



석조전
대한제국역사관
DAEHAN EMPIRE HISTORY MUSEUM

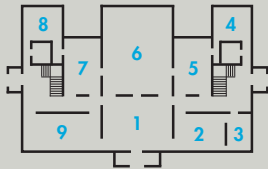


DAEHAN EMPIRE

HISTORY MUSEUM

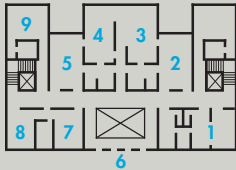
Floor Plan

1F



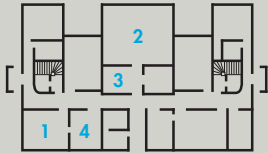
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B



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History of Seokjojeon Hall

1910

Building Completion

1911~1922

Provisional residence of King Yeongchin (1911, 1918, 1919, 1922)

1933~1938

Deoksugung Palace Art Gallery

1938~1945

Yi Royal-Family Art Museum

1945 After Liberation

Assembly hall of Democratic committee

1946~1947

Conference hall of the Joint Soviet-American Commission

1948~1950

Conference hall of United Nations Commission on Korea(UNCOK)

1955~1972

National Museum

1973~1986

National Museum of Contemporary Art

1987~1992

Office of Cultural Properties

1992~2004

National Palace Museum

2005~2009

Deoksugung Office

2009~2014

Restoration work

2014

Seokjojeon Daehan Empire History Museum

Construction history of Seokjojeon Hall

1897

Plan to build

1898

Draft Blueprint

1898~1900

Develop Construction Model

1900~1901

Building of Foundation

1902~1903

Construction Disrupted

1903~1906

Construction of Structure

1907~1910

Construction of Interior

1910

Building Completion

1911

Landscaping work

1918

Preparation to move in

1933

Interior work for
Deoksugung Palace
Art Gallery

1946

Restoration work by
US army military
government in Korea

1950

Restoration work by
corps of engineers

1954

Interior work for
National Museum

1980~2007

Renovation and
Reinforcement work

2009~2014

Restoration work

Seokjojeon

Daehan Empire History Museum

Originally designed as an imperial palace of Korea, Seokjojeon Hall comprises an Audience Chamber, a Grand Dining Room, and the Emperor's Bedrooms and Library. However, it was transformed into an art gallery when Korea was under Japanese colonial rule. Following Korea's liberation in 1945, the palace was used as a venue for international conferences, as a museum, and then as an art gallery, losing many of its original features in the process. In 2009, a plan for the restoration of this historical palace building to its original condition was conceived and put into practice, ultimately leading to the opening of the Korean Empire History Museum of Seokjojeon in October 2014.

The restoration of Seokjojeon Hall is made possible with the collection of historical photographs, newspaper articles and catalogues. Some of the rooms in the palace have been restored to the original condition in which they were used by the Korean imperial family thanks to photographs of them, while other rooms, for which there is a lack of historical evidence, were converted into exhibition halls dedicated to the Korean Empire. The restored rooms are furnished with 41 original items of furniture that were supplied by the British furniture company Maple & Co. when the palace was completed, but which had been placed in storage in Changdeokgung Palace and the National Palace Museum of Korea. Some of the pieces of furniture were either purchased from antique shops in the UK or reproduced on the basis of the products shown in the catalogue of Maple & Co.



Seokjojeon, 2014

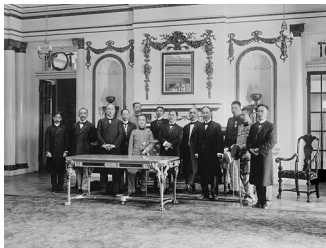
Central Lobby

1F-1

The Central Lobby is the first room into which visitors are guided after they have climbed the central stairway, and hence functions as the foyer of Seokjojeon Hall. The hall is connected to the imperial Audience Chamber at the center of the building and the Reception Room and Dining Room are on either side. The restoration of the interior of Seokjojeon Hall was based on old photographs taken during the 1910s. The interior decoration of the palace building features a neoclassical style marked by acanthus leaf moldings, ornamental columns and other architectural elements arranged in perfect symmetry. The Hall table of the Central Lobby is known as the most luxurious of all the original items of furniture in the palace. The table was kept at Huijeongdang Hall of Changdeokgung Palace until it was moved back to its original location in the hall.



