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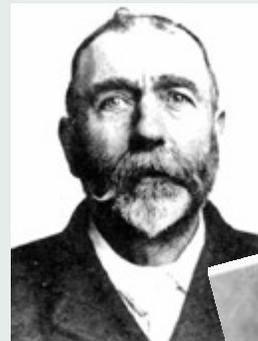
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Charles A. Dunham Part II: Tumblety's Anatomical Collection Reconsidered

By Michael Hawley

In part one of my article in the January 2012 edition of the *New Independent Review* (Issue 2) titled “Charles A. Dunham: for the Better Good,” I argued that 19th century New York City lawyer Charles Dunham was far from being an incessant, *pathological* liar, as almost all Ripperologists have decided,¹ and I thus agree with the conclusions made by the foremost expert on Charles Dunham, Carman Cumming, the author of *Devil's Game: The Civil War Intrigues of Charles A. Dunham*. Colonel Dunham was the man who claimed to have seen Whitechapel murder suspect Francis Tumblety's private collection of uterus specimens in 1861 and further claimed to have heard Tumblety talk about his failed marriage.² These assertions were published in the *New York World* on December 2, 1888.

While a professionally diagnosed pathological liar is an uncontrollable and excessive liar with no apparent agenda other than lying, Cumming explains that Dunham had a clear agenda in his

deceptive activities, which even included a hint of altruism. Cumming claims that if one takes all of the available evidence into account, a pattern within Dunham's actions emerges of a brilliant, crafty, often unscrupulous, and charismatic man who skillfully utilized the art of deception as required by his job description — a double agent for the Union during the Civil War.

It is certainly true that Dunham created a series of elaborate faked stories in New York newspapers during the Civil War under different aliases, but it was for the purpose of “*damaging the Confederates and Northern Peace Democrats*.” In effect, Dunham participated in reptile journalism “for the better good.” Dunham once stated, when referring to his deceptive tactics, “*I do not believe in fighting the Devil with fair play and honesty, and claim the right to use his own weapons.*”

Because of the commonly held belief among Ripperologists that Dunham was a pathological liar, his entire 1888 interview in the *New York World* has

been held by the Ripperology community to be a pack of lies. If, however, we take into account Cumming's conclusions about Dunham, then his 1888 *New York World* interview was likely not a pack of lies, but is — at worst — a mix of truths and lies in order to accomplish his agenda; just as he did with his reptile journalism activities during the Civil War. Cumming writes, “*All these tales [as a special correspondent for the New York Tribune] can now be seen as gross fabrication. But Dunham often based his best fabrications on some basis of fact.*”³ [Emphasis added.]

Strangely though, Dunham's recounting of his experiences with Francis Tumblety are actually filled

1. Hawley, Charles A. Dunham: for the Better Good, *The New Independent Review* (Issue 2, pp. 10-17, January 2012).

2. Cumming, *Devil's Game: The Civil War Intrigues of Charles A. Dunham*. (2004).

3 *Ibid.* p. 58.

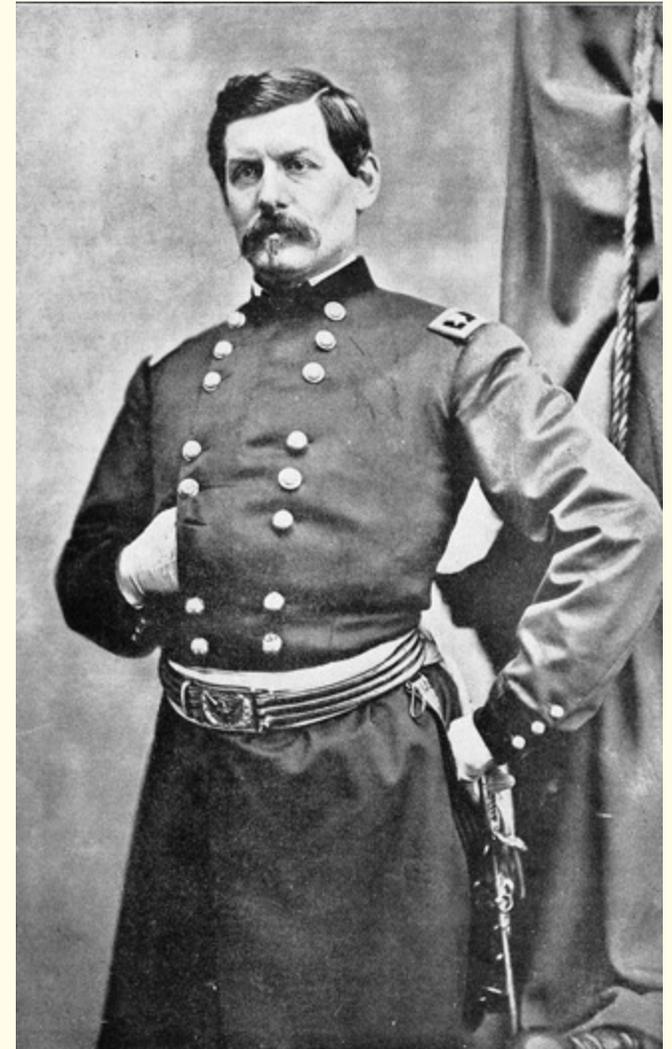
with accurate information. For example, Dunham states, “Shortly after telling this story [the marriage to a prostitute story] the ‘doctor’s’ real character became known and he slipped away to St. Louis, where he was arrested for wearing the uniform of an army surgeon.” Tumblety being arrested in St. Louis for this reason actually did occur. Also, William Pinkerton, the famous private detective, was in Washington, D.C., at the same time working for the Army’s newly formed secret service investigating people of interest, such as Francis Tumblety. In a November 20, 1888, interview with the *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean*, Pinkerton states:

A little inquiry soon showed that he [Francis Tumblety] had flooded the army with his handbills and with objectionable books, so much so that General [George B.] McClellan issued strict orders that the circulation of these books in the army should be suppressed, on the ground that many of the books were calculated to debase the soldiers, their contents being of an immoral character and their illustrations still more so. Of course, this military acknowledgment that the doctor existed only caused still more wide attention to be turned upon him. He was watched with closer scrutiny, and, at last, it became known that he was in the

*habit of indulging in certain vices that finally resulted in him being driven from the city.*⁵

Some researchers who have embraced the pathological liar argument claim that most, if not all, of the statements made by Dunham in the interview are lies, but there is evidence to the contrary in each case. One claim needs to be addressed, because if true, the entire Dunham interview was fabrication. This assertion states that Francis Tumblety was not even in Washington, D.C., in July or August 1861, soon after the Battle of Bull Run as Dunham claimed, and therefore, they never met. According to Cumming, Dunham was in Washington, D.C., in 1861 for brief periods in July, August, and November.⁶

Tim Riordan, in his book *Prince of Quacks*, argues on page 91 that Francis Tumblety had run a major advertising campaign in New York from July 13 to October 19, 1861, in *Harper’s Weekly* magazine and certain New York newspapers at



General George B. McClellan.

