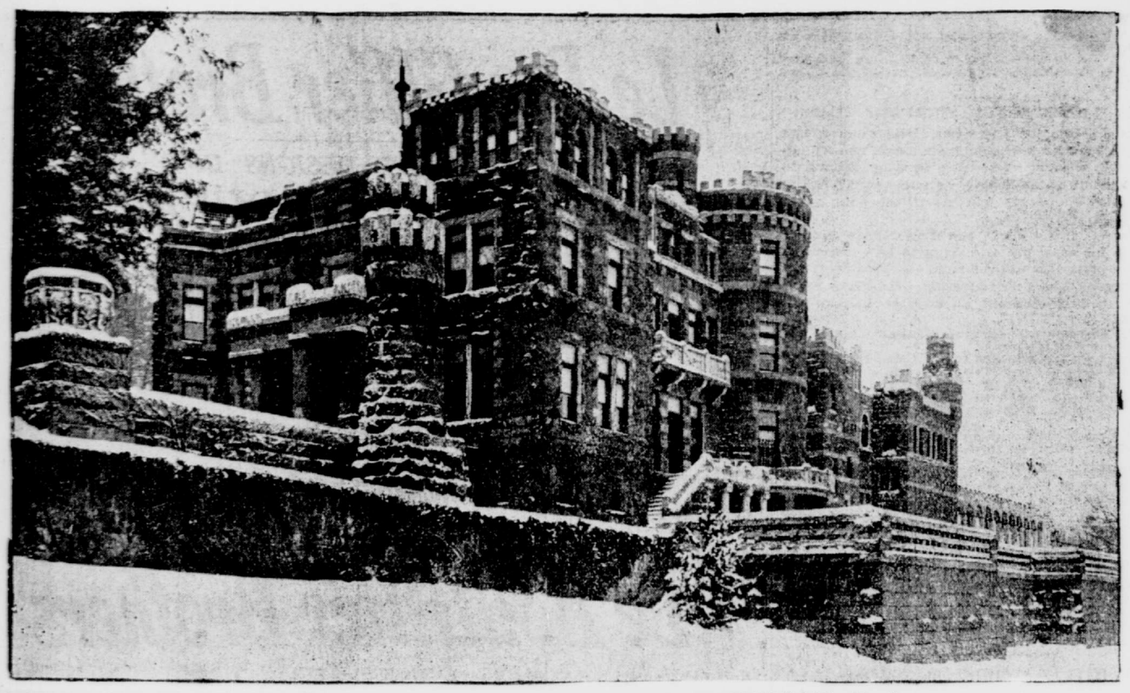
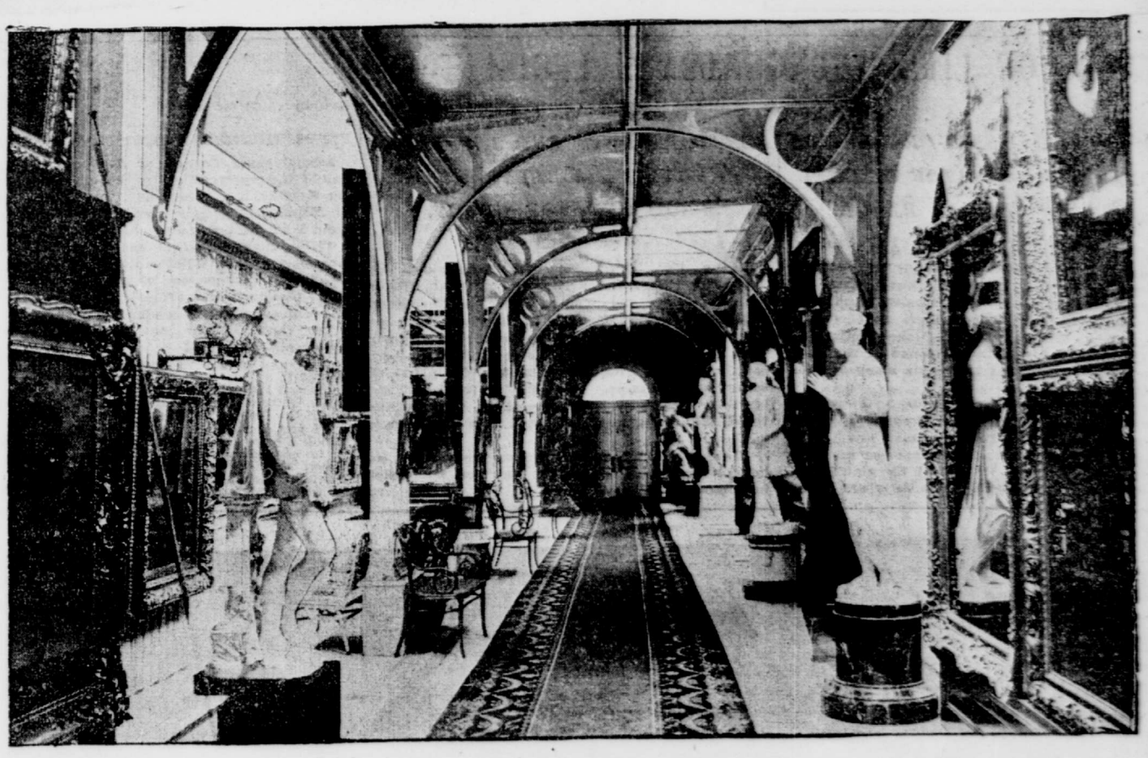
PATERSON SILK MANUFACTURERS HAVE IMPARTED A TONE OF INDEPENDENCE AND PLUCK TO THE WHOLE CITY.



