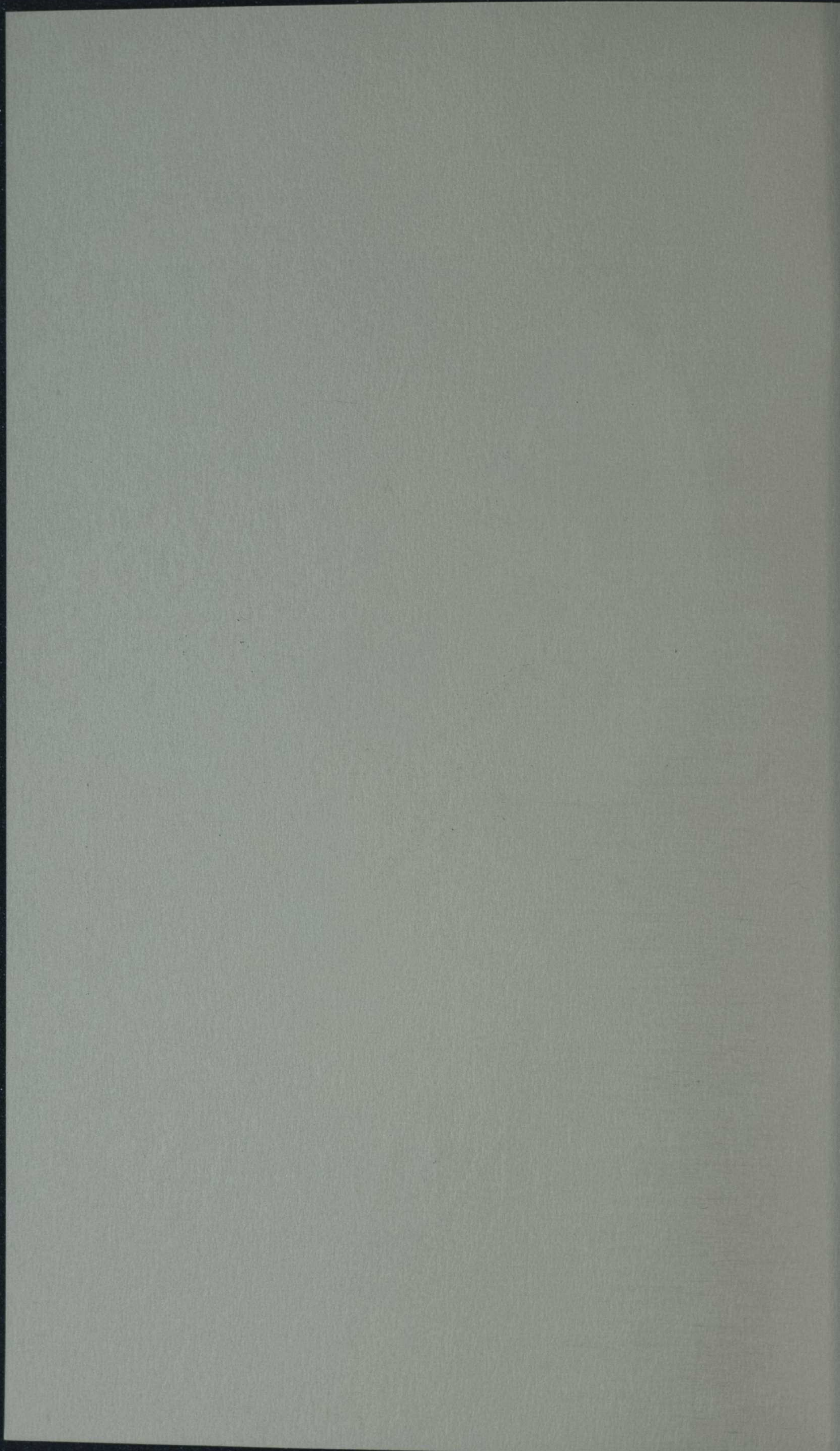




STEINWAY







# *Steinway*

Y E S T E R D A Y

T O D A Y

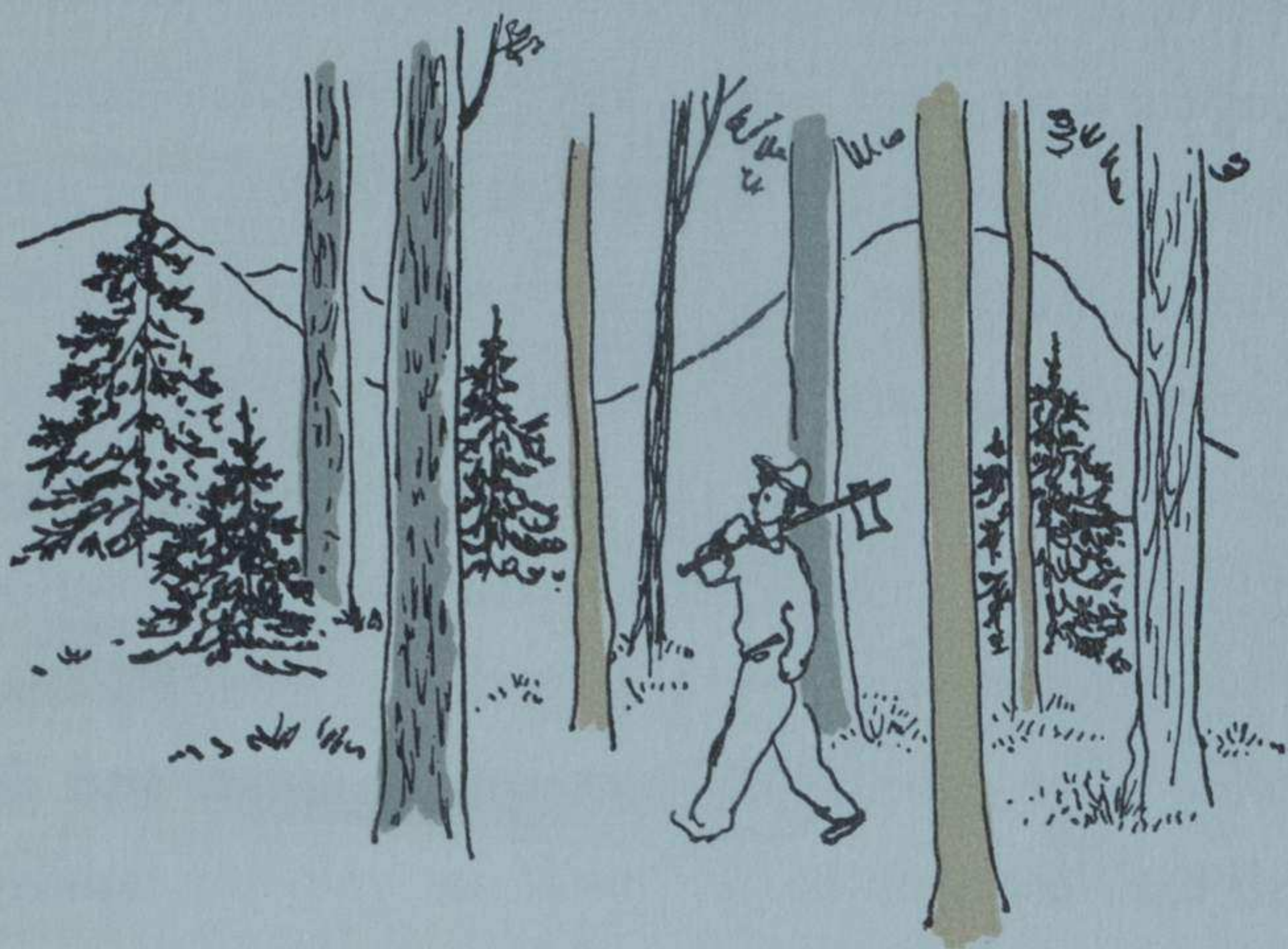
T O M O R R O W

ILLUSTRATED & DESIGNED BY SUSANNE SUBA



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# PROLOGUE

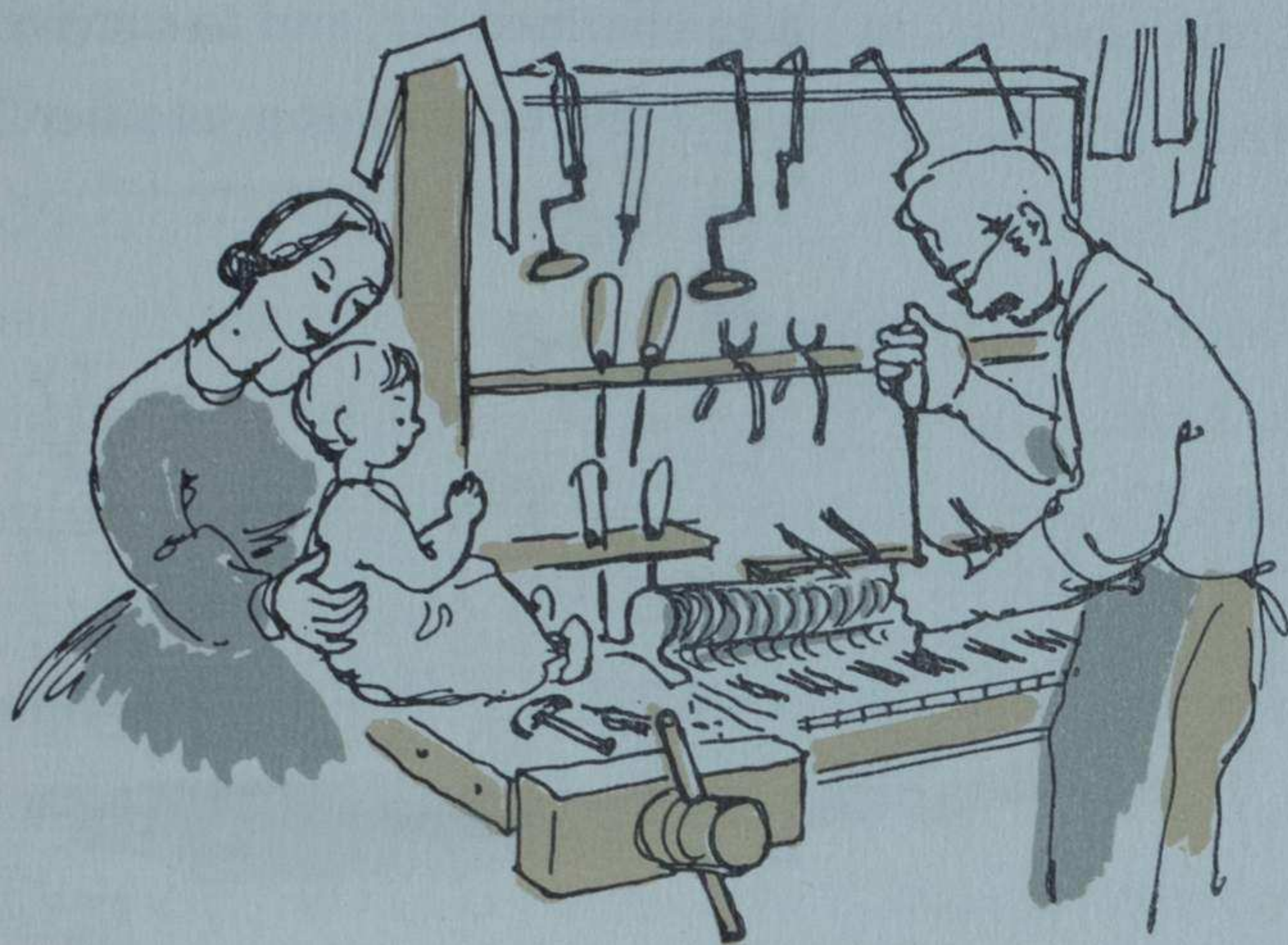
*What's in a name?* Everything its possessor has been and done goes into whatever evaluation others may place upon his name. At birth, a name may be no more than an identification tag, or it may be something to live up to—or live down, but that is not important. What matters is that each of us is given a name, in trust, for a lifetime—to pass on to the future, embellished, or tarnished, or unchanged.



