



Design for a Wallpaper, or possibly a woven silk. c. 1887 [655] Illustrated in The Builder, LXXVI, 1899

1. Design for a wallpaper, or possibly a woven silk. c. 1887 [655]
445x420
Illustrated in *The Builder*, LXXVI, 1899

Voysey began producing decorative designs shortly after he had set up his own practice in 1882. This is the earliest example in the RIBA Drawings Collection. Sea creatures and the sea itself fascinated Voysey's contemporaries - William Burges's bedroom in Melbury Road in West London was decorated with symbols of the sea



2. Design for a textile. c. 1888 [656]

Noted '“For 54” cloth'
780x560

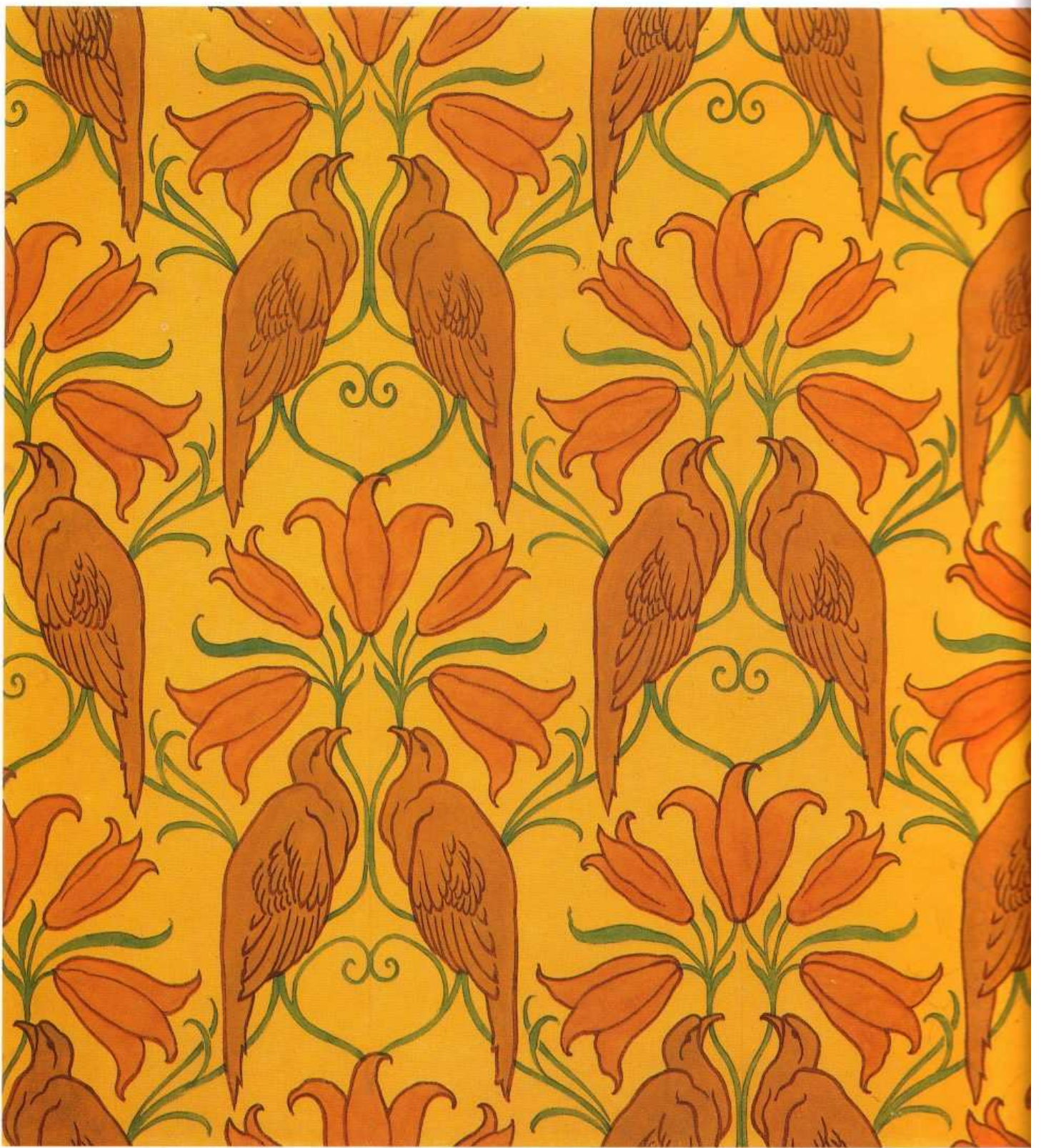
Illustrated in Cassou, Langui and Pevsner, *The Sources of Modern Art*, 1962, and Tschudi Madsen, *Art Nouveau*, 1967

There is an affinity in the undulating forms of the lilies - depicted with no great botanical exactitude - and certain decorative work of Walter Crane, 1845-1915, or Heywood Sumner, 1853-1940. A.H. Mackmurdo, Voysey's friend, used similarly undulating forms in his designs, which were inspired by the work of William Blake



3. Design for a wallpaper or textile. April, 1889 [657]
Inscribed verso 'Arts & Crafts', presumably indicating that the design was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, founded in 1888
490x410
Illustrated in Durant, *Ornament: A Survey of Decoration since 1830*, 1986

Herbert Horne, a member of the Century Guild (see page 24), produced a design for block-printed cotton, 'The Angel with Trumpet' between 1884 and 1888 (see Linda Parry, *Textiles of the Arts and Crafts Movement*, 1988, p.43). Voysey's angelic figures bear a passing resemblance to Horne's, but the small silhouette devils - driven to flight by the angels - have come entirely from Voysey's own imagination. As a Theist, of course, Voysey would have had no belief in Hell (see page 11). Voysey once painted a mural of angels for Seddon, to whom he was articulated in 1874 (see page 13)



4. Design for a wallpaper produced by Essex & Co. Dated in the RIBA Catalogue as 'pre-1899', but attributed, on stylistic grounds, to the late-1880s [863a]
Noted 'Vulture and lily symbols of purity' and in another hand 'probably pre-1889'
405x390
Illustrated in *The Builder*, LXXVI, 1899
Apparently an early design. Might the symbolism indicate an equilibrium between good and evil?



