

Book of the Week.

"I WILL MAINTAIN."*

There are those who believe that the interest of a novel cannot be maintained unless it is dominated by a love episode. Samuel Warren disproved this when he wrote "Now and Then." Miss Marjorie Bowen has done the same in her latest novel, "I Will Maintain," which more than confirms the strong evidence we have already had, that she is a novelist of extraordinary genius—a woman saturated with history, which she can weave into romances of enthralling interest for our instruction and recreation.

The book takes its title from the motto of the House of Orange: "Moi je sera Nassau, je maintendrai," and is the story of John de Witt, Republican, and Grand Pensionary of the United Provinces; and William Prince of Orange, in his guardianship and under his tutelage as head of the Republic. The historical situation finds its parallel in our own country at the time of the struggle between Royalists and Parliamentarians, when good men of both parties willingly laid down their lives for principles which they believed to be vital.

John de Witt was a true patriot, a man of great nobility of character, who served his country with a single aim, and deserved better at its hands after spending twenty laborious years in its service than to be torn to pieces by a frenzied mob.

But our sympathies go out to William of Orange; of delicate health, surrounded by those whom he distrusts, veiling his real feelings under a deep reserve, apparently submissive to his Governor, John de Witt, but inwardly raging at having to submit to the control of a burgher, and quietly biding his time to show that he too is inspired by a burning patriotism, and that he can bring to his country's service gifts greater even than John de Witt, since he succeeds in foiling the attempts of Louis XIV. of France and Charles II. of England to compel the submission of the United Provinces to the outrageous demands of France, when de Witt's policy has failed completely.

And surely de Witt's insight was at fault when he believed that he could educate a Prince of the House of Orange to become a good Republican. M. de Montbas told him plainly: "You have been wrong from the first. You cannot tame an eagle with sugar and smiles. If you want to keep him you cage him, otherwise he will fly as soon as he is able, though he may have taken your friendliness while his wings were growing." Nevertheless, though William was "a prince in a thousand, a nature as deep, as constant as any the Lord God ever made," yet he owed something too to John de Witt, who could truly say, "I have taken some pains with his teaching; he hath been educated as a Christian, a Dutchman, a gentleman; I cannot believe my labour has been in vain—not utterly."

William of Orange did little to gain the affection of the nation, but it was his for the taking, for he had charm—perhaps he owed it to his Stuart blood—which bound people to his service

* By Marjorie Bowen. (Methuen and Co., 36, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.)

without any effort on his part. He had tact also, and insight beyond his years. He took counsel of no one—and it goes without saying that he was lonely. We have a glimpse of his clear-sightedness when, at a ball, he repels the advances of the tool of France, a beautiful woman twice his age, and experienced in the ways of the world to whom he professes his belief in predestination, and says, "I do not believe, madame, that I am predestined to be the tool of the King of France. The Princes of my house have left behind them records that teach me different aims and higher ambitions!" In the face of almost unsurmountable obstacles he accomplished the task which he set before himself—to rescue the United Provinces from the designs of France upon her liberties, to repel the foreign invader, and to preserve intact her national independence and her reformed religion, even at the expense, as a last resource, of cutting the dykes and flooding the country.

Our regret is that two such noble natures as those of John de Witt and William Prince of Orange should inevitably have been at variance, so that de Witt felt "meeting his own firm resolve, iron striking iron, the unyielding strength of two opposed natures brought into contest."

To those unacquainted with it let me commend Motley's "Rise and Fall of the Dutch Republic."

P. G. Y.

COMING EVENTS.

April 5th.—First lecture of a Post Graduate Course to Nurses, arranged by the Guy's Hospital Nurses' League, on "Recent Changes and Treatment in the Medical Wards." Course open to non-members on payment of a fee of 7s. 6d. Nurses' Home, Guy's Hospital, 8 p.m.

April 5th.—Gresham Lectures: Dr. F. M. Sandwith begins a course of four lectures on "Elementary Domestic Hygiene," City of London School, 6.

April 6th.—Royal Sanitary Institute, 90, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W. Paper on "Sanitary Aspects of Floods, and Measures to be Taken to Prevent Epidemics Arising Therefrom," by Dr. A. J. Martin, Inspecteur Général des Services d'Hygiène de la Ville de Paris. Chairman, A. Winter Blyth, Esq., Barrister-at-Law. 5 p.m.

April 7th.—Child Study Society: Dr. T. B. Hyslop on "Subconsciousness," 90, Buckingham Palace Road, 7.30.

April 21st.—Monthly Meeting of Central Midwives' Board, Board Room, Caxton House, Westminster, S.W., 2.45 p.m.

April 22nd.—Society for the State Registration of Nurses: Meeting of Executive Committee, 431, Oxford Street, 4 p.m.

April 27th to 30th.—Third Annual Nursing and Midwifery Exhibition and Conference, Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, S.W.

April 28th.—Examination of Central Midwives Board at the Examination Hall, Victoria Embankment, W.C. The Oral Examination follows a few days later.

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"Above the clouds the sky is blue."

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