CATHOLINA LAMBERT'S HOME, IN PATERSON, N. J.



PART OF THE ENGLISH ART GALLERY IN CATHOLINA LAMBERT'S HOME, IN PATERSON.

THE LYONS OF AMERICA.

PATERSON AND ITS GREAT SILK INDUSTRY.

WHY THE CITY RALLIED SO PROMPTLY FROM THE BIG FIRE—WHERE WORKINGMEN BECOME MANUFACTURERS.

One of the things upon which the people of Paterson congratulate themselves to-day is the fact that the great fire which swept the business centre of the city and a great many homes out of existence left the mill section unscathed. While a thousand persons were rendered homeless, practically none of the mill hands lost employment, and that is one of the potent reasons why the city authorities were able to show such unparalleled independence in refusing assistance from the outside. The heads of families were able to go to work the morning following the fire and earn money with which to sustain their homeless ones.

Paterson is a manufacturing city, and depends on two industries—iron and silk. John Ryle, an Englishman, who started first in the East, made it the centre of the silk industry in America, and it became known as the "Lyons of America."

Perhaps nowhere in the world can there be found a place where so many workingmen have started in business and succeeded as in the silk business at Paterson. Catholina Lambert, the richest silk manufacturer living at Paterson, who landed in this country with $2 50 in his pocket, says:

We were all as poor as Job's turkey when we started. All the American manufacturers here started at the bottom of the ladder. When I say American manufacturers, I mean those who have been in the silk business a long time. To tell the truth, there are hardly any of us who are Americans. Most of us came from England, Scotland or Ireland, but we have spent our lives at the business in this country, and we call ourselves Americans, as distinguished from those who have imported their business from the other side. I would not say that Paterson silk men are rich in the way one is accustomed to talk nowadays. Some of us have a great deal of real estate, mills and machinery, but the trouble with us is that when business is dull we cannot get anything like its value for it, and when business is good you cannot get us to sell.

Fully 90 per cent of the men in the silk business at Paterson were workingmen earning their living at the loom or the dye tub before they started for themselves. Whether this has anything to do with the fact that the trust promoter has dismally failed in his schemes to form combinations of their plants cannot be said, but it is a very unusual condition that practically a whole industry should be entirely in the hands of men who started with no commercial training, and who picked up their knowledge of finance as their business interests grew.