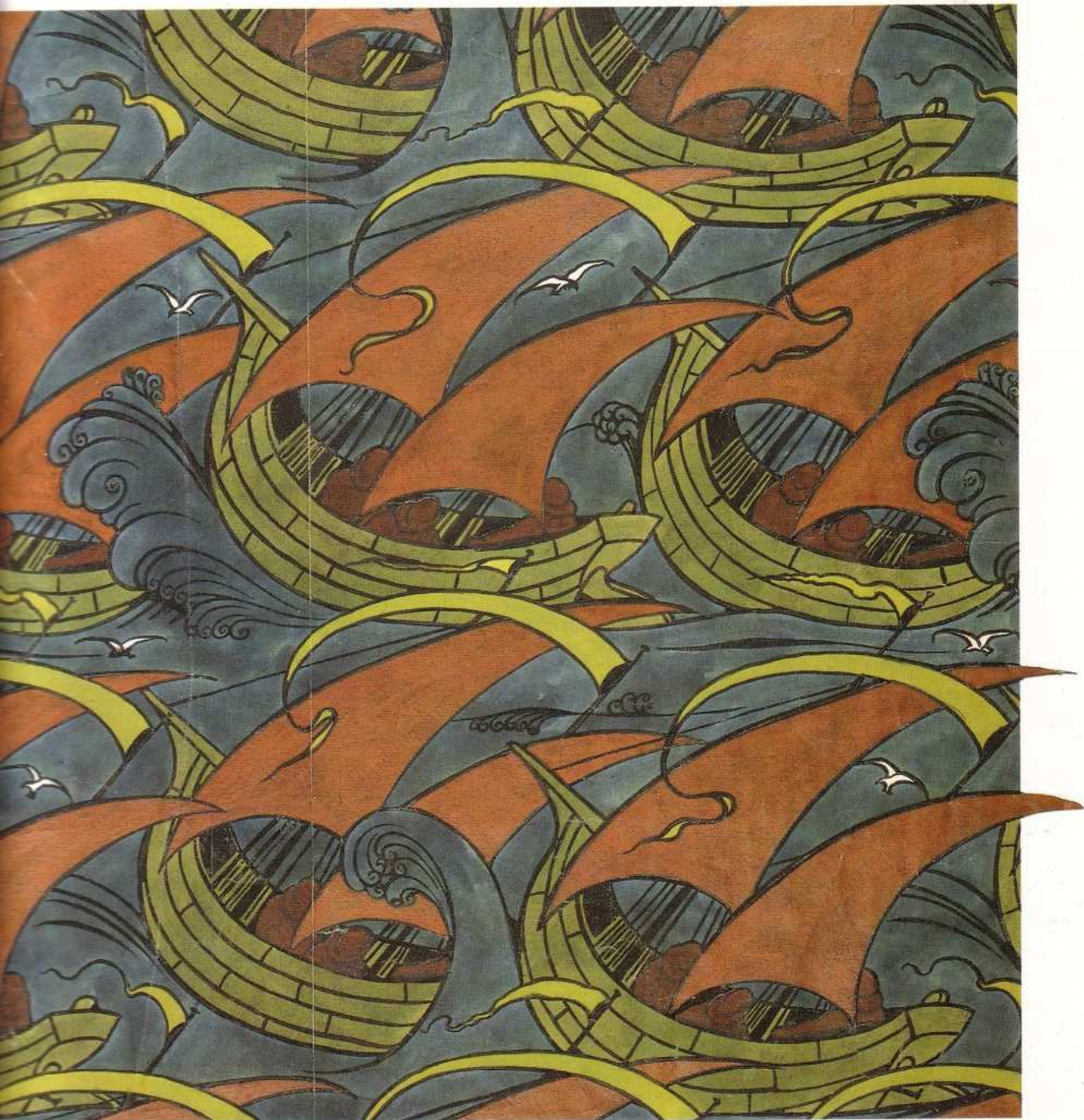
5. Design for a wallpaper or textile, called 'The Demon', 1889 [658]
430x300
Illustrated in *The Studio*, I, 1893

There seems to be no precedent for wallpapers, or textiles, incorporating depictions of diabolical figures - although in the 1870s, Christopher Dresser, 1834-1904, based designs on malevolent-looking Thai ballet masks. Voysey's devil, however, is based on the Renaissance version of the devil, which is itself based on the satyr of classical times



6. Design for a wallpaper, c. 1889 [not listed in RIBA Catalogue]
396x381

The presence of gilt indicates conclusively that this design was intended as a wallpaper. This design was possibly exhibited at the Arts and Crafts Society exhibition, as it is inscribed 'Arts and Crafts' on the verso. Fanciful creatures appear fairly frequently in the late nineteenth-century illustrations - Tenniel's Jabberwocky is a well-known example



