

air into the lungs. Each complaint causes more or less interference with the voice, and sometimes its temporary or permanent loss. And in consequence of the extreme sensitiveness of the surface of the larynx, and especially of the vocal cords, the presence of any disease—like the presence of a crumb of bread or any other foreign body—causes extreme irritation and a more or less violent spasmodic cough. It is, in fact, a distinctive mark of laryngeal trouble when we find this constant and extreme irritability of the throat, the cough being hard and "dry," because the surface affected is so small that the phlegm produced is comparatively scanty.

With reference to the diseases of the Larynx which have been named, the most common in childhood is that to which the term Croup is applied; and the nurse should remember that there are, at any rate, two distinct forms—the true, which is dangerous, and the false, which is harmless. The former is an infectious complaint, associated with some elevation of temperature and more or less bodily prostration. The breathing rapidly becomes impeded by the swelling around the throat, and in many children, the latter progresses almost to complete closure of the larynx. Such cases require incessant watchfulness on the part of the nurse, because there is then a considerable liability to the occurrence of what is termed "spasm of the glottis," a spasmodic action of the muscles of the larynx, which entirely closes the aperture, and thus prevents any access of air to the lungs. In such cases, unless the spasm quickly relaxes, or unless immediate relief be otherwise given, the child rapidly dies. It is therefore imperative that CHILDREN WITH THROAT COMPLAINTS SHOULD BE ALWAYS MOST CAREFULLY WATCHED.

In some cases of spasm the only means of saving life is the performance of Tracheotomy—the operation which consists of making an opening into the trachea below the larynx, and so admitting air direct into the lungs. In slight cases, however, sponging a little cold water on the child's face causes the relaxation of the muscular spasm, and the entrance again of air into the chest by the ordinary channel.

In all cases of Croup the prominent symptoms are the characteristic hard barking cough, the rapid and often very difficult breathing, and the exhaustion of the bodily strength which so quickly occurs.

(To be continued).

## Medical Matters.

### BURIED ALIVE.



THERE is, just at present, an extreme amount of public interest being exhibited in the question of premature burial. A society has been formed with the express object of preventing this accident, and it has even announced its intention of preparing a Bill upon the subject for presentation to Parliament. We recently published in this journal a somewhat ghastly engraving of a well-known Flemish picture, showing the struggles made by a man, buried alive, to escape from his coffin. The weird horror of such a tragedy has at all times preyed upon the imagination, and there is good reason to believe that many people now leave directions that their bodies should be cremated, in order to escape the possibilities of such a fate. Inasmuch, however, as the vast majority of the population will always be buried, it is important to consider how much foundation there is for this fear of premature burial. There are, undoubtedly, well authenticated cases which prove that a few persons have been buried before death, and that others have been almost confined in their coffins in the mistaken belief that life was extinct—a mistake fortunately rectified before it was too late. Such, then, are the facts; and it is argued with some force that beyond the few cases which are known, there may be large numbers which of necessity can never be discovered, in which this horrible accident occurred. We consider that the matter certainly deserves the attention of Parliament, because the most sensible and most effective remedy would produce invaluable results in another direction. We have, on various occasions, referred to the grievous defect in the law, at present, relating to stillbirths, and have on several occasions pointed out that the non-registration of such births provides facilities for the easy commission of murder. If all stillbirths had to be registered the necessary inspection could be made by an official deputed for the purpose of examining all dead bodies, and certifying to the actual occurrence of death, as well as its cause. Such officials are appointed by the State in continental countries, and in France the law on the subject is most stringent, notice of death having to be immediately given to the *Morts Verifica-*

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