In this age of great industrial and commercial trusts it is interesting to turn to one industry which has so far defied the efforts of the trust promoter, and where the small capitalist or the man with no capital has still as much chance as ever to launch himself into business and make a bold bid for fortune. The advocate of individualism could find no better illustration of his doctrine than the success of the men who are at the head of the two hundred silk concerns in Paterson, either in the manufacturing or some other branch of the trade.

Several efforts have been made to group the various branches of the industry into trusts. The first was with the ribbon manufacturers, the next was with the throwsters, and then the dyers were tried, but, although in each case the negotiations were carried to the point of consummation, they all fell through, and to-day each of the two hundred silk concerns is intent on the success of its separate and individual existence.

The silk trade was probably never better than it is to-day. Every plant in Paterson is running up to its capacity and no man is heard to complain. Of course there are always those who talk of the good old times when money was more plentiful, but, although manufacturers get a great deal less to-day for their product than they did years ago, their facility for turning out more material for the same expenditure is greater. Mr. Lambert says that fifty years ago his concern used about fifty pounds of silk a week, whereas to-day it uses six thousand pounds a week. The benefit of the development in the trade goes to the consumer. The consumer now gets for 75 cents what he formerly paid $2 for.

That the manufacturers are well satisfied with their profits cannot be better shown than by the fact that 50 per cent of those in the business have started within the last few years. It is remarkable to notice how many new firms have sprung up lately. It is not alone the briskness in the trade that has caused this increase in the number of concerns which are now doing business. There are no more moneyed men going into the business now than formerly. Nearly all of those who are starting are workingmen. They have seen the success of Catholina Lambert, Peter Bailey, Dwight Ashley, Joseph Wadsworth, Henry Doherty, Charles E. Meding, Jacob Weidmann, Edward Riley, Charles Auger, Charles Simon, the Grimshaw Brothers, the Bamfords and many others, who now go to their mills in carriages and automobiles, live in fine homes and are the leading citizens of the town, yet who started practically without a dollar, depending entirely on their practical experience. The new men in the trade are showing enterprise and business shrewdness no less bold and keen than the princes of the industry, and in time they will take the places of the big manufacturers in the community.

It is generally asserted that it takes a great deal more money to start up in business nowadays in Paterson than it formerly did, but the experience of the last few years in the silk industry proves that this is not true, as most of the young men who have ventured forth for themselves have had no more capital than their predecessors. This can be seen from a few instances taken at random:

For sharp young business men it would be hard to beat the Cohen Brothers, who started with nothing in 1895, and to-day they have a plant worth $30,000. Israel is thirty-six and Abraham is twenty-six years old. They were both weavers, and they hired four looms in the Merrill mill and got their winding and warping done on commission. They went ahead and wove silk without orders, and Israel went on Saturday afternoons and sold what they had made during the week. After a struggle of nine months they moved into the Acme mill, where they put in twenty-four of the finest power looms. Now they are in the Fulton mill with one hundred looms. Their strong point is in knowing what is wanted in the market. They made a big hit by being the first to see the coming fashion in moire velours, which are now in vogue.

"It has been a hard fight," said Israel, when talking of his experience, "and I would not take $50,000 to go through it again; but we are all right now, and are in as fine condition as any firm in the trade."

Hamilton & Bowles started three years ago, and now have a plant worth $8,000. William Hamilton is sixty years old, and was a twister. Samuel Bowles is thirty-five years old, and was a loom-fixer. They each had $2,000, and were undecided whether to sink it in business or buy homes for themselves with the money they had saved by long economy. Finally they decided to go into business. In the first year they were sorry they did not buy homes, but to-day they are well satisfied with their business venture and are making money. Their only regret now is that they did not start in business long ago.

The Appel Brothers Manufacturing Company is another young concern which is making great strides. The corporation is composed of Joseph and John Appel and Charles Eckstone, all being employed by Charles E. Meding before they started for themselves four years ago with ten looms. Now they have a hundred fine looms in operation, and have the reputation of making the best designs in tie silks in the market. The Appels are Bohemians, and both studied textile designing in Vienna.