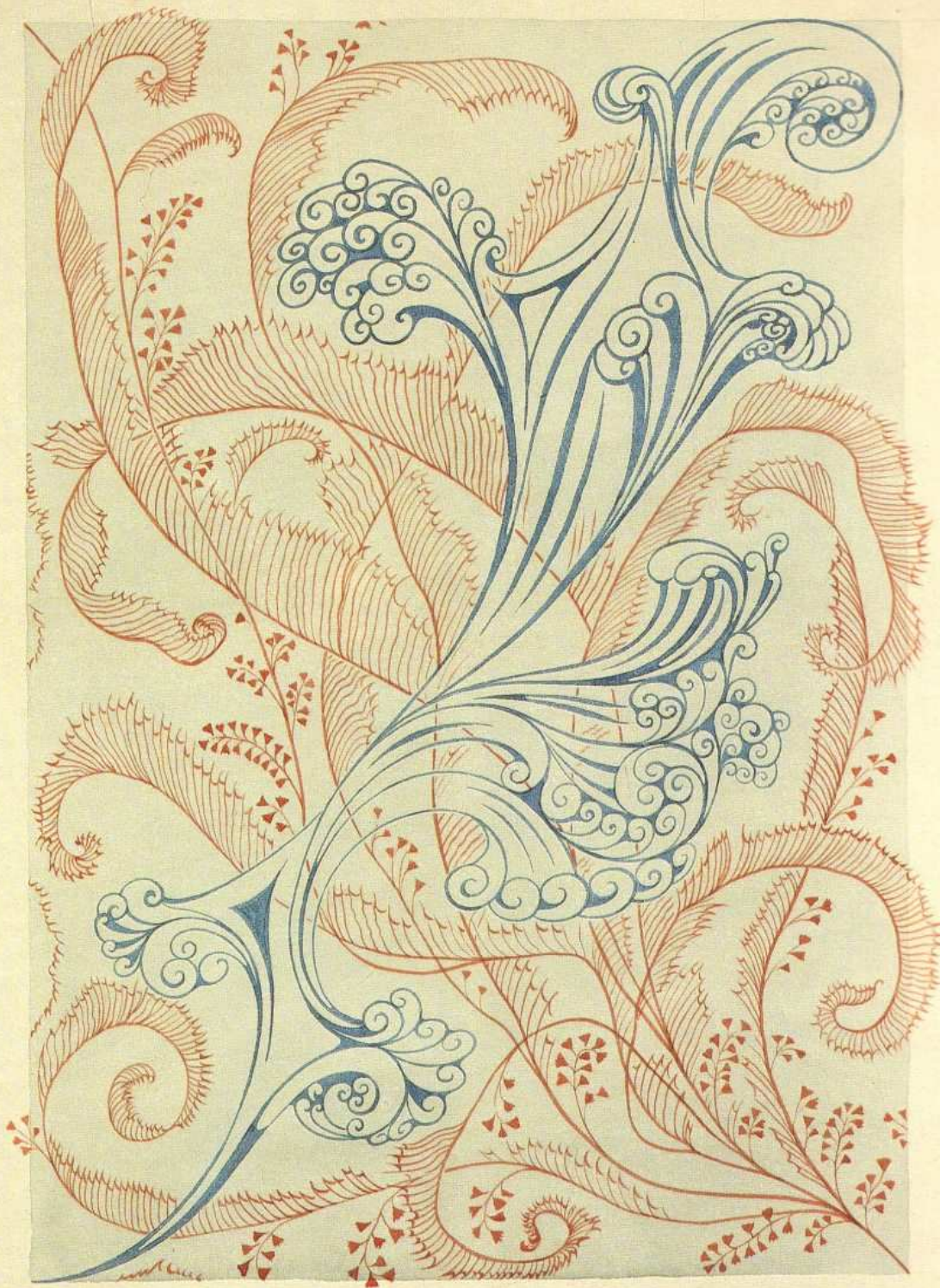
7. Design for a printed velvet called 'The Three Men of Gotham', c. 1889 [659]

Noted, in another hand, 'Finished 14/7/96'

555x725

Illustrated in *The Studio*, I, 1893

The story illustrated by this design is correctly called 'The Three Wise Men of Gotham'. Gotham is in Nottinghamshire, and the three wise men are said to have feigned madness to prevent King John establishing a right of way by coming through their village. The story appears in a sixteenth-century chapbook. Ancient ships of this kind appear in early illustrations by Walter Crane, and in paintings by E. Burne-Jones



Repeat 10 1/2 x 15

"Claudia"
Southern Ocean

C. F. A. Voysey. Architect
45, Tisbury Rd.
Stratton Hill Rd.
April 1890

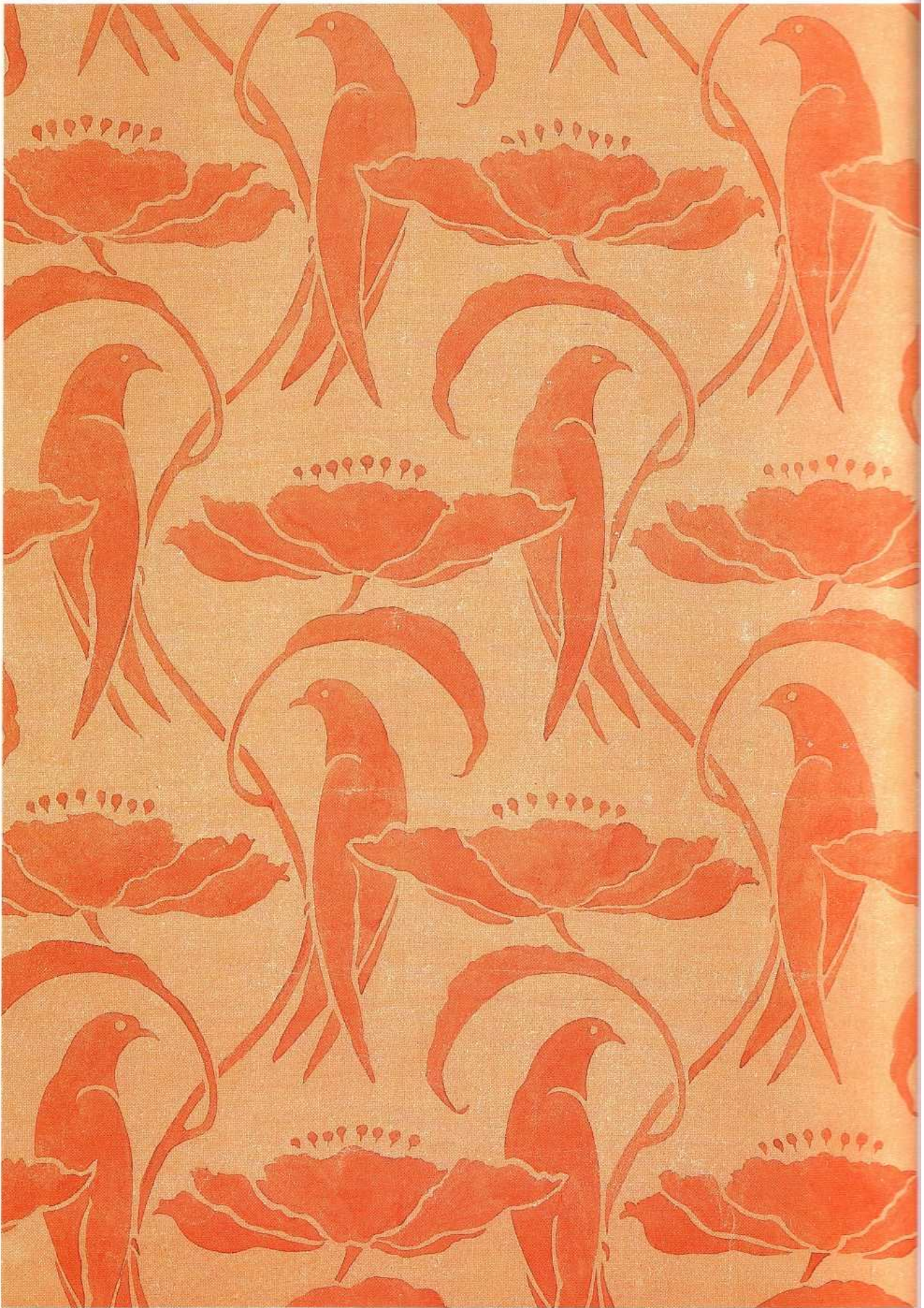
8. Design for a wallpaper or textile called 'Claudia', April, 1890 [660]
Noted ' "Claudia", Southern Ocean'
510x450

