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Marjorie Bowen

Collected Works

Series Fifteen

The Collected Works of
MARJORIE BOWEN
(1885-1952)

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Version 1

The Collected Works of

MARJORIE BOWEN

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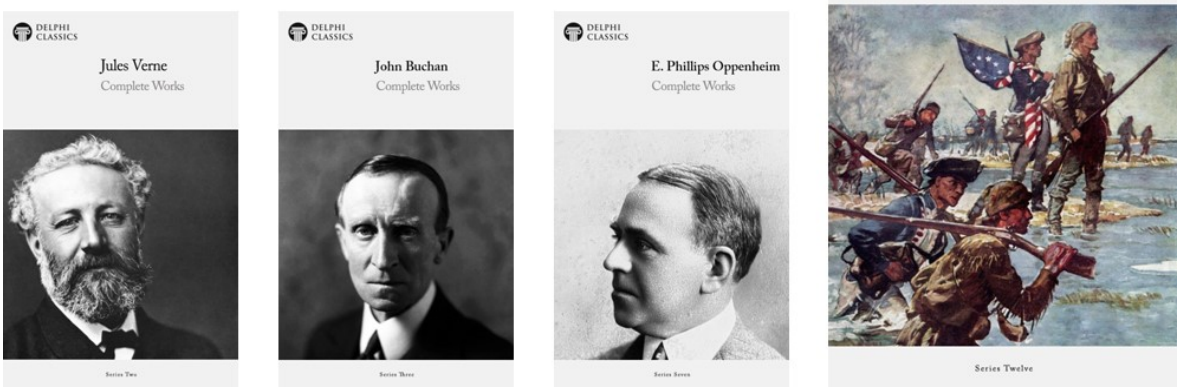
Classic Adventure



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The William of Orange Trilogy

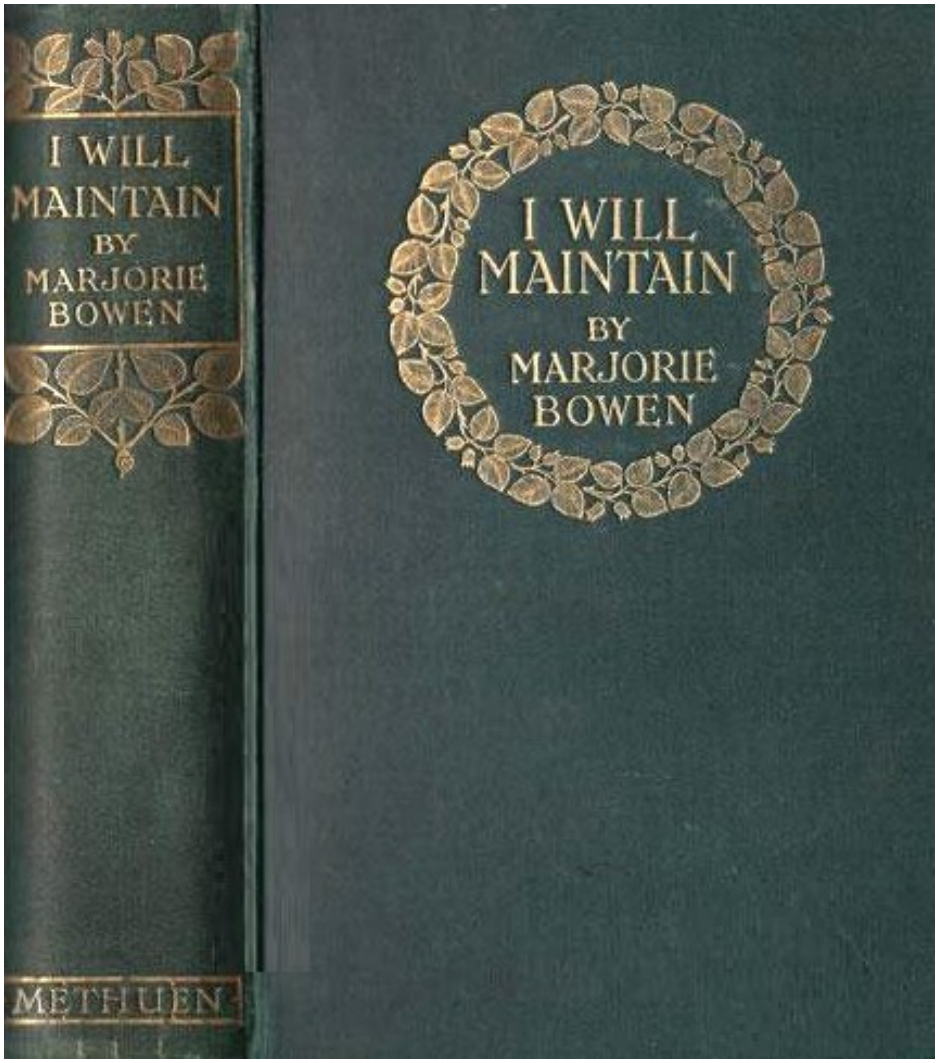
Hayling Island, Hampshire, c. 1890 — Margaret Gabrielle Vere Long (Marjory Bowen) was born in Hayling Island on 1 November 1885.