4. *New York World*, December 2, 1888.

5. *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean*, November 20, 1888.

6. Cumming, *op. Cit.*

the same time Dunham claimed to have seen him in Washington, D.C.⁷ Why would someone start an expensive advertising campaign and then leave the city? Riordan's point is that Tumblety stayed in New York at least until October 19 in order to reap the rewards of his advertising. Riordan thus concludes that Tumblety "could not have had a residence in Washington at the time."⁸

If the basis of Riordan's argument is correct, then a number of contradictions arise. First, why did Tumblety run a concurrent advertising campaign in Baltimore, which ran from September 14 to September 23, if the requirement was to be physically present in the office? Joe Chetcuti comments about these *Baltimore Sun* advertisements in his article, *Lieutenant Sullivan*, in the January edition of the *New Independent Review* (p. 6), "These ads encouraged patients to come to his office at 220 Baltimore Street and get treated."⁹ The evidence is clear. Tumblety needed to be in Baltimore in order to see patients while he continued advertising in New York, which means he maintained his New York City office even when he was out of town for extended periods of time. It logically follows that he hired a secretary to handle the mail order business; a business technique he inherited from his mentor, E.J. Reynolds, a.k.a., Dr. Lispenard. Riordan actually admits this travelling mode of business on page 87:

*By March 1863, Tumblety had decided to return to Washington. His first ad was on March 2 and included several testimonials from Frederick which were dated in February. Near the bottom, the ad reports that "the Doctor will be here again, to practice his profession, in a few days." It then goes on to say that he can be consulted at his office in the Washington Building. It is likely that while Tumblety was in Frederick he hired someone to run the Washington office, coming back periodically to check on things.*¹⁰ [Emphasis added.]

Riordan, however, cannot have it both ways. A second contradiction arises in an article in the *St. Thomas Weekly Dispatch* dated March 20, 1862. The article states,

DR. TUMBLETY IN TROUBLE AGAIN

*Dr. Tumblety, who has been cutting large figures about Washington for the past six or eight months, and who was reported at one time to holding the position of Senior Surgeon on the staff of General McClellan — an idea that was probably created by the superb air of distinguished importance that the fellow knows how to wear — has come to grief, it appears, and is having his pretentious charlatanry exposed.*¹¹ [Emphases added.]

The "past six or eight months" comment places Tumblety in Washington during September 1861. This was when two of his "major ad campaigns" were going on in two different cities, New York and Baltimore. In view of these contradictions, it is highly possible that Tumblety and Dunham could meet in July or August of 1861; especially if we take into account that Dunham was not a *pathological* liar and often based his reptile journalism fabrications on facts.

In his 1888 interview, Charles Dunham discussed two events he experienced with Francis Tumblety that, if true, would easily cause someone to conclude Tumblety likely was the Whitechapel killer. First, he stated that he — as a Colonel in the Union Army — met Tumblety in Washington, D.C., in 1861 during the reorganization and augmentation

7. Riordan, T.B. *Prince of quacks: The notorious life of Dr. Francis Tumblety, charlatan and Jack the Ripper suspect.* (2009).

8. *Ibid.*

9. Chetcuti, Lieutenant Sullivan, *The New Independent Review* (Issue 2), pp. 2-9, January 2012.

10. Riordan, *op. cit.* p. 87.

11. *St. Thomas Weekly Dispatch*, March 20, 1862.

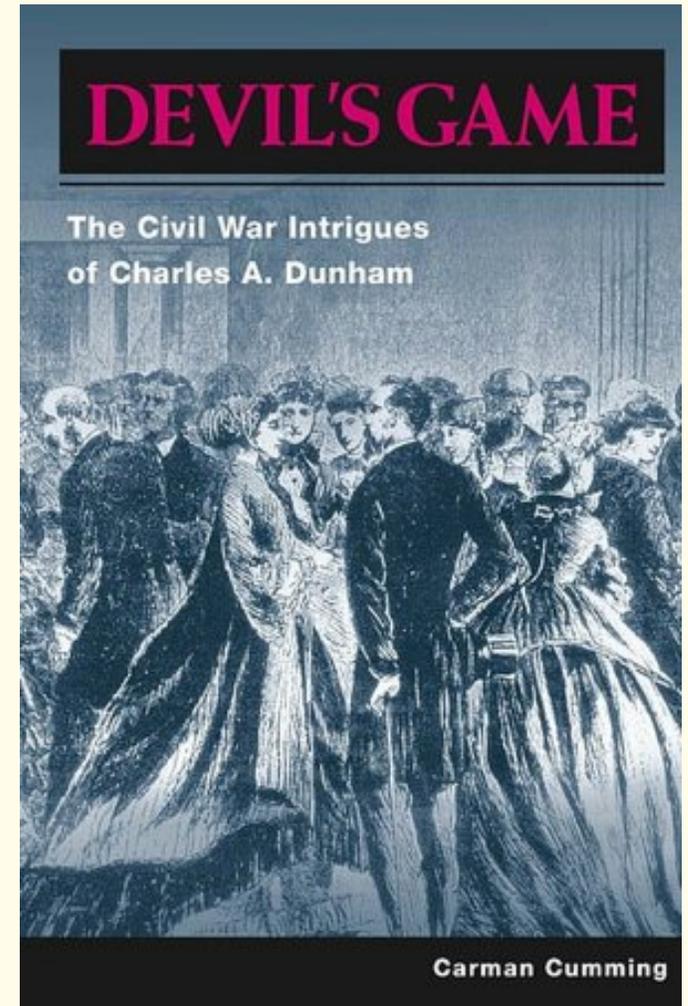
of the Army of the Potomac.¹² Reality had sunk in quickly and deeply in the White House as the Union had just lost the Civil War's first major battle, the First Battle of Bull Run, which resulted in an immediate restructuring of the Army of the Potomac under a new commander, Major General George B. McClellan. In the interview Dunham stated that during this time 'Doctor' Francis Tumblety invited him, his second in command, and other military guests to a dinner-symposium. Later on in the evening, Tumblety brought Colonel Dunham and his Lieutenant Colonel aide into his office and showed them his private collection of uterus specimens. Second, sometime after this Tumblety was in Colonel Dunham's room. again with his second in command, and explained to them the reason for his hatred of women. Tumblety apparently told Dunham that as a young man he unknowingly fell in love and married a prostitute who still actively pursued her profession behind his back. This made him so distraught that he left her and gave up women altogether.

I suggested at the end of Part One that both stories may have been the deceptive portions of the interview, since these stories were the most damning in Dunham's agenda of convincing the reader that Tumblety had motive for being the Whitechapel killer.¹³ In this article, I will propose an alternative

view that Dunham was actually telling the truth about both incidents. If I am correct then Francis Tumblety *did* possess a private anatomical museum. We begin with a peculiar comment Carman Cumming makes, which actually supports the possibility that Dunham was not engaging in reptile journalism in 1888. Cumming admits that Charles Dunham's 1888 *New York World* interview does not conform to the ventures of the later-in-life Dunham. Cumming writes,

*The Chameleon's later life is for the most part hidden. If he ever followed up on the threat to write his own dangerous memoirs, they have never been discovered. His later public ventures (except for the strange 1888 column on Dr. Tumblety) seem to have been confined mainly to attempts to tap into rich estates.*¹⁴ [Emphasis added.]

