

### Book of the Week.

FRAULEIN SCHMIDT AND MR. ANSTRUTHER.\*

Would it be possible for "Elizabeth" of "German Garden" fame to write a single dull line, in whatever form she chose to couch it? Her latest work goes far to prove such a thing impossible. A book with the sub-title of "The Letters of an Independent Woman," might be approached with a certain amount of misgiving, penned by an unknown writer, but "Fraulein Schmidt and Mr. Anstruther" amply justifies the utmost confidence with which one sets out upon perusal.

From beginning to end we have no personal intercourse with Mr. Anstruther, our knowledge of him is all obtained at second hand, and yet no portrait ever committed to paper could be more vividly real. It is an impression in outline in which every stroke tells—the work of a genuine artist. One cannot question for one moment why Rose-Marie Schmidt fell in love with him, it would have been a thing incredible had she not done so after his year's residence in her father's house for the purpose of studying German. He was something so different to her homely surroundings—a cultured gentleman of good birth in addition to being poetic in temperament, and enjoyably intellectual. Besides which there was a bond of sympathy in the fact that Fraulein Schmidt's mother was an Englishwoman. It is just this skilful touch that saves the situation from any impossibility—no German girl would have thought, felt, or behaved as did Rose-Marie when the world went awry with her, and she discovered that her god possessed clay feet of the most insecure description. It needed the composite characteristics of two nations, the very un-German upbringing by wholly unconventional parents to produce such independence as Marie-Rose displays when her lover fails her, and she realises that beneath his loveableness lurks incurable weakness of character, that despite his undoubted mental capacity he is as utterly at the mercy of every breath of influence as a rudderless ship is at the mercy of the waves. It is not in the rapturous abandonment to joy to be found in her first letters that one learns the nature of Rose-Marie's love, but in the ultimate, steadfast attempt to establish a Platonic friendship between herself and Roger Anstruther. How that attempt succeeds it is worth while to read every word of the book to discover. One is rewarded by page after page of delicious subtleties—by pictures of homely German life and inimitable character studies: the kindly Herr Schmidt, who, for the sake of Rose-Marie, replaces his adored English wife by a typical, stolid, practical woman of his own country, who becomes the trial of her step-daughter's life, but whose death reveals her many solid and house-wifely perfections. Herr Schmidt and his daughter, once more left to

\* By the Author of "Elizabeth in her German Garden." (Smith, Elder, and Co.)

themselves, resort to vegetarianism as a saving of labour and an economy. The letters describing the process are quite perfect in their humour. Indeed, it is Rose-Marie's unquenchable sense of humour that carries her through everything. Coupled with it there is a vein of pathos, however, and the independent woman leaves one with an ache at heart for herself, in spite of her boasted strength, her undoubted common-sense. "Do not all charms fly," your Keats inquires, "at the mere touch of cold Philosophy?" "But I have found that nothing flies quite so fast as cold Philosophy herself," says Miss Schmidt; "she would win in any race when the race is who shall run away the quickest." E.L.H.

### Coming Events.

May 24th.—Annual Meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., 4 p.m. Miss M. Mollett presiding.

#### AGENDA.

1. Minutes.
2. Address by the Chairman.
3. To receive the Annual Report and Audited Accounts.
4. To receive the resignation of the President, Miss Louisa Stevenson, LL.D., and to elect a President and Senior Vice-President.
5. To elect the Executive Committee for the ensuing year.
6. To consider Resolutions.
7. Other business.

May 28th.—Annual Meeting of the Rural Midwives' Association, at 3, Grosvenor Place, S.W., Mrs. Murdoch in the chair. 3 p.m.

May 29th.—Annual General Meeting, Asylum Workers' Association, Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, 4 p.m.

May 29th.—Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, opens the "Rainbow Bazaar" at Prince's Skating Rink, in aid of the British Lying-In Hospital.

June 3rd.—Meeting at 10, Hill Street, Mayfair, to inaugurate a Navy and Army Male Nursing Association, 3.15 p.m.

June 13th.—Red Cross Conference—Visit of the Foreign Delegates to Windsor Castle by invitation of the King; Lord Mayor's Reception at the Mansion House, 9.

June 14th.—Red Cross Conference—Lord Rothschild's Banquet to the Foreign Delegates and the Council of the British Red Cross Society, Hotel Cecil, 8.

June 15th.—Their Majesties' Reception of the Delegates to the International Red Cross Conference at Buckingham Palace.

June 18th.—Opening of the International Nursing Conference at Paris.

### A Word for the Week.

I do not claim life's sweetness, but I claim Life's Liberty, the birthright of a man.

H.H.K.

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