

## THE "LATEST CRY" IN FRENCH FURNITURE

### THE "LATEST CRY" IN FURNITURE FOR FRENCH WOMEN

"A Little Salon for Women" was the title given to the group of furniture designed by M. Follot and shown at the Bruxelles Exhibition of Decorative Arts. Nothing more supremely elegant has probably ever been put together. To achieve this furniture for the Salon of the French *grande dame* every final culture in decorative art has been utilized. The temperament of the woman of the very beginning of this century of limitless luxury and indolence has been studied by the creator of this "latest cry" in elaborate, costly art for the home. All the extravagances of all the centuries of art furniture in France seem to have been gathered up and the most perfect detail of each period culled and combined in this desire to cater to the overrefined, oversensitive, overemotional feminine product of the present day in France. It is in fact an epitome of the life of the woman, of the society which breeds her. For in this search for sheer futile decorative beauty, vitality has been lost. There is the decorative idea, but

for Women he has tranquil design, colors so exquisitely harmonized that they could not fatigue the most delicate spirit, a fitting background for the most subtle day dreams, materials the most precious that could be woven, the construction, the details so perfect that they would satisfy the most supersensitive and cultivated woman.

He purposes that each effort in his furniture making shall be unique. He will not



A PEARWOOD COUCH: FROM L'ART DÉCORATIF.

imitate himself or the work of any other artist. He wishes perpetually to create new imaginative beauty in his furniture to correspond with the lives of the beauties for whom it is devised. A composite of all that France has ever imagined of intricate and wonderful art is here combined.

And the result, a salon in which idleness, futility, weakness is so revealed as inspiration that in spite of beauty, good construction, subtle appreciation of harmonies, there is degeneracy, a lack even of that expression of fearless immorality which inspired the periods of frank luxury of the middle centuries in France. This is an etherealized sensuality which is neither honest nor fearless, formed for the soul of the *demi vierge*, conscious or unconscious, for the woman possessing more curiosity about life than experience, to whom the great fundamentals of life are a surprise, a shock. Furniture interesting as a symbol, and deplorable for the



FRENCH PEARWOOD FURNITURE INLAID WITH MOTHER-OF-PEARL, EBONY AND IVORY: FROM L'ART DÉCORATIF.

not the purpose of art. There is every refinement, but no reality.

In fact, M. Follot has himself well summed up this furniture of *la vie moderne*. He first revolts nervously from any uniformity of style. It is but a form of slavery, he says. In the furniture in his Salon

same reason. The contrast between this "latest cry" in French furniture and the growing regard in America for simplicity in furnishing is a matter of no little import to the nation. For the greater the simplicity in the home the surer are we as a people to strike a genuine note.