The only reason why the *New York World* interview seems out of character for Dunham is because of the assumption that he was again participating in reptile journalism after a hiatus of more than 20 years. Could it be that Dunham was not engaging in something contrary to his later-in-life ventures and, thus, it was not "strange"? If so, we must not be comparing his Civil War journalistic activities with his 1888 *New York World* interview, thus opening up the slight possibility that Dunham



¹² *New York World*, December 2, 1888.

¹³ Hawley, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Cumming, *op. cit.* p. 260.

In a moment, almost, the doctor was lecturing him and denouncing women.

was actually telling the truth about the two incidents. This also means that something in their mutual past must have convinced Dunham sufficiently of Tumblety's guilt that he contacted and allowed himself to be interviewed by the press.

Is there any evidence that supports the notion of Dunham telling the truth about the two incidents? I would like to begin with Dunham's account of Tumblety confessing to having once been married to a prostitute. The following is the pertinent section of the *New York World* interview:

Not long after this the 'doctor' was in my room when my lieutenant-colonel came in and commenced expatiating on the charms of a certain woman. In a moment, almost, the doctor was lecturing him and denouncing women. When he was asked why he hated women, he said that when quite a young man he fell desperately in love with a pretty girl, rather his senior, who promised to reciprocate his affection. After a brief courtship he married her. The honeymoon was not over when he noticed a disposition on the part of his wife to

*flirt with other men. He remonstrated, she kissed him, called him a dear, jealous fool — and he believed her. Happening one day to pass in a cab through the worst part of the town he saw his wife and a man enter a gloomy-looking house. Then he learned that before her marriage his wife had been an inmate of that and many similar houses. Then he gave up all womankind.*¹⁵

Let us assume that the marriage story was a lie, but was it a Dunham lie or a Tumblety lie? Being once married would have been the perfect excuse for Tumblety explaining to a group of military officers he was attempting to impress as to why he had no interest in women. Throughout Tumblety's life, he publically denied his homosexual activities. Knowledge of this would have adversely affected the reputation of a respected doctor, which would be bad for business. Surprisingly, the Tumblety origin of the marriage story has two corroborating pieces of evidence. The first comes from an article in the *New York World* on December 4, 1888. The reporter writes:

*Everybody in the neighborhood seemed to have heard of Dr. Twomblety's [sic] arrival, and he is well known in all the stores and saloons for several blocks. One merchant who knows him well said: "Mrs. McNamara is a queer old lady, very religious and kind-hearted. The doctor began stopping with her years ago and he has lived there ever since he was in New York. He used to explain his long absence at night, when he was prowling about the streets, by telling her he had to go to a monastery to **pray for his dear departed wife**."¹⁶ [Emphasis added.]*

If his story was false, Francis Tumblety was concealing his evening activities from Mrs. McNamara. Not only this, his excuse was about his wife since passed, which clearly supports the possibility that the origins of the Tumblety-marriage story in the 1888 interview was Tumblety himself and not Dunham. Tim Riordan, author of *Prince of Quacks*, comments on page 170, "*It is likely that Tumblety used the idea of being a widower as a way to mask his true orientation.*"¹⁷

15. *New York World*, December 2, 1888.

16. *New York World*, December 4, 1888.

17. Riordan, *op. cit.* p. 170.

The second piece of evidence is Tumblety's death certificate, issued by the City of St. Louis Health Department upon his death on May 28, 1903, at St. John's Hospital.¹⁸ Stewart Evans obtained a copy of Tumblety's death certificate in 1995. It states that Francis Tumblety's conjugal condition was 'widowed.' The *St Louis Republic*, May 29, 1903, reported that he checked himself into St. John's Hospital about one month prior on April 26 and "selected St. John's as a convenient place to die."¹⁹ It also stated that he died "without a relative or intimate friend at his bedside." In view of this, it is highly likely that the source for the physician seeming to have knowledge of his conjugal condition was Tumblety himself.

The preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that the marriage story did not come from the imagination of Charles Dunham, which means Dunham was again telling the truth. Dunham questioning Tumblety in 1861 about his hatred of women meant that this issue was significant enough to have Dunham ask the question in the first place. Instead of Tumblety stating he had no issues with women, he gave an explanation as to why he hated them. This would certainly explain why the lawyer Dunham was convinced that Tumblety had motive to be the Whitechapel killer.

Next is the "uterus collection" story. Dunham recalling the marriage account accurately suggests the possibility that the uterus collection story might also be true, since it is much more probable Dunham was *not* engaging in reptile journalism in the 1888 interview. The evidence against the uterus collection story being true, though, seems insurmountable — or is it?

Dunham's revelation of Francis Tumblety owning a private collection of uteri has received the most attention among Ripperologists and for good reason. Not only does such a morbid hobby as collecting the same anatomical parts that were missing from two Ripper victims seriously implicate Tumblety as the killer, but at the time of the interview, this same person was also considered a suspect by Scotland Yard. Once the Ripperology community was convinced that Dunham had been a reptile journalist in his past and was a pathological liar, the uterus collection story immediately became suspect. To raise further doubts, there seemed to be no other evidence to corroborate this unusual claim. Moreover, the idea of anyone — even someone as eccentric as Francis Tumblety — making a hobby of collecting uteri seems too bizarre to be true. These points have been so convincing to the Ripperology community that the idea of Tumblety possessing a uterus collection is now considered simply laughable.

Because this belief is based upon inaccuracies, such as Dunham being a pathological liar, it logically follows that the belief may be wrong. It is time to revisit what Charles Dunham actually said in his 1888 interview. The following is the pertinent section in the *New York World* article reproduced in the *Rochester Democrat and Republican*, December 3, 1888:

*Colonel C. A. Dunham, a well-known lawyer who lives near Fairview, N.J., was intimately acquainted with Twombly [sic] for many years, and, in his own mind, had long connected him with the Whitechapel horror."The man's real name," said the lawyer, "is Tumblety, with Francis for a Christian name . . . When, to my knowledge of the man's history, his idiosyncrasies, his revolting practices, his antipathy to women, and especially to fallen women, his **anatomical museum**, containing many specimens like those carved from the Whitechapel victims — when, to my knowledge*

18 . Francis Tumblety's death certificate issued by the City of St. Louis Health Department, May 28, 1903.

