

The success of the Wesley Church Sunday-school is no accident. Circumstances have, of course, favored the school by surrounding it with a large population, but this is to a considerable extent offset by the lack of suitable accommodations. The real secret of success evidently lies in the enthusiasm and devotion of the officers and teachers. They seem to realize the importance of their work, and apparently delight in it. That which is done heartily is usually well done.

HOW THE LESSONS ARE CHOSEN.

UNDER the heading, "The World's Greatest Syndicate," the *Saturday Evening Post* gives the following interesting information concerning the work of the International Lesson Committee:

The greatest literary syndicate in the world is conducted without a penny of profit; its editorial staff receives no compensation for services and meets but once a year; its sanctum is as itinerant as the traditional circuit rider; and its total yearly expenditures would scarcely cover the expense account of the average war correspondent for a single month of active service in the field—yet every article prepared by this monster syndicate has a circulation of more than twenty million copies, which appear simultaneously in every part of the civilized world! And in point of influence it may be stated with emphasis that no other agent of publicity compares with this unique application of the distinctively modern idea of centralization, for every copy of its literary productions is read and studied with a seriousness accorded few other pages.

The name by which this chief of literary syndicates is most commonly known is The International Sunday-school Lesson Series, and the vast dimensions to which it has attained afford one of the most remarkable and striking evidences to-day apparent in the world of the vitality and power of evangelical Christianity. The wonder of this achievement is emphasized by the reflection that little more than thirty-five years ago the Sunday-school where the same lesson occupied the attention of all the pupils was the exception, and in many schools a half dozen different lessons were taught at the same session to the various classes. Now, twenty million teachers and pupils simultaneously study the same lesson.

The central editorial staff of this mammoth syndicate is the American Lesson Committee, which held its last meeting in New York on April 17, 1901. It has, however, an auxiliary body of associates known as the British Section, to which its work is submitted for amendment and concurrence. As the members of this section are divided between England, Australia and India, it will be seen that the entire editorial organization covers three continents. America, however, exerts the dominant influence, for the initiative rests with the American Committee and the movement had its birth in Chicago.

Simplicity and dignity characterize this body and its deliberations. Formalism and red tape are avoided, and things

move with a quiet speed which shows the organization to be thoroughly in touch with the business spirit of the age.

Generally the sessions are held in the parlor of a hotel and behind closed doors. They gather about a large library table, at the head of which sits the chairman, with the secretary at his right. If all members are present the roll-call is answered by fifteen, but it is seldom that all are able to attend. It has so frequently happened that thirteen have sat at this council table, that this occurrence has ceased to be the subject of even laughing comment. A few moments of prayer and Scripture reading invariably open and close each session. Then the secretary reads all the important correspondence, and is instructed regarding its disposition. This is followed by the presentation of memorials and petitions. Scores of these have been presented, and

itself directly to the task of preparing the lessons.

The selections must be held high above all denominational and controversial tides and issues. For this reason the strong doctrinal portions of the Scriptures, like the book of Romans, are generally avoided. Not less important or imperative is the second requirement that every lesson shall be within the mental scope and grasp of the average American boy or girl of school age.

At last the block of one year's lessons is adopted and sent to the first members of what may be termed the principal subscribers to the world's largest literary syndicate. These are mainly the great denominational publishing houses, the men who have won fame as writers and commentators on Sunday-school literature, and a few of the foremost primary teachers. These publishers and the spe-



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some have been both massive in bulk and fervent in tone, containing thousands of names. Many of the most animated discussions in the history of the committee have been in regard to petitions. Those which attained to the most unwieldy dimensions and provoked the warmest opinions were the ones presented by the pioneers of the temperance movement in the days before it had achieved its present popularity and strength. Now this problem is effectually settled by having, in each quarter, one lesson devoted especially to temperance.

A common teacher's Bible is in the hands of every man at the long table, and few, if any, are without a copy of the revised version. These, together with several copies of the Old and New Testaments in the original Hebrew and Greek, are the main tools used in this conference. After the preliminary programme has been carried out, the committee applies

specialists employed by them bear the expenses of the Lesson Committee, which generally amount to less than \$600 a meeting.

IMPORTANT WORK

MAY we not be pardoned for raising a question? Has the Church any more important work than the training of the children for the church life? We are losing tens of thousands of possible church members by our failure to really weld the children of the Church in those years while they are in our hands. Multitudes of our Sunday-schools are, as it were, a church within the Church, quite independent of the real church life—pools, rather than rivulets, feeding the Church current and intensifying and widening its energies.—Ex.