

Professor Mills is now seventy; and, though he is at times a very great sufferer from painful and incurable diseases, his general health is remarkable, as might be gathered from the above-mentioned items.

"A PUZZLING CASE."

To the Editor of The Open Court:

"A Puzzling Case" interested me very considerably. It very well shows how a person of scientific training and good moral judgment in all ordinary affairs of life, may be deceived by very simple means in case a shade of mystery be thrown about the matter. Abbott's answer ought to be deemed satisfactory,—at least it is so to me.

Fifty or sixty years ago, the "spirit-rapping" folly had its course. At the time, 1851-2-3, I was living in Chillicothe, the first capital of Ohio. Being invited to a "seance", I went, and saw through the case without difficulty. At the next "seance" I was invited to sit at the table in and as part of the mystic circle. About the third evening I began to do a little "rapping" quietly. Soon I became the chief one,—kept it up,—for months, and finally exposed the the whole thing, at the close of what the "Medium" called the best "seance" that there had been in the city. I exposed and showed up the whole process before a large audience of citizens.

That ended the "cult" in that city. To me it was a very interesting bit of "psychological" history.

R. W. M.

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

ORGANIZED DEMOCRACY. By *Albert Stickney*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1906. Pp. 268.

We all know that democracy is an ideal which can not easily be realized and we have here an attempt to overcome its shortcomings, but we doubt whether any reader will deem the conclusions of Mr. Stickney satisfactory.

The author says: "Democratic institutions are still in their infancy, are still almost in their rudimentary stage of development. Only during the last century can they be said to have been put to the test of actual experiment on any large scale. Their form with us to-day is almost the same as the earliest that was ever put in use. There has been slight change in the matter of form.

"Consequently, it is a virtual certainty that the political institutions of this American people—to-day—are susceptible of improvement. It can hardly be, that the first experiments in democracy were a final complete success."

The book contains chapters on "Machine Politics," "Organized Democracy," "The Cost of Machine Politics," "The Necessity of Reorganization," and concludes with "General Considerations."

We agree with the author when he says (p. 266) that "we must revise our ideas of democratic government from the very foundation"; but we fear that his ideas of reorganization have not yet been sufficiently worked out into clearness. He says: "The people's judgment must be the product of the people's united common thought. Such thought can be had only in a deliberative, popular assembly. . . . Vesting the supreme control of public affairs, subject to necessary constitutional restrictions, in a carefully selected body of able, experienced men, is evidently the only practicable means of securing wise control."