19. St Louis Republic, May 29, 1903.

on these subjects, there is added the fact of his arrest on suspicion of being the murderer, there appears to me nothing improbable in the suggestion that Tumblety is the culprit... At length it was whispered about that he was an adventurer. One day my lieutenant-colonel and myself accepted the the [sic] 'doctor's' invitation to a late **dinner—symposium**, he called it — at his rooms. He had very cosy and tastefully arranged quarters in, I believe, H. street. There were three rooms on a floor, the rear one being his office, with a bedroom or two a story higher. On reaching the place we found covers laid for eight — that being the 'doctor's' lucky number, he said — several of the guests, all in the military service, were persons with whom we were already acquainted. It was soon apparent that whatever Tumblety's deficiencies as a surgeon, as an amphitryon he could not easily be excelled. His menu, with colored waiters and the et ceteras, was furnished by one of the best caterers in the city. After dinner there were brought out two tables for play — for poker or whist. In the course of the evening some of the party, warmed by the wine, proposed to play for heavy stakes, but Tumblety frowned down the proposition at once and in such a way as to show he was no gambler . . . Then he invited us into his office where he **illustrated his** so to speak. **One side of this room was entirely**

occupied with cases, outwardly resembling wardrobes. When the doors were opened quite a museum was revealed — tiers of shelves with glass jars and cases, some round and others square, filled with all sorts of anatomical [sic] specimens. The 'doctor' placed on a table a dozen or more jars containing, as he said, the matrices of every class of women. Nearly a half of one of these cases was occupied exclusively with these specimens.²⁰ [Emphases added.]

According to the interview Dunham did not claim Tumblety merely had a collection of uterus specimens, but had an entire private anatomical museum, much of which contained items that were still in cases on the shelves 'filled with all sorts of anatomical [sic] specimens'. Regardless, if Dunham was purposely focusing a reader's attention on unusual uterus specimens within the collection, Tumblety had in his possession an anatomical museum large enough to cover an entire wall.

We now need to clarify what Dunham meant by an 'anatomical museum.' According to Michael Sappol, curator-historian at the National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland, the 19th century anatomical museum was a well-known and very popular attraction in the larger cities and explains that none exist today. In his dissertation, *Morbid*

Curiosity: The Decline and Fall of the Popular Anatomical Museum, Sappol states:

*Yet the [anatomical] museum was a part of American urban life for almost a hundred years. The nation's first popular anatomical museum appeared in the 1840s; the last closed its doors around 1930.*²¹

There were actually two general types of 19th century anatomical museums. The first fits Tumblety's character and activities to such an extent that it is seductive to believe he may have owned this particular type, while the second, I will argue, was the type Charles Dunham may have seen in Francis Tumblety's Washington, D.C., office in 1861.

The first type of anatomical museum was what Sappol calls the "popular anatomical museum." It was a combination of a freak show and a medical show designed to exploit sexual desires and human curiosity of the grotesque and morbid. Sappol states:

20. *Rochester Democrat and Republican*, 3 Dec, 1888.

21. Sappol, "Morbid curiosity: The Decline and Fall of the Popular Anatomical Museum." *Common-Place, A Cabinet of Curiosities*, Volume 4, Number 2, January 2004.



The Florentine Venus.

*The popular anatomical museum was a museum among dime museums. It inhabited the Bowery and other plebeian entertainment districts, places where novelty acts and freak shows proliferated alongside houses of prostitution, gambling, and all kinds of petty and not so petty crime . . . Its province, in other words, was pathology and grotesquery, sex and impulsive desire, savagery and murder, death and decay. The anatomy museum — a mix of real specimens and models — blurred those categories, and staged them as a theater of the body.*²²

The ‘anatomical and surgical’ section along with the ‘pathological’ and ‘obstetrical and monstrosity’ sections of the popular museum not only displayed models and specimens of the sexual parts of the male and female anatomy, it also did so in a very erotic way. The partly dissected and semi-nude female model known as the “Florentine Venus” was often positioned seductively in a bed strategically covered with a sexy night gown, her breasts and the skin over her stomach removable to reveal her inner organs.

This prompted an interesting observation made while this article was being prepared for publication. That is, note how similar the anatomical Venus display is to Mary Kelly's murder scene — opened lower torso, disarticulated breasts and all. Did

Kelly's killer see the Florentine Venus at some time previous to his Miller's Court mutilations?

Of similar interest, another section at the museum displayed “gruesome crimes and gruesome punishments.” For example, the late-nineteenth century New York Museum of Anatomy was owned by one of the four infamous and shady Jordan brothers. (Besides operating popular anatomical museums, the Jordans participated in the Tumblety-like practices of claiming medical certifications, providing services for abortions, and even selling sexually explicit medical pamphlets.)²³ In this museum were displayed the gory execution of murderer Anton Probst, perpetrator of the Philadelphia Massacre of 1866 in which Probst casually mutilated a family of six plus two non-members of the family.²⁴

It is an intriguing prospect that the motive or inspiration behind the gruesome Whitechapel killings might have been the Ripper visiting “freak-

22. *Ibid.*

23. Hoolihan, *An Annotated Catalogue of the Edward C. Atwater Collection of American Popular Medicine and Health Reform. Volume III, Supplement: A-Z.* (2008).

24. Sappol, *op. cit.*



Joseph Merrick, 'The Elephant Man'.

museums.” It may have been the inspiration behind the Yorkshire Ripper, as he enjoyed viewing wax representations of diseased female anatomy at Louis Tussaud’s exhibition in Blackpool, England.²⁵

On Whitechapel Road directly across from the London Hospital was a museum called *The Bell and Mackerel*, which had as its main attraction in the 1880s Joseph Merrick, the Elephant Man. Note what Peter Ford and Michael Howell, authors of *The True History of the Elephant Man* wrote:

*As he recorded in his collection of autobiographical reminiscences, The Story of a Surgeon, he [Frederick Treves] was in the habit of wandering out through the East End of London . . . to satisfy a mixture of professional interest and idle curiosity: “. . . especially on Saturday nights, to see dwarfs, giants, fat-women, and monstrosities at the freak shows. There was a freak-museum at a public-house — The Bell and Mackerel, 123 Whitechapel Road, near the London Hospital [123 Whitechapel Road]. It was on one of these visits in 1884 I saw ‘on show’ opposite the London Hospital a repulsive human being known as the Elephant Man . . .”*²⁶

This Whitechapel museum seems to have even recreated at least one of the Whitechapel murders as Ford and Howell go on to say:

A waxworks museum certainly flourished opposite to the London Hospital, for in September 1888, in the midst of the Whitechapel murders committed by ‘Jack the Ripper’, a correspondent called John Law was writing in the columns of the Pall Mall Gazette:

25. Burn, G. *Somebody’s Husband, Somebody’s Son*. (1986).

26. Ford, & Howell, *The True History of the Elephant Man: The Definitive Account of the Tragic and Extraordinary Life of Joseph Carey Merrick*. (2010).



Dr. Baskette's Gallery of Anatomy in Chicago, IL, circa 1875.

