

CHAPTER XII
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

It is given to few men to leave behind them such permanent and diverse memorials as a great commercial enterprise, a university college and a famous infantry battalion, yet this singular distinction was achieved by another member of the Beaumont family. He was John Thomas Barber Beaumont, great grandson of Henry, second son of William of Dunmow.

Henry had two sons and three daughters. The eldest son Henry (1710-32) matriculated at New College but did not live long enough to take up a career. All we know of the second son Thomas is that during the '45 rebellion he joined the army of the Duke of Cumberland and which pursued Prince Charles into the Highlands and defeated him at the bloody battle of Culloden. In that battle Thomas lost his life. He must have been well known to the Duke, for it appears that his widow and small son were taken under Cumberland's protection and went to live in Hanover, where the boy was brought up. In 1768 William's son married . . . Barber, grand-daughter of John Barber, once Lord Mayor of London. Whether or not he committed some kind of crime we do not know, but the fact remains that he was attainted . . . and that he left England for America and fought in the War of Independence, leaving his wife and young son behind. This boy, born in Marylebone, was registered in his mother's name and was known as John Thomas Barber, until 1812 when the attainer was lifted and the estates restored and he assumed his paternal name.

Though mother and son were not wealthy, they were by no means destitute, for the records of Hanover show that they received money from some source within the Royal Household after the death of the Duke of Cumberland in 1765, which continued until the boy had been educated. Nevertheless, there was little to spare, and early struggles to live and learn must have conditioned the whole of his later life, for he was never forgetful of the needs of those who had less to exist on than he had himself. From these arose all his efforts to help the poorer classes, not merely by charity, but to teach them ways in which they might help themselves.

John Thomas Barber Beaumont was two to three years older than Ernest Augustus, fifth son of George III who was created Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale in 1799, and the two were apparently well known to each other, for Prince Augustus introduced Thomas into the Royal Household and was later responsible for his appointment as Miniature Painter Royal. From his very early years Thomas had showed a liking and talent for drawing, and in 1791 he entered the Royal Academy School where he gained several medals for his work. Between 1794 and 1804 he exhibited no less than 53 miniatures, painting several portraits, mostly of members of the theatrical profession including Mrs. Jordan and Charles Incledon.

He was chiefly attracted, however, to the painting of miniatures and several examples of his exquisite work are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Miniatures of excellent quality abound, whereas there is only one really interesting oil painting, that of his wife Sarah Sophia, now in the County Fire Office which was for so many years his business headquarters. Royal patronage brought him the appointment as miniaturist to both the Duke of York and the Duke of Kent.

He and his relative the 7th Baronet must have been well acquainted, for Academy records reveal that they were both at several meetings together, and

one of Barber's earliest works, an illustrated book describing a tour through South Wales (1802) is in pencil and wash, much after the Baronet's own style. Barber Beaumont dedicated it to Richard Brinsley Sheridan and which is today a collector's piece.

Before he was thirty, however, the desire to paint had given way to a greater desire to be of some use to the community. Since 1793 England had been at war with the French and had been under the threat of invasion. The militia was permanently under arms and volunteer corps had been enrolled all over the country by gentlemen of means, largely at their own expense. In 1802 there was a short truce, but the dream of lasting peace with a person of Napoleon's military stature and overweening ambition was doomed to be rudely shattered. It was obvious that this was to be no more than a breathing-space to allow Bonaparte to absorb his conquests and to prepare for further military action. Nobody was surprised when war broke out again in May, 1803. In England a new Army of Reserve was called up, and there was a more intense drive for enrolment into the volunteer forces.

