

ANNA SIMONS AS SCRIBE AND ILLUMINATOR

In the first of these monographs devoted to writing and lettering Anna Simons gave a detailed account, based on her own recollections and experiences, of the gifted personality of her teacher, the great English artist and scribe Edward Johnston and his work for the reform of modern writing and lettering. It is therefore only a natural continuation and completion of her interesting report that this second volume should give an account of the work of Anna Simons herself who successfully introduced and spread Johnston's educational ideas in Germany, and who has earned the reputation of being the most important of all German women artists in writing and lettering. Anna Simons' services found recognition by the Prussian and Bavarian governments which honoured her by the title of professor. A proof of the high esteem in which her art is held abroad, especially in England, is shown by the fact that she was made an honorary member of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators in London and an honorary associate of the Women's Guild of Art under the chairmanship of Miss May Morris, the daughter of William Morris. Thus the artist has not lacked public recognition, and her work has found deserved appreciation in the professional press, but owing to her great personal reserve, her reputation is more or less confined to a small set of specialists interested in the art of writing and lettering. Hence it seems desirable, that this monograph should acquaint the general public with a fuller knowledge of her work and of her services to the cause of German education in writing and lettering.

In order to grasp fully the development and the ensuing achievement of this artist it is necessary to remember that at the end of the last century it was still almost impossible for women in Prussian Germany to enter any State School or Academy of Art or Arts & Crafts. Under these circumstances Anna Simons, a descendant of an old Rhenish family and born on June 8, 1871, at München-Gladbach, went to London in 1896 to study at the Royal College of Art in South Kensington, where women were freely admitted, and of which Walter Crane was for a time Principal. It may be regarded as a dispensation of Providence that after a few years Edward Johnston was appointed lecturer at the College, who, from the first, exercised a decisive influence on her artistic development and who described her subsequently, when recalling these days, as perhaps the best pupil he ever had. In the first of these monographs, mentioned above, Anna Simons gave a very detailed description of Edward Johnston's practical courses in writing and lettering which she attended and of his original and fascinating method of instruction which laid the foundation of her career as a teacher and her great skill in the technique of writing script. So great was the confidence and respect which she enjoyed that as early as 1905 she was entrusted, in place of Edward Johnston, who was unable to come to Germany himself, with courses in writing and lettering which had then been newly organised by the Prussian Ministry at the Royal School of Arts and Crafts at Düsseldorf. Through these courses the immense value of the study of writing and lettering in art education which had been entirely neglected in Germany was again brought home to larger numbers. A continuing series of these courses were subsequently given by her in other German cities. Since 1915 the artist has settled in Munich where she still