nutrition. But there is another class of cases, those of so-called metastasis, in which diseased conditions are conducted apparently through the nervous system, from one organ, as the eye or testis, to its symmetrically disposed fellow. In cases of this class at least, and in those given in Circular No. 6, where there is no especial morbid matter in the blood nor any especial organic derangement of the blood itself, and where the disease does not attack the two symmetrical parts at the same time, as would be the case if the peculiar arrangement were due to structural likeness between these parts, the secondary changes in nutrition may very possibly be due to local disturbances of circulation caused by some influence set up by the primary injury or irritation, and conducted through the spinal cord and vaso-motor nerves to the part secondarily affected.

THE LATE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

By J. L. SULLIVAN, M.D., Boston.

ON reviewing the brief but severe strictures, open and covert, upon the proceedings of the American Medical Association at its recent meeting in Washington contained in several numbers of the JOURNAL, I cannot avoid the conclusion that the exponent of medical ideas in Massachusetts is infected with the prevailing misconception as to the position and action of that body with reference to the unhappy controversy between the Medical Society of the District of Columbia and the "National Medical Society of the District," so called.

The fairness and impartiality uniformly evinced by the editors of the JOURNAL towards those who differ from them in opinion, afford the assurance that statements intended to vindicate the honor of the Association and remove the unjust aspersions that have been showered upon it, will, provided they are made in the proper spirit, meet with a cordial reception from the organ of the medical profession in New England. I feel emboldened, therefore, to offer the following explanatory remarks, with the request that their publication may not be unnecessarily delayed.

I shall begin by affirming several propositions, in which certain fundamental principles regulating the government of representative bodies in general, as well as the American Medical Association, are embraced and, as it were, formularized. I shall afterwards endeavor to apply, with logical

precision, these principles to the case in hand, with the expectation of proving the injustice done the Association by the press, both medical and secular, throughout the country.

The American Medical Association, then, is a representative body, composed of delegates annually elected or appointed by medical societies, colleges, or hospitals, affiliated with the Association through the adoption of its Code of Ethics, and therefore entitled to representation therein. Like other representative bodies, the Association is governed by a system of laws or rules, in this instance denominated its Code of Ethics.

Like other representative bodies, it can recognize or receive as members none but duly accredited representatives of organizations entitled to representation therein.

As happens in the case of other representative bodies, the seats of members of the Association are liable to be contested, or the attempt may be made to invalidate the credentials of persons claiming to be members thereof. In either event, *it becomes the duty of the Association to determine, in accordance with its existing laws or regulations, whether persons whose seats are contested or whose credentials are disputed, are or are not entitled to membership therein.* However burdensome or invidious circumstances may render the discharge of this duty, nevertheless it is one which the Association cannot refuse to perform without dishonor to itself and injustice to the parties whose rights are involved.

Now, on applying these simple, indeed almost self-evident propositions to the proceedings of the Association, is it not clear that that body could not refuse to consider the questions at issue between the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, and the so-called "National Medical Society" of that District? That it could not refuse will, I think, be apparent from the following considerations.

The former of the above-mentioned Societies, viz. the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, a numerous and highly respectable organization, deriving its charter from the Congress of the United States, and affiliated from the beginning with the National Association, had formally protested against the admission of delegates from the latter, that is, from the so-called "National Medical Society" of the District, on the ground that whereas the aforesaid Society had been organized in violation of the Code of Ethics of the Association, and that by its subsequent action it had con-

stantly infringed the provisions of the Code, therefore the Society never had been and was not now affiliated with the Association, and consequently not entitled to representation therein.

These charges were of too serious a nature to be dismissed without investigation. The matter was accordingly referred to the Committee on Ethics. The members of the Committee unfortunately disagreeing, a majority and minority report were presented, neither of which shed the necessary light upon the merits of the controversy; neither of which offered any substantial reasons for the action recommended therein. Thus the Association, as much in the dark as before, was reduced to the alternative of adopting at random one report or the other, or of granting a hearing to both sides. That it ultimately chose the latter was, in my judgment, very much to its credit. A patient and impartial investigation of all the evidence resulted in a verdict *against* the so-called National Medical Society of the District of Columbia, a verdict honorable to the Association because rendered with full knowledge of the facts and in accordance therewith—a verdict, moreover, “to all intents and purposes unanimous.” The question thus decided was a question of ethics, pure and simple, into which, despite the assertions to the contrary abounding in partizan newspapers or other publications under the control of fire-eating politicians, considerations of race or color did not and could not intrude.

In conclusion, therefore, I submit that no body of sensible men that could be convened in Christendom would have acted or ought to have acted otherwise than did in this instance the American Medical Association, confronted, as it was, with a question which it could not avoid deciding, and upon which it was bound by every consideration of justice and honor to render a decision in accordance, so to speak, “with the law and the evidence.”

Furthermore, I submit that it is in the nature of things impossible that a representative body of whatever description should not, occasionally at least, be called upon to adjudicate questions involving the eligibility to membership of persons claiming to be duly accredited thereto, and that in such cases it becomes the imperative duty of the organization to render a just and impartial decision in accordance with its existing rules or laws and the testimony presented. This is precisely what the American Medical Association did, and for

so doing has it not been most unjustly assailed?

Reports of Medical Societies.

CASES REPORTED AT THE MEETING OF THE ESSEX
NORTH DISTRICT MED. SOCIETY, MAY 4, 1870.
JOHN CROWELL, M.D., COR. SEC. PRO TEM.

Dr. PERKINS, of Newburyport, reported a case of dropsy resulting from disease of the heart. The case was peculiar in not yielding to the usual remedies. Powerful diuretics and alteratives had been administered in vain. Dr. Perkins considered the condition of the case as somewhat remarkable, and asked for suggestions.

Dr. Huse, of Georgetown, spoke of his success with digitalis in such cases. His experience with this drug had been that it did not act as a diuretic when the pulse was above its normal beat. When the pulse was brought from 120 to its normal state, then the digitalis began to exert its diuretic properties.

Dr. Whittemore spoke of the successful use of a decoction of the leaves of this drug over the kidneys in an obstinate case of retention, following scarlet fever.

Dr. Lovejoy reported a case of double placenta, in a single birth. A drawing was exhibited showing the placenta to be distinct and perfect in all respects. This rare anomaly is not mentioned in the usual textbooks on obstetrics. Dr. Sullivan suggested that it was mentioned by Cazeaux in his great work.

Dr. Lamb spoke of the successful use of the fluid extract of ricinus in cases of deficient secretion of milk.

Dr. Cross, of Newburyport, reported a case of difficult labor with breech presentation. One leg only could be detected by manipulation. After delivery it was found that the other leg was firmly twisted around the neck of the child. Several similar cases were reported.

Dr. Tracy, of Andover, spoke of a case of difficult delivery, in which the frontal bone was indented, presenting a concave surface. An incision was made with a bistoury, and the bone snapped into shape by means of a probe.

Dr. Morris Spofford, of Groveland, reported an interesting case of a man, of intemperate habits, suddenly attacked with violent pain in the bowels, which was temporarily relieved by subcutaneous injection of morphine. The patient was out the