It was in this emergency that Barber Beaumont first revealed his powers as a man of action, in deciding to form a corps of sharpshooters. First he obtained the consent of his friend the Duke of Cumberland to act as patron and in August a meeting was held in the Vestry Room of St. Paul's Covent Garden, when it was resolved that a corps of sharpshooters "would be eminently useful in and about the Metropolis" and its formation was decided on. Enlistment was rapid, and as early as the 5th of September the first meeting of the gentlemen of the Duke of Cumberland's Sharpshooters was held at the Shakespeare Tavern. Here a letter was read from the Marquis of Titchfield, Lord Lieutenant of Middlesex signifying His Majesty's approval and acceptance of the corps. Here also a letter was read from the Duke of Cumberland recognising the efforts of J.T. Barber Beaumont and nominating him as "a fit and proper person to have the honour of commanding the Duke of Cumberland's Corps of Sharpshooters." The reading of the letter was received with loud applause, the appointment was approved by all present and John Thomas Barber Beaumont addressed the meeting:

"Whatever the abilities may be for which you have been pleased to give me credit, exertion on my part will at least, not be wanting to maintain the respectability and spirit which the Corps so eminently possesses, and to advance the rapid progress which it has already made in military manoeuvres to an effectiveness which will render it conspicuous in the eyes of our countrymen. . . ."

He went on to promise regular meetings which would fall as often as possible out of working hours and that these meetings, though subservient to the necessary strictness of discipline would be "in every respect agreeable and even amusing."

An advertisement was then put into the daily newspapers intimating that suitable gentlemen between the heights of five feet three inches and six feet might apply at any of the weekly meetings of the committee for enlistment at the Shakespeare Tavern, Covent Garden. Any applicants not personally acquainted with existing members of the Corps would be required to furnish references from respectable householders.

At the time of its foundation the Corps consisted of three companies each of 70 men, one field officer, three captains, six subalterns, six sergeants, nine corporals and three drummers. By the end of October the required number was evidently reached, for the Corps was inspected on the 22nd day by Lord Harrington, Lord Petersham and three high-ranking officers. John Thomas Barber had already made an earnest study of the novel methods

of Brigadier John Moore for meeting the kind of assaults that might be expected from Bonaparte. The strange thing is that, without any practical experience of military manoeuvres he managed in a few weeks to bring his corps to such a high standard as to be complimented by Lord Harrington. The complexity of these evolutions, gathered from a report of the event, must have required both intelligence and discipline.

"After passing twice before the General and his suite, in ordinary and quick time, they went through their skirmishing manoeuvres to the satisfaction and surprise of every person present, military or otherwise. They formed into an extended line, the front rank discharging their rifles, and giving way for the rear to advance, who, having fired, remained firm at their post, the front rank again advancing in the same order, keeping up an alternate discharge and advance of the most rapid kind. All was silent, not a word could be heard from the corps, the command being given by a whistle, so that an enemy must be unconscious of their approach in everything but the effect of their guns. Having advanced in this way to a considerable distance, they retreated in the same order, at the sound of the bugle, firing and falling back.

Another mode of annoyance was then practised, as singular in its appearance as expertly performed. The corps advanced to a certain position, laid themselves on their bellies, took aim and discharged their rifles, rolling again upon their backs at full length to load, and by this means keeping up an incessant and well-directed annoyance. After some time spent in this way, the whole corps, at the sound of the whistle, leaped up and fled, with the utmost precipitancy, then rallied, took a fresh position and repeated their former movements."

This kind of manoeuvre introduced by Moore and entirely new in the British army, was only part of the training of the corps, for the stress also had to be on the excellence of marksmanship. In 1804 Captain Barber Beaumont compiled and published a small booklet, "Instructions for the Formation and Exercise of Volunteer Sharpshooters" which dealt in detail with these two elements, manoeuvre and marksmanship. It gave details of the methods and equipment of his own corps and, widely used by others, did much to improve the standard and performance of many companies of Volunteers. In the same year the corps presented him with a silver cup surmounted with the figure of a member of the corps in uniform. This cup is now in the Mess of the Queen Victoria Rifles in Davies Street, London, having been presented to them by his grand-daughter Sarah Auguste Beaumont wife of Sir Ronald Lane.