To inherit a good or noble name might seem to be an advantage, but history disproves this theory, for the temptation to bask in the glory of a predecessor's credit is too strong for most great men's sons. No benevolent despot can guarantee a succession of benevolent despots; no artist or musician can insure his progeny's inheritance of talent. In the world of business, founders of empires are often grandfathers of paupers. Man can inherit neither goodness nor greatness. He may be exposed to their beneficent influence, but he must achieve them for himself.

When five generations successively honor and distinguish their common name, this is not only the family of a great man—this is a great family! A name thus honored and distinguished is *Steinway*, symbol and trademark of the world's most esteemed piano. The secret of this rare and proud achievement is simply that the Steinway name has been accepted by each generation, not as an honor or an advantage, but as a solemn trust and threefold responsibility, to the family, to the product which bears its name, and to the public it serves.





# YESTERDAY

*Every story* has its beginning, every harvest has its seed, and so in a name there is the past—the yesterday which breaks the soil for today's reality and tomorrow's promise.

The Steinway story begins in Wolfshagen in the Harz mountains in 1797, when Heinrich Steinweg was born to a humble forester who already had a family of fifteen children. Nothing singular or promising marked this event.



In fact, it seems probable that the economic burden of it must have far overshadowed the natural aspect of joy. And yet, this child was to lead a charmed life, and to survive—as if by intent of Destiny—one misfortune after another.



The first misfortune came with the Napoleonic Wars which took Heinrich's father and older brothers off to the army, leaving his mother and the younger children to hide in the mountains and forage for themselves. But only one brother and one sister and Heinrich came down from the mountains alive. The rest perished from hunger and exposure.

Sorrow overran its cup when the father returned and found but three young children alive to welcome him; but there was more misfortune to come. The ensuing tragedy, an electrical storm, caught the entire family group working on a road, and, with seemingly planned precision, left only Heinrich alive to bear the family name.

A few years later, Heinrich himself was called to war, where once again a strange charm protected him. At Water-



loo, with men falling all around him, he lived gloriously on, winning a medal for bugling without faltering in the face of battle.

We find no record of any musical bent in Heinrich's childhood, but we know that he became a forester like his father, and hewed his existence from the oak, fir, and spruce of the mountain forests. The first recorded musical note sounds in the Steinweg story when Heinrich, in his dull garrison, postwar days, spent his time making musical instruments—a mandolin, a zither, and a dulcimer. Perhaps he was completely unaware that this escape from daily boredom was to prove the key to his future, that his fingers were weaving the first immortal threads into his name; but either fate or intuition led him after his discharge into the significant trade of cabinet-making in an organ factory. Thus, the forester returned to his wood—never to leave it again.

Marriage to Juliane Thiemer was the occasion for a wedding gift of major significance to the bride—a new kind of piano, with two strings to each note, designed and made by Heinrich. Their first-born, C. F. Theodor, inspired another piano, one with three strings to each note—a work of love which required fourteen years of devoted evenings to perfect, with the aid of an ardent young son. Still, it was not until Theodor won first prize in a recital at the State Fair that Heinrich finally made the momentous decision to quit his trade, and spend his life making pianos.

