Charles Frederick Terence East

Charles Frederick Terence East was born in 1894 near Malvern where his father, Dr. C. H. East, was in practice. He was educated at Winchester, where he was President of the Boat Club, and at New College. From Oxford he obtained a Burney Yeo Scholarship to Kings College Hospital where he qualified in 1921. In the following year he was elected to a Murchison Scholarship of the Royal College of Physicians and in 1924 he was the Radcliffe Travelling Fellow. At this stage in his career East's interests were in general medicine, and he

published in the *Lancet* an account of a minor explosion which occurred in a cinema when a patient with pyloric stenosis attempted to light a cigarette. In 1924 he was appointed to the Honorary Staff of King's College Hospital. The vacancy had arisen owing to the retirement through ill health of Dr. H. W. Wiltshire who had built up the Electrocardiographic Department in the Hospital; East took over this work and from that time his main interest lay in cardiology.

I had known Terence East since Oxford days but

it was a casual meeting in London during the winter of 1927 that led to our arranging to take a walking holiday together in the Black Forest in the spring. Terence also wanted to visit his landlady in Freiburg where he had spent six months before the war. The hotel on Lake Titisee was almost empty and we soon exhausted topics of conversation and so chanced to comment on the lack at that time of a good book on heart disease. We spent some days discussing how we should have planned such a book had we been required to do so. Shortly after our return Dr. ffolliott Creed of King's happened to be in the office of Messrs. J. & A. Churchill when they told him that they were proposing to extend the range of their Recent Advances series and asked if he could suggest someone to do a book on cardiology. He proposed the name of East who had already begun a book on treatment. When East was approached by Churchill's he accepted on the understanding that it would be written jointly with myself; so began an undertaking that continued intermittently for the rest of our working lives. We divided the subject matter as equally as we could and changed over chapters for each new edition. In this way the book was practically rewritten each time since one was not impressed by a chapter done some years before by someone else.

Terence East was a large man in every way; he seemed to be immune from the minor worries that afflict lesser mortals. He took little account of conventional public opinion: he always wore light coloured clothes because he preferred them. Moreover he could, when he chose, detach himself completely from his surroundings, a knack he said he had acquired at Winchester. I recall a visit to Fountains Hall in the grounds of the Abbey where the guide was a strong-minded individual who required that his parties should keep close to him and listen to all he was saying. Terence disliked being corralled and for the whole of the tour the guide used every artifice of voice and manner to induce conformity while Terence remained unaware of his existence.

To work with East was a stimulating experience. He had a good working knowledge of several languages and in later years reviewed books in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. This added depth to his knowledge. His teaching made him precise regarding physical signs. He had a keen appreciation of music and approached the heart sounds from that angle: a gallop sound could not be con-

fused with anything else because of its cadence. Novel ideas were never rejected out of hand, nor were they accepted without a critical examination. Occasionally they were found not to be novel at all since he was always interested in tracing back items of knowledge to the original source. His style of writing was individual and somewhat staccato but he always insisted that the meaning must be clear and easily understood.

Terence East was closely associated with the *British Heart Journal*. From 1950 to 1954 he was Associate Editor under Maurice Campbell, taking his share in the work of reading articles and giving advice to authors. During these years he did much valuable work for the Journal, but he also published original articles, some jointly with Oram, on the heart in scleroderma, oesophageal and other leads in posterior myocardial infarction, and the cardiogram in ventricular aneurysm following cardiac infarction. In addition to these articles in the *British Heart Journal*, East wrote in 1937 a small book on *Failure of the Heart and Circulation* which went through two editions and a larger *Cardiovascular Diseases in General Practice* in 1938 which ran to three editions. But his *magnum opus* was undoubtedly his *Story of Heart Disease*, the title of the Fitzpatrick Lectures he delivered at the Royal College of Physicians in 1956 and 1957, which were subsequently published in book form. In this work he traced the knowledge of heart disease back to the Middle Ages under the headings of diagnosis, morbid anatomy, coronary circulation, and therapeutics, reading all the hundreds of original publications himself, except one in Russian, and making his own translations from the Latin, French, and German for the Lectures. Many of the illustrations taken from the title pages of old works came from his own library.

It was said that as a young man East never pushed himself forward: he merely leaned in the desired direction and affairs arranged themselves accordingly. The same notion could be applied to the manner of his death. After a day of work in his garden he waited up, listening to Dvořák at a Promenade Concert, to welcome his son and daughter-in-law who were driving down from London. Early next morning his wife was awakened by his stertorous breathing, and he died six hours later without recovering consciousness.

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