Purely linear designs for textiles, or wallpapers, were unusual at this time. The design suggests that Voysey may have had a passing interest in Japanese decoration, although the vogue for Japanese design was passing by 1890. It is not known whether this design was actually produced



9. Design for a wallpaper called 'Bushey'. Produced by Essex & Co, c. 1890 [661]
780x560
Illustrated in *The Studio*, III, 1894

This is the earliest of the designs in the RIBA Drawings Collection that is known to have been manufactured. Voysey produced many designs for Essex & Co, including its trademark (see page 18), some advertisements, and a house - not built ultimately according to his plans - for R.W. Essex, the managing director. The darker colouring of the ground (bottom left) presumably indicates how the design could be modified



10. Design for a wallpaper, c. 1890 [662]

Noted 'Anaglypta' and 'Samson Brothers' which suggests that the design was actually sold 555x375

Even Voysey's simplest designs indicate that he had a strong feeling for outline - the Victorians spoke of the outline of a building as 'the sky blotch'. Voysey's buildings are always assertive in outline



11. Design for a wallpaper and carpet, c. 1890 [663]

Noted in another hand on the verso is 'something like this sold to Line & Son for paper ditto ditto
D'Oyly for carpet circa 1890'
405x265

Although the design, at first sight, appears to have little in common with the decorations of
A.W.N. Pugin, it was Pugin who established in his *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament*, 1844, how
the simplest forms of ornament should be handled. Voysey, who admired Pugin, is likely to have
known the work