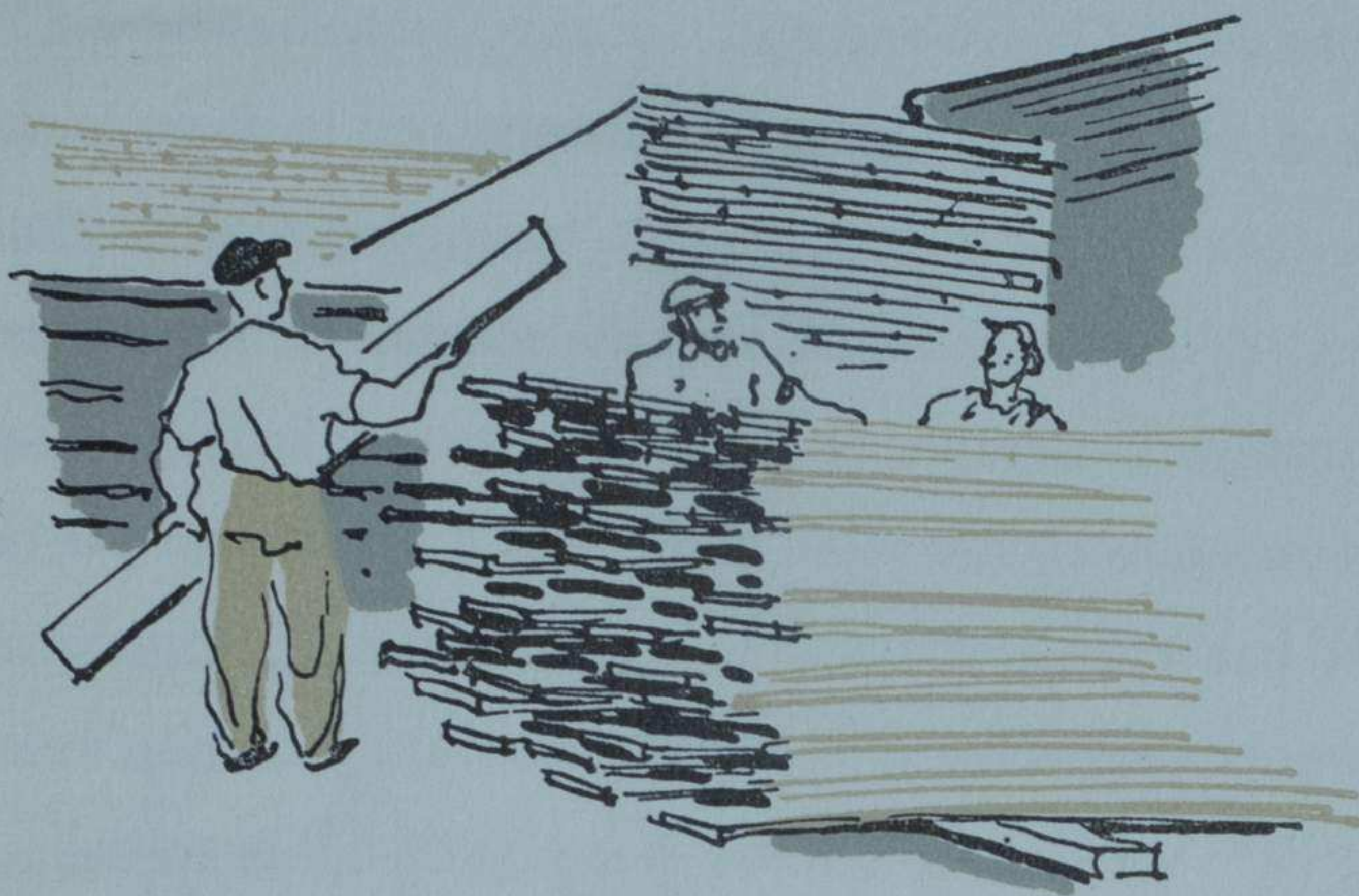
War struck the Steinwegs again in the Revolution of



1848, but this time it brought good rather than evil, for it uprooted Heinrich's family of ten and flung it bodily from the old world into the new. Son Charles, enraptured with the democratic ideals of Franklin and Jefferson, was the first to flee to America, and, once in this land of individual freedom, he knew that he must remain forever. Instead of returning home, he persuaded his father to bring the family to New York, and transplant their roots to this bright new land of opportunity . . .

. . . where Heinrich Steinweg of Wolfshagen — whose name had survived war, tyranny, and tempest—voluntarily became Henry Steinway of New York—founder and father of an illustrious American family, and creator of the immortal Steinway Piano.





# WORK

*It is a moot question* whether a successful man chooses his work or whether the work chooses him. What is important is that they fit, that they become inseparable, and that together they result in satisfaction and service. Henry loved his work, and to it he brought all his energy, endeavor, imagination, and fervor; from it he derived complete satisfaction and a consuming pride. He aimed always at perfection, and when that goal seemed to be reached, he set a new horizon.



If this were the sum-total of Henry's achievement, our story would begin and end with one man, but he did much more. He made disciples of his sons, and in them he sowed the seeds of his own principles, purposes, and ideals. The artist-craftsman became also the teacher of artistic craftsmanship. The reaper of a rich harvest for himself, he taught his sons how to sow wisely and well, in order that the bountiful harvest might be garnered generation after generation. One man's goal became a family goal, and one man's searching light created a veritable battery of lights to follow.

The incomparable piano became the focal point to which nearly every Steinway male, past and present, has brought and is forever bringing his individual talents, his resources, and his loyalty. Beginning with a humble, factory apprenticeship, each, even down to the fifth generation, has applied himself to the task of understanding every detail of the family product, and to the goal of adding his own personal contribution to the future of its name. Every piano that leaves the factory reflects the collective image of all the Steinways who have had a part in its creation and development.

This brings us to the factory which was the natural evolution of a successful enterprise that grew too large for one family. Where Henry and his sons once assumed each and every duty and responsibility for the design, production, and distribution of their product, today these duties and responsibilities are shared by many workers.

There has been no change in the Steinway goal. Perfec-



tion is still the aim and the result, skilled craftsmanship is still the means—loyalty and pride have simply been spilled over from family worker to factory worker. Where mass production logically stresses speed, economy, and replaceable parts, the Steinways still stress beauty, quality, and durability.



The Steinway piano is a work of art. The workers still operate as devoted artisans. With few exceptions, all parts of the product are still made in the Steinway factories in New York. Fifty-two percent of the manufacturing cost goes into the craftsmanship required to perfect every tiny part and mechanism of a Steinway. Forty-two percent of material cost goes into wood, the greatest single factor contributing to the piano's tone and long life.

The story of this wood is fascinating in itself. The Stein-



ways demand the right to handpick each piece of lumber that goes into the piano. The lumber buyer is responsible for the initial selection of American walnut and Central American mahogany; for the mountain-grown eastern spruce from Vermont for the soundboard; for poplar from the Great Smokies for core stock; maple from Indiana, Wisconsin, and Canada for rims, wrest planks, and bridges; sugar pine from Idaho for the keys; rosewood from Brazil for part of the action. As a result of this buyer's nod, the Steinways have accepted over seven million square feet of highest grade lumbers, at a cost of over fifteen million dollars.