Hall table in the Central Lobby



King Yeongchin at the Central Lobby, 1911



Central Lobby, 2014

Reception Room

1F-2

Seokjojeon Hall contains a waiting room where guests would wait for their turn to have an audience with the emperor, engaging in light conversation with officials over a light, Western-style snack, such as biscuits and champagne, while they waited. The restored interior of the waiting room is based on a photograph taken in 1918, which exhibits the influence of Adam Style as introduced in a catalogue published by a UK-based company, Maple & Co., which executed the entire interior decoration of Seokjojeon Hall under the supervision of a British architect named Lovell. The photograph shows that one of the walls of the Reception Room originally held a British naturalistic landscape painting Which hasn't survived. In the restored room, the painting has been replaced by a copy of Seokjojeon by unknown painter, and A Landscape of Seoul painted in 1899 by a Dutch painter, Hubert Vos, who also painted a portrait of Emperor Gojong. Two items of furniture, a long seat and a display cabinet, bear the inscription, "RECEPTION ROOM," indicating that the items were originally made to furnish the Reception Room.



Original furniture marked with the inscription, "RECEPTION ROOM"

A DRAWING ROOM IN THE "ADAM" STYLE



A Drawing room in the "ADAM" style, Catalogue of Maple & Co., c. 1905



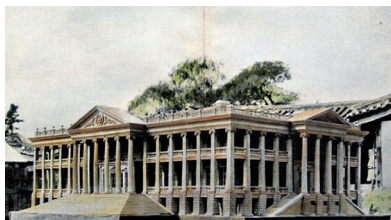
Reception Room, 2014

Construction of Seokjojeon Hall

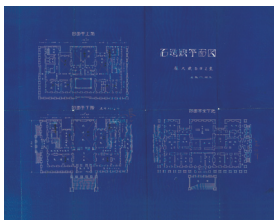
1F-3

The construction of the Korean imperial palace now called Seokjojeon was planned by a British lawyer named John McLeavy Brown, who was then serving Emperor Gojong as a financial advisor and Chief Commissioner of Customs, and was designed by John Reginald Harding, a British engineer serving with the Chinese Maritime Customs Service. The construction work was supervised by three British engineers, Kartman, Harding, and Davidson, while the interior decoration and furniture were supplied by the British company Maple & Co., under the supervision of Lovell. Before starting the construction work, the engineers made a 1/10 scale model of the palace that was presented in a US architectural magazine issued in 1900.

Upon its completion in 1910, the palace became the largest Western-style building in the Korean Empire, exhibiting a neoclassical architectural style with strict symmetry and perfect proportions. The building consisted of three stories: the ground floor, which was occupied by workrooms and storage facilities; the first floor, which consisted of rooms related with the emperor's official duties; and the second floor, which served as the private living space of the emperor and his empress consort.



Photograph of the scale model of Seokjojeon hall,
The American Architect and Building News, 1900



Floor Plan of Seokjojeon hall, 1933

Declaration of the Korean Empire

1F-4

The brutal murder of Queen Myeongseong by a gang of Japanese assassins in 1895 led King Gojong to seek shelter in the Russian Legation in Seoul the following year. He returned to Deoksugung Palace in 1897 with a plan to establish a new political system in a bid to secure the national sovereignty and independence of his kingdom, resulting in the proclamation of the Empire of the Great Han (in kor Daehan), now simply called the Korean Empire. He chose the word, “Great Han,” to signify that his empire would represent the unification of the three Han States that emerged on the Korean Peninsula during the early phase of Korean history, and adopted a reign title, Gwangmu. He also introduced new systems of court uniforms and government in order to assert the dignity of his state as a new empire.



Emperor Gojong wearing
the Yellow Dragon Robe

Meeting with the Emperor of Korean Empire

1F-5

The foundation of the Korean Empire naturally meant that it could no longer follow the rites and ceremonies established by Joseon, which had been a “mere” kingdom. The ruler of the newly-founded empire was also keenly interested in adopting the diplomatic protocols of the West in the belief that they would help his empire to modernize and ultimately establish itself as an accredited member of the international community. He published *Daehan yejeon* (The Rules of Decorum in Korea) in 1899 to summarize the newly adopted rites and ceremonies, followed by a revised version, *Yesik jangjeon* (Rules of Rites and Ceremonies), in 1902, and sent the books to foreign legations.

