

officials, officers, or merchants, and the intelligent children of local Indonesians. (There is no colour prejudice in the Dutch East Indies—at any rate, on the Dutch side; white and brown mix freely in the big cities; there is unrestricted social intercourse, and quite frequent inter-marrying.) His student years were the first he ever spent in Holland. Then back to Indonesia as a Civil Servant.

In the early 'thirties he joins a group of Radical young politicians and publicists who publish a bi-weekly paper, *De Stuw*; soon after he is elected as an Independent for the "Volksraad," the Advisory Parliament of the Dutch East Indies. His radius of action widens rapidly during the following years; he visits America, Japan, Europe, the Philippines; but Java remains the constant centre of his life; and in 1940 he holds for the first time the fate of that country in his hands; he is appointed chairman of the Netherlands Delegation for economic negotiations with Japan.

It is September, 1940. Far away the Battle of Britain is raging. Holland has disappeared behind the horizon; the Indies are left like a body without its head. Nearer home, Japan is just concluding the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, pocketing French-Indo-China, feeling her way towards Siam and Malaya. Britain has been forced to close the Burma road to supplies for China. The Japanese delegation speaks politely of "The obvious need for closer economic co-operation between Japan and the Dutch East Indies." Everybody knows that this is an economic prelude to conquest. Van Mook—still a little-known official—is the man chosen to check the Japanese.

It is then that his extraordinary qualities—his will-power, his firmness of purpose, the peasant-cunning he can bring into play when necessary; above all, his tremendous tenacity and staying-power in negotiation—reveal themselves for the first time on a big scene. Van Mook holds no bargaining assets at all; he faces an overwhelming claimant almost defenceless, with no hope of outside support. But the negotiations last a year; and in the end leave the Japanese empty-handed.

The sequel for van Mook is eminence. He is made Minister of Colonies; and soon after the outbreak of the Far Eastern war he is, in addition, given his post as Lieutenant-Governor-General of the East Indies. He stands in that post to the very last minute; until finally he escapes from falling Java to Australia.

This was in March, 1942. In September, 1945, he returned to Java—to face the supreme crisis of his career and his life.

Van Mook is a big, robust man, with a dominating presence—but with a

twinkle in the kindly blue eyes behind his glasses; a heavy worker; a formidable negotiator; a man who never admits defeat; who clings to his points with grim tenacity; but who knows, at the right moment, to relax the tension with an unexpected joke and a deep, rolling laughter.

He is a man of many friends (and many Indonesian friends); and he is adored by his subordinates and collaborators (though they admit that he drives them hard). One of them, asked what he regarded as van Mook's outstanding characteristics, replied after a moment's thought, in three words, "Sincerity, Simplicity, Humanity."

VAN MOOK is not what is called a colourful personality. But he is a big man. He has impressed himself on world consciousness even though he has left the gossip stars of stories. What stories can be told about a man who works all day, whose career has never seen a setback, whose name has never been associated with intrigue or scandal, who is a good family man, and who spends his rare holidays in a lonely bungalow in a mountainous forest, without radio, or telephone? Only perhaps, some day, the one big story of a man who, in an hour of supreme danger, saved and remade a great Commonwealth.

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*IN Little Wimpling-on-the-Mole  
They eat their periwinkles whole;  
They skewer them upon a pin  
And one by one they stow them in:  
This does not sound prodigious fare,  
But I've been told there's culture there,  
So I shall move from Manutahi  
And o'er the ocean I shall hie;  
Lose pounds of flesh, but gain a Soul  
At Little Wimpling-on-the-Mole.*

—Barbarae Insularum.