

Switching a Track

A.J. Cronin had been in practice as a physician for almost 10 years when he developed a gastric ulcer that required complete rest. He went to a farm in the Scottish Highlands to recuperate. "The first few days of leisure were pleasant enough," he said, "but soon the enforced idleness of Fyne Farm became insufferable.

"I had often, in the back of my mind, nursed the vague illusion that I might write. I had actually thought out the theme of a novel – the tragic record of man's egotism and bitter pride." He added:

"Upstairs in my cold, clean bedroom was a scrubbed deal table and a very hard chair. Next morning, I found myself on this chair, facing a new exercise book open upon the table, slowly becoming aware that, short of Latin prescriptions, I had never composed a significant phrase in all my life. It was a discouraging thought as I picked up my pen. Never mind, I began."

Even though Cronin struggled to write 500 words a day and eventually threw his first draft on the farm's trash heap, he finished *Hatter's Castle* (1931), the story of the megalomaniac James Brodie, a Scottish hatmaker, and his foolish dreams of social acceptance. The book was dramatized, translated into 22 languages and sold some 5 million copies.

Cronin produced several bestsellers drawing from his experiences as a doctor, and some of his works had religious themes, such as *The Keys of the Kingdom* (1942), which was also made into a film starring Gregory Peck. Cronin continued to write until he was in his 80th year.

The world had lost a physician, but gained a novelist.

Perhaps adversity has a way of blocking an initial dream that you may have had. Instead of a derailment, however, it could be the switching of a track – to something even better that God has in store for you. Being open to His leadership, coupled with determination and persistence, can produce amazing results.

One thing is certain: you cannot win if you do not begin.

--Beecher Hunter