

# The Great American Doctor and Anatomical Knowledge

## Part 1 – Canada West and the Seismic Event

By Michael Hawley

A common question asked when discussing the Whitechapel murders is, “Did Jack the Ripper have anatomical knowledge?” The more pertinent issue is why this question was asked in the first place. What should be asked is, “Was Jack the Ripper’s primary motive the desire to possess specific organs?” The killer not only extracted internal organs out of three of his victims, i.e., he eviscerated them, he also took these organs from the crime scene. After the Whitechapel fiend took Chapman’s uterus and police surgeon Dr. George Bagster Phillips concluded that Chapman’s killer had anatomical knowledge, and after hearing rumors about “*an American*” requesting uterus specimens from the sub-curator of a pathological museum, Coroner Wynne Baxter publicly proposed at the inquest the possibility that the object of the murder was to acquire a uterus. Baxter did not suggest that the rumors were true, but that the demand for this organ “*may have incited some abandoned wretch to possess*” them. In order to find and extract the uterus from a female body “*with no meaningless cuts*,” and do so with lightning speed, Phillips and Baxter were convinced the fiend must have had anatomical knowledge. Jack the Ripper wanted the uterus.

This revised question is actually quite significant. Nearly all proposed Jack the Ripper suspects had no reason to possess any particular internal organ. In view of this, a killer having an agenda to obtain a specific organ from “*the almost living body*,” as journalist George R. Sims phrased it in the *Sunday Referee* in 1907 after receiving information from his Scotland Yard sources, does not support the prospects of these suspects having been the killer.

Still, there is the possibility that the killer had no interest in taking any particular organ, as concluded by esteemed police surgeon Dr. Thomas Bond. Bond stated in his report to Assistant Commissioner Anderson dated November 10, 1888, “*in all the murders, the object was mutilation*,” which was, “*due to homicidal and erotic mania*.” Evisceration was merely part of the mutilation experience and seeking out a specific organ had nothing to do with gaining homicidal and erotic gratification. It is not a surprise that Bond concluded this, because he had just completed the post mortem on the excessively mutilated body of Mary Kelly where her intestines were cut in an “*unprofessional manner*.” Since he concluded that Mary Kelly’s killer also killed Nichols, Chapman, and Eddowes, by extension mutilation was the object of those murders, as well. This may possibly have been the reason why Dr. Bond stated in his post mortem report that Kelly’s heart was “absent,” as opposed to being “missing.” The focus should be on the mutilation and not the taking of the heart.

While some experts are convinced Bond was correct, there are problems with his conclusion. First, positioning the intestines over the right shoulder of the bodies of both Chapman and Eddowes suggests the offender was not in an elevated emotional state of mania mutilating his victim, but was deliberate and controlled in his actions. He was purposely seeking out the uterus, which was positioned underneath those very intestines. Second, Dr. Frederick “Gordon” Brown, police surgeon for the City of London Police and involved with the Eddowes murder, was convinced the killer “*must have had a good deal of [anatomical] knowledge*,” because the kidney was taken. If a killer was just ripping out organs in a state of mania, the kidney was “*apt to be overlooked*,” because it was covered by a membrane. Third, Catherine Eddowes was eviscerated in just minutes in near-total darkness. The killer would likely have experienced little to no homicidal and erotic gratification in mutilation, especially when his mind was on completing the task before a police constable arrived. Even taking

an organ as a trophy to later re-live the hurried event would have been nearly pointless. Fourth, Jack the Ripper escaped through the streets holding onto irrefutable evidence of his guilt, knowing full well that he may encounter -and be stopped by- one of the many ever-present police constables walking his beat. Why chance being caught on the street with unimportant, yet overly damning evidence? This is especially the case, since law enforcement was on high-alert for such a killer. Jack the Ripper discarded the piece of bloody apron in his haste as he left the Eddowes crime scene, but he kept the organs.