Joseph Warner comes of a race of silk men who were in business in England, and he has seen some hard times when silk was at its worst. He started in business in Paterson seven years ago with three looms, after having worked in the mills as a weaver. He has a plant now worth $8,000. As an illustration of the development of the silk business, he says that it used to cost him $4 to get a pound of silk wound, and now the winding costs 12 cents a pound.

The David Beckett Silk Company started in 1891 with four looms. Now they have a fine plant, and the company has been recently incorporated at $100,000. John and David Beckett, the latter of whom died three months ago, were athletes. They won several notable bicycle races in the county.

The Loyal Silk Company is run by Messrs. Dodds & Main, who started four years ago with a capital of $500 in the Broomhead mill. The small plant was practically operated by the families of the two men at first, Mr. Dodd giving his whole time to it, but Mr. Main only going there in the evening after working in another mill all day. They speedily developed their plant, and two years ago they formed a corporation. Shortly after that they had trouble with their raw silk man and their supply was cut off until an accountant went over their books. It was found that they had an equity of $11,000 and operations were resumed. They are now doing a good business.

The Miesch Manufacturing Company is a big concern to-day, but sixteen years ago Mr. Miesch, who was then a foreman for Charles E. Meding, started in a humble way. To-day he owns the large Miesch mill, in South Paterson, and is wealthy.

Samuel Setzer, proprietor of the Riverside Silk Company, did not know anything of the silk business when he became a partner of J. Fortinsky two years ago. They started with five looms. A year ago Setzer bought his partner out, and now he has eighteen looms and is worth $8,000. He is thirty years old.

John W. Taylor, a weaver, started fifteen years ago and had a hard struggle for a long time, but he is doing well now. He has taken up all kinds of fancy designs, such as McKinley souvenirs, football pictures, etc., and is doing a big trade. He exhibited at the World's Fair, and took a medal.

Post & Sheldon have been exceptionally successful. They started five or six years ago, and never have had a day of hard luck. Mr. Post was a bookkeeper and Mr. Sheldon a foreman for James Simpson. Now they have automobiles and carriages and a large factory, which is growing every day.

Fortune smiles to-day on the business of the Rettger-Allen Company, although she turned her face on Mr. Allen for a long time. He was a weaver and started in business for himself. Mr. Rettger was a silk salesman, and since he entered the business it has prospered.

Although they are now separated in business, Samuel J. Aronsohn and Abram Murphy made their money together. Both were weavers, and they started eight years ago with a combined capital of $175. They secured second hand machinery and got material on time, so that they only had to pay rent to start with. Six months ago Aronsohn bought Murphy out, and he is now running a plant of 120 looms. Murphy started a new plant of fifty looms in the Harmony mill. Both are under thirty years of age and each is worth $30,000. Aronsohn keeps a pair of fast horses, but of late he has been using his automobile to go to his mill.

Threlfall & Steele, both weavers, started about two years ago in the Broomhead mill with twelve looms. Now they are building a mill of their own at West Paterson with their own money.

Michael J. Green is perhaps the only silk manufacturer in the city with a war record. He enlisted in the 1st New-Jersey Cavalry in 1861, and served through the entire war, being a chief trumpeter. He was wounded in the battle of Cold Harbor. He now holds an office in the Union Veteran Legion. When he returned from the war he went to work in the silk mills, and was foreman in the William Strange mill. He started in business in 1887 with twenty-five looms, and now he has 120.

Joseph White, who owns a fine silk plant at Lakeview, started in business with his stepfather, Henry Eastwood. In 1892 Mr. Eastwood was an inventor, and got many valuable patents. Almost the whole plant was run under the patents of Mr. Eastwood. They have thirty-two looms, which are equal to 192 of the looms which were in style at the time Mr. Eastwood started in business. The value of the plant is $60,000, and the value of the patents is $25,000. Mr. Eastwood was a poor man, but retired wealthy in 1900, leaving the business to Mr. White. The latter lives in a fine residence at Ridgewood. He is also a large real estate owner in Paterson.

The firm of Anderson Brothers is composed of four brothers—John H., James J., George B. and William J.—all practical men. They started in 1879, in the era of the hand loom, when they were all very young. They have exhibited at ten expositions, and hold a number of medals for unexcelled work. Theirs is one of the foremost concerns in the silk trade now.

