that a Committee of Inquiry should be appointed for the purpose of reporting on the following points :

(1) The advisability of a more direct and continuous management of the affairs of the Association and of the conduct of our Journal, by the appointment of a small "Executive" which shall meet frequently, and be paid adequately for its services.

(2) The advisability of securing to the Association direct and practical control over its own policy by placing the election of such Executive in the hands of its members.

(3) To advise as to the best method of electing such Executive—by the votes of those present at the Annual General Meeting; by voting papers issued to all members of the Association, or otherwise.

(4) To advise as to what alterations of the by-laws may become necessary to carry into effect the recommendation of this Committee of Inquiry."

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Many members of the R.B.N.A. will be in keen sympathy with Mr. Lawson Tait and his supporters, especially in connection with the desire that the journal of an Association shall reflect the opinions of the members, and not merely be utilised as the organ of the officials.

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A Correspondent, who has a turn for figures that would make the average head whirl, writes to the *Morning Post* objecting to the system of collecting money by the method of geometrical progression known as the "snowball" system. A lady at West Dulwich, appealing for Guy's Hospital, asks the public to send her sixpence and to write to three friends asking them to send the same and also to write three letters. Each writer is to number all his letters one higher than the number on the one he receives, and the "chain" is to stop at fifty. Now this gentleman has calculated that if the "absurd request" were complied with, the sum brought in to Guy's Hospital would be nearly £9,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. And in the effort to raise this sum the whole money of the world would be spent millions of times over in postage stamps, and everyone in the world would receive millions of appeals and forward millions of sixpences, and write millions of triplets of letters. "Is it not time" the writer asks, "to make the starting of these "snowballs" on any pretence, a penal offence?"

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Mr. C. B. Lockwood gives the following interesting information concerning the disinfection of sponges, in his article entitled "Further Report on Aseptic and Septic Surgical Cases, with official reference to the Disinfection of Materials and the Skin," which lately appeared in the *British Medical Journal*.

Disinfection of Sponges.*

"In the previous report, eleven sponges out of twelve were aseptic. Since then twenty-five sponges have been tested before use. Twenty-two were aseptic and three were septic; two others were tested after use, and both were septic.

* * *

The proportion of septic sponges in the tests done before the operation seems to me to be very high. The results do not equal those of the previous report. But the tests of the skin of my own hands show that it was septic in seven times out of twenty-one. Inasmuch as the hands are used to squeeze out the sponges, so it is possible that the method of disinfection may not be always at fault. Here again the atmospheric bacteria have also to be reckoned with.

* * *

Of the three septic sponges the kind of sepsis of one was not ascertained; another was infected with a micrococcus almost invariably found in the skin, and which is very like staphylococcus pyogenes albus, but does not liquefy gelatine in the same way. It has been called staphylococcus epidermidis albus. The third sponge contained a bacillus with rather unusual characters. It grew in gelatine near the surface as a delicate white cloud. The gelatine was liquefied at summer temperature. On agar-agar it grew in minute white colonies on the surface and in the depths. The growth was slow, and consisted of slender bacilli of varying length, usually solitary, but occasionally forming short chains. Some of these bacilli were slightly curved, no spores were seen, the culture had no odour, the bacilli were probably motionless. The disinfection of sponges is a serious problem. They do their work so well that I should be reluctant to abandom them for substances which can be sterilised with heat. Moreover, the surgeons who use wool disinfected by heat in place of marine sponges have not yet given us the results of their tests. My own efforts to disinfect wool for bacteriological purposes with dry heat sometimes failed. Moreover, I have seen moulds growing from wool which had been disinfected by others.

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On two occasions I tested wool which had been prepared in Lautenschlager's steam steriliser, and on both it was aseptic. When sponges have been in solution of sublimate the sulphurous acid method of sterilisation is apt to make them black and dingy. This can be obviated by using chlorine water, instead of sulphurous acid solution. A sponge which had been prepared in this way was aseptic. The chlorine, however, seems to make the sponges red and friable. One of the sponges which was aseptic after the sulphurous acid method of preparation is known to have previously been used for a septic case."

* For mode of preparation, see *British Medical Journal*, January 27th, 1894.

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