But selection is only the first step, for the wood must then be seasoned properly before use. This seasoning requires two or more years outdoors, followed by two additional years indoors, plus drying in patented humidity kilns which turn out a wood whose precisely controlled humidity is equal to six to eight percent. Then comes the consummate skill required in matching the grains for strength and resonance qualities, followed by the glueing, bending, and finishing processes.

The work involved in making a Steinway consists of a thousand individual endeavors, blended and coordinated into one immortal product. The Steinway is made of wood, steel, iron, felt, and ivory—but it is also made of love, art, science, knowledge, loyalty, and idealism. It has set the standard of piano perfection.





# ART

*It is impossible* to separate art from work in a work of art like the Steinway piano, for by aiming steadfastly and solely at functional perfection, its creators could not avoid creating a thing of beauty. That the Steinway piano is pleasing to look at is the purely accidental result of another goal—the goal of functional perfection. The attractive bent rim was not designed to please the eye, but to fulfill a purely scientific purpose. That the piano shape happens to resemble the harp is not simply the result



of C. F. Theodor Steinway's attachment to the harp, but is also the natural outgrowth of their similar acoustical problems. Theodor painstakingly studied the harp in order that he might eventually develop the piano. As a result of his knowledge, the bent rim of the Steinway amplifies the vibrations of the strings.

No better example of this combination of arts can be found than the present White House piano. When Steinway and Sons replaced the Steinway accepted in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt, three eminent artists were engaged to produce the most beautiful and fitting thing that could be conceived for that purpose.

The case of the New White House Piano (presented December 10, 1938) is made of the finest Honduras mahogany, constructed on the chaste and simple lines of the old spinet. The legs, in the shape of three American eagles, are carved from solid mahogany blocks, covered with gold leaf and painted. The rich red of the mahogany and the soft gold decorations blend magnificently with the cream-and-gold walls and rich deep red hangings of the East Room of the White House.

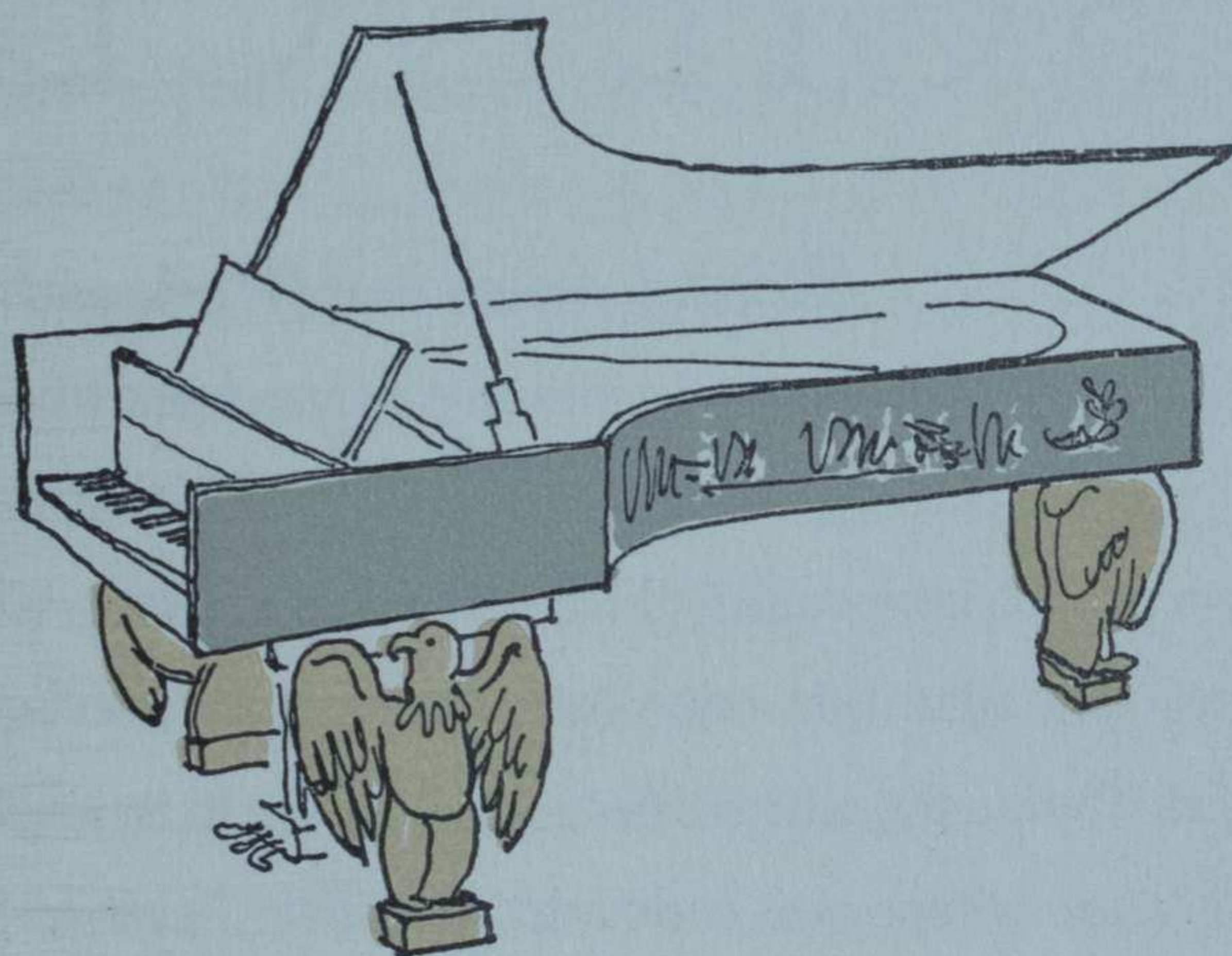
The decorations represent the colorful variety of American musical sources—the Virginia reel, the New England barn dance, the chanting Indian, the spiritual-singing Negro cottonpicker, and the lonely cowboy.