Francis H. Mayhew worked in the silk mills all his life until 1888, when he rented the machinery in Wortendyke, N. J., and started to manufacture silk. Afterward he bought the machinery. A year ago he moved his plant to Paterson, and at the same time he started another plant in Altoona, Penn. He has now 175 looms and 7,000 spindles in operation.

Jacob Frederick Baer is one of the sturdy Swiss who have played an important part in the development of the silk industry in this country. His father was in the silk business in Switzerland, and there Mr. Baer got his training. He came to this country, and started in Paterson with half a dozen looms. To-day he has over three hundred men and women working for him. He is assisted in his business by his sons—Frederick A., Ralph, an ex-school commissioner; Eugene W. and William A.

Abraham and Arthur Murphy, who do business as Murphy Brothers, started a year ago, and they are now making arrangements to double their plant, after which it will be worth $18,000. Both started when small boys as quill winders with their father. They have had large practical experience in the silk business, Abraham being a weaver and Arthur a warper.

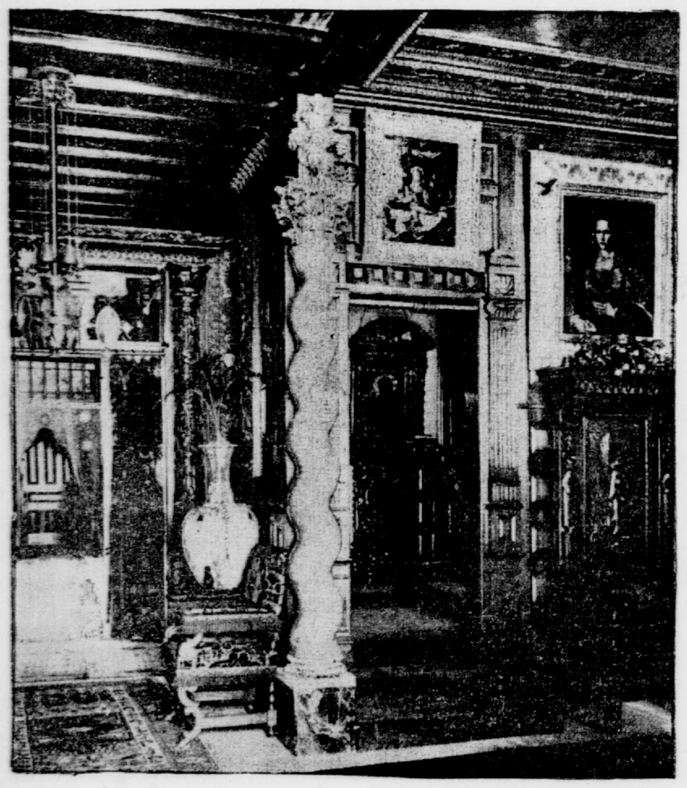
The Patterson Brothers, composed of Joseph and Samuel Patterson, started a year ago, with sixteen looms. Now they have forty. Their specialty is taffetas, which are reputed to be the finest in the market. Their plant is worth about $25,000. Joseph is Supreme Commander of the Knights of Malta in New-Jersey. Samuel is a National Guardsman and also belongs to the Knights of Malta.

The Spring Silk Company started a year ago, and hard and unceasing labor has developed the business so that to-day the plant is worth $9,000. The concern is composed of David Matchett, president; Richard Matchett, treasurer, and James Martin, secretary. The two Matchetts were weavers and Martin was a warper.

William Clowes, of Clowes, Southern & Co., is a fine example of the self-made man. He never went to school, but he is one of the best read men in the city. He started to work in a silk mill in England when he was eight years old. He studied at the loom, and always had a book beside him. He mastered Pitman's system of shorthand in this manner. His application brought him promotion, and he was superintendent in several mills in England. He came to this country fourteen years ago, and has been in business in this city about eight years. He started with four looms and now has 120.