‘There is at present almost opposite the London Hospital a ghastly display of the unfortunate woman murdered . . . An old man exhibits these things, and while he points them out, you will be tightly wedged in between a number of boys and girls, while a smell of death rises into your nostrils,

and you feel as if your throat was filled up with fungus.’²⁷

Coincidentally, three of the four popular anatomical museums in New York were destroyed by law enforcement officials in the same year as the

Whitechapel murders and just before Francis Tumblety made his way to England. The New York newspaper, *The Sun*, reported this on January 22, 1888. Interestingly, a Dr. Hamilton pointed out that anatomical museums have made weak-minded people lunatics:

Bowery Museum Wax Works Smashed.

*The wax works recently seized in the three ‘anatomical museums’ in the Bowery were destroyed yesterday at Police Headquarters in the presence of the Police Commissioners and Superintendent Murray. The trash was smashed and piled up in the store shed in the yard ready for the furnace by noon. There were more than two hundred figures or parts of figures, all of them nude and more or less repulsive. The aggregate value of the trash was put by the owners at over thirty-seven thousand dollars. A letter was shown from Dr. Allan McLean Hamilton strongly condemning the museums. **The Doctor wrote that weak-minded people had, without a doubt, been***

27. Ibid. p. 5.

made lunatics by the horribly exaggerated sights they saw at them. ²⁸ [Emphasis added.]

In the late 19th century, the Bowery (where the museums were located) was a center for prostitution and for bars catering to homosexual men at all social levels. According to George Chauncey, author of “The Bowery as Haven and Spectacle” in *The Columbia Reader on Lesbians and Gay Men in Media, Society, and Politics* (Columbia University Press, 1999):

*At the end of the 1890s, Columbia Hall (better known as Paresis Hall), on the Bowery at Fifth Street, was, by all accounts, the principal resort in New York for degenerates . . . and that it made no attempt to disguise its well-known character as a resort for male prostitutes.*²⁹

Francis Tumblety was gay and was arrested in areas like the Bowery in multiple other cities, so it would not be a stretch of logic to suggest this New York City resident had frequented these resorts in the Bowery. Researcher Roger Palmer pointed out that the owner of many of these anatomical museums, Louis Jordan (aka Dr. Ricord and Dr. Kahn) operated his business out of 7 University Place, New York City, up until 1881 or early 1882. This is the exact same address Tumblety moved into after “Dr. Ricord” moved out. The localities of Jordan-owned popular anatomical museums have

an interesting connection with Francis Tumblety in other cities as well, that hint, at the very least, of some type of connection. When Tumblety operated out of San Francisco, he lived in the immediate neighborhood of another Jordan-owned anatomical museum near the corner of Montgomery and California streets.

The popular anatomical museum was also claimed by the owners to be an extension of the medical field, especially surgery. Sappol states:

*The museum was a clinic of a peculiar sort, catering entirely to men. Its proprietor typically described himself as a physician (but was suspiciously silent as to where he obtained his medical degree). The museum also featured a resident “lecturer” who transfixed customers with a pitch on the medico-moral-sexual maladies man was heir to. This was a long list that included syphilis, gonorrhea, chancre, impotence, incontinence (a category that included bedwetting, premature ejaculation, and nocturnal emissions), horniness, or a lack of libido. **The lecturer’s litany of woes . . . was designed to produce a state of anxiety in the clientele . . . the marks could then be easily persuaded to buy a book or patent medicine, or even better have a consultation with the doctor.***³⁰ [Emphasis added.]

Notice how this curiously fits in with Tumblety’s business of selling his highly illustrated medical pamphlets on sexual diseases. The following newspaper article from *The True Witness & Catholic Chronicle* out of Toronto, Canada, on September 25, 1857, reveals Tumblety’s practice of distributing pamphlets while he operated his Indian Herb Doctor business,

Beware of Quacks.

*. . . We suppose that the person above alluded to is the same as the ‘Dr. Tumblety’ whose name appears on the title page of an infamous and obscene pamphlet, now, we regret to say it, being extensively circulated as a ‘Private Medical Treatise,’ amongst our young people, and which is recommended, by its author as an excellent work to place in the hands of our “sons and daughters.”*³¹

Even with all of these eerily close connections between the popular anatomical museums of the era

²⁸ *The Sun*, January 22, 1888.

²⁹ George Chauncey, author of *The Bowery as Haven and Spectacle* in *The Columbia Reader on Lesbians and Gay Men in Media, Society, and Politics*. (1999).

³⁰ Sappol, *op. Cit.*

³¹ *The True Witness & Catholic Chronicle*, September 25, 1857.

and the character and profile of Francis Tumblety and his business practices, it is the second type of anatomical museum I argue is the more significant specific to Tumblety possibly having an anatomical collection in Washington, D.C., at the outset of the Civil War. According to Sappol, the second type of anatomical museum was the “professional anatomical museum” set up for the purpose of the medical profession, as opposed to the general public (in the 19th century it was usually male-only). The professional anatomical museum was an integral part of the nineteenth century medical profession for students in medical school and even seasoned practices of established physicians. He states:

*In the nineteenth century, any medical college worth its salt had an anatomical museum and pathological cabinet. There was a pedagogical circle of life: medical students and colleagues were expected to study specimens and also to produce them. Membership in the profession was consolidated by a **common culture of collectorship**. In formal medical discourse the specimen was accounted as an educational aid or as a record of a typical or unusual anatomical feature or pathological condition . . . The professional anatomical museum was a repository of medical souvenirs. In other works: **stuff in jars** skeletons, dried preparations, casts and models in*



Another version of the Florentine Venus.

wax, plaster, papier mâché, and wood. [Emphases added.]³²

Doctor A.W. Bates, PhD, MD, at the Department of Histopathology in the Royal Free Hospital, London, England, affirms this point and explains it was the same in mid-Victorian England. He states:

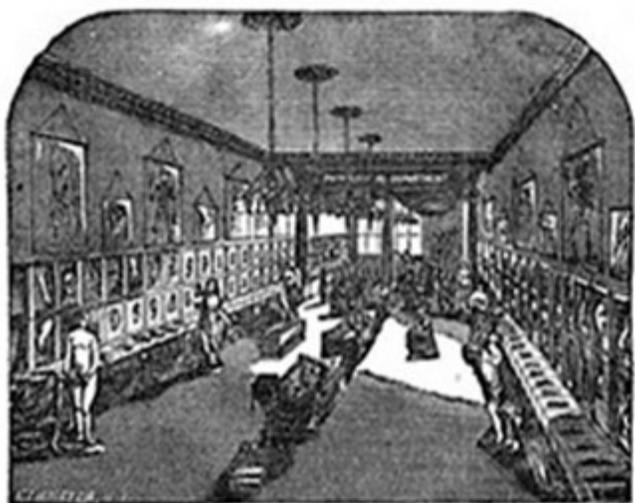
*Anatomy teachers assembled their own collections or ‘museums’ of material with which to **illustrate lectures** . . . Ownership of a museum*

*indicated that a teacher was likely to be financially solvent and, in the 1820s, possession of a museum worth more than 500 pounds was suggested as a prerequisite for an anatomy teacher to be recognized by the College of Surgeons.*³³ [Emphasis added.]