In this incomparable White House Piano are combined the epitome of three major arts—the art of functional per-

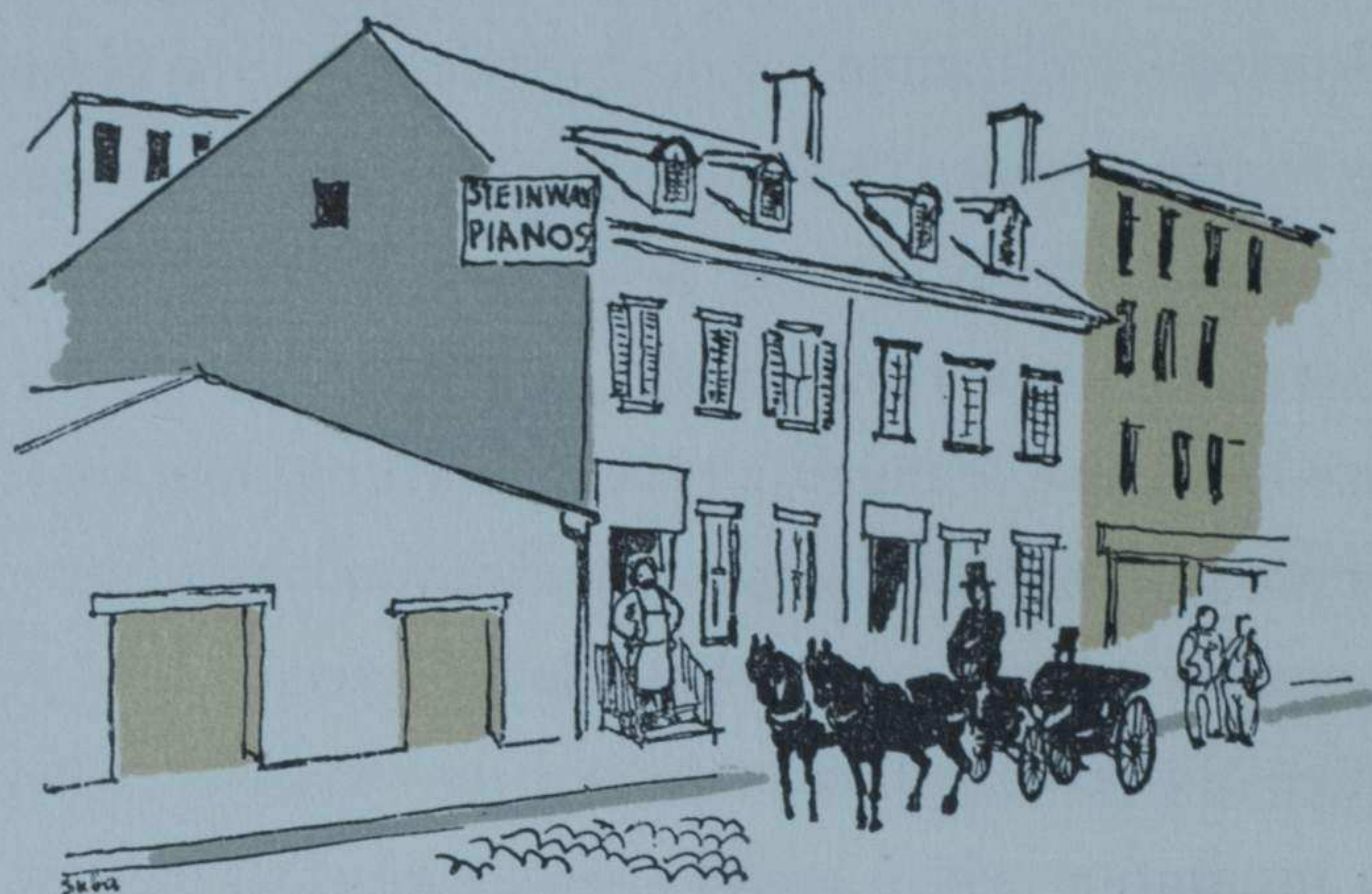


fection, the art of symbolic decoration, and the universal art of music.

Probably no single art is more widely loved, appreciated, and understood than music, and the contribution of Steinway to this common language is inestimable. By providing a glorious medium for such artists as Liszt, Wagner, and Anton Rubinstein, the Steinway early became the preferred voice for Music's immortals. Remembering, too, that the piano is the basic musical instrument around which not only the symphony has evolved, but also the learning and appreciation of music itself, one cannot help wondering whether the inspiration which swept struggling artists upward to their universally honored status could have been accomplished without the Steinway. Surely each owes the other an immense debt of gratitude, for Steinway created the perfect voice through which the immortal musicians express themselves to the world.







# SCIENCE

*Having shown that Work and Art in a Steinway piano are so intimately related that they are actually inseparable, we now discover that these two elements are also irrevocably blended with a third, which is Science, and that this trio intermingle and overlap each other so obviously and so necessarily that it is impossible to determine where one ends and the other begins.*



A Steinway piano is wood, iron, ivory, glue; it is form, weight, stresses, balance, action, tone; it is metallurgy, physics, chemistry, mechanics, acoustics; it is all of these things moulded together by the hands, minds, and hearts of five Steinway generations. In their first American headquarters, an old Varick Street (New York City) barn, where old Henry fumed and fussed over every piece of lumber—was he engaged in work, art, or science? And in 1859, when Henry Jr. made piano history by combining the single-cast metal plate with the overstrung scale—a feat that set the pattern for all pianos to come—was he contributing to the art of music, or to the science of piano-making, or both?