I Will Maintain (1910)

Though widely known today by the alias of Marjorie Bowen, the author was born Margaret Gabrielle Vere Campbell and used a variety of pseudonyms for her writings. She was a prolific author and novelist, completing more than one hundred and fifty works over the course of a career that spanned nearly fifty years.

First published in February 1910 by Methuen & Co., *I Will Maintain* was the first in a trilogy of historical novels centred on the life and rule of William III of England, also known as William of Orange. The second novel *Defender of the Faith* and the final instalment in the series, *God and the King*, were both released by Methuen & Co in 1911.

I Will Maintain is set in the Dutch Republic during the second half of the seventeenth century. It captures the turbulent political, economic and social conditions of the period and the relationship between the Grand Pensionary of Holland — a prominent official in the Dutch Republic — Johan de Witt and the young Prince William of Orange. Bowen depicts De Witt as a man dedicated to the ideals of the republic, fearful of its precarity and concerned about the role and influence of the young Prince. The warring political factions — Orangists vs. the Pro-States Party — combined with conflicts from foreign powers create a febrile environment for governance as De Witt and William struggle for power.



The first edition

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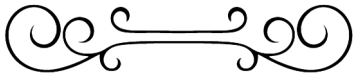
Portrait of Johan de Witt by Adriaen Hanneman, 1665. Johan de Witt (1625-1672) was a Dutch statesman and mathematician who was a major political figure during the First Stadtholderless Period, when flourishing global trade in a period of rapid European colonial expansion made the Dutch a leading trading and seafaring power in Europe.

PART I. JOHN DE WITT, REPUBLICAN

"A MAN OF unwearied industry, inflexible constancy, sound, clear, and deep understanding and untainted integrity; so that whenever he was blinded, it was by the passion that he had for that which he esteemed the good and interest of the State." — Sir William Temple, *Observations on the United Provinces*, 1672.

CHAPTER I. THE IDEALS OF M. DE WITT



"THERE IS ONE subject that we seldom touch upon," said Sir William. "And that is one upon which I am curious to hear you speak."

John de Witt looked up quickly.

"Ah, sir," he smiled faintly. "You are of a probing disposition — what is this subject?"

"The Prince."

"The Prince—" repeated M. de Witt, and an intent expression that might have been trouble came into his full brown eyes. "What is there to say of His Highness?" he added.

The English Ambassador laughed in the soft and pleasant way he had; he was standing by the long window, and, as he answered, glanced out at the wych elms and pale sunshine that filled the garden of M. de Witt.

"The situation is piquant — between good friends you must allow it — —"

The Grand Pensionary rose.

"Between good friends, Sir William, the situation is dangerous. I am aware of it — but the Prince — the Prince is only a child."

Sir William moved from the window with a little shiver.

"Your Dutch weather!" he said. "I think the damp has got into my very bones — —"

"But you like the house?" asked de Witt "It hath a large garden for the children when they stay with me — and since it was not possible to remain where I was, I thought I could do no better."

