

not blame them. One night I dreamed that I went to school in the morning and found each pillar transformed into a beautiful column of verdure. The next morning I told the children my dream, and that afternoon my desk was covered with empty yeast-powder bottles, string, tacks, and slips of "Wandering Jew," *tradescantia*, and ivies, all of which will grow in water, and to be the pillars of my dream. No, not quite so beautiful, but in a few weeks they were nearly so. We had also mixed spray of pressed autumn leaves among the vines. These and pressed ferns are a beautiful means of ornamentation that every one can have. The pointing now came from those who did not sit near the pillars; and after I named them "The Bowers," the seats near them were so coveted that I used them as rewards for diligence.—*American Teacher*.

THE MASSACHUSETTS EXPERIMENT IN EDUCATION.

BY CHARLES BARNARD.

THE conventional school, with its book-lessons and recitations, is familiar to all; but the new public school, with its realistic methods, its entertaining sessions devoted apparently more to talking than recitation, more to amusement than drudgery, is unknown as yet except to the fortunate children of a few towns. We recently visited a model primary schoolroom in eastern Massachusetts, and, sitting down among the little children, tried to see the system pursued there from the little one's point of view.

It is a plain room, with windows on two sides. In the sunny windows are blossoming plants, and on the walls above the dado-like blackboard are pretty pictures, stuffed birds, and crayon sketches of plants and animals, shells, and curious things from fields and woods. The boys and girls enter the room together, and take their seats behind their little desks, on which are slates and pencils—nothing more. The teacher comes, a smiling woman with flowers in her hand. She advances to the front of the twoscore

children and begins to sing. They all sing "This is the way we wash our slates, wash our slates, so early in the morning. This is the way we wipe our slates, wipe our slates, so early in the morning." Some of the girls bring little pails of water, and each child dips a sponge in the water and washes the slate as they sing.

"Pussy Willow's class," says the teacher, "may copy the red words; Tommy Thorndike's class may take the green words; and Jenny's class may take the white words."

These words are already written in colored crayons on the blackboard. Three rows of the children take their slates and begin to copy the colored words—a happy device for teaching to write and "to tell colors."

"Sophy May's class," resumes the teacher, "may come to the blackboard, and the babies may make a fence and a gate with the sticks."

One of the girls places a handful of large shoe-pegs on the desk of each of the youngest children, and several of the children come to the teacher's desk and stand before the blackboard. They are invited to tell what the teacher holds in her hand. Every hand is raised with almost frantic eagerness. They know what that is, "What is it, Johnny?" "A cat." "Can you tell me a story about it?" Every hand is up. "Well, Katy?" "I see a cat." "Good, now look at this on the board." She writes in script "cat." "What is that?" Not a hand is raised, though every eye is intently studying the unfamiliar letters. "What is this?" says the teacher, rapidly making a sketch of the cat. They all see that. "Now [pointing to the word] what does this stand for?" Two hands are up. "Freddy?" "A cat." "Oh, no. Mary?" "Cat." "Right! Now I will add our old friend," and with this the article is prefixed to the word. "Now Freddy is right—'a cat.' Who can find another?" With this the word "cat" is written a number of times on different parts of the board, and the children eagerly hunt it up.

The sentence, "I see a cat," is written on the board. That puzzles the children. One has it; another, and another. "Mary?"