

They ought make the driver's examinations

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“They ought to make the driver's examinations harder,” remarks Mr. MacCurrie. We have been watching the struggles of a woman driver trying to park at a satisfactory angle.

“That wumman shouldn't be drivin' a car. Not till she's learned to handle it a lot better. There's not much sense in this auto inspection law, if they're goin' to pass oot licenses to drivers like her.

“Now that's one thing they're far ahead of us over in Europe. They have much more sensible tests for new drivers. I was talkin' to George Dewell about it just the other day, and he told about the time he was over in France, back in 1906 or seven. George got a license to drive over there. He was chauffeur for some rich New Yorker and he took him across.

“George said it was the goddomdest test he ever see. He said these French cops got in with him, and they told him to start driven'. He said they took him up narrow streets, and barrels would roll oot in front of him, and somebody would shove a dummy in his path and the like o' that. He said when it was all over he was a nervous wreck. But over there, when they give a mon a license he's not got to renew it every year. It's good for life.”

Mr. Brennan: “Years ago you didn't have to take any test at all. All you hadda do was make an application. That's the way it is in some states today --all you gotta do is register, if you're over a certain age limit, they give you the license.”

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Mr. MacCurrie: “Well, I see they're tryin' to pass the compulsory insurance law over in Hartford. That'll make some of them dig doon in their pockets.”

Mr. Brennan: “It'll be a good thing, if they do pass it. Guys like Sully will get a break. There he is with only one leg, and all he ever did in his life was hard manual labor. What good

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is he now to his wife and kid? If the guy that hit him had had insurance, he woulda had something for what he went through.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “Well maybe the lad had insurance, how do you know?”

Mr. Brennan: “I don't think so.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “I see the paper said the other day Sully was home from the hospital. God, he's been home for two weeks, they just found it oot.”

Mr. Brennan: “Well ---poor Sully. He always reminded me of an uncle of mine down in Bridgeport. He's dead now, my uncle is. And the funny thing about it --his beat friend was an undertaker. My uncle belonged to a club, and it happened that his undertaker friend stopped in there lookin' for him a couple of times and he wasn't there. So he says, jokin' like, ‘The next time I come lookin' for him it'll be on business.’ Well, darned if my uncle didn't die before they saw each other again. But the family heard about what the undertaker said, and they wouldn't let him have the body. For bein' so smart, they said. Of course he didn't mean nothin' by it, the lad didn't, but you couldn't tell them that. He felt bad about not gettin' my uncle too. Said he was one of the best friends he ever had, and he woulda liked to bury him.”

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Mr. MacCurrie: “He must've been related to the fella in Hartford that used to take oot the license plate ‘U 2’ for his hearse every year. That lad was in ‘Believe It or Not’ one time.”

Mr. Brennan: “It's a great business, undertakin'.”

Mr. MacCurrie: “It don't make no difference who buries you, you're a long time dead.”

Mr. Richmond comes in, peering myopically at the small group. Mr. Brennan inquires politely about the state of his health, but Mr. MacCurrie, who is not on the best of terms with Mr. Richmond, is dourly silent. Mr. Richmond has recently had a cataract removed

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from one eye and must have the other eye similarly treated. But, says he, "The weather is against me. I would've gone down to see Doc Bevans this week, if 'twasn't for the weather.

"Of course I don't know whether they'll do anything for me any more. I don't know's the first operation has been such a great success."

Mr. Brennan: "Well, takes time, George."

Mr. Richmond: "Takin' a damn long time, seems to me. Takin' a damn long time." He lingers uncertainly, a forlorn, shabby little figure, but there is no further attempt to include him in the conversation, and presently he leaves.

Mr. MacCurrie: "Sometimes I don't think George is as blind as he makes oot. He's kind of lookin' for sympathy. He was around here before his operation and if somebody'd speak to him he'd say 'Who be ye? I can't see nothin'. You know goddom well he could tell who you were by the sound of your voice."

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Mr. Brennan: "Well, I feel sorry for him. He don't have many places to hang out. I suppose he gets lonesome up in his boarding house, nobody to talk to up there. And if he goes over on the other side they turn the radio on full blast so's he won't begin talkin'. I see him up in Colt's store some times. He just goes up there and sits around all afternoon."

Mr. MacCurrie: "They must get tired of that. People comin' in and oot all day, they don't want nobody sittin' around like that."

Mr. Brennan: "Remember old man Kellie? There was a blind man for you. Blind as a bat."

Mr. MacCurrie: "He was doon here every mornin' as regular as ten o'clock; and every afternoon at two. He used to get mad because the place wasn't unlocked mornings so's he could get in. He raised so much hell aboot it they finally gave him a key to keep him quiet."

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Mr. Brennan: "He wasn't even a member, was he?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "He was not."

Mr. Brennan: "I remember one time I was sittin' here, and he came up all excited. Somebody took his watch, he said. He said he laid it on the table while he went in to wash his hands, and when he come out it was gone. Well, there wasn't anybody in the place but me and him. I says 'Listen Tom, come down here with me, and we'll look for it.' Well, there it was, right on the table where he left it."

Mr. MacCurrie: "That was the paper just come, wasn't it?"

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He goes out to the hall, returns with the paper, holding it at arm' length. "Look at this, will you," he says, indicating the front page screamer. "Levy exonerates Hayes! They've got some nerve to print that kind o' bosh! This paper is favorin' Hayes, you know. They don't give a dom if the rest of them go to prison for life, as long as Hayes gets off."

Mr. Brennan: "And Leary. Well, I think I'll head for home. I don't like to read the paper here, I never have anything to read home if I do. But Mr. MacCurrie, buried to the eyebrows in the exciting news of the Waterbury trial, is with us only in the flesh."