What Dr. Bond, and for that matter Dr. Phillips, Coroner Baxter, and Dr. Brown, was completely ignorant about is the results of exhaustive research on serial offender motives today. This includes the study of actual serial killers and, in this case, those who extract internal organs from their victims. There are two relevant facts. First, the usual motive for serial offenders of this type is what modern experts call hedonism, specifically, necrophilia. Professor of forensic medicine Anil Aggrawal classified serial offenders with the sexually-motivated necrophilia into eight distinct categories, although he explains there are also nonsexually-motivated necrophiliacs.<sup>1</sup> According to Aggrawal, the taking of the organs fits into a category involving cannibalism, since organ extraction almost always involves the offender ingesting human tissue and/or organs. The New Orleans serial killer and cannibal Sean Vincent Gillis had files on Russian necrophilia. Cannibalism does indeed have a connection with the Whitechapel murders. Of the hundreds of letters claimed to have come from Jack the Ripper, the letter taken most seriously by experts is the From hell letter, especially since it came with a kidney preserved in wine. The author of the letter stated that he fried a piece of the kidney and ate it.

Second, necrophiles show they frequently have more than one serial offender motive, such as psychological gratification from necrophilia plus power and control.<sup>2</sup> The sexually-motivated necrophiliac and cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer ate his victims' organs to possess them and control them by making them part of him. Dr. Bond was so convinced the psychological gratification of mutilation was the only motive that the offender could not have been after specific organs.

If one of the motives for Jack the Ripper was the desire to obtain specific organs, the only major suspect who was connected to this is Dr. Francis Tumblety, known in England at the time as the great doctor or great American doctor. This is especially the case, since this extreme misogynist is connected to the very internal organs Jack the Ripper took, the uterus, the kidney, and the heart. In January 1888, the year of the murders, Tumblety told a Toronto reporter that he was constantly in dread of sudden death because of kidney and heart disease. When George Sims claimed in 1907 that some in Scotland Yard still believed this theory, they may very well have been thinking it was Tumblety. A study into how and why he gained anatomical knowledge may assist in evaluating his candidacy as having been Jack the Ripper.

The very first time Tumblety was associated with human organs specific to the Whitechapel murders was in mid-November 1888. In the Sunday edition of the *New York Sun*, London correspondent Arthur Brisbane authored extensive multi-column articles sent weekly to New York headquarters via steamship. In the November 25, 1888, Sunday edition, the article was on the Whitechapel murders titled, *Astounding Murders*, with stories he collected the week before. One of them was on Dr. Francis Tumblety's arrest and reasons why Scotland Yard suspected him,

*"...is now being held because he is an erratic character, and because one theory is that some American*

1 Aggrawal, A., A new classification of necrophilia, *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 2009, v. 16, pp. 310-20.

2 Nucleus, Herta Oberheuser "horrific operations", The True Crime Database, <[https://www.thetruecrimedatabase.com/case\\_file/herta-oberheuser/](https://www.thetruecrimedatabase.com/case_file/herta-oberheuser/)>.

*medical institution wants specimens of the female uterus, which it happens that Jack the Ripper often takes from the bodies of his victims.”*

Arthur Brisbane’s article predates the famous December 2, 1888, *New York World* article where eyewitness Charles Dunham claimed to have seen Tumblety’s anatomical collection of human organs, notably, his favored uterus specimens, during an illustrated medical lecture in 1861. Brisbane was finishing up his 3-year tenure as the London correspondent, being replaced just weeks later by Frank White. Brisbane was well-respected by his British counterparts and had many connections. In fact, one week earlier Brisbane personally interviewed Assistant Commissioner Anderson in his office at Scotland Yard, stating in their November 14, 1888, edition, “*Though extremely busy, Dr. Anderson, the head of the hour of the Metropolitan Police, has been kind enough, on knowing that I was a representative of The Sun, to give me a few minutes of his just now priceless time...*” Either Brisbane connected Tumblety to collecting uterus specimens out of the blue or he spoke with someone as he walked the halls of Scotland Yard. It certainly does corroborate George Sims’ 1907 claim.

