight.

$2.50 Blouse and Double-Breasted Suits, made from splendid quality pure wool cheviots and cassimeres in nobby stripes, checks, mixtures, and solid colors, superbly finished, pants with full wide double seat, and knees extended from seam to seam, patent waistbands and buttons, suits that look and will wear as well and better than the four-dollar kinds ordinarily offered at most stores, choice of sizes to 16, only two-fifty.

Fashion's Best in Boys' Attire Economically Priced.

$3 Strictly Pure Wool Cassimere, Cheviot and Worsted Suits for boys, beautifully made and trimmed, vestee and blouse styles for the little tots, stylish double-breasted jackets in the larger sizes—beyond question the fullest measure of worth, value, and good looks ever crowded into boys attire at the reasonable charge of only three dollars.

$3.50 No claims of matchless bargain worth can be too extravagant for the peerless three-fifty line. Choose from handsome Blouse Suits, beautifully braided and ornamented collars and shields, made from pure wool serges, cheviots, and flannels in Blue and fancy patterns, stylish Double-Breasted Suits in the larger sizes, positively matchless under a V at any other store.

$4 Boys' Elegant Dress Suits, made from high-grade pure wool and fadeless cheviots, serges, worsteds, and cassimeres, in nobby, swell patterns of stripes, checks, plaids, mixtures, and solid colors, faultless fitting, superbly tailored garments, in all the newest shapes of blouse, vestee, Norfolk, and double-breasted styles, better wearing or handsomer garments impossible to produce. They will need no exhaustive pleas or arguments to change ownership, all sizes to 17, inclusive, four dollars.

$5 Fashion's best and fashion's latest is embodied in the peerless showing of the Big Store's Mammoth Five Dollar Range of Boys' Attire—Russian Blouses, Norfolk Jackets, Blouse, Vestee, Double-Breasted, and Three-Piece Novelties, made from elegant worsteds, serges, cassimeres, tweeds, and cheviots, representing every idea of pattern and color of the season's choicest productions, garments which the fancy charging stores wouldn't dream of offering under seven or seven-fifty. The Big Store's wholesale-retail distributive plan makes it possible to obtain such high class apparel for boys in all sizes to 17—chaice five dollars.

29c. choice of Mother's Friend Laundered Waists, made with collars attached or separate collars, worth 50 and 75c., choice of sizes only 29c.

Manufacturing Clothiers, Merchant Tailors, Men's Furnishers, Leading Hatters.

BURK & CO.,
5 Big Stores,
1003 E. MAIN STREET.

Norfolk, Richmond, Nashville, Dallas, Baltimore.

ALL SPIDERS SPIN.

But Not the Way Most Artists Draw Them.

(Harvey Sutherland, in Ainslee's.)

"All spiders spin, but not all of them spin snares, those orbed and radiated webs that we see pictured so many times and every time pictured wrong. But that only goes to show that the lower animals are not the only ones that possess instinct. I think it will be generally agreed that artists may be classed among the higher animals. At any rate, their instinct is to draw a thing, not as it is, but as it appears to man that doesn't know very much about anything in particular. So he lays off his picture of a spider's web with a pair of dividers, and people marvel at the spider's mathematical sense, whereas, a spider doesn't bother her head with any such foolishness. She puts her lines where she thinks they will do the most good regardless of their distance apart.

"Here of late, though, I think I have noticed a little improvement in artists. They have begun to notice that the spider always stands head downward in her web, if it be a perpendicular one, and if it is horizontal hangs back downward. Some of these flat-web spiders can hardly walk right side up. But the spider of art never has more than six legs, while the real spider has eight, and the spider of art often has three sections of the body, while the real spider never has more than two. The head and chest are in one part, so to speak. There are their eyes, from four to eight in number, and disposed in different patterns according to their political affiliations; their jaws, which work sideways, instead of up and down; their poison-bag, and a few other arrangements; and in the abdomen or silk department are the heart (a banana-shaped affair), the liver, the slit and tubes that do duty for lungs, and the spinnerets. These last are warty-looking affairs that may be spread apart and brought together exactly like the thumb and fingers of the nand. Each wart is covered with hundreds of little hollow hairs, through which is expressed a gummy liquid that turns to silk when it dries. Mrs. Spider slaps her spinnerets broad against the wall and sticks fast (I don't know how) many hundreds of fine filaments. Then she pulls away the spinnerets and shuts them up, and all of those fine filaments melt into one rope, in thickness about one-five-thousandth of an inch. Insects' silk is a simple thread; spiders' is compound."