One of the attractions of joining a Volunteer Corps was the glamour attached to wearing the uniform. Every county, almost every hundred of a county, had its peculiar colour and cut, as well known in the towns and shires as football colours are today. There were contests of skill, parades and church services at which they could be shown off under the admiring gaze of the young ladies. In the uniform of a volunteer even the most ordinary youth could be made to look dashing and handsome. That of the Duke of Cumberland's Sharpshooters was of rifle green with a short cavalry jacket and tight trousers, brass buttons carrying the letters D.C.S.S.; a tall shako with long feather plume, and black gaiters. The officer were hanging hussar jacket trimmed with fur, and for undress, white tights were worn. Men who could afford the money (and there were many in the Volunteers) bought their own, the rest were fitted out sometimes by public subscription, sometimes by the gift of a patron.

More serious work was not neglected. Captain Barber Beaumont divided his men into three classes according to their skill, the third being proficient on targets 150 yards away, the second at 200 yards, the first at 300 yards and at shorter distance at a moving target. The first class were allowed to wear a green cockade in their caps, and once a month a gold medal was competed for by men in the first and second classes, the winner in six consecutive monthly trials being allowed to keep it. Between 1803 and about 1808 when the volunteer movement had begun to decline with the decreasing probability of invasion, the Duke of Cumberland's Sharpshooters were constantly ahead of every other corps in the standard of their marksmanship. Captain Barber Beaumont was so confident in the ability of his men that on one occasion in Hyde Park he held the target while the entire corps fired into it consecutively at a distance of 150 yards. For many years the stone from which the firing took place remained in Hyde Park opposite the spot where the butt stood, and on it were chiselled the letters D.C.C.S. The feat was a rehearsal for an inspection that was due to take place the next day by General the Earl of Banbury. Capt. Barber Beaumont breakfasted with General Banbury the next morning, told him what had happened and that he intended to repeat the performance for the benefit of the General. Banbury was horrified and gave peremptory orders that the shoot was not to take place. It was fortunate that he did so, for the crack shot in the corps, who had hit the bull's eye the previous day, became nervous and even missed the target in two shots out of three.

Captain Barber Beaumont seems to have disappeared from the active list after a few years, because the Earl of Yarmouth was later shown to be in command. This was probably owing to the intense business activity which he took on in the year 1806. He still appears to have kept contact with the Corps though, because in the Times of April 22nd, 1826 there is a somewhat spiteful allusion to him in an account of a ball during the course of which the hit of his sword got entangled in the sweeping train of the Widow Coutts.

In June 1814 a General Order for the disbandment of all volunteers and for the return of their equipment to the Government stores was issued. It was even served upon the Honourable Artillery Company but a week later it was rescinded. The Duke of Cumberland's Sharpshooters were most averse to sharing the fate of all the other units and tried every way without success to gain exemption. In the end after long correspondence the then Secretary of State wrote saying that though the Government could not afford any official recognition no obstruction would be put in the way of their continuing their association as long as they kept out of the public eye. This resulted in their becoming a Rifle Club though they retained among themselves the old regimental name, continued to wear the uniform and met regularly for practice. The crack of their rifles was heard regularly in the summer afternoons first at Wormwood Scrubs and later at Chalk Farm. Thus they kept their unity and their successors of today proudly boast of being the oldest territorial unit in existence.

In 1835 those who remained in the Rifle Club, "a party of gentlemen principally connected with the Army and the Government residing in the neighbourhood of Earl's Court and Hammersmith", decided to seek new recognition by applying to H.R.H. The Duchess of Kent, the mother of Princess (later Queen) Victoria, for the Club to be called the Royal Victoria Rifle Club. Then in 1851 when Louis Napoleon made himself Emperor of France, the British Government decided again that it was time to look at the country's defences. Several volunteer rifle corps were speedily projected. One of the first to offer its services was the Royal Victoria Rifles.

