Subject: "Dr. Hanfstengel".

Shortly after the Hitler regime came in in January of 1933, Dr. Hanfstengel came to the fore. He was a graduate of Harvard University. He had lived in the United States for a number of years. He was, I believe, a classmate of President Roosevelt at Harvard. In any event he claimed a close friendship with President Roosevelt. He always made a great deal of this. He was a tall not too bad looking German. He spoke English perfectly. He could be very agreeable and ingratiating in his manner. He was, I understand, an excellent performer on the piano. It is this which apparently brought him close to Hitler and kept him close for some time. Hitler enjoyed certain types of music; he liked to hear someone improvise on the piano. Hanfstengel became one of the close associates of Hitler. He was one of those people who had constant access to him. Because of his having lived in the United States and because of the many friends he claimed to have there, and because of the knowledge which he was supposed to have of the country, Hitler made him one of his intimates and he was one of the court favorites for several years.

Hanstengel could be arrogant and unpleasant when he so chose and he could be gracious and charming when it pleased him. I met him in a number of houses, German and American, where no other member of the party or the regime would be tolerated. I always steered clear of him. I did not trust him and for me he was a most unpleasant individual. My wife and I both had an instinctive dislike for the man. It was I believe in the latter part of 1933 that Lochner, who was the correspondent for the United Press in Germany, stationed in Berlin, asked us to dinner. My wife and I accepted not thinking that we would meet any one there whom we did not wish to see. We made it a very definite practice to stay away from houses and places where there was
any reason to believe that we might meet Nazi adherents or members of the government. Lochner was a man who knew German very well, had had a great deal of experience in Germany, and knew the country very well. At that time he had absolutely no use for the Nazi regime and he had close contact with many of the high people in the party and in the regime. He had no reason to have any illusions and he had none, at that time. Incidentally I may say that later, when Nazi strength grew, Lochner was very much impressed by the military power of Germany and by a good many things which happened in the country which before he had deferred. When the invasion of Poland took place he sent dispatches to his home office in New York which should have caused his immediate recall. He was condoning and explaining away everything that was being done by Germany to destroy Poland, and his dispatches from Germany began to be colored by his changed position.

When Mrs. Messersmith and I arrived at the dinner we found, among the other guests, Kitty and Sidney O'Donoghue. Kitty was a niece of Thomas Lamont of Morgan & Company, an old friend of ours. The O'Donoghues were a very fine young couple. He was at that time stationed in the Embassy and doing a good job there. Dinner was usually rather early and promptly served in Berlin. After about three quarters of an hour dinner was not served and I found that Lochner was waiting for Hanfstengel. My first impulse was to leave with my wife; I decided that it might do harm to Lochner if I did so we decided to stay, but I told Lochner that I saw no reason why he should wait to serve the dinner and that there was no reason to keep his guests waiting. In any event Hanfstengel was not of very much importance. Dinner was served before Hanfstengel arrived.

We were about half-way through dinner, I was sitting next to Mrs. Lochner and on my other side I had Mrs. O'Donoghue. Half-way through
dinner Hanfstengel appeared. He made quite a good deal of bustle and noise when he arrived. He was in full SS or SA uniform, I do not recall which. His place was next to my neighbor, Mrs. O'Donoghue. After he had been sat for about five minutes, Kitty turned to me and said, "I can't stay at the table". I thought she might be ill. A minute or so later she said, "George, I have to leave the table". I said, "I'm sorry you're feeling badly and why don't you leave the table and I'm sure Sidney will take you home". She said, "It's not that. He is bothering me under the table. He is pinching my leg". In another moment she said, "I have got to leave, I can't take this." I got up and leaned over the back of Hanfstengel's chair and told him, "If you can't behave like a gentleman I suggest that you leave before I make any scandal about it". I think he was about as amazed as anybody could be; he thought that his position as Hitler's favorite and his uniform permitted him to do anything. He didn't molest her during the rest of the dinner and as soon as the dinner was over my wife and I and the O'Donoghues left for home.

I forgot to mention that when Hanfstengel sat down at the table he reached over in front of Mrs. O'Donoghue and picked up my place card. Looking at it he said, "Oh, this is the famous Messersmith who knows everything that is going on here and doesn't like it".

It was much afterwards that a prominent well-known German industrialist and banker asked Mrs. Messersmith and me to dinner at his villa in Wannsee. He was a Jew and a very successful and respected banker who had broad industrial interests. Up to that time he had not been molested. His interests were, for the time being, so important that it was useful to the regime not to bother him; it was, of course, only a question of time. When we arrived at his villa in Wannsee we found that it was a large party and in honor of his two charming daughters.
After a little while Hanfstengel arrived. He immediately began pursuing the girls, that is, the two daughters of the house. Among a good many of the guests it created consternation, and the host and his wife were in a most unhappy state. I walked into the music room and found Hanfstengel at the piano with one of the daughters. She looked at me appealingly. He was making improper advances; she was scared to death. She was afraid to make a scandal because she thought it might bring immediate retaliation on her parents. I walked over to the piano and I said to Hanfstengel that I didn't frequently interfere in other people's business. I recalled, however, that when I'd last seen him he had molested a guest of the house in which he was. He was even behaving more badly now. I said that he thought he could get away with anything but this was something he could not get away with. I told him that if he did not leave the daughters of the house alone, with whom he was taking these liberties, only because he thought he could get away with it, because they were Jews, that I knew what to do about it and I would certainly do it that same evening. Hanfstengel knew what I meant and that he knew that I was going to tell Goering about it, who would not stand for that sort of thing. He was an exemplary guest the rest of the evening.