SALE OF AUTOGRAPHS.

Some Unprecedented Prices—$260 for a Washington Letter.

(Philadelphia Press-Republican.)

"How much for Grover Cleveland? 50 cents? One dollar—and a half—two—Three—four—five—five—five—five dollars—five dollars—do I hear six—six I have—six dollars — seven—seven—seven—seven and a half—seven and a half— sold!"

Market value of the signature of Grover Cleveland, one time President of the United States, was sold yesterday at $7.50.

This occurred when collectors of signatures gathered to inspect the valuable collection of autograph letters and historical documents belonging to the estate of the late General William S. Stryker, of Trenton, N. J., which were placed on sale at auction in this city at Davis & Harvey's by Stan V. Henkels, the auctioneer.

Some unprecedented prices were paid by the zealous dealers and collectors. Shortly after the sale began in the afternoon a ripple of excitement was occasioned by the bidding for an autographic letter from Robert Burns, for which a representative of Dodd, Meade & Co. paid $75.00.

William L. Thulsrup, of New York, paid $260 for Washington's letter accusing his brother Charles of intoxication, while Joseph A. Sabin, of New York, the purchasing agent for Pierpont Morgan, William Havermeyer and the Vanderbilts, paid $200 for General Washington's orderly book.

Thimbull's great painting, "The Sortie by the Garrison of Gibraltar," was sacrificed for $175, the lucky purchaser being Mr. Joseph M. Fox, of this city.

The Stryker collection was one of the most famous in the country and included many signatures not duplicated in America. A letter from John Adams was knocked down for $22.50 to Mr. Sabin, while Dodd, Wead & Co. secured Major General Lee's signature for $65. Lafayette's letters averaged $4 a piece.

Old papers for sale at the Dispatch Office at 15c. per hundred.

The Pension List of Monte Carlo.

(May Ledger Monthly.)

Monte Carlo, the most famous gambling place in the world, has a very curious pension list. Here are inscribed the names of the men and women who have lost their fortunes at the tables, and who are allowed small sums daily for the rest of their miserable lives. This practice, which was inaugurated by Pere Blanc in his paternal care for the decaves, is also being dropped as the pensionnaires die out. The pensions now paid range from one dollar to eight dollars a day, according to the amount which has been lost at the tables and the social position of the recipient. For instance, a tall Scotchman who is a familiar figure upon the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, receives two louis (about eight dollars) per day. He lost a million and a quarter at roulette. He has still a small income, and the bank, therefore, considers his pension sufficient to keep this broken vessel from coming to the ground. If one could go through the whole list, what a story might be written anent each item!

There is no hope of the Casino being closed—not even during the summer—but if people would only restrain their passion for gambling for another five years, as they showed themselves capable of doing during the winter of '96 and '97, the dividend will come out zero, and the bank will be broken, not in name only, but also in deed.

American Lady to Wed Marconi.

NEW YORK, April 26.—Miss Josephine Bowen Holman, of Indianapolis, a daughter of the late Justice J. A. Holman, of the Indiana Supreme Court, and a cousin of the late Congressman W. S. Holman, of Indiana, said to-night that the report that she was engaged to Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of wireless telegraphy, was true.

Signor Marconi is now on his way to Europe, and it is said that the marriage will be in the autumn.

War.

(Ainslee's Magazine.)

"All trembling is the meadow;
All crimson is the rill.
The dead lie in the valley;
The dead lie on the hill.
And one side is the victor,
The other side has lost—
The women of two peoples
Are counting up the cost."