But there was no war. As Sergeant Bouncer sang in Burnand and

Sullivan's Box and Cox:

"We sounded the trumpet, we beat the drum
Somehow the enemy didn't come."

Though many of the other companies eventually dwindled and died, the Royal Victoria Rifles still managed to survive, and the Duke of Wellington took up their cause, applying for leave to organise them into a regiment of a thousand men. In the end permission was grudgingly conceded for the raising of a four-company battalion of 75 men in each, but in 1853 the Corps had to give up the title of "Royal" and settled down under that which it still bears - The Queen Victoria Rifles.

During the whole of his adult life Barber Beaumont had one overriding preoccupation - the welfare of those who were dependent on him. Even before he embarked on his major business ventures this is shown. At a meeting of the whole Company of Sharpshooters on November 16th 1803 with him in the Chair the following resolution was passed:

"... That at a time so momentous as the present, when Britons, actuated by one sentiment, have so nobly come forward to enrol themselves in defence of Our Most Gracious Sovereign . . . it must be obvious . . . that in the training and disciplining of such an immense body of men, accidents of the most fatal kind may frequently happen, by which a family depending exclusively upon the exertions of its father, may in addition to its irreparable loss, be in one instant involved in the greatest misery and distress."

The result was an instruction to the General Committee to devise a means of carrying into effect a plan proposed by one of its members. In 1803 Barber Beaumont already had in his mind the idea of life assurance. This concern about individual security came to full fruition in the years 1806-7.

In the spring of 1806 he established a Provident Institution or Bank for Savings, the first of its kind in existence, and explained its purpose in an essay in the same year giving a detailed account of the plan, regulations and routine of the management of the Provident Bank in the Parish of Covent Garden. This was followed by a second venture, the establishment of the County Fire Office, combined with the Provident Life Office. Fire insurance had existed even before the Great Fire of London in 1666 and had been developed by such companies as the General Insurance Office (1685), Lombard House (1694) and the Phoenix Office (1705). This, however, was the first fire insurance company established in Great Britain or anywhere else upon the mixed principle usually associated with life insurance but equally applicable to fire and some other branches.

The County Fire Office was founded with capital of £400,000 in 4,000 shares of £100, a very large sum in those days. From the beginning the Company's operations were a great success and investors were attracted through the repayment of certain surpluses of the annual premiums to all shareholders, even though they might have made claims. Previous to 1819 the Company had conducted its business from offices in the Strand but in that year the business was transferred to Piccadilly Circus where the offices have remained ever since. In 1825 the market price of a £100 share had risen to £135.

From then onwards Barber Beaumont's attentions were almost wholly absorbed by the demands of the companies he had founded. In 1814 he wrote a pamphlet on the general question of life insurance giving important facts which showed how in his company there had been successive reductions in the terms, and how certain recent schemes were bound to fail. By that time he was a very rich man.

He was not without enemies, and an encounter with one of these in 1823 nearly cost him his life.

John Thurtell, born in 1794 was the son of a Norwich merchant and alderman. Spoilt by a doting mother and badly behaved, he was sent into the marines where he spent two years. Then to give him a fresh start, his father set him up as a manufacturer of bombazines, a very fashionable fabric in those days.

This was not young Thurtell's idea of seeing life, and he was soon spending more time in the taverns than in his business. He fell into disfavour with the Norwich merchants who suspected him of shady practices and doubted his credit, and he finally quitted Norwich for the more glamorous excitements of London. There he got a reputation among the underworld as being one who, though pretending to be smart and wide-awake, could easily be 'plucked'.

Before many months were out he was reduced to his usual methods of sharp practice. In December 1822 a policy for nearly £2,000 was taken out with the County Fire Office in the name of his brother Thomas on premises at 93 Watling Street hard by St. Paul's. The two brothers then raised money on bills and together with £500 lent by their father, bought a vast quantity of bombazines, crepes and other silk goods paying cash, from London wholesalers. These they hoped to sell at a profit, but were finally forced to get rid of them at a loss of 25 per cent. Hopelessly in debt they had to find some way of raising money and on January 26th 1823 their premises in Watling Street went up in flames.

