

Francis Mitchell Caird & Charles Walker Cathcart

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Presented by Mrs H. M. McNeilage (née Cathcart) November 1964



Charles Walker Cathcart (1853-1932) FRCSEd 1880 graduated in medicine from Edinburgh in 1878. Later that year he became House Surgeon in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh to Professor Annandale, who had succeeded Lister as Regius Professor of Surgery the previous year. The Anatomy Department at Surgeons' Hall, which had been established by John Bell, elder brother of Charles Bell, was still flourishing and he Cathcart took charge of it. With the outbreak of war he served as a surgeon on the staff at Craighleith Hospital (subsequently the Western General Hospital). When the military hospital at Bangour opened he became Chief Surgeon there and after demobilisation became surgeon to the Edenhall Hospital for limbless soldiers and sailors. Cathcart was a surgical innovator, designing and building a microtome for frozen sections, a steriliser for surgical dressings and an adaption of the Springel pump for bladder drainage - and more.

Two publications enhanced his considerable local reputation as a teacher. He published "A Surgical Handbook: for the use of Students, Practitioners, House-Surgeons and Dressers" jointly with Professor Caird which became a vade mecum for generations of students. "Caird and Cathcart" went on to be published in twenty editions. "Requisites and Methods in Surgery" was published in 1928 bringing the earlier surgical handbook up-to-date.



Francis Mitchell Caird (1853-1926) FRCSEd 1880 Regius Professor of Clinical Surgery in the University of Edinburgh and President of the College, had served as an undergraduate as a dresser on Lord Lister's wards. He went on to become an early and lifelong advocate and teacher of Listerian antiseptics. At a time when abdominal surgery was being pioneered in Germany and Austria, he regularly visited European centres and successfully pioneered modern gastrointestinal surgery in Scotland. On the death of Professor Annandale in 1908 he was appointed to the Regius Chair of Clinical Surgery in Edinburgh. His use of rigorous aseptic technique and visits to continental surgeons like Mikulicz in Breslau and Billroth in Vienna allowed him to successfully pioneer intestinal surgery in Scotland. He was one of the first exponents of major gastrointestinal resections in Scotland, his pioneering work extending throughout the gastrointestinal tract.

His gift for drawing and painting was used to great effect in his teaching and in the Surgical Handbook.

The album contains carefully executed drawings in pen and ink and is accompanied by letters between the donor and the College.

