### *Lunacy Law Reform.*

A Royal Commission on Lunacy would seem to be the most probable outcome of the many expressions of opinion that are finding vent in the press. Judging by the general character of these, it would appear to be advisable that it should be preceded by a commission of another kind, to ascertain whether the public is really *compos mentis*.

The great increase of lunacy is our constantly recurring note of alarm; and no amount of explanation can make the public comprehend that this accumulation in asylums is almost entirely due to the four shilling per week capitation grant which was enacted to obtain the favour and votes of the Boards of Guardians, and that these stupendous institutions are not the outcome of necessity, but are monuments of the folly of legislating for party purposes.

The Medico-Psychological Association at the time that this great crime was perpetrated strongly protested, and vigorously urged that the money grant should be applied to the maintenance of asylums and their staffs. This would not have appealed to the Boards of Guardians, but it would have made the asylums more efficient, and would have prevented their usefulness being interfered with by the enormous influx of imbeciles and senile cases, who might have been as well cared for in other ways. The boarding-out system might also have been developed instead of being absolutely arrested.

The national conscience, therefore, should not indulge in self-gratulations in pointing to these vast asylums as evidence of its abounding benevolence, but remember that in very truth they are merely stupendous monuments of the folly of legislation in the momentary interests of a political party. They are the legacy of a party move that was both a crime and a blunder.

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### *Private Asylums.*

The sea-serpent and great gooseberry season has again resuscitated a correspondence in the daily papers on the private asylum question.

Those members of the specialty who are thus attacked are, from their position, unable to reply to the baseless abuse that is often directed against them, and knowing the popular pre-

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