Tumblety’s first reported link to actual human organs occurred twenty eight years earlier in 1860. In December 1888, a St. John newspaper reporter hired by the *San Francisco Call* interviewed elderly residents about the now infamous Jack the Ripper suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety operating a quack doctor office in their New Brunswick town in 1860. The reporter also searched the archives of old newspapers and discovered the following peculiar event, which occurred just hours before Tumblety sneaked across the border to the US under the cover of darkness successfully avoiding manslaughter charges. The reporter stated,

*“During the inquest, and before the Doctor [Francis Tumblety] fled, those present at the hearing were horrified at the nearly successful attempt to abstract the heart and liver of the dead man from the receptacle in which they lay.”* [Author emphasis added] <sup>3</sup>

Dr. Francis Tumblety was caught attempting to steal organs from a deceased St. John patient he treated just days earlier. The patient’s name was James Portmore, a carpenter who came to Tumblety’s Indian Herb Doctor office in late September 1860 for medical treatment.<sup>4</sup> Tumblety diagnosed his illness and prescribed to him expensive medicine. Portmore obediently took the medicine that evening, became extremely ill, and then died. This automatically prompted a coroner’s inquest in order to determine the cause of his death. In order to see what Portmore ingested, a postmortem examination was performed on the morning of September 27, 1860. This explains why the heart and liver had already been extracted from the body. The jurors determined Tumblety was indeed responsible for Portmore’s death and recommended he be charged with manslaughter.<sup>5</sup> His exit across the border had significant financial consequences abruptly ended a highly lucrative five-year Canadian business venture, which started in April 1856.

Although attempting to steal the organs taken out of a man he had just treated to improve his health seems like deviant and senseless behavior, Tumblety’s actions throughout the five years of his Canadian travels from 1856 to 1860 actually point to this organ-acquisition behavior as being a strategic business decision; albeit a callous one. Tumblety’s ignorance in the practice of medicine in the Province of Upper Canada in 1856 may have sparked a trajectory that eventually caused Scotland Yard to suspect him as Jack the Ripper in 1888.

According to the *Rochester Union*, May 9, 1965, Tumblety began working for Indian Herb Doctor Rudolph J. Lyons while in Rochester. Lyons was first listed in a Rochester City Directory in 1853, so Tumblety likely worked under him from around 1853 to early 1856. R. J. Lyons did not operate out of just one office, but main-

<sup>3</sup> St. Louis Globe-Democrat, January 5, 1889.

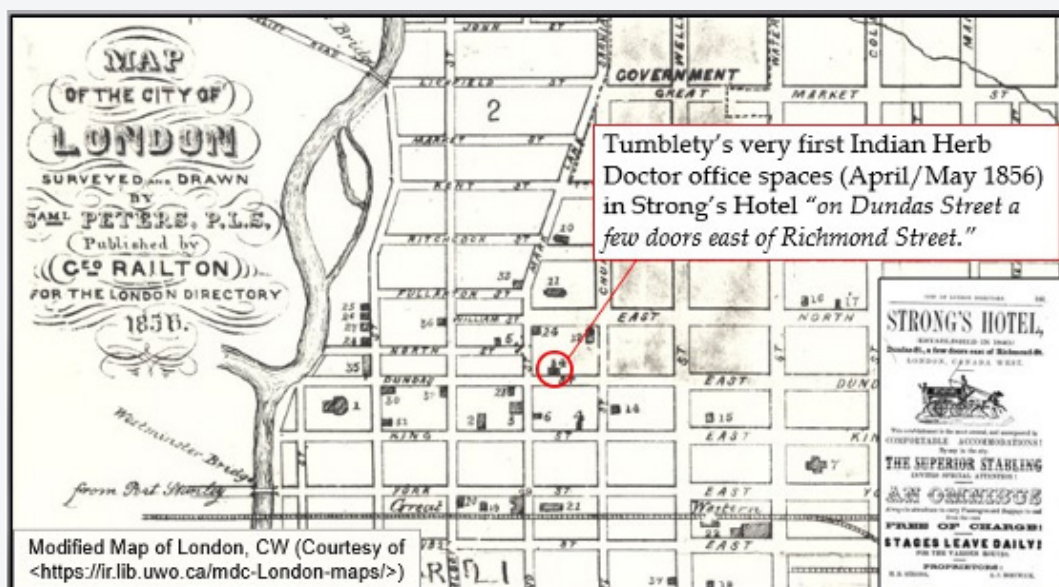
<sup>4</sup> American Medical Times, November 3, 1860.