32. Sappol, *op. cit.*

33. Bates, A.W. “Indecent and Demoralising Representations”: Public Anatomy Museums in mid-Victorian England. *Medical History*, Volume 52 (1), January 1, 2008, pp. 1-22.

DR. KAHN'S GRAND MUSEUM



—OF—

ANATOMY, SCIENCE AND ART,

No. 688 BROADWAY,

Between Great Jones and Fourth Sts.,

NEW YORK.

ONE VISIT TO THIS UNRIVALLED AND

MAGNIFICENT PALACE OF WONDERS

WILL CONVINCED EVERY ONE OF THE

SUPERIORITY OF THIS INSTITUTION TO THAT OF EVERY OTHER.

FOR GENTLEMEN ONLY.

ADMISSION, 50 CENTS.

N. B.—Every Visitor to the Museum is presented with a copy of DR. KAHN'S LECTURES. [Jan., 1878, &c.]

Specific to the individual doctor, professional anatomical collections were a visible testimony of their medical expertise and legitimacy. Sappol further states:

*Doctors were known to keep a few specimens or a cabinet of material on display in their offices as trophies and, more broadly, as objects that advertised a medical vocation (as did diplomas, weighty medical tomes, medicines, and instruments). The specimens served as a credential, proof that the doctor had dissected and had special knowledge of the interior of the body.*³⁴

Just as medical diplomas and credentials placed on a wall of a doctor's office today provides medical credibility, a private collection of anatomical specimens in the 19th century — presented to a carefully chosen audience — had a similar effect. A non-expert would generally not be in possession of such a cache, since it requires a significant amount of medical knowledge and expertise to create the models.

Sappol explains that professional and popular museums were very much alike in that they contained similar items. The difference was one of proportion, where professional museums displayed a higher percentage of anatomical specimens in jars, while popular museums displayed more sex - and crime-related material. While the popular museum catered to the “gentlemen only” working class, the professional museum “was generally open only to doctors and medical students, although respectable members of the laity were sometimes granted access.”³⁵

The anatomical specimen practice even produced competition among medical professionals. The following was advertised to medical professionals in *The Homeopathic Sun*, Volume 1 - (p217) *Missouri Homoeopathic Medical College* publicizing prizes given at a nineteenth century medical symposium:

34. Sappol, *op. cit.*

35. Sappol, *op. cit.*

The prizes were awarded as follows:

*Dr. J. R. Reed, Pittsburgh, for the best anatomical specimen, a set of surgical instruments, given by Professor Franklin.*³⁶

It was not unheard of for advertising physicians in the early 1860s to publicize their anatomical museum, especially to differentiate themselves from quack doctors. The following advertisement comes from the *Dubuque Democratic Herald*, October 2, 1863, which was around the same time Dunham claimed Tumblety had shown him a personal anatomical museum,

DOCTOR THOMSON

. . . Doctor Thomson has more than fifty specimens of syphilite [sic] disease, involving the use of scientific terms, in his Anatomical Museum, and not one of the ‘doctors’ who advertise in the Chicago papers can tell the names of them.

Doctor Thomson is responsible and will give to each patient a written instrument, binding himself to effect radical and permanent cure, or make no charge. . . .

By inclosing [sic] 12 cents in stamps, and addressing Doctor Thomson, box 72 Chicago, Ill., ‘The Unfortunate Man’s Guide’ shall be

*forwarded, free from observation, to any address in the United States.*³⁷ [Emphases added.]

Regardless if this particular advertising doctor was just another quack, it is clear he recognized that possessing an anatomical museum in the 19th century set himself apart from ‘*soi-disant*’ doctors — like Indian herb doctors — just as Sappol alluded to. Knowledge of the human anatomy was one way for trained medical professionals to separate themselves from *soi-disant* doctors, since it required time and appropriate training to receive this knowledge and experience. Tumblety was intimately aware of the credibility battles between his quack medical profession and the established medical profession in 1861. He even acknowledges the importance of anatomical knowledge in quality medicine. Note what he says on page 42 of his 1866 autobiography as he quotes from Thomas Jefferson:

*The only sure foundations of medicine are an intimate knowledge of the human body, and observation of the effects of medicinal substances on that. The anatomical and clinical schools, therefore, are those in which the young physician should be formed.*³⁸

If we only take into account that Tumblety merely had a morbid fascination with uterus

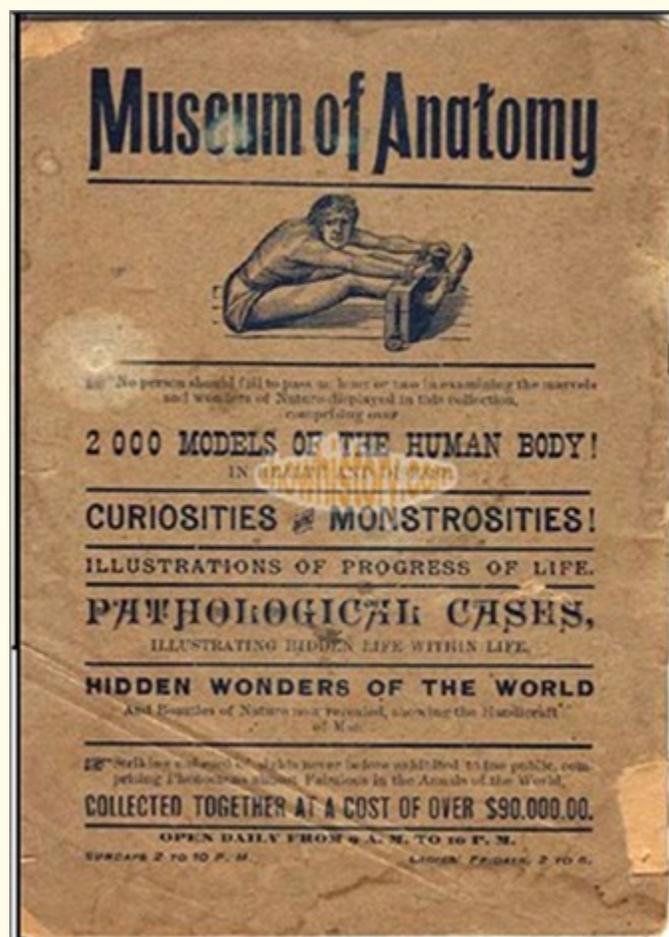
specimens, then his reasons for owning the collection were most likely for satisfying certain grotesque and abnormal impulses. In view of this, his anatomical collection would better fit the popular anatomical collection — something that the Whitechapel killer might have desired. It is my contention that Tumblety’s motivation for possibly owning an anatomical collection in 1861 was not a morbid fascination but, rather, was strictly because of business. If so, he possessed a *professional* anatomical museum.

The first piece of evidence in support of this conclusion is Dunham’s description of Tumblety’s anatomical collection. Recall, Sappol explained that a professional and a public anatomical museum were very similar but varied in the percentage of anatomical specimens in jars. The professional anatomical museum had a higher percentage of specimens. Dunham stated that the large number of cases had “*tiers of shelves with glass jars and cases . . . filled with all sorts of anatomical specimens.*”

36. *The Homoeopathic Sun*, Volume 1, 1868, p. 217.

