

TELEPHONIC SYNDICATES.

A NEW WRINKLE FOR BUSINESS MEN.

A wideawake correspondent of a West of England paper writes as follows:—"I have been asked to join a telephonic syndicate and I want to know what it is?" Thus inquired a friend of mine the other day. Now, I do not know much about syndicates generally, except that some men who suddenly rise from mediocrity to opulence tell me they have joined a syndicate and made a nice pile out of it. But a 'telephonic syndicate' I do know a little about, and as my friend is very likely to be only one of many who thirst for knowledge, I will try to explain the sort of thing he has been asked to join. 'Shopping' is one of the wearisome institutions of civilisation. I often want some article or another, and yet for weeks leave the shop unvisited simply because to a busy man like myself time is so valuable. So much for me. But my wife? Butcher, baker, poulterer, greengrocer, fishmonger, dairyman, and I know not how many more, call for orders every day, and all the morning is spent in answering the maid, who comes to say, 'Please, 'm, the butcher,' or 'Please, 'm, the greengrocer.' If my wife can order by telephone, the tradesman is relieved of the expense of sending for orders, and her's and the maid's time saved. What a blessing it would be! Good. But a telephone costs £20 a year. Here comes the agent of 'a syndicate,' or association of the sharp tradesmen in my neighborhood, and says that a telephone will be fitted up if I will give—what? My permission!

These traders find it so much to their advantage to have orders by telephone and save time, that they have united to furnish one hundred houses in the district with the time-saving instrument gratis. On the telephone hangs a card, and on the card are printed about twenty tradesmen's names, who form the syndicate. Finn the fishmonger, Jones the baker, and all the other leading men, the sharp, shrewd fellows who know the innate laziness of the Briton's constitution, and by

saving me trouble, gain trade for themselves, here they are, set down in order, and without stirring from the house, we can command an army of ready caterers. In cases of interesting domestic emergency, or of accident, there are the doctor and the chemist on the list. Nor is this all. I have a cold perhaps, and cannot go to town. Here is the rub. This telephone is on a small 'primary exchange,' and how can I call to 7,654, for instance, on another exchange? The local syndicate give me their instrument, but it is obvious that for me to call someone not connected with the syndicate entails expense. Very well. All that is arranged, I call my local exchange, they switch me on to the trunk line, and so to 7,654, my town office, and debit me with threepence for the message—not of twenty words, but of whatever length may suffice for the business in hand. The syndicate pays well. What the traders pay is not, be it well observed, an actual outlay, but really only a commission on orders received by telephone. In my friend's neighborhood several firms have expressed their willingness to pay 5 per cent. on such orders. Telephone enterprise is old enough to be secure from idle opposition and the effects of a panic and yet quite young enough to show fine promise of a grand future. So my advice to my friend was 'join the syndicate.' It is beyond all question a capital idea, and its successful adoption in many parts is encouragement to the sharp tradesmen in all localities to follow the lead, to oblige their customers, and to fill their own pockets."—*Hardware Journal*.

—Sir Edward Watkin announces his intention of publishing a work on Canada before and after Confederation.

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—When we read that out of a lump of Pittsburg coal such widely diverse substances can be extracted as gas, ammonia, water, tar, pitch, creosote, naphtha, benzine, aniline, and toluene, the latter yielding a saccharine matter beside whose sweetness sugar is tasteless, a vivid idea is obtained of the concentration of natural wealth in that vicinity.

—The women in the North are suffering from a double craze—sealskin sacsques and diamonds. In the South the disease thus far is comparatively mild. The genuine sacsques are not very numerous, and you cannot tell a diamond from a rhinestone shine. If a poor girl wears a diamond she is suspected of wearing the imitation, and if a rich girl wears paste she is credited with a brilliant of the first water.—*Wilmington Star*, N. C.

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