The experience of many of the young manufacturers is expressed by John Holtham, of the Essex Silk Company. He has been in business for five years, previous to which he was a weaver for Ashley & Bailey. When asked as to his business experience he said:

"I have had a lot of trouble and worry, and if I had known what I was going to face I probably would not have tackled it; but I am a good deal better off to-day, and my children are a great deal better off still. They will get the advantage. I am glad that they will not have to go through what I have had to contend with. They are being brought up differently from what they would have been had I stayed at the loom. It puts them in a different sphere of life."



A CORNER OF THE MAIN HALL OF CATHOLINA LAMBERT'S HOME IN PATERSON.

CATHOLINA LAMBERT.

ONE MAN'S GREAT SUCCESS

HOW CATHOLINA LAMBERT MADE THE MONEY WHICH HE HAS INVESTED IN COSTLY PAINTINGS.

Catholina Lambert, head of Dexter, Lambert & Co., who have several large mills, is the wealthiest individual silk manufacturer living in Paterson. He is a millionaire several times over, and his home is a large stone castle, built on the side of Garret Mountain, overlooking the city. A fortune was spent in improving the face of the mountain, outside of the cost of the palatial home. On a projection of the mountain, immediately behind the castle, he built an observatory, the telescope in which sweeps New-York City, the harbor, and far down the bay. Mr. Lambert calls his home Belle Vista, as it has a commanding view.

In this home Mr. Lambert has a choice collection of paintings. The main gallery in the centre of the castle has a height of two floors, and is lighted from the ceiling. Here are many of the rarest works of old masters, for which fabulous sums would be paid to-day. Three or four years ago he found that the gallery was not large enough to contain his paintings, to which he is constantly adding. He had an exceptionally large number of paintings by English masters of the eighteenth century, and he decided to group them together. With this object he built a new gallery, running along part of the long promenade to the north of the castle. To-day this is decidedly the finer of the two galleries. Artists and art lovers come from all parts of the country to see Mr. Lambert's collection.

To any one who makes a civil request to see the gallery Mr. Lambert's door is open. No one is more delighted than he to take some one through the gallery who understands and appreciates the treasures.

"I do not believe these pictures should be locked up from the people," he said. "They are one of the best educators in the world. I sometimes think that many of my pictures should be in a public gallery, where the public can have more ready access to them, but I am always willing to let any one come to my house and see my collection."

Since Mrs. Lambert died the opportunity for outsiders to inspect the collection is practically confined to Sundays, unless a previous engagement is made. Mr. Lambert lives in the big house alone. He has a son and a daughter, but the daughter is married and the son's business keeps him away from home most of the time. Mr. Lambert attends as strictly to business to-day as he did fifty years ago. He is at his mill in Paterson every morning at 7 o'clock. After attending to the correspondence and other matters he goes to the New-York office of the company, where he spends the day, returning to his home at 6 o'clock.

He is bordering on threescore years and ten, but he is still an active and healthy man. He admits that the severe daily routine he imposes upon himself is beginning to make itself felt, and that he returns home tired at nights now, after the cares and worries of directing the affairs of a concern which employs 2,500 men and women, but he does not know when or how he is going to change it.

Although most of his leisure hours are spent on his art collection, yet he has always taken an interest in the public affairs of the city of Paterson. He never entered into the field of practical politics, but at one time he was a member of the Board of Trade, and he was active in all the movements that body took up. At one time he was a prominent figure in local musical circles, and it is said that Mr. Lambert intends to build a hall for musical societies or make some such provision in his will. He is a trustee of the Second Presbyterian Church.

At one time there was a story that Mr. Lambert would leave his art collection to the city of Paterson, but when asked about the matter he said that he could not do that in justice to his family, as it was the most valuable asset he had.

"I have been collecting pictures for the last forty years," he said. "As I had the cash to spare I bought pictures with it, and I have kept on buying more valuable pictures every year. As my taste and my purse grew I cleared out the pictures which I bought at first and got better and more expensive ones, until now my pictures are worth all my real estate, silk plant and business put together. If some of those pictures were put on the market to-day they would be bought by some of those multi-millionaires at remarkable figures. Now that we have so many very rich men, some of these treasures have gone up in value, far beyond what I paid for them."

