

John William Ballantyne, M.D. By Lt.-Col. A. G.  
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JOHN WILLIAM BALLANTYNE was born in Eskbank in the year 1861. He was educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh, from which he passed to Edinburgh University, where he graduated as M.B., C.M. in 1883. Thereafter he studied at the medical schools of Berlin, Munich, and Göttingen, returning to Edinburgh as senior assistant to Professor A. R. Simpson, the professor of midwifery and diseases of women. In 1889 he took the degree of M.D., being awarded a gold medal and the Simpson-Gunning Victoria Jubilee prize in obstetrics, for a thesis entitled "Certain Anatomical and Pathological Conditions in the Fœtus and New Born Infant in their Relation to Obstetrics." Two years later he published *An Introduction to the Diseases of Infancy* which incorporated his M.D. thesis, and dealt mainly with the anatomy, as revealed by frozen sections, and the physiology of the fœtus. In 1892 and 1895 two volumes on diseases and deformities of the fœtus appeared from his pen, and in 1902 and 1904 two volumes of a *Manual of Antenatal Pathology and Hygiene*. This manual was the first of its kind. In it were merged the conclusions arrived at in over two hundred papers which Ballantyne had published earlier. It dealt mainly with the physiology and diseases of the fœtus, with teratology and morbid heredity, and at once won him a reputation as a pioneer in medical science.

Having thus aroused interest in the child during antenatal existence, Ballantyne was not content to allow matters to rest, but devoted his energies to the practical application of the principles which emerged. His gospel was that the supervision of child life should begin before birth, and that by such supervision many diseased conditions, which were difficult to deal with in infancy and in later life, could be prevented. In 1901, in response to his appeal, the "Hamilton Bed" was endowed in the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital, for the treatment of diseases and complications of pregnancy. Interest in the movement rapidly spread. In Edinburgh the single bed soon gave place to an antenatal department, comprising a number of beds, and a large outdoor dispensary. In America, in the British Colonies, and in Europe antenatal clinics rapidly

came into being. The principles for which he strove may at the present time seem almost obvious, but they were not so until he presented them. Ballantyne will have an honoured place in the history of medical and social progress.

He was a Fellow of many Societies at home and abroad, and was elected to the Fellowship of this Society in 1892.

He died in Edinburgh on 23rd January 1923.