Sir William answered gently, aware of the allusion, veiled under commonplace words, to the late death of Wendela de Witt. It seemed to him, composed and close observer as he was, even of his friends, that the Grand Pensionary had changed more than a little since he had lost his wife.

"It is a noble mansion," he said. "I could be selfish enough to wish this library at Sheen."

He looked, with the approval of a fine taste, round the lofty apartment panelled in mellow-hued, carved wood, and lined with shelves filled with rare and costly volumes; a few handsome portraits hung above the bookcases, and over the high chimney-piece a rich but sombre picture of fruit and flowers showed; on the blue-tiled hearth were brass andirons, and on the table in the centre of the chamber candlesticks were set, also brass, but polished so that they shone like gold.

At a small desk by the far window sat a secretary in a dark dress, writing.

"The house hath been a palace," continued Sir William.

"Therefore should not be the residence of a republican?" smiled John de Witt. "Nay," he added simply, "the house is well enough, but I took it for the garden; and now you look on my one luxury — my books — for the rest the furnishings are simple — too simple for Cornelia's taste, as she will tell you if you stay to dinner, — nay, I doubt not she tells my lady now."

Sir William crossed to one of the bookcases, took a volume down and opened it at random. As John de Witt came up behind him, he spoke in a low tone, looking at the book.

“Who is the new secretary?”

The Grand Pensionary seemed slightly surprised.

“He? — a young man from Guelders.” He glanced to where the person in question sat absorbed in writing. “He was recommended to me by de Groot — he is diligent and silent — I like him.”

Sir William’s white fingers slowly turned the leaves of the volume he held.

“Then we may talk freely?”

“As always in my house.”

The Englishman glanced up. His face, which was of a dark, soft, luxurious style of indolent good looks, expressed a watchful yet friendly kind of amusement and interest; his air was slightly cynical, wholly pleasant, as if viewing follies that never tempted him to participate in them he yet found them harmless and tolerated them, good-humouredly.

“Well, then, of the Prince,” he said. “What are you going to do?”

John de Witt frowned.

“You think I am afraid of His Highness.”

Sir William answered with the ready courtesy that took all appearance of sincerity from his speech —

“All Europe knows that you are afraid of nothing — yet, for Holland’s sake, you might tremble a little now.”

The cloud did not lift from the Grand Pensionary’s noble face. He put out his hand and rested it on the edge of one of the bookshelves, and his delicate fingers tapped restlessly on the polished wood.

“Diplomacy as well as friendship dictates frankness to me,” he answered in his slow, stately, yet gentle way,— “nor is there much I could conceal from such an observer as yourself, Sir William. The Orange party have wearied me, have thwarted me, have alarmed me; I find them unreasonable, powerful and dangerous — I speak of the party, not of the Prince.”

“Why not of him?”

“I have no right. He has ever shown himself quiet, tractable, obedient,” was the quick reply. “We have never had to complain of his behaviour.”

“Yet he is the focus for much discontent,” smiled the Englishman, “the magnet for much ambition.”

The Grand Pensionary smiled also, uplifting his melancholy eyes.

“His Highness is but seventeen, immersed in study, brought up as a republican — I think he is even ignorant of these agitations in his name. He could not live more quietly.”

But it did not escape Sir William that the Grand Pensionary spoke like a man trying to reassure himself.

“The Prince is your pupil — forgive me, but, as I said, the situation is curious. You, sir, a republican — for seventeen years the head of a Republic which has been a fine nation, and a wealthy, and a lesson to all of us — you undertake the education of a Prince who is the heir of the House on whose ruin you founded your Republic; you bring this young man up in your ideas, you teach him this, that, as you will; you are not his master but his friend — he is to regard himself as a mere citizen of the country that is his heritage — well, it is a curious experiment, Mynheer de Witt.”

The Grand Pensionary answered quietly —

“I have done all I can — since we speak privately, not as politicians, I will say that I have no hope to always exclude His Highness from all power. I think that when he comes of age he will obtain the command of the army; nor do I regret it — the House

of Orange has rendered such service to Holland that there should be some gratitude, some trust shown this Prince."

Sir William closed the book he held and replaced it on the shelf.

"Meanwhile I train him to serve his country," continued de Witt, with a faint smile.

