

keen, responsive, well mannered and appreciative, most of them members of the church in full communion.

"As I began to teach, I quickly made the discovery that my preparation of the Lesson had been insufficient. I had not fully appreciated the point of view from which the boys regarded the Lesson, and so I failed to adjust myself and my teaching to the turns of the conversation,—for the members of the class were ready enough to talk.

"But it was not my imperfect preparation which prevented the Lesson from being as successful as it ought to have been. A good deal of the blame may fairly be laid upon the unfavorable conditions. The class occupied a dark corner of the School room, where it was impossible to read even quite large print without artificial light, for which the provision was quite inadequate. Near by was a door into a passage way through which the secretary and his assistants were frequently passing, and so unavoidably causing a distraction of attention. The atmosphere, too, in the absence of sufficient ventilation, became more and more unfit to breathe.

"Besides, close at hand stood the lantern which had been used during the opening exercises for throwing the hymns on the screen. Some special slides were to be used at the

close of the Lesson period, and the superintendent and the secretary stood, for a considerable time, near the lantern, consulting about these, and the boys became interested in watching them, their attention to the Lesson, of course, being correspondingly diminished.

"The Lesson left me with a sense of real mental fatigue from the exertion of trying to teach under such conditions and of disappointment at the result. But it immediately occurred to me that the conditions might be remedied, or, at least, greatly bettered. A quiet suggestion to the officers of the School would materially lessen the distractions for which they were responsible. A better lighted, better ventilated part of the School room might be found. And as to the preparation for teaching,—why that was a matter under my own control, and it was up to me to see that it was adequate and suitable."

Our correspondent expresses his conviction, that no church workers are rendering more difficult or more valuable services than those who teach in our Sunday Schools, and that no expenditure from congregational revenues will yield better returns than that incurred in providing such accommodation that this work shall be done under conditions that will contribute to its effectiveness in the largest possible measure.

THE GRADED LESSONS

AN EXPERIENCE

By Rev. John W. Little, B.D.

Our first experience with Graded Lessons was made many years ago in Keewatin, when Mrs. Haven's two-year course for Beginners, issued by Fleming Revell Co., was tried in one class of little tots. So satisfactory did the test prove, that when the International Committee issued their first course for this Grade, we readily accepted it, and later the Courses for the Primary and Junior Departments as well.

Since then we have had the Graded Lessons in use in one or more departments of our Sunday Schools continuously, and the results, on the whole, have been very gratifying.

But experience has taught us that, if the Graded Series is to be introduced on any

large scale, there should be previous preparation. In some way the teachers should be made acquainted with the chief characteristics of the different epochs of the developing life of the child, and shown how the Graded Lesson material and methods of teaching are especially suited to meet the child's needs at each stage of its growth; also how the Lessons for each Grade pave the way for those of the next, constituting the whole a progressive series. Only thus can they intelligently understand the vital significance of the Graded Course, and so teach it sympathetically and efficiently. Where the system has failed in any case under our oversight, it has been largely due to a failure on