Ronald Ross was a multifaceted personality. He was a novelist, musician, scientist and reluctant Physician. He was awarded Nobel Prize in medicine in 1902 for his contribution to the pathogenesis of malaria, which was the climax of his professional career, wavering between literature, music and science.

Ross was born in Almora, India. He was an obedient son of the Commander of British Forces on NW Frontier. He reluctantly enrolled for medical studies at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, London and took his medical degree in 1879. After returning to India, he entered Madras Medical Service as a Surgeon. Ronald Ross was a man of letters and his first few years in India were richly productive of verses and prose, but idle medically. However the scourge of malaria was ever apparent to Ross. He writes

"The painful faces ask, can we not cure? We answer, No, not yet; we seek the laws
O God, reveal thro’ all this thing obscure; the unseen, small, but million murdering cause"

In the year 1892, malaria became to him the object of scientific interest and all absorbing except for precious time allocated to music and poetry. Alphonso Laveran had already discovered malarial parasite in 1880. With the guiding hands of Patrick Manson, Ross succeeded in working out the life cycle of the malarial parasite in birds (sparrow). He discovered the object of his search, the zygotes (the sexual forms) in the stomach of the anopheles mosquito. The sporoblasts (progeny) were later identified in its salivary glands. The parasites were present only in insects that had dined on the blood of infected sparrow. These critical observations were carried out at the makeshift laboratory in Secunderabad and thus the parasite-mosquito-host cycle of malaria was established after 5 years of relentless toil, on 20th August 1897.

In 1899, he retired from the IMS and in 1902 was appointed Professor of Tropical Medicine at the University of Liverpool, holding this post for 12 years. He was knighted in 1911. Sir Ronald Ross was reluctant to enter medicine, but having done so, made notable contribution to the greatest morbid hazard of mankind.