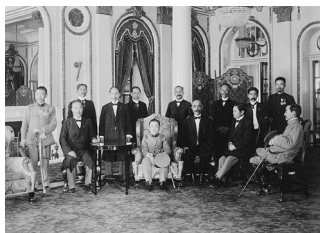


Daehanyejeon (The Rules
of Decorum in Korea), 1899

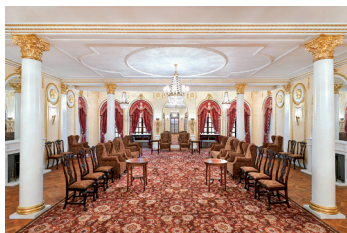
Audience Chamber

1F-6

The Audience Chamber is the most luxuriously and majestically decorated of all the rooms in Seokjojeon Hall. Compared with the other rooms, the hall is unique in that its interior, including its furniture, is decorated with Plum blossom designs symbolizing the Korean imperial household. A heraldic emblem of the Korean imperial family, the Plum blossom has also been regarded as one of the most prominent symbols of the Korean empire, along with the current Korean national flag and flower, and extensively used to decorate various items connected with the Korean Empire, such as court attire, military uniforms, medals, official documents, coins, postage stamps, and government table ware. The ceiling is lower than the original by about one thirds because steel beams were added to support the weight of the ceiling, which had been damaged by time and the Korean War (1950).



King Yeongchin at the Audience Chamber, 1911



Audience Chamber, 2014



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3

- 1 Plum blossom emblem on a wall of the Audience Chamber
- 2 Plum blossom emblem on a Round Table
- 3 Plum blossom emblem on the pediment of Seokjojeon Hall

Private Dining Room

1F-7

The walls of the private dining room are decorated with British oak. The room, along with the Central Lobby and the Audience Chamber, was used for the reception of guests even after Seokjojeon was turned into an art gallery in 1933. The successful restoration of the dining room is greatly indebted to a photograph carried in a Japanese architecture magazine published in 1933. Though no photograph or text regarding the furniture used in this room has survived, the discovery of an inscription, "PRIVATE DINING ROOM", on three items of furniture - a table, chair and sideboard - during the restoration work made it possible to restore some of the original items of furniture to the room. The remaining furniture displays a dignified neoclassical style.



Original furniture marked
with the inscription,
"PRIVATE DINING ROOM"



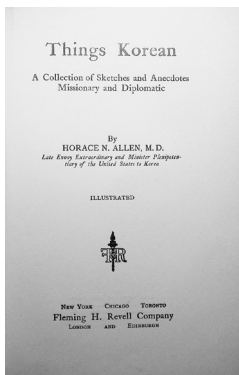
Private Dining Room, 2014

Diplomacy of the Korean Empire

1F-8

After signing the Korea-Japanese Treaty of Amity in 1876, the Korean Empire signed further treaties of amity and commerce with various countries, including the USA, Great Britain and Germany. The opening of diplomatic relations with the Western powers led to an increase in the numbers of Western diplomats visiting Korea as well as to the dispatch of Korean diplomats overseas. Some foreign diplomats authored books about Korean culture and customs, and were honored with medals for their meritorious services on behalf of the Korean Empire.

The political turbulence engulfing the Korean Empire led some Korean diplomats, such as Min Yeong-hwan, Yi Beom-jin and Yi Han-eung, to forge an international reputation for their resolute struggle in Europe and the US to secure the national sovereignty and independence of Korea.



Things Korean by
H. A. Allen, 1908

Korean Legation
in the Washington
D.C., early 20C

Grand Dining Room

1F-9

The restoration of the Grand Dining Room, where the Korean emperor had formal lunch and dinners with his guests, is based on a photograph taken in 1918. Historical records show that the banquets held for foreign guests largely served Western-style cuisine. The recreated dining scene displays a Western-style meal for twelve on the basis of “An illustration of a Banquet” contained in *The Rules of Decorum in Korea*, formal protocol guidelines published in 1897. The tableware consists of white porcelain vessels decorated with the Korean imperial seal inspired by the pear flower, while the table setting and decorations are based on the British neoclassical style.