Consider Patent No. 1,826,848. In 1932, Josef Hofmann, already an ardent admirer of the Steinway's perfection, asked, "Can't you make it still more sensitive, still more responsive?"

Frederick A. Vietor, great-grandson of Henry, accepted the challenge, just as sixty years earlier his Uncle Theodor had accepted a similar challenge from the great Liszt. Vietor studied the problem for a year, and then decided to abandon the hitherto accepted notion that keys had to sit flat. Instead, he proved that the keys could be balanced sensitively on small curved fulcrums, and thereby produced a keyboard which is more responsive to the touch. Thus was born Steinway's Accelerated Action, the popular name for Patent No. 1,826,848. Because of an artistic need, Vietor,



through the medium of hard work, achieved a result which served both Art and Science.

Pages could be written on these "requests" or "demands" which musicians make of their favorite instrument-makers. The researches and studies of Theodor alone would fill many volumes, for he was prolific in his discoveries, and has a record of at least thirty-four patents. One—the duplex scale—was of major proportions in the purification of ultimate tonal quality. Theodor's meticulous analysis of the vibration and sympathetic vibration problem of a string stretched over a bridge led him to this discovery of the inestimable value of bringing the unused portions of the vibrating strings into sympathetic reactions.

Represented in his scientific records are the studies of acoustics, of the elasticity of woods, the behavior of strings when vibrating, sound velocities of various materials, and the whole field of mathematics. Theodor's accomplishments alone add up to scientific genius. They required the patient studiousness of a researcher, the exciting imagination of an inventor, and the unfailing devotion of an idealist. For twenty-five years, he experimented and labored over the piano's insides, and steadily, under his guiding hand, the art of music and the science of music-making became ever more permanently wedded.

Consider the "voice" of the piano. Examine the action, both the exposed and the hidden parts, and you will find it is made up of no less than seven thousand components. To



the mechanic, these represent the "action," but to the average layman, this amazingly intricate combination of whippens, shanks, and hammers seems like the throbbing nervous system of some living organism. How many people have any idea what happens when a single key is played?

A Steinway grand has twelve thousand parts. Each plays its own starring role, and yet each is a mere sustainer to the others in the larger perfected whole. From the selection of the wood to the musical rendition in its place of honor in your home, a Steinway piano is as beautifully blended an intermarriage of labor, art, science, loyalty, and love as any product man has yet created.







# NOBILITY

*An inanimate object, such as a piano, can be only as noble as its creators. Whatever they may impart of their integrity, wisdom, and aspiration, that much and no more will their creation possess.*

From the founder to the present time, five generations of Steinways have faithfully served their apprenticeships of labor and learning, have chosen their respective niches in the family business, and have contributed the best that was within them to the furthering of an unbroken tradition.



As individuals, their respective gifts to the immortality of their name have differed both in nature and in amount, but each has given what he had, and all have shared in the common bonds of loyalty, integrity, and idealism.

We know of Henry's patient, ceaseless passion for knowledge and perfection, for an unequalled merger of high idealism and severe practicality. We know too of Henry Jr.'s spectacular invention of the single-cast plate, and of Theodor—the indefatigable genius. But there was another side to Theodor upon which we have not dwelt, a quality which all of the Steinways have possessed, but perhaps to a lesser degree. Theodor was a natural-born teacher.

Teaching does not consist of being informed, inspired, or wise. Teaching is the art of transferring that information, inspiration, and wisdom to others. Even today, the family members speak warmly of Uncle Theodor and his amazing capacity to arouse others by his own example. Whether probing deep into intricate mathematical problems, or puttering in the shop, he was a shirt-sleeve worker, at home at every bench in the Steinway factory. His enthusiasm and sincerity of purpose were contagious, and the craftsmen who shared his companionship and his goal became incurably infected. Among these were his nephew apprentices, who today bear the indelible print of the master's teachings.

William's contribution was of a different calibre, but it was no less effective. This son served as a liaison between the "House of Steinway" and the world outside.



He underwrote the American appearances of Ignaz Paderewski, Anton Rubinstein, Annette Essipoff, and many other famous musicians. As a community leader, he was twice appointed Chairman of the Rapid Transit Commission of New York. He advocated the building of a tube from Forty-Second Street to Long Island (the present I.R.T. subway tunnel), and built up the town of Steinway for his workers around the factories he had begun in 1872.

The Steinways of the third, fourth, and fifth generations who are carrying on the tradition today, fully realize the immensity of their task. They have inherited more than a famous name; they have inherited a trust which cannot be deserted, and a challenge to strive toward newer and even broader horizons.





# ESTEEM

*Is a noble work of art worth the effort and expense entailed in this modern America of mass production?*

At first thought, the answer would seem to be "no," and yet Steinway has stood alone in its field, uncompromising and unafraid. Despite almost insurmountable difficulties, two world wars, and heartbreaking reverses, the House of Steinway has proved that perfection can be profitable, and that integrity will bring its own inevitable reward.