Barber Beaumont saw something odd in the circumstances surrounding the fire and suspected that it had been purposely caused. In this the Board of the Fire Office upheld him and the claim was resisted. Thomas Thurtell then brought an action against the County Fire Office which was heard in June, 1823. Some say that the Counsel who represented the Fire Office offended the Judge by making a "breeze" in court, and that Justice Park revenged himself in the summing up. Whatever the truth may be, the verdict of the jury went for the plaintiff. This did not mean that Thurtell was much better off, for already his affairs were in the hands of creditors.

Then, in July 1823 a board meeting in the office was held in which new evidence was brought up and this, gave sufficient evidence of a "deep-laid and flagitious conspiracy" to justify bills of indictment to be drawn up against the Thurtell brothers for conspiracy and perjury.

What then followed was revealed at the subsequent trial of John Thurtell by one of his confederates, Joseph Hunt. Hunt was the landlord of the Army and Navy Tavern which was at that time a well-known resort of sharpers and sporting gentlemen.

John Thurtell, the prime mover in this fire-raising plot, enraged at the delays in meeting his claim, sensed that the obstacle was Barber Beaumont, and he set Hunt to watch the door of the Fire Office to ascertain the times at which his prospective victim went in and out. "If I discovered him", said Hunt, "I was to run and give notice to Thurtell which way he went and he was to follow and shoot him". Thurtell carried on these prowling occasions, what appeared to be a quite ordinary walking-stick, but it was composed of metal cased with tin to resemble wood. The top part of the stick was removable. An air-pump, separate from the rest but small enough to go into the pocket, could be fixed on in a second and the gun filled with air. The calibre was very small and could only take bullets very little larger than buckshot, but it could send one of these through an inch-thick deal

"We sounded the trumpet, we beat the drum
board at a moderate distance even when his gun was 100 years old.

Though Thurtell very nearly succeeded, for one night Hunt happened to be on the watch as Barber Beaumont left the office. He tried to call his principals but before they could reach the spot where they hoped to waylay him, they found he had turned off in another direction. This lucky chance certainly saved Beaumont's life. Our company battalion of 75 men in each, but in 1853 the Corps had to give up the title of "Royal" and settled down. The attempt was not repeated for in the meantime another prospect appeared which Thurtell hoped would turn out more profitable and he decided that the revenge on Barber Beaumont could wait. He had lately met an elderly gambler named William Weare who visited the horse-races far and wide. He was rumoured in October that he had returned from the St. Legers in Doncaster laden with the spoils of his card-sharping operations, and a plot was laid to rob him. In a friendly fashion Thurtell proposed that Weare should go with him and his confederates to shoot in the country and perhaps organise a few card games. Weare accepted, packed his bag and joined them, with the slightest idea that they were out to rob and murder him in a deserted country lane. Somehow the plans miscarried and only Thurtell was at the place of execution at the time. He murdered Weare in the most brutal fashion to find that he had only a few pounds on him which he and his confederates shared out between them that night.

In the course of time the criminals were discovered and brought to trial. Thurtell after making a speech denouncing Barber Beaumont, was condemned to be hanged. Hunt was later transported. In June, 1824 after much negotiation, proceedings were taken up in a trial for conspiracy to defraud the County Fire Office. Thurtell's brother Thomas was convicted and imprisoned in Newgate for eight years. The case had been won but the costs were enormous, almost as heavy as they would have been had the claim been paid out. Individual security came to full fruition in the years 1806-7.