<sup>5</sup> The Morning Freeman, September 29, 1860.

tained a home office in Rochester and traveled throughout the month in small towns and cities throughout Western New York opening up a temporary office in a hotel for a day or two. It was an area of operation, or business territory. In the *Westfield Republican*, August 20, 1856, he stated, “Dr. Lyons will be absent from his office in Rochester, in order to attend to his country patients, at the following dates of each and every month: 1st, 2nd, 15th, 16th, 17th, 23rd, 24th, and 26th.”

Tumblety placed his first ever ad in the *Troy Daily Times*, March 9, 1856, a city in eastern New York next to Albany. The personal stated, “A Dr. Tumblety (what a name!) is performing marvelous cures in Rochester. He cures scrofula in fifteen minutes, and small pox before it breaks out!”

Tumblety was still in Rochester, but was about to separate from Lyons. Since the city of Troy was outside of Lyons’ business territory, Tumblety may have been planning to start up his own business in a separate area of operation, thus, would not compete with his mentor. He did indeed set off on his own two months later, but instead of east of Lyons’ territory he selected west across the border into what was known as the Province of Upper Canada, more commonly known as Canada West (CW). It is today’s Ontario, Canada, Province. In early April 1856, an extremely motivated 25-year-old Francis Tumblety walked off the train at the London, CW, Great Western Railway train depot and gazed around at the city he chose to begin his lucrative profession as an advertising Indian herb doctor selling his “vegetable medicines.”<sup>6</sup>



After renting out office rooms at Mr. Strong’s Hotel in London, Tumblety eventually made his way to their three local newspapers, the *London Atlas*, *Free Press*, and *Prototype*, where he spent liberally on advertisements.<sup>7</sup> In his first advertisements, Tumblety also attempted to hook readers with the following statement:

*“Invalids, and all those suffering under lingering diseases, will find it to their interest to give the Indian Doctor a call. If he can do you no good, he will frankly tell you so, and not charge you for advice.”*<sup>8</sup> [Author emphasis added]

An important revelation in this statement is that Tumblety did indeed charge for advice. Further along in John Magee’s testimonial, he stated that Tumblety charged “five dollars for a cure.” This means that Tumblety en-

