

A Sharp Scalpel or a Mighty Pen? The Legacy of A.J. Cronin

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Abstract

Archibald Joseph Cronin was born in Cardross, which currently lies in the local authority of Argyll and Bute, a few miles from Glasgow. Training to become a physician, Cronin graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1919 with a degree in medicine and with the hope of becoming a surgeon. Learning eagerly and constantly, working hard towards his desire of owning a practice in London's fashionable Harley Street, Cronin's ambition was shattered by a diagnosis of duodenal ulcer which forced him to take a break. Returning to his childhood dream of writing a novel, he published *Hatter's Castle* in 1933, the success of which was so immense that Cronin never returned to the medical field. This paper aims to highlight a few aspects of the writer's life and literary output in relation to his medical background.

Key words: A.J. Cronin, *The Citadel*, surgery, National Health Service, medical practice