

Expert Out On Limb Over Men Vs. Women Drivers

Editor's Note: United Press International asked the head of the National Safety Council, which keeps close tabs on American driving habits, "tell us, are women really better drivers than men?" Brave man that he is, he replied as follows.

By NED H. DEARBORN
President, National Safety Council
CHICAGO (UPI)—If your home is like mine, there are times when the subject of men versus women drivers comes up for what my wife and I like to call friendly discussion.

My wife amiably points out to me that the National Safety Council's own figures show that male drivers are much more likely to be involved in traffic accidents

than lady drivers. And she smirks as she points it out.

I, in turn, call her attention in a mild manner to the fact that the National Safety Council also says that the traffic record of male drivers is improving, while the rates for the lovely ladies have been getting worse.

You can't find a surer way to enliven a dull evening around the house than to get into a discussion like this!

Actually, neither my wife nor I can get too positive in our comments, for the simple reason that nobody knows just how many miles men drive or women drive. So any comparisons on the number of accidents each sex has are bound to be inconclusive.

Our statisticians at the National Safety Council estimate that there were about 57 million male drivers and 23 million female drivers on the road in the United States in 1957.

Of these, 41,300 male drivers and 5,200 female drivers were involved in fatal traffic accidents. On the basis of the number of fatal accidents per 100,000 drivers, this gave the male drivers a rate of 72 and the lady drivers a rate of 23.

But, how much more driving did the men do than the women? We don't know.

We do know that male drivers average considerably more miles than women drivers—even though the ladies seem to get most of the parking spaces!

Nearly all commercial vehicles are driven by men—frequently 20,000 miles or more each year. And even the family passenger car is more frequently driven on long trips by men than by women, even though the housewife does pound the pavement with the family jolopy on daily shopping expeditions.

My own feeling is that while women may not be better drivers than men, they are less inclined to show off behind the wheel, and therefore may be safer drivers.

And that is a good place for me to stop!

AUTO INJURIES

LOS ANGELES (UPI)—The interior of today's car with its steering wheel, doorknobs, dashboard, ashtrays and other protruding parts, is a major cause of injuries during collisions.

So says a research team from the Institute of Transportation and Traffic Engineering at the University of California at Los Angeles based on 10 years of study.

The researchers predicted a number of changes in automobiles to provide motorists with greater safety, including a retractable or collapsible steering column and the padding of interiors with foam plastic or some other such material.

KING MOB. By Christopher Hibbert. The World Publishing Co. \$4.95.

The English are a proper and well-behaved people, who scarcely raise their voices, let alone their fists, in anger. But it was not ever thus. Author Hibbert with great skill and a keen dramatic sense has illuminated a tiny, almost forgotten, moment in history when for a little less than a week in 1780 London was controlled by a drunken, brutal mob.

It all began in 1778 when with the tide of war running poorly for Great Britain in the struggle with the American Colonies, Parliament decided more army recruits might be gained by tempering, albeit rather slightly, the harsh measures enacted against Roman Catholics during the reign of William III. Ultra-Protestant groups reacted strongly. The Protestant Assn., spearheaded by the objectors, enlisted as its president a strange nobleman, Lord George Gordon, member of a Scottish ducal house blessed with more than the usual share of eccentricities.

A failure up to then, the youthful lord now was in his element in the role of knight in shining armor. Foresightedness was not among his qualities.

On June 2 his adherents by the thousands assembled in St. George's Fields, sang hymns, and marched solemnly to Parliament bearing an enormous petition calling for the repeal of the Catholic Relief Act. As could be expected, rowdies joined the parade. There was rioting outside Parliament, and its members were manhandled. Lord George had unleashed the hurricane. He was baffled.

The next day the trouble began in earnest. The Protestant Assn. and its leaders faded into the background. The dregs of London took over. Newgate Prison was stormed, and its inmates turned loose. Great sections of London were put to the torch.

There were no police in the modern sense, and there was much hesitation before troops were finally summoned into the heart of London and the riots put down. To the blood that had flown so freely in the streets was then added that of a motley batch of prisoners caught in the legal net. In 12 days, 44 were sentenced to death at Old Bailey, and 24 were condemned in the Southwark sessions. Lord George was tried, but acquitted.

His last appearance on the stage of his times was as a convert to Judaism. He died in prison serving a sentence for criminal libel against the Queen of France.

It was a strange times and a strange man. If history could be said to teach a lesson, this one says plainly that when a mob takes command, no matter what the original intentions of its leaders might be, the end is fearful and horrible.

THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE WEEK. by Marek Hlasko (Dutton). A short, taut story of two Polish lovers and their thorny path in a dreary, Communist-ridden country. Sunday is the day when the young Agneska and Pietrek plan to consummate their love. It is also the day when Agneska's father plans to escape his ailing, complaining wife. And when Agneska's brother looks forward to the return of his lost love. But Sunday turns out to be as frustrating as usual. Still hope, like life, goes on, and the author suggests "an eighth day in the week . . . when everyone can be happy." This is a perceptive piece of writing by a brilliant young (25) Pole. Translated by Norbert Guterman, it is the first of Hlasko's books to be made available to American readers.

YOUNG MEN SEE VISIONS. by Mary Mian (Houghton-Mifflin). Concerns self-righteousness, hypocrisy and religion in a Massachusetts town at the end of the last century. Love is here, too, in the person of minister Mark Deming (who has the vision) and Mary Chatfield (who learns to believe in his vision). Theme is a good one, but is handled clumsily and interest is likely to wane as the story runs down toward a trite ending.