On February 24th 1825 the meeting of the Board of the Board of the Fire Office carried a resolution in existence, and explained its purpose in an essay in the same year giving a detailed account of the plan, regular that this meeting recognised the exertions and activities in the Parish of the Managing Director to unmask and to punish the nefarious conduct of the Thurtells the same enterprise spirit and life Office useful energy which has so effectively contributed to the of London in 1666 success of this office by such companies as the General Insurance Office (1685), Lombard House (1694) and the Phoenix Office (1705). This, however, Thurtell's air-gun, when examined later in Bow Street Office was described by a local gunsmith as one of the most ingenious things of its kind ever made. Before his execution Thurtell gave this gun to the Governor of Hertford Gaol. It was seized by the assignees under Thurtell's bankruptcy and was later purchased by Barber Beaumont. It is now exhibited with a pair of handcuffs in a glass case in the Board Room of the Fire Office although it still belonged to the Beaumont family. In the following year the Office was faced with the charge of 1819 defrauding the Inland Revenue of a portion of the fire duties collected by it. Barber Beaumont was fined £5,000 which was paid by the Company. This charge and the complicated negotiations that ensued caused him much distress, so much so that his health broke down. In the end the Lords of the Treasury instituted a thorough investigation of the books of the Company ever since its inception in 1806. The answers proved that in all the eighteen years transactions brought in question, not a single policy or renewal of a policy had been issued (and there had been nearly a million) whereon the duty charges had not been duly accounted for and paid. The Office, rather than being in arrears had always been some £10,000 in advance and that there was a balance

in favour of the County Fire Office of £162-9-2, which the Office could forthwith claim from the exchequer.

Barber Beaumont was 55 years of age when he started on his last great project. For years he had been a magistrate and had always had the welfare of the poor at heart. In the eighteen thirties he had extended his activities into land speculation and had bought some fields at Mile End. This, near to one of the poorest quarters in East London appeared to him an ideal place for the great experiment he had in mind. He therefore decided in 1840 to develop this land, building on it a settlement with its houses grouped round a square and having a community centre which was to be known as the Beaumont Institute.

The work of building was started in September 1840 and all through the winter Beaumont was on the spot directing the work and supervising the men. We are told that, inspired by the thought that this scheme was one which would do lasting good he paid little regard to food, drink or sleep. The winter of 1840-41 was cold and severe, but he was always there, and gratified in the spring to see his Philosophical Institute, as he called it, rise and take shape. On Wednesday May 12th 1841, the rooms being complete, he spent the whole day there, arranging his display of minerals and attending to other matters of detail. A life of unremitting work had, however, undermined his former robust constitution, and for years he had never been free from periodic attacks of asthma. He returned home in the evening both tired and exhausted. The following morning he attended at the Offices of the Board as usual but he looked very ill, though it appeared to be nothing that could not be put right by rest and sleep. On the Friday he spent the whole day in bed, but quite unexpectedly began to lose ground. The next day, Saturday the 15th of May, he died, his last work unfinished.

This, more than anything else he had ever done, captured the imagination of the public. The Times commented on the vast expense he had incurred in carrying out the work and endowing the scheme with £400 a year - £13,000 put into 3 per cent Consols in the names of certain of his friends to secure it against future hazards. The Sun declared that he had always been a staunch supporter of liberal measures, active and indefatigable in his duties as a magistrate, strenuous in his exertions to ameliorate the condition of the working classes."

He was buried in his own cemetery, the East London in Shandy Street though his remains were afterwards removed to Kensal Green. His tomb-stone contained a long eulogy of his life work, ending with an account of his Philosophical Institution:

"Who that contemplates this Institution with its immediate benefits and its more beneficial tendencies will not exclaim when he pauses pensive over the sepulchre of the departed founder, 'May the fruits of this good work be co-eternal with his reward, and may his example be prolific of similar glorious deeds, till ignorance, superstition and depravity shall vanish from the land.'"