"You serve your country well, Mynheer," remarked the Englishman, watching him.

"I serve my ideals," said the Grand Pensionary.

The Englishman very slightly shrugged his shoulders.

"In these days! — you have been successful, but I should watch this little Prince — —"

"We stand firm — The Triple Alliance, the treaty of Breda — the Perpetual Edict," quoted de Witt.

The diplomat who had framed the first had never approved of the last.

"There you went too far," he said.

"There I secured the liberty of Holland," answered the Grand Pensionary, still with that faint smile on his full, finely cut mouth, "and made impossible a recurrence of 1650 — this Prince's father brought his troops to the gates of Amsterdam, no man shall do that again; by abolishing the office of Stadtholder I do away with the fear of a king, and so, sir, secure my Republic."

"Amen to that," answered Sir William. "You have the confidence of the idealist. I love you for it, but I cannot be so sanguine — the Prince, if he is heir to nothing else, hath the name, the prestige, and that is a strange spell to work with the people."

He looked, as he spoke, with the interest of the worldly man at a noble simplicity he admires but cannot comprehend. John de Witt was his friend, they had much in common, respected each other's character and talents, but Sir William Temple had never ceased to marvel at John de Witt.

The Grand Pensionary was silent; a deep thoughtfulness came into his face. The Englishman watched him, smiling a little coldly.

"Do you think that I am not loved in the United Provinces?" asked de Witt suddenly.

Sir William fingered the ends of his cravat. The other did not wait for an answer so leisurely composed.

"This young man is popular — it sometimes seems, Sir William, as if he was heir to the heart of the people — —"

"He has the name."

"The name! — and, with the people, is not that everything? I think nothing weighs against the name. The Prince does little to make himself beloved, but there are those who clamour for him as if he owned his ancestor's virtues with his ancestor's titles." And again M. de Witt repeated, "the name!"

Then, as if resolute to close the subject, he laid his hand familiarly on Sir William's velvet sleeve.

"Will you not come into the garden? — the gardens, I have two that open into one. But you know too much, my poor trees will be shamed."

They crossed the room and stepped out of the high window. The young secretary from Guelders leant back in his chair and watched them walking under the elms.

Not a word of their conversation had been lost on him, and now that he could no longer hear what they said he pondered, in his quick yet laborious way, over their previous speech.

He had been in M. de Witt's service a week. It was in the course of his duty to overhear diplomatic talk, to read, and make notes on, political papers, and, though he

had always considered himself well informed, he began to find that what was knowledge in Guelders was ignorance at the Hague.

He reviewed, rather sourly, the change in his feelings this week had brought about. He had been so proud of the post, so grateful for de Groot's recommendation, so confident of what his own energy and industry would do for him; and now he did not feel at all confident.

Not that his trust in himself was diminished; but he had already begun to doubt if he had taken his services to the best market or pledged himself to the most profitable of masters.

He bit his quill and fixed his eyes on M. de Witt, who was standing, not far away, on the gravel path talking to his companion.

The secretary marked with a calculating glance the Grand Pensionary's stately figure, clothed sombrely in black, his pale oval face, under jawed, the full but curiously firm and clean-cut mouth shaded by the slight moustache, the large, weary brown eyes, the high brow over which fell the soft dark hair that was just beginning to be touched with grey, and contrasted his melancholy, noble air with the vivacious ease of the splendid Englishman whose rich comeliness was enhanced by his elegant and costly dress.

As he looked, the young man from Guelders wondered. M. de Witt had been Grand Pensionary of the United Provinces for seventeen years; the secretary had long taken him for granted as something always there, immovable as the law he represented, and had no more questioned the authority than he had the power of this first magistrate of the Republic.

Only with difficulty and by forcing his mind back to his childhood could he recall something of the famous *coup d'état* that had made M. de Witt head of the State.

He recollected dimly the excitement that had filled the country when the young Stadtholder, William the Second, had tried to seize Amsterdam and the absolute power of a king. He remembered going with other boys of his own age to break the windows of a house that had sported Orange favours, and being rebuked by the minister, and made to stay longer in the gaunt white church praying for strength to curb his feelings.