OUR FRIEND JAMES JOYCE. Mary and Padraic Colum (Doubleday). The authors were not only close friends of Joyce but also fellow Dubliners. Their long-awaited book fills in many details about Joyce from the days when he was emerging as a Dublin "character" to the final years in which his life was darkened by the mental breakdown of his daughter Lucia. A valuable addition to the Joyce story.

THE MISCHIEF. by Assia Djebar (Simon and Schuster). A short novel in the Francoise Sagan tradition—about a young bored girl who has nothing better to do than get involved in the lives and loves of her friends. The setting for this one is Algiers where the author was born. Nadia is the girl. Her friends are Jedla and her husband Ali. Nadia makes a play for Ali, not realizing that she is being used as a pawn by Jedla. Then there is Hussein who finally wins Nadia—to all intents and purposes. The story furnishes an interesting look into the willful, misdirected, passionate mind of a 20-year-old girl—just the age the author was when she wrote the book in 1956.

By W. G. ROGERS
WARLOCK. By Oakley Hall. Viking. \$4.95.

Around 1880 in the frontier town which gives this long ambitious novel its title, a fellow named Abe McQuown plays the role of principal bad man, and it is the community's problem to maintain law and order in spite of his twitchy trigger finger.

No formal law is established there; it's a territory, not a state, and no sheriff is so devoted to justice that he'll risk his life in Warlock. So a committee of citizens, after seeing one marshal turn tail and flee from a showdown with McQuown, puts up a big kifty and summons Clay Blaisdell, a gunman known as a fearless killer. A former deputy, Carl Schroeder, stays on, though quaking in his boots, out of friendship for the runaway marshal and out of defiance of McQuown. Morgan, Clay's long-time intimate friend, opens a joint for cards and drinks. Brunk is the miner who fights the cruel bosses. Jessie is the Angel of Mercy, and Kate Dollar is the other kind of dame.

There is a good deal of soul searching by citizens who question their right to grant the power of life and death to a fellow like Clay, about whom they know little except his deadly marksmanship. Some of the characters soul-search, too—they try to wean McQuown away from his evil ways. There is generally the moral reflection that the bad man has good streaks, the good man weak spots, and that it is because of their natural inconsistency that the feuding pyramids.

But Hall does not let this interfere with the crackling swift pace of his story. Cowboys ride to town, raise havoc in the cribs, shoot out the lamp chimneys, scare the lawless citizens to pieces, and every now and then—to prove they mean it—kill the barber or the piano professor, or a luckless deputy, or some traveler who didn't reach for the sky quickly enough when they put on a playful little stage-coach robbery. And time and again a couple of guys, or bands of them, confront each other, their hands just quivering to see who draws the fastest, and a few more fellows bite the dust.

This is a Western, but a glorified one, by a writer with serious intentions. It has some tense scenes, and the characters, though they are basically stock, are often clearly drawn.

There's nothing wrong with this book, then—except me. When I was a kid, I had a wigwag, a wooden scalping knife, a war-whoop that would scare the daylight out of anyone, and with my two pistols I had the fastest imaginary draw of any of the imaginary cowboys on the imaginary Western plains on the north end of my New England home town. So I got all of this "Warlock" stuff out of my system.

But maybe you didn't. If you can still dream happily of going bang-bang, and holding up the stage coach right between the clotheslines and the rosebush, and galloping along the back fence to safety, this is definitely your book—and several notches, gunman's notches, above the average.

THE SECRET OF LUCA. By Ignazio Silone. Harper & Brothers. \$3.50.

Silone is a master of the simple, straightforward narrative, shorn of all frills, that illuminates the meaning of life. "The Secret of Luca" is another triumph for the great Italian storyteller.

The plot of this novella is stark and original. Luca Sabatini, a simple Italian peasant, has been released from prison after serving 40 years for a murder that, it is now established, he did not commit. He returns to the poor village where once he lived. The old people are terrified. They knew he was innocent, yet never came forward to save him when he went on trial. It would seem obvious that he would seek revenge.

But Luca has no such idea in mind. Instead he wants to see the familiar hills and a few friends. A noted politician, Andrea Cipriani, comes home at the same time. When Andrea was a boy he wrote from dictation the letters that Luca's illiterate mother sent to the prisoner. To Andrea, Luca is a symbol of profound importance and he sets out to unravel the mystery of why he did not defend himself at his trial.

Andrea gets no help from Luca until the very end when only a few key pieces remain to be placed in the puzzle.

In a strange way this is a detective story, but because of Silone's genius it is a great deal more than that. There is mounting suspense, dogged investigative work, keen intuition—but instead of a slick explanation in the end, there is insight into the basic human qualities of loyalty and integrity.

Silone's style is as shorn of adornment as the narrative. The village in all its squalor and poverty comes alive through the briefest flashes of description, and the characters are keenly defined and realized.

"The Secret of Luca" belongs on the list of important modern fiction and it is not the least of its virtues to say that it is as readable and engrossing as it is significant.

LAUNDRY NEEDS LIGHT
EAST LANSING, Mich (UPI)—Good lighting is essential in the laundry—and here are two tips from Michigan State University home management specialists on how to get it: Proper reflectors on laundry lights may give as much as 35 per cent more light on work areas. Reflectors reduce glare and concentrate the light.

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