

The Largest Factory in the World Devoted Exclusively to Upholstered Furniture.

On page 3 will be seen cuts representing the factory, office and salesrooms and portraits of the gentlemen of the world-wide reputed firm of S. Karpen & Bros. of Chicago, manufacturers of upholstered furniture, acknowledged to be the largest exclusive firm in that line in the United States, if not in the world.

The group of portraits shows the faces of nine brothers, all of whom are men of exceptional business qualifications, as can be judged from their business-like countenances. The firm is composed of three brothers, Solomon, Oscar, and Adolph, the other brothers holding responsible working-interest positions.

Like hundreds of other large concerns, this one commenced at the bottom, and it was not without the greatest combined effort of all the brothers working hand in hand that the firm has attained the proud distinction it now enjoys throughout the country—that of being the largest producers of upholstered furniture in the United States.

The business was first started in August, 1880, and was located at 204 Lake street, afterward moving into larger quarters at 205 Lake street. Later the plant was moved to 42 and 44 South Canal street, where misfortune overtook the firm in the shape of fire, and the plant was totally destroyed.

A frame factory was then erected at the present location, corner Wood, Park and Ellen streets. After burning out on Canal street, the finishing and upholstering departments were moved to 298-302 Wabash avenue. In 1891 a large addition to the factory was erected, and since then the finishing, upholstering and manufacturing has been done altogether at Wood, Park and Ellen streets.

The present plant, as seen by the cut, is an immense institution, covering an entire block, and is equipped with all the latest machinery. The workmen employed in the factory are the best that money can secure, and the workmanship and quality of the goods made are not surpassed in this or any other country. Being manufacturers on a very large scale, making their own frames and buying their upholstery goods and materials in large quantities direct from producers, enables the firm to turn out high grade goods at moderate prices.

In 1891 the business had grown to such an extent that the firm found it necessary to purchase the premises 154 and 155 Michigan avenue, where a gorgeous line of parlor goods and upholstered furniture is constantly on exhibition. This building is six stories high.

WORK OF THE BROTHERS.

Solomon Karpen has full charge of the factory, looks after buying stock and superintends the manufacturing part of the business. In this work he is ably assisted, however, by

Oscar and Isaac, the former having charge of the wood working department, and the latter as upholstery foreman and designer. Both of these gentlemen are men of wide experience in their respective positions, and to them is largely due credit for the hundreds of new patterns the firm is constantly bringing out. They are truly "makers of new patterns," for which S. Karpen & Bros. are so famous.

Michael Karpen is a "knight of the grip," his territory extending to the Pacific coast. His acquaintance with the trade is marvelous, and he is known far and near as the prince of good fellows. The business he turns into the house annually is enormous.

Upon the shoulders of Adolph Karpen, who has charge of the show-rooms, offices, etc., rests a world of responsibility. His office is at the salesrooms on Michigan avenue, where he can be found busy at his desk early and late. He looks after the entire building, but always finds time to courteously greet all who enter his office, no matter how pressing his duties are. It has often been said that Adolph Karpen was the best known man in the furniture trade in the West. He is the president of the Chicago Furniture Manufacturers' Association, and is always willing and ready to give his personal attention to further the interests of the furniture trade. To him much credit is due for the rebuilding of the parlor furniture industry of Chicago.

William Karpen is the credit man for the concern, and he has charge of the office force. While his duties do not bring him prominently before the trade, he is none the less popular with the people who know and work with him. As a credit man, his equal would be hard to find. His position, just now, is certainly not an easy one. He is assisted in his office duties by Julius Karpen, who, by the way, is an attorney at law. All legal points are referred to him, and, as a matter of fact, the firm's interest is carefully guarded. He is a conscientious, painstaking man in all he undertakes, making his services quite indispensable.

Leopold Karpen is perhaps as well known by the retail furniture trade of Chicago as any man in the business. He has charge of the city trade, and looks after it well. Because of his pleasant manners and fair treatment to the trade, he is well thought of, and he has little trouble in booking orders when there is any demand for goods.