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WILLIAM BEAUMONT. A PIONEER AMERICAN PHYSIOLOGIST.*

PROFESSOR W. OSLER delivered an address before the St. Louis Medical Society, on the 4th October, and which appeared in the *J. A. M. A.* of November 15, on William Beaumont. The opening scene of the lecture is laid in the Island of Michilimacinae, on the morning of June 6, 1822. The contents of a shotgun were accidentally discharged into the body of Alexis St. Martin, at a distance of only two or three feet from its muzzle. Dr. Beaumont, who was at the time a surgeon in U. S. uniform, and in charge of old Fort Mackinac, came at once to attend the wounded Frenchman. The wound was just under the left breast, and supposed, at the time, to have been mortal. A large portion of the side was blown off, the ribs fractured and openings made into the cavities of the chest and abdomen, through which protruded portions of the lungs and stomach, much lacerated and burnt, exhibiting altogether an appalling and hopeless case. The diaphragm was lacerated and a perforation made directly into the stomach, through which food escaped. Shot, clothing and torn flesh were removed. With the utmost care, at the end of ten months the wound was partially healed, but he was still an object altogether miserable and helpless. It was then decided to transport him as a pauper to his place of nativity in Lower Canada. Dr. Beaumont believed St. Martin could not make the journey, and took him into his own house and cared for him at his own expense for nearly two years.

In the month of May, 1825, Beaumont began the experiments. He was ordered to Fort Niagara, where, taking the man with him, he continued the experiments. He took him with him to Burlington and Pittsburg. St. Martin returned to Canada in 1825. He married and had two children. Dr. Beaumont secured him again in 1829, and continued his observations till March, 1831. In 1832 and 1833 he again submitted to further series of experiments. In 1856 he was under the observation of Dr. Francis Gurney Smith, of Philadelphia, for a short

* Through the kindness of Professor W. Osler and Dr. Simmons, Editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, we are able to furnish our readers with illustrations of Dr. Beaumont and Alexis St. Martin.