He remembered, too, the news of the sudden death of the Prince who had threatened their liberties, and how they had thanked God for it solemnly. After that there had been the Republic, which he had taken unquestioningly. M. de Witt stood for the United Provinces; as for the last Prince of Orange, born after his father's death, the heir of a fallen House, the secretary had never heard much of him. There had been quarrels as to his education between M. de Witt and his uncle the Elector, between his grandmother and his mother the English Princess.…

The secretary remembered hearing, without interest, of the death of this lady in England, and of how her son, more than ever a State prisoner, was being educated by M. de Witt.

There seemed no reason why he, Florent Van Mander, of the town of Arnheim, a prudent, able young Dutchman, honourably and profitably employed in the service of the Grand Pensionary, should be so laboriously recalling every detail he had ever heard of William of Orange.

But two things had taken hold of a nature naturally observant, cautious, yet energetic and aspiring: the first was the conviction that M. de Witt held a position by no means as secure as it seemed, a position that, despite the treaty of Breda, despite the Triple Alliance, was one that he, the new secretary, must watch carefully if he would not be entangled in a falling cause; and the second was the impression that this

youth, the son of the late Stadtholder, was a latent force in Holland that might one day become tremendous, overwhelming.

"He has the name," Sir William Temple had said, and the words had seized Florent Van Mander's slow but not dull imagination. He thought that the Englishman had expressed less than he felt, and longed to hear him again on the subject.

He had only seen Sir William twice, but there was something in his easy, almost careless, manner, in the slightly disdainful shrewdness of his remarks, that inspired the secretary with a respect he did not entertain for John de Witt. He had an uncomfortable feeling that the Grand Pensionary was a man who might be, without much difficulty, fooled.

"I serve my ideals," he had said.

That annoyed Van Mander. He had not a very clear conception of an idealist, but he was tolerably certain that no man could be one and still be successful in a practical way, and it had struck him as a pointless and rather weak thing to say— "I serve my ideals."

He had noted other remarks, too, of the same trend; a certain loftiness of outlook, an unworldly tolerance of detraction and malice, that did not please him. He would have preferred a master more eagerly alive to his own advantage, more conscious of evil in others and prepared to fight it on its own grounds.

Sir William had also said other things that remained in the young secretary's mind. He had spoken of the curious situation, the Republican Minister instructing and watching the Prince — at once tutor and jailer — and Florent Van Mander thought that it was indeed curious, and a little foolish, too, on the part of John de Witt.

And there were yet other aspects of the situation that the previous conversation had not touched on, but which were nevertheless present to the roused mind of the secretary.

This Prince was cousin of the King of France, a figure of dazzling and alarming greatness, and nephew of the King of England; and both these were of an aspect menacing to the Republic, true — there was the Triple Alliance, but ——

The young secretary became aware that he had bitten his pen till it was split and useless, and he laid it down with a vexed look. He greatly disliked to do anything careless or unmethodical, or even to become absorbed in reflections not in themselves necessary to present business.

He took out another quill, mended it, and glanced again out of the window.

The Grand Pensionary and Sir William had been joined by Agneta de Witt — a pale, graceful, fragile-looking child — and Cornelia Van Bicker, the mistress of the house.

Looking at these ladies moving under the shifting, pale shadows of the trees, the young man's rather hard eyes softened. He had the Dutchman's intense respect for domestic affections, and to think of the recent death of Wendela de Witt moved him. He had never seen her, but he knew that she had been good and gentle, patient and adoring, like her daughter Agneta, and he guessed at the great loneliness that her loss had left in the heart of John de Witt. He thought of it whenever he saw her sister, Cornelia Van Bicker, or one of her quiet, sweet-voiced children.

As he watched, the little party turned towards the house, Sir William in his blue-and-gold velvet ruffled with ribbon, his heavy curls falling round his handsome face, walking beside the Grand Pensionary, who had no relief to his black garments save his broad linen collar, and between them the little figure of Agneta in her white gown and prim cap, holding herself soberly, while before them moved the sister of Wendela

de Witt, self-contained, plainly dressed, with the fading, changing, sunlight flickering over her dark dress.

