

**THOMAS DENMAN**, the son of a respectable apothecary, at Bakewell, in Derbyshire, was born there on the 27th of June, 1733. After having finished his education at the grammar-school of his native town, he became an assistant, successively, to his father and elder brother. In 1753, he proceeded to London, and attended the practice and lectures at St. George's Hospital, living upon an allowance, left him by his father, of £75 a year, until he procured an appointment as surgeon's mate, in the navy. In 1757, through the interest of the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, he was made surgeon of a ship; and, after a cruise of seventeen months, off the coast of Africa, removed to the *Edgar*, of sixty guns, commanded by Captain, afterwards Admiral, Drake, in which he served, on several important occasions, until the peace of 1763; when his health having become materially affected by a sedulous attention to the sick and wounded in the hospitals, at Gibraltar and Havannah, he abandoned the navy, and returned to London.

After having commenced practice, he acquired some reputation by producing *An Essay on Puerperal Fever*; and, in 1764, the University of Aberdeen presented him with a diploma of M. D. He now endeavoured, but without success, to establish himself at Winchester; and, on returning to London, found his prospects so bad, that he attempted to procure a re-appointment in the navy, but was unable to obtain a warrant. At length, through the influence of Lord John Cavendish, and the recommendation of his friend, Captain Drake, he was made surgeon of one of the royal yachts, at a salary of £70 per annum. About the year 1770, he commenced the delivery of lectures on midwifery, in conjunction with Dr. Osborne, which they continued, with great reputation, for a period of fifteen years; and, nearly at the same time, he was appointed joint physician to the Middlesex Hospital. In 1783, he became a licentiate, in midwifery, of the College of Physicians;

and, seven years after, an honorary member of the Edinburgh Royal Society. He subsequently published several medical tracts; and, at length, obtained a very extensive practice, from which, in 1791, he partially withdrew in favour of Sir Richard Croft.

Long before Dr. Jenner's great discovery of vaccination had been universally recognized, Dr. Denman published, in the *Medical Journal*, several important and decisive facts in confirmation of its efficacy. He was instrumental in founding a charity, which did not finally succeed, for the relief of persons afflicted with cancer; and, in 1815, contributed an article to the *Medical Journal*, in which he strongly recommended the mode of treatment pursued by Mr. Young for that disease, of the importance of which he had satisfied himself by personal observation. In addition to these pieces, and his work on puerperal fever, he was the author of some valuable Aphorisms for the use of Junior Practitioners; *An Introduction to the Practice of Midwifery*, in which most of his tracts on the subject were incorporated; and a small Treatise on Cancer, of which, it is said, he had prepared a second edition, when he was taken ill, on Sunday, the 26th of November, 1815, and almost immediately expired; leaving a son, the eminent barrister, and two daughters, the elder of whom was married to Sir Richard Croft, and the younger to Dr. Matthew Baillie.

From the death of Dr. William Hunter, this eminent man appears to have been considered as the head of his profession. His deportment was unaffected and cheerful, his disposition kind, and his mode of living temperate and regular. As a practitioner, he is said to have been remarkably cautious; yet, when his mind was made up as to a mode of operation, admirably firm in carrying it into effect. He was admired by the rich and beloved by the poor; his charitable disposition rendering him a most welcome visitor to the latter, and his profound obstetrical skill to both.

DR. T. DENMAN,

LICENTIATE IN MIDWIFERY OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE  
OF PHYSICIANS.

**T**O enjoy the evening of life, unmolested with the pursuits of business, any farther than as they constitute an amusement or pleasure, is the enviable lot of few medical characters. It has been the good fortune, however, of the present respectable individual, "*to take time by the forelock,*" and not only to secure his own independence, but to transmit the same extensive and beneficial practice, founded by his merit and exertions, to his family.

Dr. T. Denman is a native of England, and settled early in the metropolis, in the department of Midwifery. This part of the profession is one of the most politic for a young practitioner, and an attendance on the mother of the family generally secures the good opinion and favour of the whole. Much improvement had been introduced into this part by one of his countrymen, the late Dr. Smellie; but the field was still open for farther progress, and of this Dr. Denman wisely took advantage, and steadily applied himself to become distinguished as a lecturer and physician in female cases. His lectures, a proof of his competence for this task, became soon crowded with students, and he carried the palm of reputation for many years from the other competitors in this line.

During the period of his lecturing, he found it necessary, in order to make his opinions better understood and more extensively known, to publish a text-book on that

part of the subject, which had been left imperfect by other authors. This particularly related to the use of instruments in difficult cases, and his aphorisms here on the use of the forceps and lever, may be considered as *golden rules* for the young accoucheur to go by, the fruits of tried experience, mechanical accuracy, and just observation.

Nor are his directions less important in manual or preternatural cases. Here he has pointed out what nature will do in the most unfavourable situations, and that the presentation will be, even in the worse cases, rectified by the action of the uterus *itself* causing the child to turn on its own axis. This was a new and most valuable fact never observed by any former practitioner, and which gives to Dr. Denman's practice much merit, by shewing him a close observer of nature, and attentive in following her steps in directing his practice. His improvements in flooding and convulsive cases were no less important and useful; situations which, of all others, a practitioner has most to dread. Here the great point is, to choose the *happy time for interference*, and neither to anticipate by a rash opposition to nature, nor delay it too long, till the powers of the system are exhausted in a vain struggle.

The recital of these circumstances will sufficiently appreciate the merits of this eminent physician, and entitle him to high professional rank. There is, indeed, no branch which is attended with greater exertion both of body and mind, than the practice of the accoucheur. He is obliged to submit to the midnight watch and the anxious busy day, seldom the master of his own hours, and apt to be broken in upon by the calls of his duty at his most pleasing moments, when least wished for. This soon undermines his constitution in an extensive practice, and Dr. Denman continued it as long as his health and

strength permitted, and luckily till he had attained an able successor to his labours. This was in his son-in-law, Mr. Croft, who had been bred with him, and shewed his attachment to his family, by soliciting the hand of his youngest daughter. This happy event rendered his continuance in practice no longer necessary, than till the proper introduction of Mr. Croft: so that he has seen his character as an accoucheur perpetuated in his relative, in the same line in which he moved, and with the same eclat which attended his own labours; while his reputation as a teacher, and his practical directions, are disseminated widely, and regulate the conduct of every scientific practitioner.

On Dr. Denman's retirement, this department of lecturing was given up, which was indeed less necessary, from his particular opinions and practice having been submitted to the public eye; but though in retirement, we find Dr. Denman's mind still alive to the interests of the profession: and he published a small treatise, the results of his experience and observation on that formidable disease, cancer. That disease is more frequently met with by an accoucheur than any other practitioner, from its attacking the female oftener than the other sex. Dr. Denman has in this work justly appreciated all the remedies that have been employed, and given his opinion in a candid and judicious manner, without arrogating too much.

To the honour of this gentleman, it may be also stated, that several years ago he projected the plan for a College of Midwifery. The licenses given by the College for that department only, he considered as too limited, and unworthy the standing of men of science. The extent of this department, and its importance, he regarded as deserving a separate establishment, and we have no doubt

it would have been of advantage to the community at large. In this, however, he was unfortunately frustrated.

Of Dr. Denman we may conclude, that his professional life has been valuable and meritorious; and he has given a wise and useful example for others to retire in time, and not shew the common desire of grasping too long, till the period of health and enjoyment is past, when *hic jacet* is the *only* recompense for their unwearied exertion and unceasing struggle.