It was pleasure to read this collection of essays by Dr. Farokh E. Udwadia. In the nine essays, the author has covered a wide range of topics.

In the first essay “the forgotten art of healing” Dr. Udwadia delves into the reasons for the paradox of the amazing progress of modern medicine on one hand and the increasingly deepening illusion, distrust and even antagonism against medicine and the medical profession. He points out that modern medicine and the physician have lost the way. The physician no longer ministers an individual but his organs. The human being is forgotten. There is more and more dependence and emphasis on mechanization, technology and less and less on the doctor-patient relationship, on taking a thorough history, examining the patient fully, and understanding his sufferings, fears, and anxiety. Dr. Udwadia emphasizes that it is the human touch that really ‘heals’. In the second essay, which was the convocation address he delivered at the Banaras Hindu University, the author describes the attributes of a good physician, these being honesty and integrity, accepting ones mistakes (which unfortunately are inevitable), learning from the mistakes, humility, equanimity, and charity. He then goes on to briefly cover the romance of medicine through the ages. In fact history comes out as the authors strong point throughout the book. This is most obvious in the subsequent essays. The essay on landmarks in modern medicine, describes the fascinating history or the stories of discovery of penicillin by Alexander Fleming, cortisone by Philip Hench, and structure of DNA by James Watson and Francis Crick. The essay on arts and medicines discusses the importance of music as a part of therapy and the relationship between disease, and suffering with arts. He sites many a examples to. (e.g. Lord Byron, Bancisco Goya, Beethoven, John Keats, Leonardo da Vinci) to make the point. The story of anesthesia is fascinating. It is the story of missed opportunity to fame, human greed and interplay between medicine and politics. The essay on religion and medicine describes how from early Egyptian days till today religion has played an important role in the practice of medicine. The subject of euthenesia is dealt in a separate essay. The last two essays deal with todays medicine, its pluses and minuses. The last essay peeps into the future with great trepidation.

What comes out all through the book is the authors strong ethical conviction, a plea to combine todays science with yesterdays art of medicine and a hope that pursuit of science does not destroy the humanity.

A book for all interested in medicine.

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