Florent Van Mander returned to the letter he was copying, for he observed the Grand Pensionary was leaving the others and returning to the library.

When M. de Witt opened the window and entered, he rose, waiting his instructions.

"I have finished these documents, Mynheer," he said, pointing to some papers given him by another secretary. "Van Ouvenaller thought they should be copied in case you care to submit them to Their High Mightinesses."

"What are they?" asked John de Witt. He always spoke gently and courteously; to-night Van Mander found himself noticing it.

"Letters from the Provinces, Mynheer," he answered, "dealing with the riots in the name of the Prince of Orange — —"

"Ah, that." The Grand Pensionary frowned thoughtfully. "The burgomasters should be able to deal with it."

"It seems in Zeeland — —"

"You have a letter from Zeeland?"

"From Mynheer Van Teel — one Michael Tichelaer is inciting the people to violence in Middelburg."

"Michael Tichelaer," M. de Witt repeated thoughtfully. "Yes, I remember the man — I must write to Mynheer Van Teel." He paused a moment, then added, "I fear we are too lenient."

The secretary sorted and neatly arranged the papers. It was not his place to offer comment, but there were many things that he burned to say.

Meanwhile the Grand Pensionary was regarding him with a kindly if remote interest. The young man had been warmly recommended for zeal and industry, and so far he had found both; he saw too, for himself, resolution and capacity in the blunt, firm features, in the alert grey eyes and erect figure.

"You are satisfied with your position, Mynheer Van Mander?" he asked.

"Quite, Mynheer," — the secretary precisely tied the ribbons of the portfolio,— "is it not an enviable one?"

"You may make it so," answered John de Witt quietly, yet with a kind of glow in his voice, " — because you are in the way to serve your country, and that is indeed an enviable thing."

Florent Van Mander was silent. His country was not much in his thoughts; he meant to serve success.

"I think there is nothing more to-night," said M. de Witt. "You will be wishing to get home — have you comfortable lodgings?" he added kindly.

"Yes, Mynheer, in the Kerkestraat."

"You must dine with us soon. Will you leave out the letter from Middelburg? I need not remind you to be early in the morning — there is somewhat to do. Good-night, Mynheer."

"Good-night, Mynheer."

M. de Witt smiled in his melancholy, half tender, half distant fashion and left the room.

Florent Van Mander put away the papers, setting aside in an upper drawer the letter from Van Teel, locked the desk and placed the key on his watch-chain.

The sunlight in the garden was taking on a deeper hue and flushing the walls of the library and the well-filled bookcases to a red-gold colour; the leaves of the wych elms shook in a trembling, joyous kind of life and motion in the strong yet gentle breeze that was arising.

The deep, solemn chimes of the Groote Kerk struck six.

It was later than the secretary had supposed; he usually had his dinner at this hour. He took his eyes from the quiet beauty of the garden and hastened to leave the house.

The dining-room door was open as he passed down the hall, and he had a glimpse of the company gathered round the plainly furnished table. John de Witt at the head of it, saying grace with an earnest composure; Cornelia Van Bicker standing with folded hands, the bright English face of Lady Temple above her falling lace collar; and Sir William, tolerant, good-humouredly amused and placid.

The young secretary passed out into the street. The sunshine was pleasant down the Kneuterdyk Avenue, bright in the windows of the houses opposite, and gay in the trees that were just turning a faint tint of yellow. A saltish breeze touched Van Mander's face, it was blowing straight across the flat country, up from the sea at Scheveningen, and brought with it memories of the dunes, the sand, and the foam.

An unnamable, an unreal excitement stole into the blood that usually ran so coolly; just as if the young man had suddenly heard commanding music or seen a flag flung out against the sky. This feeling had been with him slightly ever since he had entered the service of John de Witt; to-night it culminated.

In the Englishman's words, he thought —

"He has the name."

Florent Van Mander could not forget that remark nor the tone in which it was spoken. It seemed to give the clue to his own restlessness, his curiosity as to the Prince — his discontent with his new master.

The name!

The sense of it, the power, were about him in the keen breeze, in the sunlit trees, in the whole atmosphere of the royal Hague.

As he turned home he repeated it to himself —

"William of Orange.…"

End of Sample