A window at the southern end of the Grand Dining Room has been left unrestored to show the condition of the building before the restoration work. The restored Seokjojeon Hall features a ceiling composed of I-beams and arched beams, granite outer walls and red-brick inner walls.



“Illustration of a Banquet,” *Daehanyejeon* (Rules of Decorum for Korea), 1899

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Grand Dining Room, 1918



Grand Dining Room, 2014

Imperial House of Korea

2F-1

The introduction of cameras and Western-style clothing had a significant influence upon the life of the Korean imperial household, resulting in several interesting photographs depicting the imperial family in Western attire. These photographs capture the empire's two rulers, Emperor Gojong and his son Emperor Sunjong, in Western-style military uniforms with medals, as well as in the traditional Dragon Robes.



- 1 Imperial family of Korea seated in the Central Lobby of Seokjojeon Hall, 1918
- 2 Emperor Gojong and Sunjong, around 1900
- 3 Princess Deokhye, 1924
- 4 Honored Imperial Consort Sunheon, before 1911

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Emperor's Bedroom

2F-2

Although originally intended as the bedroom of Emperor Gojong, the room was never used by Gojong, who insisted on staying in Hamnyeongjeon Hall at Deoksugung Palace. The bedroom was briefly used by King Yeongchin in 1911, when he made a short visit to Korea from Japan to attend his mother's funeral. Thereafter, King Yeongchin continued to use Seokjojeon Hall for his accommodation requirements whenever he visited his home country until 1922.

There is no extant photograph or textual record to give us a clear idea about the fine details of this room. The restored room contains a wardrobe and washbasin inscribed with its original inscription "EMPEROR'S BEDROOM", and some more items of furniture purchased on the basis of a catalogue published by a British furniture manufacturer, Maple & Co., the company that provided the original furniture for the palace. Additionally, there is a canopy over the emperor's bed in the restored bedroom, and there are golden curtains whereas the original curtains were purple. The decorative patterns of the curtains are based on the 1918 photograph.

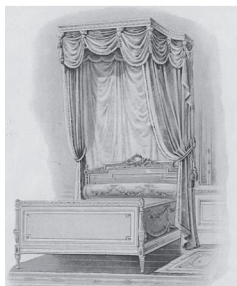


Wardrobe marked with the inscription, "EMPEROR'S BEDROOM"

DAEHAN EMPIRE HISTORY MUSEUM



Emperor's Bedroom, 2014



Bed canopy, Catalogue of Maple & Co., c. 1905

Emperor's Library

2F-3

This room was planned to be used by the emperor for the purposes of reading, writing or as the informal reception of guests. The room has been furnished with a few items of furniture based on photographs taken in 1911 and 1918, including a desk, a double-tier bookcase, a rotary book cabinet and a round table. Of the furniture, the desk and the round table bear the inscription, "EMPEROR'S LIBRARY," indicating their original location. The photograph of the library (taken in 1918) shows an unidentified Western book lying on the middle of the round table. In the restored room the book is replaced by Elements of International Law, which played a crucial role in the proclamation of "The Constitution of the Korean Empire" by Emperor Gojong. The 1918 photograph also shows that the library originally had a fireplace, which has now been replaced by an antique made in Britain in the early 20th century.



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- 1 King Yeongchin posing at the Emperor's Library, 1911
- 2 Emperor's Library, 1918
- 3 Emperor's Library, 1922
- 4 Emperor's Library, 2014

Empress's Boudoir

2F-4

This room, originally designed as a reading room for the empress and a reception room for her guests, contains at its center an oval table and a desk carrying the inscription, "EMPRESS'S BOUDOIR." Other items of furniture, all made from luxurious satinwood, were returned here from Changdeokgung Palace and the National Palace Museum of Korea. All these pieces of furniture were made by the British manufacturer, Maple & Co., and, as shown by its catalogue dated 1910, purchased as ready-made products from the same company.

