

other fields. It is sometimes salutary to discover the opinions of people interested 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, December, 1944) should be of interest to that group of librarians. At the beginning 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 additional activities which might be undertaken to the mutual advantage of patrons and librarians. The person actively 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 resources, 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 research service, 1944, \$.99) by Mrs. Winifred L. Davis should be particularly helpful. Simply written and copiously illustrated, the *Primer* carefully explains each step which a book undergoes in being added to a library. Professional terminology is employed, but each word or phrase is adequately defined in the text. The most obvious defect is that Mrs. Davis has not discussed the making of subject cards for the catalog, because she considers "their application too intricate for the beginner." However, the librarian who wishes to use subject entries could easily consult such standard works as Akers'

PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE

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In these busy days, most of us feel that we are doing well if we are able to read our library journals. Yet, there is a great deal of valuable material about libraries and library service in articles published in the periodicals of

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 *Sletuhing in the Stacks* (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 vellum, 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.