6 Tumblety, F., A Few Passages in the Live of Dr. Francis Tumblety, 1866, Cincinnati.

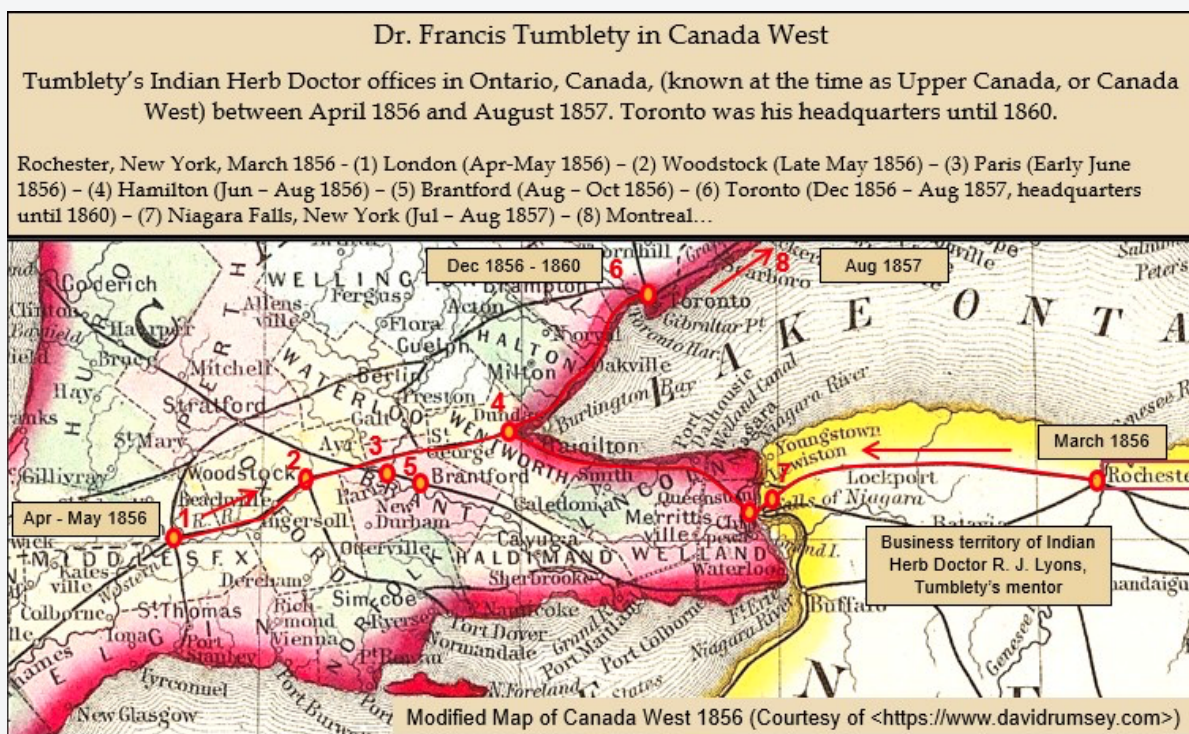
7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.



gaged in the practice of physic, i.e., medicine, meaning, he acted as a doctor diagnosing and treating patients. This also means he was not acting as a pharmacist, or druggist, by merely selling patented “vegetable medicines” and giving free advice.

Tumblety stayed in London, CW, for just over a month; leaving on or about May 19, 1856, right after an unwanted incident occurred at his office when he insulted a female patient, Mrs. Carden. Because of it, Tumblety found himself in front of the London mayor, William Barker, in order to answer to his inappropriate behavior.<sup>9</sup>



Tumblety left London a wealthier man, then traveled east temporarily opening up offices in small towns, a practice very similar to how his mentor R.J. Lyons operated in Western New York. In each town, he placed his “Voice of Truth and Reason” ads.

 <p><b>Listen to the Voice of Truth and Reason and be Profited by it.</b></p> <p>The time has come that all who will, can escape the iron grasp of Mercury, and other mineral poisons, by calling without delay to see the well known and justly celebrated Indian Herb Doctor, F. TUMBLETY, who will remain at the Brantford House, opposite Market Square, Brantford from August 21st to October 1st, to administer those only true and safe medicines from nature's garden, which has for its author the great and all-wise Physician above!</p> <p>The following diseases can be cured by Dr. T. in the most obstinate state of their existence, viz: Disease of the Lungs, Heart, Liver, and Throat. Also, Dyspepsia, Dropsy and all diseases of the blood, such as Scrofula, Erysipelas, Salt-Rheum, Fever Sores and all other Chronic complaints of years' standing.</p> <p>P. S.—The doctor will also give particular attention to all diseases peculiar to Females and children.</p> <p>☞ The poor will be liberally considered.</p> <p>Brantford, August 12, 1856. 89</p>	 <p><b>Listen to the Voice of Truth and Reason and be Profited by it.</b></p> <p>THE time has come that all who will can escape the iron grasp of Mercury, and other mineral poisons, by calling without delay to see the well-known and justly-celebrated Indian Herb Doctor, F. TUMBLETY, at the Burlington Hotel, King Street, East, Hamilton, where he will remain until the 15th of August, to administer those only true and safe medicines from nature's garden, which has for its author the great and Allwise Physician above!</p> <p>The following diseases can be cured by Dr. T. in the most obstinate state of their existence, viz: Disease of the Lungs, Heart, Liver and Throat. Also, Dyspepsia, Dropsy and all diseases of the blood, such as Scrofula, Erysipelas, Salt-Rheum, Fever, Sores and all other Chronic complaints of years standing.</p> <p>P. S.—The Doctor will also give particular attention to all diseases peculiar to Females and Children.</p> <p>The poor will be liberally considered.</p> <p>Hamilton, June 24, 1856. d37td</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brantford Weekly Expositor</b> August 29, 1856</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hamilton Spectator</b> August 13, 1856</p>