Empress's Bedroom

2F-5

Originally intended as the bedchamber of the Honored Imperial Consort Sunheon, this room remained unused as she died in 1911, shortly after the completion of Seokjojeon Hall. The room was briefly used by her son King Yeongchin and his consort when they made a short visit to Korea from Japan in 1922. No record or photograph remains to show what the room was originally like. The restored bedroom contains original furniture inscribed with "EMPRESS'S BEDROOM" and other items chosen on the basis of a catalogue of a British furniture manufacturer, Maple & Co., which provided the original furniture for the palace. The Empress's Bedroom is designed to form symmetry with the Emperor's Bedroom.



Empress's Boudoir, 2014



Empress's Bedroom, 2014

Terrace (Seokjojeon Garden)

2F-6

The garden in front of Seokjojeon's terrace was originally created in a Baroque style with exotic trees imported from overseas. As the trees withered away, a square pond appeared in the 1920s with a sculptural work of a tortoise at the center. The Western Hall (present-day Deoksugung Art Museum) was built in 1938, thus completing the current water fountain with its tortoise sculpture. The terrace is closed during the winter season(i.e. from November to February).



Seokjojeon Hall and Garden, 1910's



1920-30's



1938.6



1938.9

Empress Myeongseong and Honored Imperial Consort Sunheon 2F-7

The Emperor Gojong's two consorts, Empress Myeongseong and Imperial Honored Consort Sunheon, were the emperor's greatest and most indispensable helpers, engaging in various diplomatic activities to help the ruler cope wisely with the political turbulence surrounding the empire. They were particularly interested in the promotion of women's education.

Empress Myeongseong gave birth to four sons and one daughter, of whom the second son became the Emperor Sunjong, the second ruler of the Korean Empire. She was assassinated in 1895 by a gang of Japanese assassins who broke into her residence, Geoncheonggung, in Gyeongbokgung Palace. The title of empress was posthumously bestowed upon her after the proclamation of the Korean Empire in 1897.

Dethronement of Emperor Gojong 2F-8

Korea's loss of diplomatic sovereignty through the imposition of the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty in 1905 led Emperor Gojong to send special envoys to the Hague Conference of 1907 to inform the international community about the illegality of the treaty. The emperor's desperate effort to save Korea's national sovereignty infuriated the powerful Japanese colonialists, who exploited the situation to force him to abdicate the throne to his son, later Emperor Sunjong.

Emperor Gojong died in 1919 at Hamnyeongjeon Hall, Deoksugung Palace. His death and funeral spurred a nationwide popular protest against Japan's harsh colonial rule over Korea which is now commemorated as the March First Movement.



Emperor Gojong's funeral palanquin, 1919

King Yeongchin and His Consort

2F-9

King Yeongchin (1897-1970), the son of Emperor Gojong and Imperial Honored Consort Sunheon, was the last heir apparent of the Korean Empire. He was born at Deoksugung Palace in 1897, but was sent to Japan by the powerful Japanese politician Ito Hirobumi, where he remained for most of his adult life. He was married to a Japanese aristocrat, Princess Masako Nashimoto, in 1920, and made a short visit to Korea in 1922 during which he stayed in Seokjojeon Hall. The couple recovered Korean nationality in 1962 and spent the rest of their lives in Seoul, Korea.

King Yeongchin left behind several anecdotes attesting to his love of Korea and Korean culture. He even wrote a book, First Book of Korean, to inform the UN forces liberating Korea about Korean culture, the Korean alphabet, and Korea's most loved folk song, "Arirang".

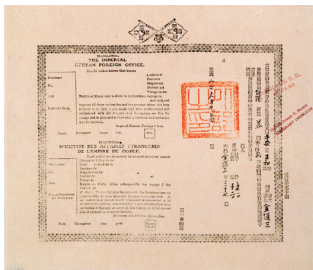


King Yeongchin
and
Queen Yeongchin,
1920

Modern Reforms by Emperor Gojong

B-1

After the foundation of the Korean Empire, Emperor Gojong launched an extensive modernization plan, now called the Gwangmu Reforms, under the slogan, “Quest for the new on the basis of the old.” The emperor was particularly interested in establishing a constitution and pushing ahead with military reforms, which he hoped would strengthen his authority as the head of the newly-founded empire and lead the international community to acknowledge Korea’s independence. He introduced a new land registration system, called Gwangmu Yangan, in an effort to modernize land administration and tax collection, standardized weights and measures, and adopted the metric system. In addition, he strove to modernize commerce and industry by promoting the establishment of banks, the introduction of new techniques and vocational education aimed at nurturing modern engineers, and the issuance of passports for those wishing to travel abroad, as well as doing all he could to establish the position of his empire within the international community.



