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When E. L. Roberts & Co. — a Chicago-based wholesale manufacturer of architectural woodwork — issued a catalog of its millwork products in 1903, the firm boasted that the publication included "more novel and useful features ... than any sash and door catalogue yet published," and that it was a book designed to satisfy "critical buyers who demand stylish and tasteful goods."

This volume, reproduced directly from a rare turn-of-the-century Roberts catalog, displays a vast assortment of finely crafted products — from window blinds, brackets, china closets, church fittings, doors, frames, gable finishes, linen closets, moldings, and office furniture to parquet floors, sashes, shingles, side boards, side lights, store fronts, wainscoting, and windows.

Nearly 300 sharply defined line drawings and photographs also provide detailed close-ups of exquisitely carved rosettes, head blocks, grilles, arches, and other decorative accents. Included in these illustrations are superb views of late-Victorian interiors finished with ornately carved balusters and newel posts, paneled walls, exquisite filigree, lovely stained glass windows, and magnificent fireplace mantels.

Here's a practical source of plans and ideas for architects, students of architectural history, carpentry enthusiasts, preservationists, restorationists, and anyone interested in the interior design and furnishings of a bygone era.



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