CASE
OF
SUDDEN DEATH,
IN WHICH A
HYDATID WAS FOUND IN THE SUBSTANCE
OF THE HEART.

By DAVID PRICE, Esq.

COMMUNICATED IN A LETTER TO
THE PRESIDENT.

Read Jan. 20, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

THE following are the only particulars I am able to collect of the case of hydatid of the heart, the preparation of which I sent to you.

James Philpot, the subject of this case, was ten years of age, well grown, and of a remarkably good disposition. His parents are in very indigent circumstances, and have had altogether fourteen children; twelve of whom they have buried. I was desirous of knowing the diseases of which so

great a proportion of their children had died ; and found that two had died with croup, three of small pox, one of measles, one through accident, and four of infantile diseases ; the two surviving are of an adult age, and are robust and healthy.

The boy in question had but one attack of the affection he then laboured under.

He was of a cheerful disposition, and always entered with alacrity into all the amusements of children of his age. He never complained of languor or fatigue, neither did he experience the smallest inconvenience from the exertion of going quickly up stairs. He never had any difficulty of breathing, nor did he ever complain of palpitation.

He was in the habit of going daily to the parochial charity school, and, on the morning of the day he died, he appeared there with dirty hands. The master sent him home, requesting that his mother would wash him. This request, it appears, was not complied with, and, in the afternoon, he returned again with unwashed hands. The master ordered one of the boys to take him into the yard and wash him ; but the boy exceeded his instructions, and instead of simply washing him as directed, took off his shirt and splashed him with cold water. The poor fellow, however, seemed very well after this ablution, and left school with the rest of the boys, in apparent good health and spirits. When

he had proceeded a short distance from the school-house, he suddenly fell on his hands and knees on the pavement; he got up and leaned on a window-frame; presently he raised himself and fell backwards. A person went up to him, and asked what was the matter? he answered "for God's sake take me home." My assistant saw him a few minutes after, but he was quite dead.

Blame having been imputed to the master, by people in the neighbourhood, the trustees of the school became anxious for a full investigation of all the circumstances which preceded the boy's death, and requested that I would examine the body before the coroner held his inquest, to ascertain if there was any natural cause for such a sudden dissolution. In compliance with the instructions which I received, I minutely examined the brain, the abdominal viscera, and the contents of the thorax; and I found every part perfectly healthy with the exception of the heart and the portion of pericardium, which was adhering to it. In the latter were about two ounces of dark-coloured fluid. In the muscular substance of the heart was found a large hydatid.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

DAVID PRICE.

9, Upper East Smithfield.

TO ASTLEY COOPER, ESQ.