other fields. It is sometimes salutary to
discover the opinions of people interest-
ed in, but outside of, the profession. For
example, Fred B. Painter’s article, “The
Responsibilities of the School Librarian”
in a recent issue of The Elementary
School Journal (v. 45, p. 220-224, De-
cember, 1944) should be of interest to
that group of librarians. At the begin-
mimg of the article, Mr. Painter poses a
number of questions which might be
used by the librarian who wants to
evaluate the effectiveness of her service.
They would also seem to suggest addi-
tional activities which might be under-
taken to the mutual advantage of pa-
trons and librarians. The person active-
ly engaged in serving school children
and teachers may not be in complete
agreement with Mr. Painter’s concept
of what that service should be, but she
certainly should be challenged to take
stock of her library, and to see if she
is, to the best of her ability and resour-
ces, fulfilling the needs of her specific
school community.

In some smaller towns, libraries may
be staffed by volunteers who have had
no special training in library procedure.
The average manual is frequently too
technical to be of much service to them.
Consequently, the recently published
Pictorial Library Primer (Library re-
search service, 1944, $0.99) by Mrs. Win-
ifred L. Davis should be particularly
helpful. Simply written and copiously
illustrated, the Primer carefully ex-
plains each step which a book under-
goes in being added to a library. Pro-
fessional terminology is employed, but
each word or phrase is adequately de-
defined in the text. The most obvious de-
fect is that Mrs. Davis has not discussed
the making of subject cards for the cata-
log, because she considers “their appli-
cation too intricate for the beginner.”
However, the librarian who wishes to
use subject entries could easily con-
sult such standard works as Akers’
Simple Library Cataloging and Sears’ List of Subject Headings for the Small Library for the necessary directions and suggestions. Should the opportunity arise, we librarians might mention this handy manual to our non-professional colleagues, who undoubtedly could make good use of it.

If you are occasionally wont to agree with the oft-expressed (and probably even more frequently unexpressed) opinion of many of our patrons that libraries are dull, musty places in which to work, you may find an antidote for that feeling in Rudolph Altrocchi’s Sleuthing in the Stocks (Harvard University press, 1944, §3.50). Mr. Altrocchi, now professor of Italian at the University of Southern California, has managed to write an interesting and entertaining account of his adventures with books as a research scholar. He blows the dust off ancient volumes in an enthusiastic fashion which must be contagious to anyone who pricks up his ears at the crackle of parchment, or sniffs appreciatively at the indefinable, penetrating odor of crumbling leather. This description of the process of discovering forgeries in manuscripts, for example, are quite as fascinating as the mental—and sometimes physical—gymnastics performed by the super-sleuth in the latest mystery thriller. The age-old appeal of matching wits with criminals is not diminished by the fact that the crimes were committed on velum, and the lethal weapon was a pen and a bottle of ink. So if your appetite for library work is somewhat jaded by an over-dose of dull routine, irritating patrons, and rapidly-disappearing clerical help, perhaps reading a chapter or two in Mr. Altrocchi’s book will whet it to the point where you can again perceive the adventure and mystery that permeate the bindings of many of the books which moulder on the shelves of the average library.

ADULT EDUCATION AND THE LIBRARY

BY EVELYN L. PARKS

The term adult education as we now use it was conceived twenty-five years ago in the period following the European War to name the movement for post-school education which grew out of a need for adjustment to a changing world. Now another war has brought even greater changes and a far greater impetus to this movement. The library is the logical agency for leadership in this field since it is the depository of the means for self-education.

Education denotes acquisition of learning by an individual, enabling him to develop his various abilities and interests and by that process preparing himself for a more intelligent participation in affairs. Through such a process he fits himself to play an active part in a democratic society. The change which we are now undergoing from a simpler pattern into the complexity of a world not yet made one but fast moving that way outreaches education and demands continuance of learning beyond school years.

The public library (and for that matter all libraries), as James Truslow Adams points out in his Frontiers of American Culture, has a particularly great opportunity in the field of adult education. Libraries are open to all the public in a real sense. The librarian’s opportunity is greater when taken in the light of Alvin Johnson’s opinion that adult education “cannot thrive under compulsion and rewards” since the adult need is not for a teacher but a “leader.” Here is an opportunity for a librarian to lead as never before, to emerge from his seclusion as book selector, lender, or keeper, into group leadership. Johnson calls attention to the need for “group activity” as a part of educational activity. Group education has been