

SIR.—All matters connected with Miguel Serveto are subject to error—perhaps because of the violent religious controversies in which he was involved; so that your correspondent Mr. I. B. George (July 26, p. 151) can be excused if he writes that Servetus was burned at the stake for propounding the pulmonal circulation. Serveto was condemned in Geneva on Oct. 26, 1553, to be “brulez tout vifz” because of his Arianism, though no law existed in Geneva penalizing heresy with death. The passage in his book, *Christianismi Restitutio* (1553), alluding to the pulmonal circulation was first noticed by the surgeon Charles Bernard (1650–1711) and then published in 1694 by William Wootton (1666–1726).

Serveto's execution is a blot on the name of his principal accuser, John Calvin (1509–64). Three copies of *Christianismi* escaped judicial fire—one each in Paris, Vienna, and Edinburgh. The latter, probably, is the torn copy Calvin employed to denounce Serveto to the Roman Catholic Inquisitor through Arneys in Lyons.—I am, etc.,

Little Shelford, Cambridgeshire.

H. P. BAYON.

SIR.—I was amazed at the contents of a letter in the *Journal* of July 26 (p. 151) signed I. B. George. I shall not trespass on your space to prove how inconsequential are his allusions concerning the attitude of the “Church” towards anatomy, surgery, and anaesthetics. The idea that hospitalization and hygiene were initiated in Europe through Arab influence is of course perfectly absurd. The implication that Servetus was burned by the “Church” for heresy demands, however, unqualified contradiction. We do not know when he discovered the circulation in the lungs, which he described so clearly in the volume on the renewal of Christianity, for which he was burned at Geneva by Calvin.—I am, etc.,

Farnham Common, Bucks.

T. GERALD GARRY.

### Rotunda Bicentenary Medical Exhibition

SIR.—We read with astonishment in the *Journal* of July 19 what purports to be a report of the medical exhibition held in conjunction with the International Obstetrical and Gynaecological Congress of the Rotunda Hospital at the Mansion House, Dublin, during the week July 7–12.

The Executive Committee of the Irish Medical Exhibitors Association—a voluntary organization of medical representatives formed for the purpose of holding medical exhibitions without profit or reward—has had an emergency meeting in connexion with your report, and while it welcomes fair and constructive criticism it strongly protests against the facetious manner in which your correspondent has described the exhibition. Already dozens of letters have reached our association from doctors and exhibitors expressing indignation. We feel that you should take immediate steps to rectify this display of bad taste, and give this letter the same publicity as you have given the misstatements of facts. We invite your editorial comment.

The Exhibition consisted of 44 ethical exhibitors from the Commonwealth, U.S.A., and the Continent—each approved by the Medical Committee of the Congress. They with many of the doctors who visited our Exhibition are very surprised at the manner in which the Exhibition was reported in your *Journal*.—I am, etc.,

W. JONES,

Hon. Secretary,

Irish Medical Exhibitors Association.

Dublin.

SIR.—Referring to your report of the Irish Medical Exhibition in the *Journal* of July 19 (p. 106). As one of the least of the 150 members of 44 manufacturing firms I should like to record my personal protest at the derogatory reference to “bright young spellbinders.” This may have been intended as a facetious remark, but it is unkind, untrue, and uncalled for. Bright possibly, young most certainly not. The great majority of the gentlemen in attendance were well over the fifty-year mark. Every one was a specialist in his own branch of work.

It would be invidious to mention names, much as I should like to do so, but it is worth noting that among these men were many who held very high qualifications in medicine, physics, and chemistry, and who were highly skilled technicians. In some cases these men have carried out most valuable work in research in biochemistry and other fields of science. To mention only a

few, there were present those who had done great work before and during the war on penicillin, sulpha drugs, paludrine, anaesthetics and anaesthesia apparatus, and x-ray equipment and technique. Among them were the principals of important firms who had flown over to put themselves at the service of the medical profession. It might amaze your correspondent, who so lightly dubbed these people bright young spellbinders, to know the great work they have done and the repute in which they are held. That is why it was untrue.

It was unkind because in every case these men had attended at very great expense and at great inconvenience and interference with their work so as to give freely and cheerfully their experience and knowledge to the members of the medical profession who might desire to avail themselves of it. If it were not that the “tools for the job” had been produced by these men, and men such as they, the success of medical treatment would not be of the high order which it has attained to-day. But the words “despite their accents” gives the clue to the reason underlying the offensive remark. Forty-three out of the 44 firms exhibiting were English, or at least British, firms, and the forty-fourth was exhibiting British and Continental manufactures. Very evidently this was enough for your correspondent to wish to belittle the whole affair and the men who had dared to invade Eire. Surely in these enlightened days science should be international and should know no boundaries, and such childish and bigoted nationalism should be abandoned and credit given to men of good will who give themselves freely to the service of others.—I am, etc.,

D. T. DICKINSON,

The London Hospital Ligation Department.

Chester.

\*We regret that in the brief account of the Rotunda Bicentenary Meeting (*B.M.J.*, July 19, p. 106) some observations made by our correspondent have been taken amiss by those responsible for the medical exhibition, and that exhibitors should interpret his colourful comment on their enthusiasm as being derogatory.—ED., *B.M.J.*

### POINTS FROM LETTERS

#### Tobacco

Dr. LENNOX JOHNSTON (Wallasey) writes: For 20 years Dr. A. G. Pannet has smoked, he alleges (June 28, p. 950), “purely for enjoyment,” and I do not doubt that he speaks what he believes to be the truth: but no addict of a powerful drug like tobacco ever, in my opinion, administers his drug *purely* for enjoyment. He is also motivated by a desire, or rather craving, compulsive in character in the strongly addicted, to keep at bay feelings of deprivation. Dr. Pannet certainly need take no account of the therapeutic effects of tobacco, but he would do well to take thought of its toxic effects. No; smoking is not a vice: it is a drug addiction, a disease. My final exclamation (it was not a statement) referred to published figures giving our purchases of tobacco during the first six months of the American loan, but I did not state (as Dr. Pannet alleges), “One-third of the American loan is being spent on tobacco” (italics mine).

#### General Knowledge and General Practice

Dr. REGINALD LAWRENCE (Wakefield) writes: On page 134 of the *Journal* of July 26 there is a review of a book under the heading “Traumatic Injury.” My immediate resort to “Liddell and Scott” for the word “trauma” made me wonder whether this type of injury should be placed in the category of the “gastric stomach” (that unflinching joy of the consulting room) and the “cardiac heart.” Will someone tell me when an injury is not traumatic?

#### Gonococcal Complement Fixation Test in India

Lieut.-Col. S. D. S. GREVAL, I.M.S. (Calcutta), writes: In the last paragraph of his letter (March 8, p. 309) Capt. K. W. G. Heathfield states: “It is one of the many annoying features about medicine in India that many special investigations are not available, including the gonococcal complement fixation test. . . .” Complement fixation test for gonorrhoea has been undertaken in the laboratory of the Imperial Serologist, School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta, for nearly two years. The details of the technique appeared in the *Indian Medical Gazette*, 1945, 80, 551.

#### Two Names Alike

Dr. BRUCE WILLIAMSON (London, W.1) writes: I shall be very glad if you will insert a few lines dissociating myself entirely from the views expressed by my namesake from San Marino, California. I find myself being taxed by colleagues disagreeing with the opinions expressed in the original letter published in the *Journal* of June 28 (p. 950).