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Original Articles

FOREIGN BODIES IN THE AIR PASSAGES*

BY SIR RICKMAN JOHN GODLEE, BART.,
President, Royal College of Surgeons, England.

In responding to the request that I should make a communication to your Society, I must apologize for not being able at comparatively short notice to offer you much, if anything, that is new, and ask your excuse for bringing before you a subject on which I have already written. It seemed best to take one from that part of the borderland to which I have directed some attention, especially as it is one that is of interest to all branches of our profession.

The practical dealing with foreign bodies in the air passages has in large measure passed into the hands of the laryngologists, but it will return into the domain of the surgeons as they become more habituated to the use of the bronchoscope which, though a dangerous weapon in the hand of the unwary, is not really a very difficult instrument to use.

But the whole question is of great importance to all, to the pure physician on account of the changes which are set up in the lungs, and above all to the general practitioner, on whose shoulders rests the heavy responsibility of making an early diagnosis and insisting on the removal of these causes of offence with the least possible delay, as must be done when it is recognized that incalculable mischief may result from the presence of some of them even for a short time in the air passages.

As the radiographer must always be called in aid, if one is available, this interesting skiagram may well form my text. But, though the radiographer may be a good friend, it must be remembered that there are many foreign bodies which give no shadow,

* Delivered before the Academy of Medicine, Toronto, November 4th, 1913.