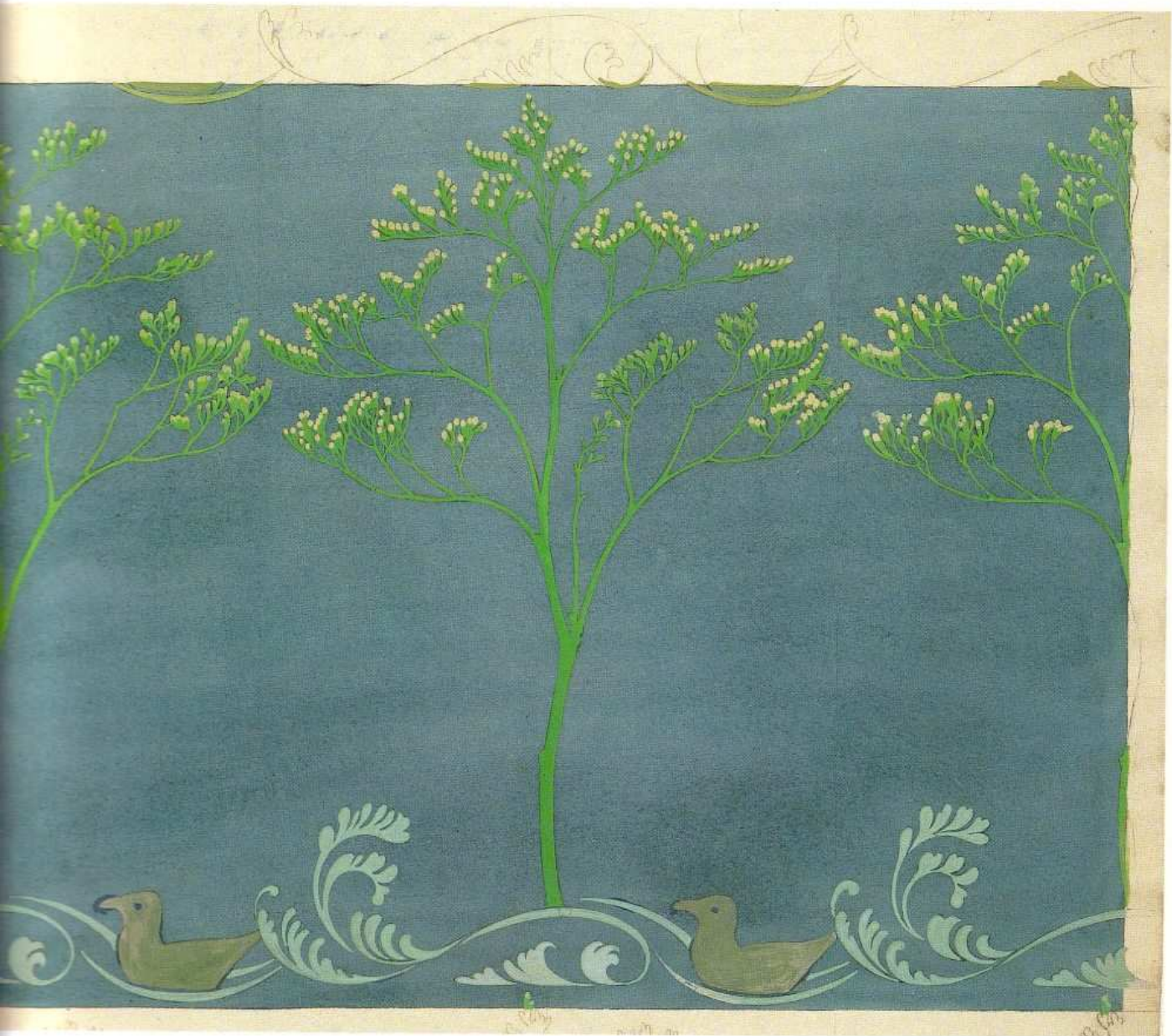


12. Design for a workbox, c. 1893 [864]

280x565

Illustrated in *The Studio*, I, 1893

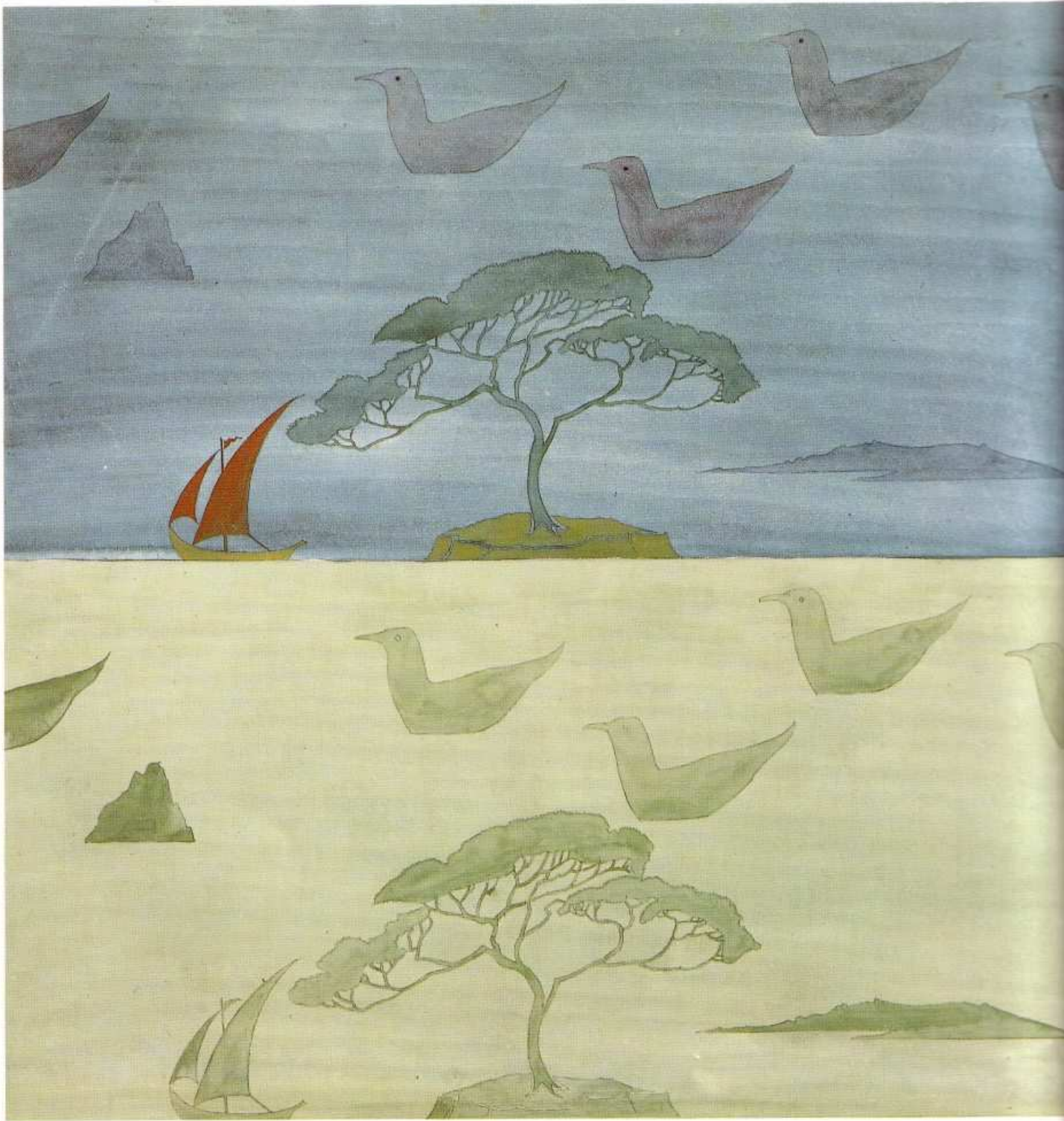
The box was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts exhibition of 1893. It was of inlaid sycamore. The male figure - sketching - may well be Voysey himself; the female figure - knitting? - is thus likely to be his wife



13. Design for a wallpaper frieze called 'Seagull', c. 1893 [666]

Noted on the verso is 'Frieze for "Seagull" design 1893'. Also noted is the fact that the watermark of the paper on which the design is executed is dated 1905. Voysey was in the habit of copying his own designs - the reason for the practice is not clear
475x565

The tree is obviously based on a sketch from nature. Like all his Arts and Crafts contemporaries, Voysey derived great inspiration from nature



14. Design for a wallpaper called 'Shallop', two colourways, c. 1893 [668]

780x560

This was redrawn in 1900. Illustrated in Peter Floud, 'The Wallpaper Designs of C.F.A. Voysey', *Penrose Annual*, LII, 1958

The design is probably based on that illustrated in Plate 13. It is, however, possible that this design is actually the earlier of the two. A shallop is a small open boat



15. Design for a wallpaper called 'Heylaugh', c. 1895 [669]
Noted in a hand, not Voysey's, is 'The Heylaugh - very early, before 1900. Watermark 1895'
775x560

Heylaugh is obviously a modified spelling of Healaugh, the parish from which Voysey's father was dismissed for unorthodox preaching in 1869. The break in the rhythm of the formalized foliage would have the effect of creating a more complex overall visual texture. Voysey clearly understood - at an empirical level - the operations of Gestalt perception



16. Design for a wallpaper, c. 1895 [822]
Inscribed 'SX', signifying that the design was produced by or sold to Essex & Co
320x370

The design is undated, but is attributed, on stylistic grounds, to the mid-1890s. Voysey was particularly fond of outline birds - they appear in his design for the 1893 cover of *The Studio*. *The Studio* of July 1894 illustrated a design of interlocking birds by the Silver Studio quite close to this design - this was for a ceiling paper



7. Design for an embroidered bed quilt called 'Squire's Garden', 1896 [670]

Dated, in Voysey's hand, 'Jany. 1896'
780x510

A similar design exists in the Print Room, the Victoria and Albert Museum

The quilt was embroidered by Mrs Reynolds-Stephens, the sculptor's wife.