Large sums of money were needed to carry on his work. Some was contributed by his son John Augustus whom he had taken into his business in 1824; other sums were raised by appeals and public subscription. Ten years after the foundation of the Institute a writer in one of these appeals describes the progress that had been made - the musical classes assisted by the then famous musician and composer John Hullah (1812-84), the concerts

held at St. Martin's Hall, the classes in geography, drawing, mathematics, chemistry, grammar, ancient and modern history, literature and art, the museum, the library of 4,000 volumes and the interest of important figures such as F.B. Maurice and T.H. Huxley.

In 1883 there was an important meeting at the Mansion House at which Professor Huxley put forward a scheme to raise £40,000 to expand the work, to give the people of the crowded East End of London some place to go other than the street corner and the gin palace to relieve their empty, colourless and dull lives. "I most certainly say", exclaimed Huxley, "that if the alternative were presented to me to choose the life of one who lived in the East End or that of the savage I would distinctly choose the latter."

In July 1885 at the inauguration of the Beaumont Trust, a £100,000 scheme was outlined and huge sums were given by prominent people and city livery companies. A site, that of the Bancroft Hospital in Mile End Road was purchased and building was commenced in the spring of 1886. This building became the People's Palace and later a college of the University of London, now known as the Queen Mary College. It is a lasting memorial to the work of Barber Beaumont. When the People's Palace was opened by Queen Victoria in 1887 it was suggested that Beaumont's Corps, the Queen Victoria Rifles, should mount a guard of honour, but the proposal was rejected by the G.O.C. Home District on the grounds that such duties were the prerogative of the Brigade of Guards. However, Barber Beaumont's grandson, Captain W. Spencer Beaumont who was a friend of the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander in Chief obtained a reversal of the Order and the Guard was mounted by the Queen Victoria Rifles. The precedent was repeated on the re-opening of the Palace by King George V in 1936 and when again it was re-opened by King George VI after being bombed in the 39 - 45 war. Thus in 1841 this versatile, active and remarkable man passed from the public scene leaving behind him institutions of the utmost value to his fellows and to posterity. Though a visionary he was an English gentleman of the old type, a Cobbett of the middle classes who wrote voluminously to the newspapers of the day on numerous topics. Like Cobbett he deplored the loss of old customs and especially the tinkering round with the honest ale of Old England." He was an ardent supporter of boxing as a sport on the ground that it provided a controlled outlet for the combative instinct and put it under control, comparing the regulated combat of the ring with the brawl and the use of knife or stiletto in other countries. In an essay of 1821 on Criminal Jurisprudence he stressed emigration as a palliative for the evils of starvation and unemployment under which the working classes of those days were suffering. Some four years later he initiated a project for sending out settlers to South America, and his son John Augustus, who was put in charge of the scheme, went out to arrange the transfer of a vast area of land and to supervise the birth of the new community. Two shiploads of emigrants set sail but, owing to the outbreak of war between Brazil and Argentina in 1825 the project had to be abandoned.

No thorough study of the work and ideas of Barber Beaumont has so far been made. If this could be done at some time, it would doubtless end in his name being far better known and honoured than it is today.

NOTES

1 Benjamin Robert Haydon. Autobiography (Macdonald, 1950 edition)

2 Essex Review XXVIII 155

3 Ibid 156

4 Haydon 49

5 Ibid 111

6 Ibid 111

7 Ibid 112

8 Ibid 207

9 Ibid 413-4

10 Times. April 1, 1924 Col. 15

11 Haydon 441

Sources for the life of Barber Beaumont are as follows

A Brief Account of the Beaumont Trust, by W. Spencer Beaumont. Printed privately by Charles and Edwin Layton 1887

Col. Keason. The Queen Victoria Rifles. A Commemorative History.

Various circulars and Reports of the Duke of Cumberland Sharpshooters and the Queen Victoria Rifles.

Queen Victoria Rifles. Report of the 150th Anniversary Dinner.

Archives of the House of Hanover

Aubrey Noakes - The County Fire Office 1807 - 1957