David Berry Hart, M.D., F.R.C.P.E., Librarian, Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. By **J. W. Ballantyne**, M.D., F.R.C.P.E.

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It was the scientific aspects of medicine which appealed most strongly to David Berry Hart, and his interest was not limited to the subjects which are usually classified as purely medical; he was therefore in a real sense at home in the rooms of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and he enjoyed to the full the intercourse with scientists of all departments which was to be had there. From the very first true science dominated all Dr Hart's contributions to medicine, and he was quick to apply every advance in cognate subjects to the elucidation of the problems of obstetrics and gynecology.

Dr Berry Hart was born in Edinburgh in October 1851, both his father's and his mother's families being well known in the city; and he died there on June 10, 1920, after an illness which had only been recognised as serious a few days previously. He was educated in his native town, and he passed through the medical curriculum in the university with distinction, graduating as M.B. and C.M. in 1877. After a short visit to Vienna he began his professional career as Assistant in the Midwifery Department of the University under Professor Alexander Russell Simpson, and at the same time he assisted him in his private practice. Shortly afterwards the association thus set up between Sir Alexander and Dr Hart was firmly established by the publication of a joint work upon an aspect of pelvic anatomy and physiology which was of great importance. From 1877 onwards there flowed from Dr Hart's pen a long series of articles on obstetrics and gynecology, scarcely one of which could be regarded as mediocre and many of which would have sufficed alone to have established his reputation as a scientific worker and deep thinker of a high order. They numbered by the time of his death over seventy, and whilst, as has been said, all were worthy of study, those upon the anatomy and physiology of the female pelvic floor, upon the physiology of the third stage of labour, and upon ectopic pregnancy were outstanding contributions which decided the trend of medical opinion all over the world. In his later years Dr Hart dealt with the fascinating problems of heredity as they appeared in connection with Mendelism, hermaphroditism, and teratology; here he was treating abstruse, difficult, and more purely theoretical questions, but what he had to say was always well worth attending to.

Meanwhile Berry Hart was receiving distinctions of various kinds. At

his graduation as M.D. in 1880 his Alma Mater awarded him a gold medal and the Syme Surgical Fellowship, both of them highly coveted honours. He began to lecture outside the university at Surgeons' Hall in 1883, and he continued to do so there till within a few days of his death. He always had a good class, and the thinkers among the undergraduates found in him a most inspiring teacher who spared no pains to make clear the fundamental principles of obstetrics and gynecology. In 1884, when he was appointed Assistant Physician to the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital, and in 1886, when he became Assistant Gynecologist to the Royal Infirmary, the sphere of his activities was immensely enlarged and the clinical aspect of his speciality engaged his attention, with immediate results in his literary output, his contributions to the Obstetrical Society (of which he was President in 1890) coming to be of a more directly practical kind. He had been elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1880, and one of the posts which he held in his later years with great acceptance was that of the Librarianship of the College. He wrote two text-books which had each a large circulation and brought fame to the Edinburgh Medical School. One was his *Guide to Midwifery*, noteworthy for the novelty of its arrangement and views; the other, in the writing of which he enjoyed the collaboration of his friend Dr Freeland Barbour, was the famous *Manual of Gynecology*, which did so much to establish Gynecology as a scientific speciality, and which was translated into three foreign languages.

In addition to the honours which Dr Berry Hart received at home, there were the distinctions which were conferred upon him abroad: America made him an Honorary Fellow of her Gynecological Society, and Germany gave him similar distinctions. He was several times asked to open discussions at annual meetings of the British Medical Association, and he was widely recognised as one of Edinburgh's most learned obstetricians. In addition to these many sides of his life there were others, such as his private practice in his speciality, his examining work both in Edinburgh and at other universities, and his post-graduate teaching; but, above all, he impressed his fellows with the extraordinarily wide outlook of his mind upon all the problems of life, and especially upon those concerned with embryology and generation. He was an attractive speaker upon these subjects; his interest in them was intense; and he brought to their elucidation a contagious enthusiasm and an immense knowledge of recondite matters, the product of a lifetime of close reading of stimulating books in every department not only of medicine but of all the sciences. This personal equipment was easily recognised in the contribution which he made to the *Proceedings* of this Society on the subject of the "free-martin."