The design was subsequently reproduced as a wallpaper. Walter Crane had made the pictorial decorative design respectable. His 'Sing a Song of Sixpence', a nursery wallpaper was produced by Jeffrey & Co in 1875; his 'The House that Jack Built' was produced in 1886



18. Design for a wallpaper called 'The Callum', c. 1896 [671]
Noted verso 'The Callum very early wallpaper for Essex'
500x310
Illustrated in *The Studio*, VII, 1896, where it is called 'Mimosa'

With considerable economy, Voysey creates a design which is as satisfactory as a more complex, more laborious, design by Morris



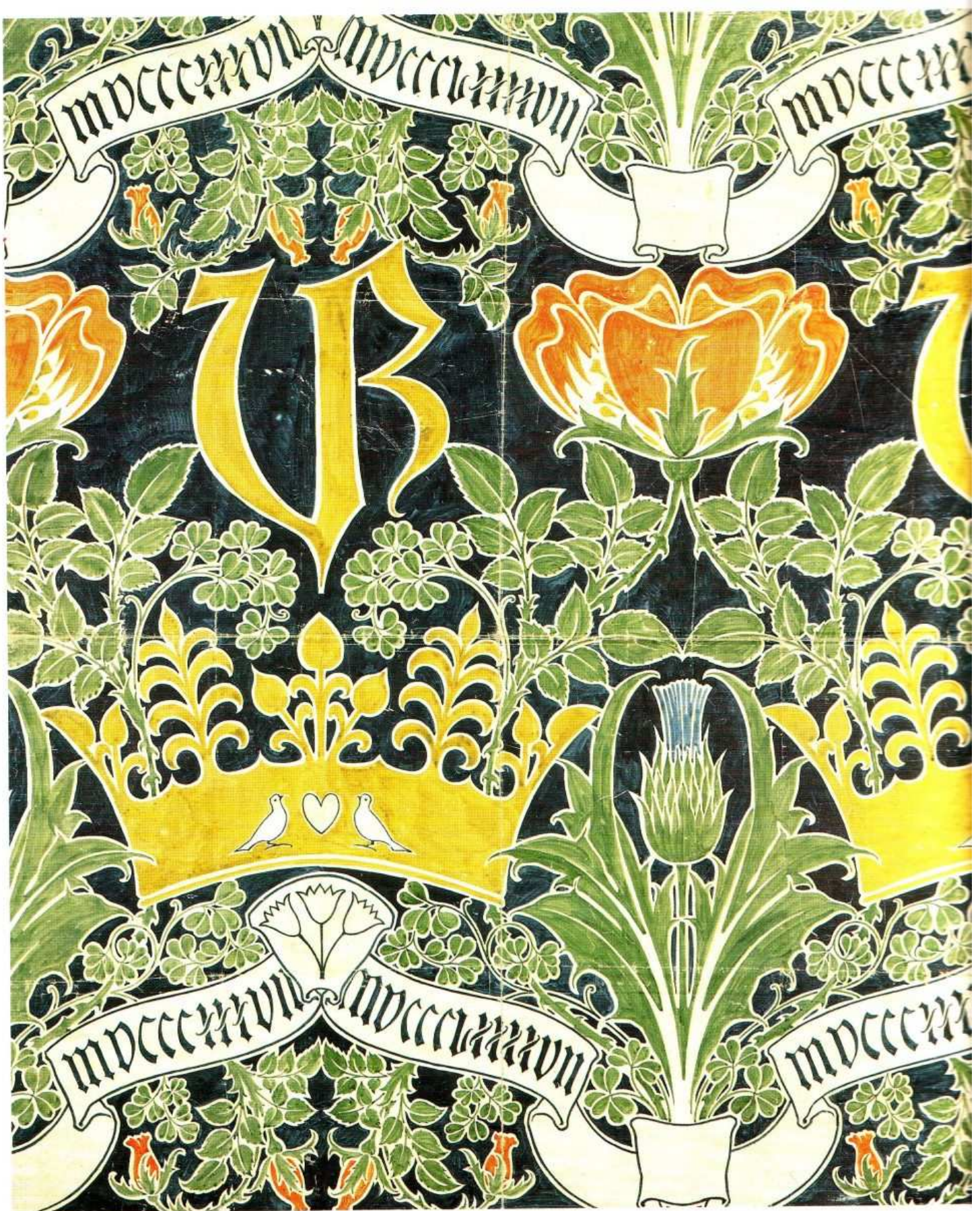
19. Design for a wallpaper, c. 1896 [673]

Noted 'Essex'

440x420

Illustrated in Cassou, Langui and Pevsner, *The Sources of Modern Art*, 1962. A similar design, dated 1889, exists in the Print Room, the Victoria and Albert Museum

The water snake would appear to emanate entirely from Voysey's imagination. Underwater decorative themes were not uncommon in the 1890s. Designs by Hermann Obrist, 1862-1927, of embroideries inspired by sea creatures appeared in *The Studio*, IX, 1896. In 1899, the great German marine biologist Ernst Haeckel, 1834-1919, began publishing his *Kunstformen der Natur* (Art Forms in Nature), which contained numerous illustrations of sea creatures as inspirations for designers. Hector Guimard's Parisian apartment block Castel Bérenger, 1894-1898, is decorated with sea themes

