

THE HISTORY OF



ABOUT one hundred years ago, Michael Thonet conceived the idea that by bending a piece of tenacious wood, using as a medium for so doing, a steaming process, he could produce a far more durable piece of furniture than any that had theretofore existed.

The wood that Michael Thonet chose for his first experiments was the long grained Czecho-Slovakian Beech—the wood which, after one hundred years of forestry and laboratory experiment, has proven superior to all others—superior to every other type of Beech and every known hard wood that the world offers! No other wood known to forestry possesses the peculiar long grain, bending quality and tremendous strength of the Czecho-Slovakian Beech.

Michael Thonet's first experiments were conducted in the city of Vienna, the capital of the former Empire of Austria-Hungary. This city later became the merchandising center of the great bentwood industry which had been created by Michael Thonet. It is on this account, bentwood chairs were and are commonly called "Vienna chairs" in this country.

Out of this idea of Michael Thonet has grown an industry that today controls its own timber tracts, covering an area of 350,000 acres of beech forest. The manufacturing is done in twenty different factories and the distribution is made through thirty-seven branch houses, located in the principal cities throughout the world, giving employment to over twenty thousand people.

Entire villages in Czecho-Slovakia, where our principal factories are located, are inhabited exclusively by employees of this concern or those who are dependent upon these employees.

It is not an uncommon sight to see a grandfather and his grandson working side by side at some process of manufacture. Many benevolent institutions are maintained wholly or in part by the concern to insure the happiness of the employees and their families.

NEARLY A CENTURY