37. *Dubuque Democratic Herald*, October 2, 1863.

38. Tumblety, F. *A Few Passages in the Life of Dr. Francis*



The description fits more closely a professional anatomical museum than that of a popular museum.

What reinforces the idea that Tumblety’s museum was professional is the reason why he was in Washington, D.C., in the first place — starting up his medical business and making money. All of Tumblety’s pre-Civil War activities, such as his travel

habits (constantly moving to new cities in the United States and Canada), his public attention-getting “performances,” such as entering a new city circus-style, and his aggressive newspaper advertising campaigns reveal a *singular* agenda — making money! It was his obsession, an obsession that even overshadowed his private homosexual activities. After all, he could enjoy his private activities in any large city he started his business. Even when he found himself in trouble with the law prior to the Civil War, it always had to do with his business activities, such as his Canadian troubles of operating without a medical license in Toronto or having a patient die in St. Johns.

Another possible motive for Tumblety going to Washington, D.C., was actually altruism. Tumblety claimed in his autobiography the reason he came to Washington, D.C., in 1861 was, at least in part, to help the war effort (i.e., an altruistic agenda.) The other part, of course, was to augment his income. He states in *A Sketch of the Life of Dr. Francis Tumblety*, on page 18:

When General McClellan was appointed Commander of the Army of the Potomac, I partially made up [my] mind to tender my professional services as a surgeon in one of the regiments, and I had the assurance . . . 39

The problem, however, with Tumblety exhibiting true altruistic behavior is that whatever he did was always associated with selfishly improving the success of his business, as evidenced by him claiming he only “partially” made up his mind. Any time Tumblety even hinted at altruistic behavior, business opportunism was the reason. For example, in an article in the *Brooklyn Eagle* on Francis Tumblety, dated May 10, 1865, it was reported:

It is stated that several years ago, the Doctor visited Buffalo, N.Y., and announced to the public, through the columns of the press, that he would, on the day following, meet any merchant of that city on the steps of the Merchants’ Exchange, and there distribute fifty sacks of flour to the poor. The proprietors of one of the papers, desiring to know more about the Doctor, telegraphed to Toronto, inquiring who he was, when the answer came back from the Bank of Toronto. “His check is good for \$60,000 in this bank.” [That would be a whopping \$850,000 in today’s money.] At the appointed time, the Doctor distributed to the poor his fifty bags of flour, and the next day published advertisements

39. *Ibid.* p. 18.

and issued hand bills, announcing to the too credulous public that he would cure “all the ills that flesh is heir to.” **Of course, his charity was more than repaid.**⁴⁰ [Emphasis added.]

What further supports his D.C. activities as being solely financial was that he actually advertised and set up his “medical practice” while there. He even paraded himself down busy thoroughfares and otherwise drew attention to himself, just as he had done in countless other cities. Not only this, but Tumblety kept his offices open in New York City and in Baltimore at the same time, which was a successful business model inherited from his former mentor, Indian Herb Doctor R.J. Lyons. Lyons would simultaneously advertise in many cities within a large geographic area and then advertise a yearly schedule as to when he would visit a particular city throughout that year.

If we accept that Tumblety’s D.C. appearance was financially motivated, then we can see that most, if not all, of his public activities had an agenda to advance his medical practice. According to Dunham’s account, he and his aide were invited to a combination social gathering and a professional lecture; what he called a *dinner-symposium*. Past Tumblety practice clearly suggests this dinner-symposium had little to do with enjoying a social

gathering and more to do with advancing his medical practice. Why then would Tumblety have opened up his private anatomical museum for viewing? And why did he do this for Charles A. Dunham of all people?

The image that Francis Tumblety was attempting to portray in D.C. was not only of a credible medical professional but also of a surgeon. Recall what he stated in his autobiographical pamphlet, “*I partially made up [my] mind to tender my professional services as a **surgeon** in one of the regiments*”.⁴¹ [Emphasis added.] It would have been a tremendous advantage to his business opportunities if he received a personal endorsement from the man in charge of the Army of the Potomac, General George B. McClellan, and also receive special access to the thousands of men under his command. If the general believed Tumblety was a valued surgeon, then Tumblety could take advantage of this for his medical practice, at least until he was actually required to perform surgery. The problem for Francis Tumblety would have been to convince General McClellan that he was the real-deal and in the mid-19th century being in possession of a professional anatomical museum would have done just that.

Additional support for the idea of Tumblety attempting to gain credibility as a surgeon was the audience he selected to see his private collection; Colonel Charles A. Dunham and his aide, a Lieutenant Colonel. The man Tumblety really wanted to convince, of course, was General McClellan — a person to whom few had access for obvious reasons during a time of war. So the best way to convince him was to convince his more readily accessible subordinate officers. Not only were the General’s officers assigned to carry out his orders, they were also the eyes, ears, and advisors to the General. Colonel Dunham was an important subordinate officer to General McClellan, since he was supposed to have been the commanding officer of a newly forming regiment. The regiment never did successfully form, but that is immaterial. At the time Tumblety invited Dunham and Dunham’s second in command to his office, Tumblety believed Dunham was an important subordinate of General McClellan. At the beginning of the Civil War, those

40. *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 10, 1865.

41. Tumblety, *op. cit.* p. 18.

with the resources and desire to form a regiment were first given a Colonel's commission in order for it to be legal for them to create a military regiment back home.

Because it was most likely a financial reason that brought Tumblety to D.C. in the first place, Tumblety was strategically allowing McClellan's officers a peek at his "professional anatomical museum" in the hope that the General would thus receive word that Tumblety was a credible surgeon. Tumblety had made it clear that he was going to continue his private medical practice in Washington, D.C, even though he was going to "tender his services as a surgeon in one of the regiments." (42) It was only after this meeting that General McClellan discovered Francis Tumblety was a detriment to his forces, as evidenced by the earlier comments of William Pinkerton.

Is there any evidence that Tumblety ever had a private anatomical museum? Consider the following article in the Chicago Tribune, November 25, 1888:

DR. TUMBLETY'S CAREER.

Where His Office was and What He Did In and Around New York.

New York, Nov. 24. - (Special.) Police Superintendent Campbell of Brooklyn has been investigating a little of the life of Dr. Tumblety, now

under arrest in London on suspicion of being 'Jack the Ripper.'