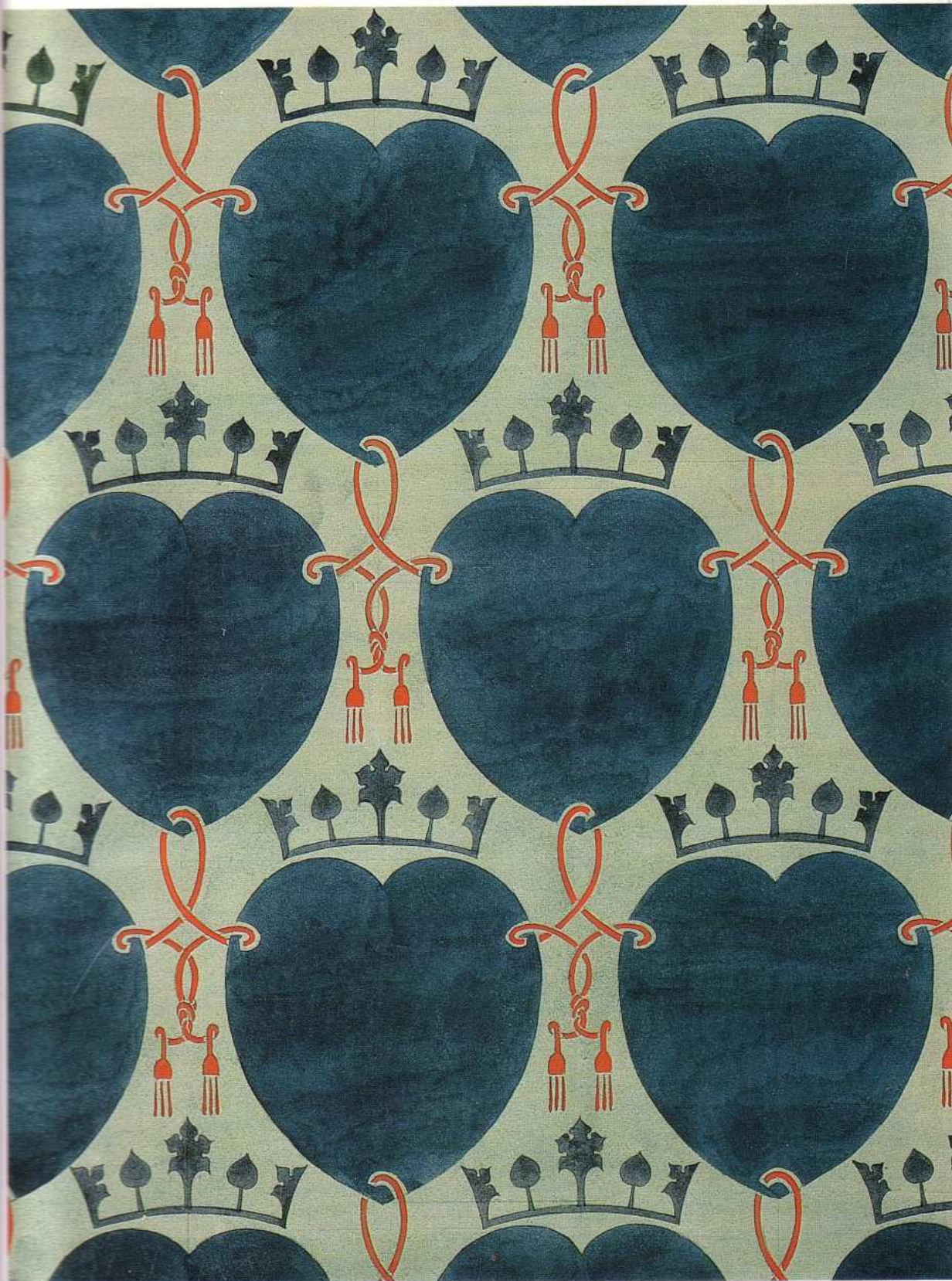


20. Design for a wallpaper and tapestry produced by Essex & Co in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897 [674]

940x805

Illustrated in *The Builder*, LXXVI, 1899, *Dekorative Kunst*, I, 1897

This design is among the most Pugin-like of Voysey's decorative designs in the Drawings Collection of the RIBA. Voysey may have known Pugin's wallpapers from the Houses of Parliament. Like many designers who grew up during the period of the Gothic Revival, Voysey was interested in heraldry. The heart and the two birds establish this unmistakably as a Voysey design



21. Design for a wallpaper called 'The Union of the Hearts'. Produced by Essex & Co. Watermark 1898 [675]

Noted on the verso is 'Produced by Essex & Co. Design for woven fabric to be sent to Arts & Crafts. SX [Essex]. AM [Alexander Morton]. J&M. J&A. Carpet for Tomkinsons' 510x340

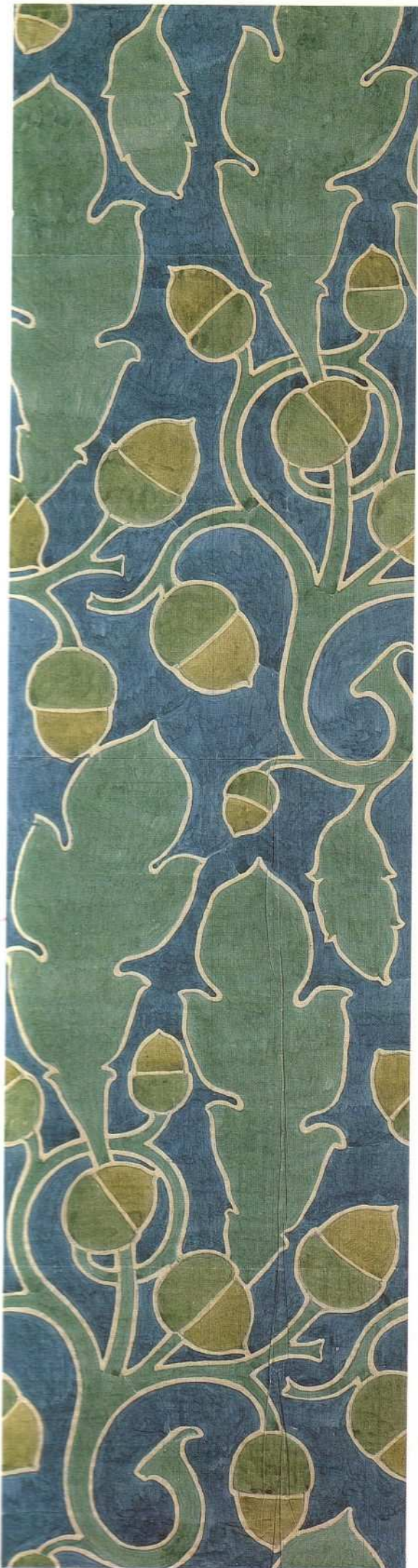
Illustrated in *Good Furniture Magazine*, XXIII, 1924, Brandon-Jones and others, C.F.A. Voysey: *Architect and Designer, 1859-1941*, Brighton, 1978, Durant, *Ornament . . .*, 1986

The iconographical significance of this design is not known. The crown may link it to the Diamond Jubilee design (Plate 20). The heart was Voysey's personal symbol - the heart, of course, has a long history as a symbol of love, both secular and divine



22. Design for a wallpaper, or possibly a textile, called 'I Love Little Pussy'. Watermark '8' (1898? or 1908?). Attributed here on stylistic grounds to 1898 [839]
555x300

The reference to the well-known rhyme suggests that this design was intended for a nursery wallpaper. The cat is observing her prey - birds and rats. The Print Room of the Victoria and Albert Museum possesses a design for a textile illustrating a cat looking at a canary, dating from the 1920s. The design is called 'Let us Prey'



