

Messrs. Knickerbocker And Harsch Enjoyed The Joke

(Continued from previous page)

"They wanted to know where Knickerbocker was, and when he was going. They didn't worry about me, mind you they just wanted to know about Knickerbocker."

Mr. Harsch had a laugh at the expense of his colleague, recalling Mr. Knickerbocker's sudden departure from Europe after he had revealed some facts which embarrassed the Nazi leaders.

"So I told that policeman that Knickerbocker was going right now and as a matter of fact was as good as on his way, and he said 'Then, that's all right.' All right! As long as Knickerbocker's on his way out, then it's all right!"

Mr. Knickerbocker enjoyed the joke. Then he spared a moment to tell me what Harsch had said went for him too—I could have anything I wanted from his cable. These two journalists were generous. I thanked them.

My Lucky Day

So we arrived at the point of departure. Other cars had found their way there. Important people closed in again. I asked Mr. Harsch if I could take a photograph. I had equipped myself with a tiny seven-and-sixpenny camera, and I knew that all I needed was bright sunshine. It was my lucky day—there was a gap in the clouds. Mr. Harsch consenting most graciously I pulled out my camera. I was rushed immediately by officials. "Very sorry, no photos here." I ought to have known. Submissively I thrust it back in my pocket. Mr. Harsch got talking to someone. Then the sun came out again. I saw a big, round, jolly looking man with a row of ribbons. I asked him if he could get me permission to take photos in some place where it couldn't matter. He trotted off. In a few

moments he was back. "Over here," he beckoned. I got my two Americans away from important people.

H. R. Knickerbocker, top-ranking news reporter, himself an expert with the best make of press camera, stood obligingly before my little toy. "That's a mighty impressive camera you got there," he drawled. I nearly ruined the picture with my laughing. Mr. Harsch went through the same procedure. I shook hands with them both, whispering confidentially to Mr. Harsch: "Thanks for being very good to me." They moved off, beyond a barricade.

In Retrospect

Left by myself, I began to wonder whether "getting" two foreign correspondents was really as important as it felt. Wasn't it a case of "news for news' sake" really? And was "news for news' sake" worth anything? It had all been rather exciting. I thought of H. R. Knickerbocker reading my note later on. He would find that it began:

"Dear Mr. Knickerbocker: I hate to be a pest—but I daresay you have told people that yourself, and with as little truthfulness . . ."

I wondered if I had really enjoyed being a pest, as I had hinted, or if it would be hateful, the over-stimulated life of these homeless men who raced from one historical event to the next, across the world and back again?

My reflections were disturbed by a big tall man with enough naval braid to make him an Admiral or something.

"Tell me. How did you get in here with that camera?"

I paused. The question seemed to apply to the whole affair. How had I got there at all? So I told him:

"I don't know. But I think it was just—well—just damn cheek."

—A.A.

COLOURFUL CAREERS

HUBERT RENFRO KNICKERBOCKER only took up journalism in the first place to save money so that he could study psychiatry, but now he is a roving reporter for Hearst International News Service and has a box-seat at every big event in international history. He is 44, a genial red-haired Texan with a southern drawl.

For a while he drove a milk wagon in Austin, Texas, but sold his round in 1919 to study psychiatry in New York. When he got to Columbia University all he could afford was the journalism course. On the Newark (NJ) *Morning Ledger* he conducted a vice crusade.

In 1923 he again set off with the intention of studying psychiatry, this time in Germany. But to pay his way he took a job as occasional correspondent for United Press. He was in Munich during Hitler's first unsuccessful putsch. In 1925 he joined Hearst's International News Service and spent two years in Moscow. At this stage his old ambition seems to have died out—his biography mentions no more universities.

In 1930 he won a Pulitzer Prize for 24 articles on "The Red Trade Menace." Then in 1932 the Nazis recognised him as an observer out of sympathy with them. Gradually he was edged out of Germany, and Hearst made him roving reporter. He "covered" Abyssinia, was with Franco's army in Spain, went to China in 1937, saw Germans march into Austria, into Czechoslovakia. His exposure of the huge investments outside Germany of the Nazi leaders created a sensation.

After one month on the Allied front in the present world war he flew back to America to give lectures urging American intervention.

