This thesis focuses on the influence of William Morris and Edward Carpenter on aspects of the back-to-the-land and simple-life movements between the years 1880-1910. Specifically, it seeks to define and explore the convergence and divergence of both writers’ return-to-nature ideology, and considers their influence on the development of particular groups, who represented some of the multiplicity of back-to-the-land ideas and experiments current during this period. The thesis is divided into three main parts; the intellectual framework for the study is broad, and takes into account the historical context, the cultural significance and the character of the material in each section. The first part of the thesis undertakes an expository evaluation of key texts from Morris’s and Carpenter’s political journalism, lectures and imaginative writing, examining how both writers developed an appropriate language to convey their social and political ideals. The critical method employed uses detailed textual analysis, identifying and discussing the individual qualities of Morris’s and Carpenter’s back-to-the-land writing, and reflecting on the differing emphases of their utopian rhetoric. The second part of the research explores the take-up of Morris’s and Carpenter’s ethos in four diverse and little known late-nineteenth-century journals, concerned with simple-life issues and a return to the land, namely Seed-time, The New Order, Land and Labor and Land and People. It employs the thinking of Pierre Bourdieu and Mikhail Bakhtin to establish an appropriate balance between critical theory and empirical study. Lastly using a historical and descriptive method the thesis uses archival material to examine the nature and extent of both writers’ influence on two Cotswold back-to-the-land experiments - the Whiteway Colony and the Chipping Campden Guild of Handicraft. These provide a particular opportunity to consider and compare the practical outcomes of return-to-the-land and simple-life ideologies. The study extends scholarship in this area by significantly re-appraising the relationship between Morris’s and Carpenter’s back-to-the-land writing, and reinstating Carpenter as a germinal influence. It also increases our understanding of the values and function of the journals in the study, and establishes an insight into the wider cultural assimilation of both writers’ ideals.
Although William Morris himself was responsible for many of the firm’s wallpaper and fabric designs, other talented designers also worked for Morris and Co. They included the following people: J. H. Dearle. J.H. Dearle (1859-1932) Dearle was a prolific designer of wallpapers and fabrics for Morris & Co. He began as an assistant in the glass studio in 1873 and was responsible for many of the wallpaper designs in the 1890’s and later. She lectured in England and the United States in 1910, and was a founder of the Women’s Guild of Arts. After her father’s death she edited 24 volumes of his writing. His pottery was responsible for reviving the taste for lustre decoration. In later life he became a novelist of distinction. Sir Edward Burne-Jones.