Passport of Kim Do-sam, 1904



Daehan-Cheonil Bank, early 20C

New Cultural Items of the Korean Empire

B-2

After the Korean Empire began to open its ports to the outside world in 1876, Emperor Gojong devoted himself to the creation of wealth and power by actively accommodating the modern civilization of the West. He reformed the government agencies responsible for modern communication, electricity, medical services, education and postal services, including the Tongsinwon (Office of Communication and Transportation), which set up a telephone line between Seoul and Incheon, and the Seoul Electric Corporation, which introduced electric streetcars and electric lights in the imperial capital. It was also during this period that Gwanhyewon Hospital, Korea's first modern medical clinic, was opened, propagating Western medical knowledge. The Ministry of Education set up modern educational facilities and published school textbooks, while the Ujeongguk (Postal Administration) introduced modern postal services. The organization of a Western-style military band in this period led to the use of Western genres of music at formal diplomatic events and other state ceremonies.



Military Band of the Korean Empire, early 20C



Scene of an Operation, 1904



Telecommunication office, early 20C



The First Post Office in Korea, late 19C ~ early 20C

Surroundings of Deoksugung Palace

B-3

About a century ago, an exotic--as far as Koreans were concerned--landscape was created in the area around Deoksugung Palace when large Western-style buildings were built to house the legations of the US, UK, Russia, France, and other Western countries. These were followed by others buildings intended for educational purposes, such as Pai Chai Hakdang and Ewha Hakdang; churches such as Jeongdong Church (USA), the Anglican Church (UK), and the Orthodox Church (Russia); and hotels to accommodate foreign visitors.

The Korean Empire added their own monumental architectural works to the area such as the Hwangudan Altar, where Emperor Gojong's coronation took place, and the Monument to the 40th Anniversary of King Gojong's Enthronement. As these important heritage sites show, the area around Deoksugung Palace was the center stage of the Korean Empire's politics and diplomacy.



Russian Legation in Korea, early 20C



Hwanggungu, 2012



Sontag Hotel, early 20C



Ehwa-hakdang, early 20C

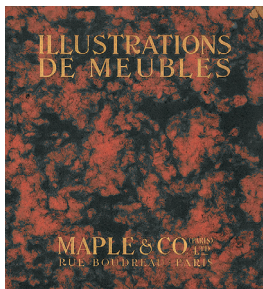
Seokjojeon Restoration Record

B-4

The construction of Seokjojeon Hall was started in 1900 and completed ten years later. It was originally planned as the official residence of Emperor Gojong, but it never fulfilled its planned function because the emperor preferred staying in Hamnyeongjeon Hall at Deoksugung Palace. Seokjojeon Hall was used only for various formal events, such as banquets for foreign diplomats, and provided temporary accommodation for King Yeongchin when he visited his home country from Japan. With the death of Emperor Gojong in 1919 the imperial palace remained totally empty and uninhabited until 1933, when the Japanese colonial authority turned it into an art gallery under its policy of transforming all of Deoksugung Palace and its grounds into a public park. It came to house the Yi Royal-Family Art Museum in 1938, then served as a venue for international conferences from 1946, and became part of the National Museum of Korea in 1955.

In 2009, the Korean Cultural Heritage Administration drew up a plan to restore the palace to its original condition as part of an initiative to discover the significance of the Korean Empire in Korean history. A group of experts worked together to determine the building's original structure and restore the original features of its interior by studying historical materials, plans, photographs, and newspaper articles. The restoration of the interior was considerably indebted to the product catalogue of a British furniture

company, Maple & Co., which provided the original furniture for the palace, many items of which had been kept in Changdeokgung Palace and the National Palace Museum of Korea. Some of the items of furniture are antiques that were purchased from British shops by referring to the catalogue above.



Furniture Catalogue of Maple & Co.
Illustrations de Meubles,
Maple & Co., c. 1910