Mr. Lambert is plain in his speech, as in everything else. He talks in an aggressive, terse manner and leaves no room for doubt as to his meaning. He is an interesting conversationalist and a good raconteur. His life story is told in that one word "work"—hard, unceasing labor. He came to this country from Yorkshire, England, fifty-four years ago, when only a lad. He says himself:

"I landed in this country with only half a sovereign in my pocket—about enough to pay half a week's board. I started to work in Mr. Dexter's mill at Boston for $4 a week. There was no eight hour law in those days. We worked twelve hours a day, and often fifteen hours. We did not grumble at the hours. When we had the work we did it. Four years after I started I had an interest in the business."

Outside of building up his own business, probably Mr. Lambert's greatest work was done on the tariff committee of the Silk Manufacturers' Association, which perhaps did more than any other body for protection to American products. This committee worked for many years at Washington to get a protective tariff put on silk, and in doing so they worked for the protection of all other industries. To the work of this committee is due the remarkable conditions which prevail in Paterson to-day, where so many workingmen, with no capital, have gone into the silk business and in a comparatively few years have become wealthy, while at the same time the operatives have been well paid, well dressed and have lived comfortably.

SLEEPS IN HIS SILK MILL.

William Ball is getting along in years now, but he has not changed his business habits with the increase of his wealth or his business. He started with three looms in River-st., and has built up a fine business, occupying three floors of his own mill, at Sumner and Montgomery sts. Although he provides a fine home for his family, he sleeps in the mill himself, and the door of the mill is never closed. His employes can come and go when they please. He pays no one more than $15 a week, and he pays every Saturday up to the minute of quitting time. He goes around the mill with a roll of bills and asks each man what he owes him. He never kept any books, always carrying the details of his business in his memory. His mill is one of the most modern in the city.

WOMAN SILK WORKER SUCCEEDS.

SHE EMBARKS IN BUSINESS AT HOME—A HARD WORKER.

Mrs. Lizzie Jenkinson has the distinction of being the only woman in the silk business in Paterson. She had been a warper in one of the silk mills before she married Mr. Jenkinson, who was an undertaker. Her husband did not prosper in business, and Mrs. Jenkinson five years ago conceived the idea of eking out the family income by doing warping at home. At that time the manufacturers did all their own warping in their mills, but at busy seasons they frequently found that their warping and winding plants were not adequate to keep their looms going. Mrs. Jenkinson was the first to make a departure in this line. Since then two others have started in the commission warping and winding, but neither of them has met with the success of Mrs. Jenkinson.

Mrs. Jenkinson was only about twenty-five years old and attractive looking when she got a warping creel into her home and started out to look for business. It was hard work at first, but Mrs. Jenkinson did not flinch from the ordeal. Little by little her custom grew. She did excellent work and was always on time with it. She soon found that she could not do all the work that she got from the mills and she bought another creel and hired a small space in the Broomhead mill. She added a winding frame to her small plant and began to employ labor. For over four years her business steadily increased until she could not get enough room in the Broomhead mill to accommodate her. About two months ago she bought the McAllister mill, in Garfield-ave. Her plant of warping and winding machines occupies the first and second floors and she lets the third floor to a tenant. She has thirty warping creels and a large number of winding frames. The plant is worth $10,000 and the mill is worth $35,000.

In five years this woman has built up a splendid business and employs about sixty hands. She is an indefatigable worker. She does her own drumming and is very often seen driving around the silk mills in her own delivery wagon. All her promises are carried out strictly to the letter. When she says that an order will be ready at a certain day the manufacturer can depend on her to the minute. That is the secret of her success. She is at her mill every morning at 7 o'clock and no one in her employ works harder than she does.

She has decided to go into the throwing business

A LUCAS HAND SILK LOOM IN PATERSON.

Mr. West, a veteran weaver, looking over the operator's shoulder.

MODERN LOOMS IN THE SILK MILL OF E. SARGENT, PATERSON.

MRS. LIZZIE JENKINSON.