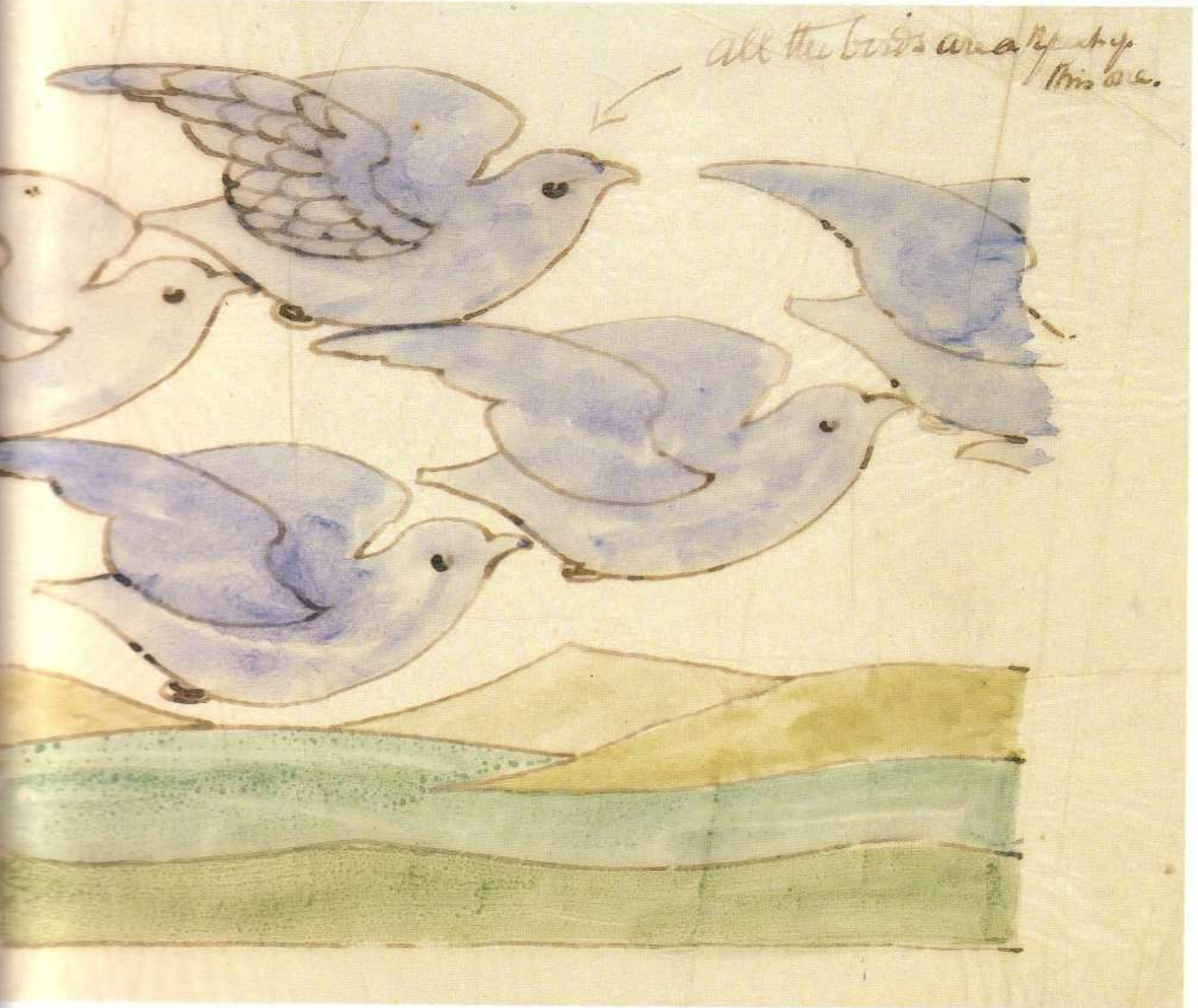
23. Design, possibly for a wallpaper, 1900 [676]
1005x390

Like such other nineteenth-century decorative designers - Pugin, Owen Jones, Christopher Dresser, Bruce Talbert or E.W. Godwin - Voysey was skilled in achieving rich effects through the simplest means. The organization of this design, however, suggests the influence of William Morris



24. Design for a wallpaper and textile, 1900 [678]
 Noted is 'This has been drawn up for Alex. M[orton]. & Essex. May 28, 1900
 390x340

Voysey had a particular fondness for bird motifs. Birds, as decoration, have a long history in English design. There is a fine misericord of c. 1300 in Wells Cathedral the central feature of which is a motif of identical birds facing each other. William Morris's early 'Trellis' wallpaper, 1864, incorporates birds drawn by his friend Philip Webb. Selwyn Image of the Century Guild was also fond of birds as motifs



25. Design for a wallpaper or textile called 'Alena', May, 1901 [685]
Noted in Voysey's hand is 'All the birds are repeats of this one' (referring to the bird with its feathers drawn in)
235x300

This is drawn on light tracing paper of the kind used by many nineteenth-century designers. This may be a sketch design. It was executed rapidly, and with great confidence, and shows Voysey's flowing, calligraphic, line



26. Design for a wallpaper frieze, c. 1902 [698]

Noted are details of the colouring
780x555

Drawn in pencil and chalk, this is presumably a preliminary design



27. Design for a carpet, dated 3 March 1903 [699]
Reproduced approximately the size of the original
Noted are details of the colouring
325x395

The motifs are intended to be reproduced on a square grid



28. Full-size working drawings of the 'River Rug', 1903 [706 . . .]
 Noted: 'Quality', 'Coronation' verso. T. Ginzkey. Maffersdo(rf). With the working drawings is a photograph of the whole design inscribed 'The River Mat. Drawings of this design Full-sized . . . made & coloured by C.F.A. Voysey F.R.I.B.A. 73 St James St S.W.1. in his possession. Size of rug 8 feet by 4 feet. . . .'
 2440x1220 approx
 Illustrated in *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, VI, 1903

The rug was exhibited at the Arts and Crafts exhibition of 1903. It remained in the Voysey family for many years and is now in a private collection. It would appear that Voysey intended to sell copies of the design to amateur rug-makers. It would have taken a considerable time to complete



29. Detail of the 'River Rug', 1903. See Plate 28
315x640

When Voysey was working in George Devey's office in the early 1880s (see pages 15-17) he was sent to Ireland to prepare a rent-roll, possibly for the Earl of Kenmare. Voysey produced a book with pages of drawings of cottages, their inhabitants and livestock (see Allibone, *George Devey*). It is conceivable that the design was inspired by the Irish rent-book. Here, however, the scene is entirely from Voysey's imagination



30. Detail of the 'River Rug', 1903. See Plates 28 and 29