psychopharmacologist, his Haitian informants and, presumably, a *zombie* (Gleason, 1986). Apparently the original idea was that the drug, when isolated, would be used by NASA to place astronauts in a state of suspended animation during long voyages (Davis, 1986).

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD

All Saints Hospital,
Birmingham B18 53D

References

DAVIS, W. (1986). *The Serpent and the Rainbow*. London: Collins.
GLEASON, J. (1986) Notes from underground. *The Times Library Supplement*, July 4, London, 725.

CORRECTION

In the letter from Anthony B. Joseph (*Journal*, June 1986, **148**, 749) 5th para, 8th line, the reference should be (Joseph, 1986) not (Weinstein *et al*, 1954).

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Idiots Bill

The framers of this measure should at once determine, not only in their own minds but by an intelligible definition of the term 'idiots' what class of persons they intend to deal with. As the Bill is drawn it is a highly unsatisfactory measure, affording opportunities for dealing with persons of feeble mind with only one certificate instead of two, and with the least possible protection. It will be a scandal if this measure passes with no more attempt to distinguish between two classes extremely easily confounded than the absurd intimations that 'idiots' or 'imbeciles' do not include 'lunatics' or 'lunatic' does not mean or include 'idiot' or 'imbecile'. The definition is not one whit more intelligible as a means of analysis than the famous synthetical formula, "Caesar and Pompey are alike, especially Pompey."

Reference

Lancet (April 3, 1886) pp. 656.

Researched by Henry Rollin. Emeritus Consultant Psychiatrist., Horton Hospital, Surrey.

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