

phase of life through our friend's spectacles. We sit beside the fire on a winter's evening, and cutting the leaves of a favourite magazine, read an editorial upon some vexed social question, and whether the matter be wisely discussed or not, we are taking a peep at society from behind the editor's spectacles.

But it is easy to realize, without further illustration, how the opinions of others affect our own judgment in all things;—and if this be true of ourselves, with fully developed reasoning powers, *how much more must it be true of our children.* Gazing out upon the world with wide-open questioning eyes how eagerly they seize upon any source of information that comes in their way, and how disastrous the results when these are unreliable and distorted. Parents and friends, teachers and writers, we are constantly lending to the children around us our spectacles, from behind which they view the busy world, and receive upon mind and heart whatever impression we desire to make. Oh, that we would take more care to make it a wise and happy one!

Ever since the days that Mother Goose sprang into popularity the necessity for children's literature has been recognized; and down the years that have multiplied her numerous offspring, has come an array of stories and ballads not always intended for mature years alone; for though, until within the past twenty-five years children's reading matter was not made a specialty, we have some specimens extant that show us, they were not altogether unsupplied. Think of a book, written by a father for his daughters as early as the thirteenth century,—picture the stern Martin Luther laying aside all care, to write those charming letters to his little ones,—and you will see that the children were not forgotten amidst the turbulence and strife of earlier

days. But it has remained for the present age to excel in books for children; full of charming tales, written by standard authors, and illustrated by the best artists of the day. The fact that it is not an easy or trifling matter to write for children has been duly recognized, since some of our best and purest authors have turned their attention to this special art, and not a few have received more honour for their tales of sweet child-life, than for profounder works.

The question then that comes to the puzzled child is not one of material but choice; not where shall he find a story, but what story shall he choose? And it is here, I think, we teachers may step in and do so much to give our pupils the proper mental bias, for biassed they must be in one direction or another.

Let us enter now for a little while into the school-room, close the door upon all outside ways and means, and see what we can do, within our programme of studies, to further the end we have in view.

In glancing over the subjects brought daily and weekly before our pupils, those in which we may find opportunity to give hints and suggestions regarding home reading, are Reading Lessons, Language Lessons, Memorized Selections, and lastly Stories, told simply in story form.

First of all come our Reading Lessons. Granting the importance of reading as a lesson in voice culture, we may ask if it not possible that we pay too much attention to the mechanical part of the work; that we rest contented if punctuation, pronunciation, even expression are accurate; forgetting that there should always be a certain mental appreciation of the matter read, which cannot be reached by the pupils without our aid. We throw a few side-lights upon the bare blank narrative, and instantly it becomes a real living picture, full of