<sup>9</sup> London Free Press, May 6, 1856.

In June 1856, Tumblety made his way to the larger city of Hamilton, CW, where he maintained an office at the Burlington Hotel for approximately three months, then left in August 1856, opening up an office in Brantford. The reason Tumblety left Hamilton may have been because of an incident that was witnessed by a number of Hamilton residents. According to the *Hamilton Spectator*, November 29, 1888, Hamilton residents John Smith and a Dr. Chittenden recalled living at the

Burlington Hotel “during 1854” when Tumblety arrived “selling patent medicine on the market.”<sup>10</sup> Although, the actual date was 1856, the fact that they accurately remembered the Burlington Hotel supports the veracity of their recollection of events. They stated that Tumblety hired a boy to barge into his office as he was treating other patients, then make a scene by crying due to a horrible toothache. Tumblety would then instantaneously cure him with a dose of medicine. The scam seemed to work until one evening Tumblety gave the young boy the wrong dose, which caused him to go into convulsions. The Hamilton residents then stated that the boy’s mother, a big Irish chambermaid, found Tumblety at the hotel and beat him, giving him a black eye and disarranged hair. The residents stated that this “made him such a laughingstock that he had to leave the city.” The significance of this event is, it is the very first time Tumblety was reported to using deception in order to further his business agenda.

### *Headquarters Toronto and the Seismic Shift*

Tumblety finally made his way to Toronto in late November or early December 1856 and quickly placed a short introduction advertisement in the papers beginning on December 2nd up until December 12th. It stated that “The Indian Herb Doctor F. Tumblety, can be consulted at the International Hotel, Toronto, C.W., where he will remain to 1st March, 1857.” In the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 10, 1865, a Toronto eyewitness recalled how Tumblety promoted his involvement with Native Americans, clearly amplifying his Indian herb doctor persona:

*“In front of his [Tumblety] office was displayed as a sign, a large pair of buck horns, which he claimed were presented to him by an Indian chief named “Sundown,” a savage of the plains, with whom he was intimately acquainted.”*

As he charged five dollars for his medicines in London, CW, a Toronto eyewitness stated in the *New York World*, May 9, 1865, he did the same in Toronto, “His plan of operations consisted inviting all to consult him free of cost, the interview winding up with the sale for which five dollars was charged, and in some cases more.” On January 27, 1857, Tumblety added in his advertisement of his intentions to make Toronto his home.

*“After traversing the United States and Canada, has come to make Toronto, C.W., his home for the future, where his safe and efficacious [sp] medicines, from nature’s garden, can be obtained, Consultation Free”.*  
[Author emphasis added]

A *New York Tribune* reporter stationed in Brantford, CW, reported in their September 29, 1857, issue seeing Tumblety in Toronto and stated he “seemed to make money fast.” The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 10, 1865, commented to the proprietors of a Buffalo newspaper, the *Buffalo Express*, contacting the Bank of Toronto, inquiring upon Francis Tumblety. The bank replied, stating, “His check is good for \$60,000 in this bank,” which is \$1,648,754 in today’s value. Tumblety had become independently wealthy within a few short years of operating out of Canada West, so establishing his main office in Toronto and making Canada West his business territory made business sense.