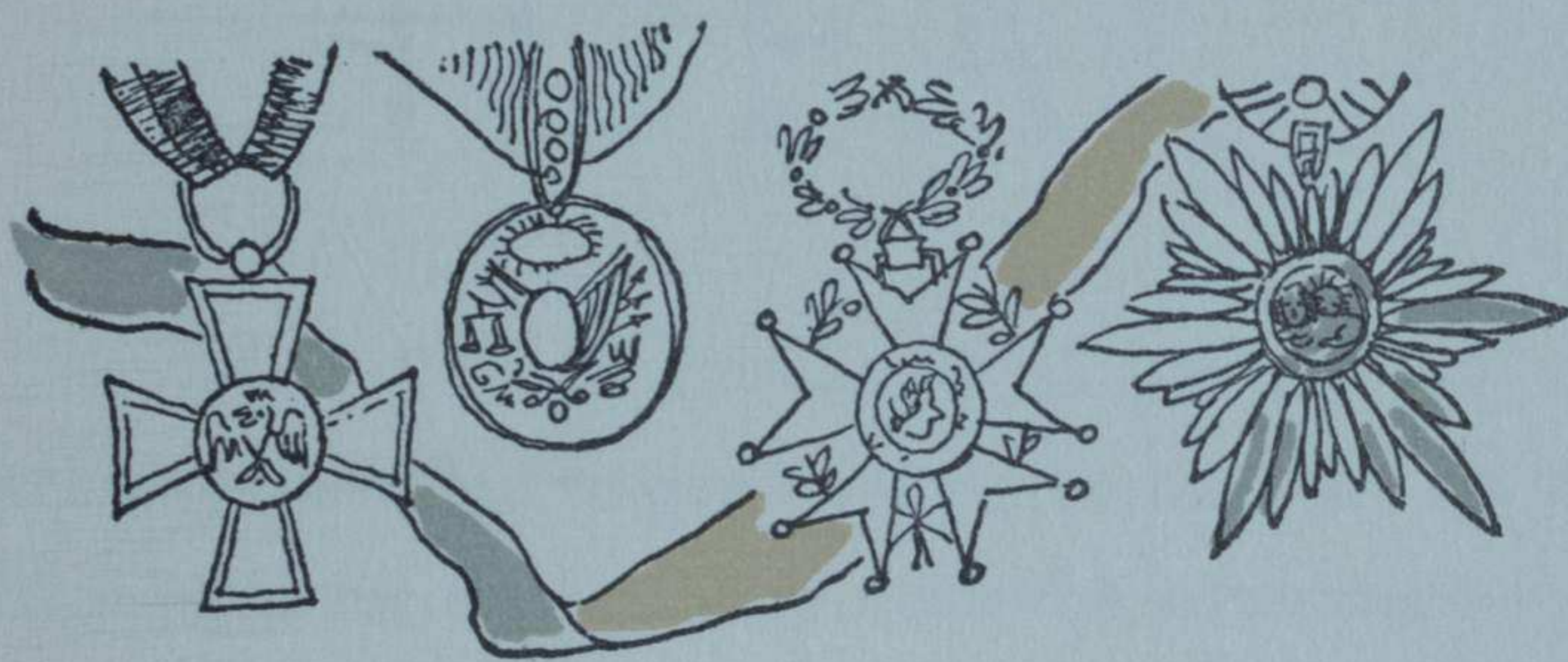


The Steinway record is an open book. In the esteem of those whose esteem means most, it has no equal. The master pianists of the present as well as of the past have openly endorsed and exclusively used this instrument. What is true of pianists has been equally true of conductors, violinists, cellists, singers, and symphony orchestras. The list is endless and conclusive, and this overwhelming approbation from music's Hall of Fame has played its inevitable part in inspiring students, teachers, and average families to aim high, and to buy the best.

Have you ever considered what a large proportion of radio's daily entertainment is musical, or what a large percentage of this musical program requires the use of a piano? Whether the rendition is to be a Chopin nocturne, a Tschai-kowsky concerto, or the latest in boogie-woogie, a radio station must supply a piano which will do justice to all three, and which will likewise prove durable under such constant and varied use. It is therefore no accident that the great stations in New York have some hundred Steinway pianos in almost continuous use, or that virtually every major city in the United States, as well as in Honolulu, England, Australia, Canada, British Columbia, Argentina, Egypt, Lithuania, East Africa, Cuba, Finland and nearly every country in the world, can point with pride to the Steinways which their radio stations possess. And we might mention, too, that all these Steinways were bought by the stations outright. They are not loaned nor contributed.



Even the golden blessing of world royalty has been added to the immortality of this noblest of pianos, for Steinway & Sons were appointed piano-makers to the Royal and Imperial courts of Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Austria, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Saxony, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and Persia. The French Republic bestowed upon Charles H. Steinway and Frederick T. Steinway the Cross of the Legion of Honor; William Steinway received the Order of the Red Eagle, Class II from Germany; Charles H. Steinway the Order of the Liakat from Turkey and the Order of the Sun and Lion from Persia, and from Norway and Sweden, the Grand National Gold Medal. In addition, the most eminent musical institution in the world, the College of St. Cecilia at Rome, conferred upon them their Academic Honors.



The list is gloriously, endlessly impressive, but somehow these honors have never superseded or overshadowed, in the minds of the Steinways, their private record of the loyal



families who have been purchasers of their piano for many successive generations. Preserved proudly in their files are letters from all over the world, asking for information, or offering personal praise.

The public esteem which has been showered upon the Steinways has come from all corners of the globe, but in a way, it is more than a tribute to this family and their product—it is also a tribute to America.





# IDEAL

*As is true* with all perfectionists, the Steinways have had to pay for their idealism. But the cost has secured for the Steinway name the sustaining power of impressive dependability. When during the mid twenties the player piano boom was at its height, and piano factories were expanding wildly to capitalize on the lucrative market, Steinway did not join the trend. The player piano market collapsed with the depression in the early thirties,