JOSEPH C. HARSCH is a foreign correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor*, and though he has not achieved such fame as H. R. Knickerbocker, his reputation is now soundly established. He went back to America from Berlin last year, having been there since the outbreak of war, and in a review of his book *Pattern of Con-*

WHAT THEY CABLED

American Correspondents' Views On New Zealand And The War

BOTH H. R. Knickerbocker and Joseph C. Harsch cabled their papers from Wellington, reporting on the establishment of the line of communication "from factory to battlefield," and both said that though Japan had won the first blow, she had lost the battle for those supply lines, her first serious reverse.

As promised by both men as they dashed away from Wellington, "The Listener" was able to examine copies of their cables to Boston and Chicago, and now prints a summary of each message. The "cablese" in which such men write might have added "local colour" to our story, but not everyone can read it with ease, so the extracts have been filled out:

HARSCH described his arrival in a U.S. destroyer: "New Zealanders around first rubbed their eyes, then waved their hats at the Stars and Stripes. The first unit of Leary's forces to reach New Zealand had arrived even before his appointment was announced." He said that Japan was presumably relying on the Pearl Harbour blow to keep the U.S. from taking part in the East Indies struggle, "but I can testify after 4000 miles travel from Pearl Harbour in several different units of the U.S. fleet that the Japanese have fooled themselves if they think Pearl Harbour is paralysed."

The lines of communication are nailed down hard now, Mr. Harsch said, after having "travelled the length and breadth of that line since leaving Pearl Harbour a month ago." He had travelled part of the way with forces which attacked mandated islands and had spent many days in Robert Louis Stevenson's islands.

"Desirablist Port"

"Our arrival here was a closely guarded secret. New Zealanders are not prone to public demonstrations and excitement, but our bluejackets on shore leave had difficulty in spending money in the shops; citizens took groups to their homes; now all are agreed this is the desirablist port they have touched."

"Phoenix-like" was the correspondent's description of the U.S. navy's "rise from the smoke of Pearl Harbour." He went on to say how he had had the choice of proceeding with the force which was to attack mandated islands or change ships and take a chance on getting to what even Americans call "the Far East."

He chose the latter course, and was transhipped by breeches buoy to a destroyer which "acted as though born for wings but denied this fullest expression."

Mr. Harsch's cable concluded: "I am confident that whenever the initial thrust can be stopped the final result is only a matter of time."

quest the periodical *Newsweek* said that the book "goes to the head of the list for objectivity and its sober ring of truth."

Harsch's book declared that the Germans still backed Hitler even though they disliked him, because they feared bankruptcy or reprisals, in the event of defeat. Harsch said he could not find a single sincere Nazi in Berlin even among the Government officials and party functionaries he dealt with.

Mr. Knickerbocker's message to the *Chicago Sun* said that the formation of the Anzac force clearly showed the intention "to implement to the fullest Roosevelt's public promise not to let Australia and New Zealand fall." An uninterrupted line of transport had been established between America's factories and the Asiatic battle-scene, and this was going to be the deciding factor.

He went astray on one minor point when he said: "local inhabitants (of Wellington) told us our destroyer was the smartest craft seen here since the original Scots settlers came."

Mr. Knickerbocker gave his *Chicago* readers a long description of life on an aircraft carrier, with "sixty pairs of eyes" watching the sea by night, and a flock of aeroplanes watching by day. Twice, "enemy" ships were sighted, but in the first instance the "smudge of smoke on the horizon turned out to be a U.S. freighter" and in the second "the meagre reward of our chase was a closeup of a Norwegian tanker."

One evening all the aeroplanes returned except one. An hour overdue, the pilot advised by radio that he had twenty gallons left—"those were his last words." In defiance of the Japanese, the captain flashed searchlights to help the lost man. "But it was no good. Somewhere in the vast Pacific he was alone."

Mr. Knickerbocker ended: "Australia and New Zealand are fully aware that the Japanese may be planning such a surprise as Pearl Harbour, and intending to strike at their port cities, and that is why the arrival of United States forces here was so welcome."

"Our Kind of People"

"It is most impressive to find that these are our kind of people, as close to Americans as people can be without being citizens of the United States. The Philippines, Singapore, Indo-China, and even the Dutch East Indies are—regardless of their strategic importance and military value—foreign, oriental, bizarre, strange, not our kind of country."

"This is not merely a militarily united front, but here one feels that the moral roots reach so deep that they may well outlast the war."

Both journalists added that they were "flying now en route Java." Some day they may be in New Zealand again. But that, as Mr. Knickerbocker told *The Listener* representative, "all depends on the little brown brothers."