Two connected court cases in March 1857 created a seismic shift in the direction of Tumblety’s future

<sup>10</sup> Brantford Daily Expositor, November 30, 1888.



plans.<sup>11</sup> These events are also arguably what sparked Tumblety's deep interest in anatomy and surgery and performing medical lectures illustrated with anatomical specimens. On March 27, 1857, Tumblety found himself in front of a Toronto police court magistrate, which had the definite possibility of him losing his lucrative Canadian-based business and even seeing prison time. According to the *Toronto Globe*, March 30, 1857, an article discovered by researcher Joe Chetcuti, the first incident involved a young man named Adolphus Binkert, a lithographer, desiring to clear his acne. He was recommended by an acquaintance to go to Tumblety "about two months ago," meaning in January 1857 to help him with his affliction.

He went and Tumblety surprised him with a diagnosis of consumption, meaning, tuberculosis. Tumblety then promised to cure him of both afflictions for a steep price. After numerous visits at a cost of over \$50 and a gold watch, Binkert read an expose' on Tumblety in the papers proclaiming that he was an "unprincipled and wicked impostor." The now angry Binkert approached Tumblety and demanded that he return his money and property, but Tumblety refused, resulting in him charging Tumblety with taking money and property under false pretenses.

The significance of this court case with Adolphus Binkert was less about Tumblety being convicted of the charge at hand and more about who the prosecution asked to re-examine Adolphus Binkert - Dr. John Grant. Dr. Grant was a faculty member of the Physicians and Surgeons of Scotland and in the employ of the Governor General of the Province of Canada, Sir Edmund W. Head. Grant was also closely aligned with the members of the medical licensing board for Upper Canada, the board responsible for allowing medical doctors to practice medicine and surgery in Canada West. According to the Medical Act of 1827, all doctors desiring to practice medicine or surgery in Upper Canada must be issued a license through an examination by the board, even if they have a valid medical diploma. This legislation regulated the practice of physic (medicine), surgery, and midwifery in the Province of Upper Canada.<sup>12</sup> Dr. Grant and the members of the medical licensing board based in Toronto were unaware of Tumblety's business operations in Upper Canada for the last year, since Tumblety was only placing ads in the respective local papers. Because of the Adolphus Binkert case in Toronto, however, Dr. Grant became aware of Tumblety and realized he had never approached the board for a medical license, thus, he was in violation of the Medical Act.

In Upper Canada in 1857, having a valid medical diploma from the United States did not satisfy the requirements in the Medical Act of 1827. Per the Medical Act:

*"Unless an applicant held a diploma or license from a designated, bona fide British university, belonged to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of London, or had held a commission or warrant in the British forces as a military surgeon, he had to submit to the Medical Board's examination."*

Submitting to the Medical Board's examination meant that at least three members of the board, who were all medical doctors licensed in Upper Canada approved by the Governor General, interviewed the candidate<sup>13</sup> This meant that doctors from the United States had to undergo an oral examination before the medical board. They also reviewed relevant credentials, then if satisfied would issue a certificate for the Lieutenant Governor (After 1841, it was the Governor General) to grant a license. The reason for the Medical Act of 1827 was to reduce the number of quacks and unlicensed doctors. A quack doctor was a medical charlatan who scammed

<sup>11</sup> *Toronto Globe*, April 2, 1857.

<sup>12</sup> Baehre, R., *The Medical Profession in Upper Canada Reconsidered: Politics, Medical Reform, and Law in a Colonial Society*, 1993, Canadian Society of the History of Medicine, Carleton University <<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/pdf/10.3138/cbmh.12.1.101>>.