*The Superintendent finds that during the few years that Tumblety spent in Brooklyn he conducted himself properly and attended strictly to business, but was regarded by the more sensible portion of the community as a sort of humbug who palmed off his nostrums on those who are always ready to patronize every mountebank who comes along. The doctor was a tall, well-built man, with a big flowing mustache, which was a good walking advertisement, for everybody used to ask when he appeared on the street who he was. He wore a short sack velvet coat, a velvet cap, and high top patent leather boots with his trousers tucked inside. He had a herb store at Fulton and Nassau streets with a glass case in front. **Among other things** in this case **was a sort of glass siphon with a red liquid running through a thin glass tube to indicate blood.** He was known as 'The Great Pimple Banisher,' and he used to promenade Fulton street with two large greyhounds and a valet.⁴³ [Emphasis added.]*

Tumblety clearly had a display of the circulatory system in order to convince patients visiting his office that he understood the circulatory system; an indication he was a credible doctor. Glass tubes and containers representing the circulatory system were

certainly in anatomical museums as far back as the 16th century. Note the following description in *The Lancet* of Rackstrow's 16th century Museum of Anatomy and Curiosities in London, England ([http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(08\)61145-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(08)61145-9/fulltext)),

*Rackstrow specialised in wax models of the human reproductive system, and visitors to his museum were shown case after case of distended wombs, syphilitic genitalia, and a selection of preserved and bottled fetuses. But his pièce de résistance was a wax sculpture of a pregnant woman, partially dissected, **with claret running through glass tubes representing the circulation of her blood. . . .***⁴⁴ [Emphasis added.]

The *London Daily Post* dated January 3, 1747 stated:

The FIGURE of ANATOMY, contriv'd by Mr ABRAHAM CHOVET, Surgeon, which represents a

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Chicago Tribune*, November 25, 1888.

44. Barnett, R. Lost wax: medicine and spectacle in Enlightenment London. *The Lancet*, Volume 372, Issue 9636, Pages 366-367, August 2, 2008.

19th Century Anatomical Museums

Baltimore:

Dr Becker's Anatomical Museum

Buffalo, Ny:

Dr. Linn's Museum of Anatomy

Chicago:

World's Musee of Anatomy

New York:

Dr. Kahn's Museum of Anatomy

New York Museum of Anatomy

Philadelphia:

European Anatomical, Pathological
and Ethnological Museum

St Louis:

Drs. S & D. Davierson's Grand Museum of
Anatomy

Liverpool, England:

Liverpool Museum of Anatomy

*Woman eight Months gone with Child; wherein the Circulation of the Blood is **made visible through Glass Veins and Arteries, by a red Liquor**, in Imitation of Blood, being convey'd through them; At the same Time the Action . . . Knowledge of Anatomy, may, at one View, be acquainted with the Circulation of the Blood, and in what Manner it is perform'd in our living Bodies. Note, Due Attendance to shew the Figure, and other curious Anatomical Preparations. A proper Person to attend the Ladies. [Price One Shilling]⁴⁵ [Emphasis added.]*

In addition to the Rackstrow Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museums contained models of the circulatory system composed of a red substance flowing "through glass veins and arteries,"⁴⁶ as well.

Besides possessing one particular apparatus likely found in an anatomical museum, note that the reporter states it was "among other things," suggesting Tumblety displayed multiple items, and "multiple items" implies a collection.

But this was years later. Is there evidence of any anatomical museum during the Civil War? The following is an article from the Evening Star (Washington, D.C.), Wednesday, November 20, 1888.

DR. TUMBLETY.

A Naval Officer Tells Some More About Him While in Washington.

In speaking this morning of the recent arrest of 'Dr. Tumblety' in London on suspicion of being 'Jack, the Ripper,' a naval officer said to a STAR reporter:

*I met that man in 1861 in this city. I was standing in front of a toy store looking at a mechanical toy in the window, when this man, who stood beside me, began to talk about it. He afterward invited me to his room **to see an arrangement of his to show the circulation of the blood.** I then thought that either he was a fool or regarded me as a fool, but after listening to him for some time came to the conclusion that he was a decided crank on the subject of medicine. He pretended to be practical, but I soon saw that he knew almost nothing about anatomy. **Among other things** he had a patent preparation for skin diseases, which seemed to have*

⁴⁵ *London Daily Post*, January 3, 1747.

⁴⁶ Lander, K.E. A Brief Account of the Use of Wax Models in the Study of Medicine. *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, Volume XXV, Issue 1, 1970.

some merit. He rode a magnificent horse, a bay with white spots, and used to dash up the avenue. At certain points boys would run out from the curb with notes for him, thus giving folks the impression that he was doing a driving business. He did not last very long here, and in '69 I met him again in San Francisco, where he was doing very poorly . . .⁴⁷[Emphases added.]

Note the repeated usage of the phrase “among other things” that clearly refers to multiple medical items. Tumblety personally showed the naval officer first a medical apparatus, followed by other items in order to demonstrate his medical credibility – the identical purpose of a professional anatomical museum. This is exactly what Colonel Dunham claimed Tumblety was trying to do with him and his second in command. It may not be a coincidence that at the same time Charles Dunham saw Tumblety’s anatomical museum another military officer reported seeing “an arrangement of his to show the circulation of the blood . . . among other things.”

The fact that Tumblety was observed to have a glass circulatory apparatus in 1861 and in 1888, suggests that he continued the practice of using medical items in order to demonstrate medical expertise until he decided to retire from the practice after the Whitechapel murders. If it is true that Francis Tumblety possessed a full anatomical museum at the beginning of the Civil War for the

purpose of convincing military officers that he was a legitimate surgeon available for surgical duties once called upon, then his possession of an anatomical museum at any other time in his life is actually irrelevant.

Conclusion

The prevailing belief among Ripperologists is that Francis Tumblety’s morbid private collection of uteri was a complete fabrication by Charles Dunham, a reptile journalist and pathological liar. It is my contention that Francis Tumblety owning an anatomical museum in 1861 is not only possible but probable. This conclusion is more clearly understood if we eliminate unintentional misconceptions about the issue and then evaluate all of the available evidence. Foremost Dunham expert Carman Cumming’s conclusions demonstrate Dunham was not a pathological liar. When he engaged in reptile journalism during the Civil War, he certainly did lie, but lied “with purpose.” Evidence suggests that Dunham was not engaging in reptile journalism when he spoke with a *New York World* reporter in 1888, thus may not even have been lying. In support of this possibility, most of Dunham’s comments in the interview were demonstrable truths, even the story of Tumblety telling him that he was once married to a prostitute (arguably a Tumblety lie). Further, if we take into account that Dunham stated Tumblety owned a *professional* anatomical museum,

as opposed to just a collection of uterus specimens, this conforms quite nicely to Tumblety’s singular passion and personal agenda for being in Washington, D.C., in 1861 in the first place: to start a successful herb doctor practice. Convincing subordinate officers of the Commander of the Army of the Potomac that he was a legitimate surgeon, thus, could be counted on when needed *as he practiced his profession in D.C.*, would be exactly what Francis Tumblety would have done.

Acknowledgments

If anyone has ever worked with Joe Chetcuti, they would know his personal drive for correctness and attention to detail. He is an amazing researcher and I am indebted to him for his assistance. Few have the in-depth knowledge of Francis Tumblety, from his early days in Rochester, New York, to his death in St. Louis, Missouri. I would also like to thank another outstanding researcher, Roger Palmer, for allowing me to tap into his brain, and thanks as well to Velma Southerland for her editing assistance.

⁴⁷. *Evening Star*, November 20, 1888.