

sees that "bigness" and "badness" need not necessarily be associated together in business. But whatever the facts—and we are bound to accept them as given until the contrary is shown—Mr. Adams has given the public a most interesting and instructive book.

S. C.



UNSUCCESSFUL COMBINATIONS.

Corporate Promotions and Reorganizations. By Arthur S. Dewing. Harvard Economic Studies, Vol. X. Published by the Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1914. Price, \$2.50 net.

This is a study of combinations that failed: Leather, Starch, Glucose, Cordage, Cotton Yarn and others. It is largely a history of the decline and fall of bonds and stocks; of bright hopes followed by disaster; of reorganization schemes offering the investor a chance to retrieve his fortunes or to throw good money after bad, as the case might be.

But to many readers the fate of the competitor will be a more interesting question than that of the investor. These combinations had the advantages of large scale production; their managers had experienced the evils of unrestricted competition, and the investor was attracted largely by the prospect of what was going to happen to the competitor. Yet, when the day of reorganization came and passed, the competitor was still there, though, in many sad cases, the investor was not. How did this happen?

Dr. Dewing explains that there are difficulties in the management of consolidated plants which sometimes outweigh the advantages of large scale production. Among these he mentions diffusion of responsibility, lack of knowledge of individual employes, lack of loyalty of officers and directors and an indisposition to certain kinds of work on the part of higher officials. The fascinations of the stock market have distracted some able directors of combinations, who, previously, as managers of comparatively small plants, had attended strictly to their welfare. Superior business ability, devoted to the interests of the business and not to the interests of the manager as distinguished from those of the business, is what Dr. Dewing finds to be the principal factor that makes a combination a success. He finds in this the reason why the Standard Oil Company has been "pre-eminently successful," although a mention of a monopoly of Pennsylvania oil fields and of certain favorable transportation contracts indicates that there have been contributing causes.

But it is the unsuccessful and not the successful combinations that are examined in this book, and as to these there can be no doubt that competition survived.

"I have been impressed throughout," says the

author, "by the powerlessness of mere aggregations of capital to hold monopoly."

He would probably not claim that his book is a complete demonstration of this conclusion and those who are already inclined to accept the conclusion will doubtless admit that there is room for further investigation. There are others, including the Socialists, who believe that aggregation of capital, managed with quite ordinary business ability, such ability as is likely to be found in their management, will hold monopoly. The escape of the competitor in these particular instances is not likely to disturb their opinion.

But in any event this book should be recognized as a useful contribution to the discussion of a very important question—what *does* give a combination the power to stifle competition?

WM. E. MCKENNA.



A POVERTY-STRICKEN MILLIONAIRE.

Joseph Pulitzer, Reminiscences of a Secretary. By Alene Ireland. Published by Mitchell Kennerly, New York. Price, \$1.25 net.

A dissecting room in action, however fascinating the sight, is never a cheerful spectacle. One is compelled to think of this analogy when reading the little book of Mr. Ireland, because here instead of a suffering body we have bared to our mental vision a quivering human soul, *in extremis*. The dreadful morbidity of the subject is greatly lessened by the fine sense of humor which pervades the entire narrative, and so lightens a story which would otherwise be hopelessly gloomy. The author was one of the six private secretaries in the service of the great newspaper publisher during the last eight months of his life. As we read this fascinating study of Pulitzer from an intimate associate, we cannot but think of the futility of human greatness, of the awful price which the immutable Law of Compensation demands of us, should we succeed in attaining a seat among the mighty. In the case of Pulitzer his price was a hell of physical suffering. Groping through an endless night, his eager mind unable to see the events of the world except by means of the eyes of hirelings; his shattered nerves so tense that even the cracking of almond shells at the dinner table were sufficient to induce a sleepless night; and all to what end? That he might own a paper having the largest circulation in New York, that he might have riches, and influence, and be the builder of the first sky-scraper erected on Manhattan. Having possessed himself of all of this at the price he was forced to pay, one cannot but repeat: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

JOSEPH DANZIGER.