<sup>13</sup> Romano, T.M., *Professional Identity and the Nineteenth-Century Ontario Medical Profession*, 1993, History of Medicine, Queen's University.

the sick and elderly, promising false cures and remedies in exchange for money. Unlicensed doctors may have had honest intentions of healing, but because of questionable methods, a lack of governance of these doctors by the established expert community would hurt the reputation of medicine administered in Upper Canada. Dr. Grant formally lodged a complaint on March 31, 1857, claiming that Tumblety was practicing medicine without being duly licensed. In accordance with the Medical Act, the case was adjudicated in the courts. A commentary in the April 3, 1857, issue of the *Toronto Globe* stated:

*“There is no charge here of false pretences [sp], such as was alleged in the first case; the accusation simply is, that the defendant gave medicine and took payment therefore... Yet upon this charge Tumblety is seized, his person rifled, his property taken forcible possession of by the police, and he is committed to stand his trial for an offence punishable by a £25 fine, or imprisonment for six months.”*

Tumblety and his attorney, Mr. J. Boulton, were in front of the police court magistrate on April 1, 1857. In this case, the prosecutors called for the deposition of eyewitness Thomas Mullen, who stated that around February 8, 1857, he went to Tumblety because of his general debilitated state. Tumblety told him he was in a bad condition in consequence of his secret habit, meaning masturbation, which he was addicted to. Mullen then admitted to Tumblety that he had a secret habit and asked what he should do. Tumblety told him that for \$20, followed by and additional \$10, he could cure him.

The magistrate was convinced that Tumblety violated the elements of the Medical Act, because he “*accepted a fee from his patient in the practice of physic.*” [Author emphasis added]

The magistrate then committed the case up to the next judicial level in front of a judge at the Court of Assize. Notice that Tumblety was not in violation of the Act for offering free-of-charge advice (as sometimes advertised) for both Binkert and Mullen, but for the practice of physic, meaning the practice of diagnosing and treating a patient. Tumblety charged them not for the medicine, but for him treating with a procedure for taking medicine after diagnosis. Tumblety was acting as a medical doctor as opposed to a druggist, or pharmacist, recommending the best medicine to take in their pharmacy then charging for the medicine.

Tumblety ultimately lost the case. When he was cross-examined on a separate court case in New York on April 1, 1861, he admitted to the defense attorney that he was convicted for practicing without a license in Toronto. An article in the May 9, 1865, issue of the *Rochester Daily Union and Advertiser*, added further detail:

*“Subsequently Tumblety was arrested at Toronto on the instigation of regular faculty as a quack and he was taken to court. There he produced some kind of certificate which he had obtained from a Philadelphia College and escaped with a fine of twenty pounds, which he paid...”*

The *Boston Pilot*, May 16, 1857, reproduced some of the actual dialogue in court, as recorded in the *Toronto Mirror*:

*“At the sitting of the Court Mr. Read moved for judgment in the case of F. Tumblety, the Indian Herb Doctor, who was, during the present assizes, found guilty of practicing medicine without first obtaining a Canadian license, as required by the statute. His Lordship. –Francis Tumblety, you have been found guilty, under the provisions of an Act practicing physic, surgery, or mid-wifery without obtaining a license, an offence.”*

*“Dr. Tumblety. –I have a diploma from the Medical College of Philadelphia. The doctor then produced it.*

*His Lordship. –That is not sufficient. The jury, however, in rendering their verdict, have most strongly*



*recommended the case to the forbearance of the Court. Therefore I will not enforce the utmost penalty. The sentence of the Court is, that you pay a fine of £20 to the Queen, and remain in the custody of the sheriff until the same is paid.*

*Dr. Tumblety at once handed to his counsel, Mr. Eccles, an immense roll of bills, containing, it is said, between \$3,000 and \$4,000.*

*Mr. Eccles paid the fine to the clerk out of this huge pile, and returned the large balance to the doctor, who then left the court”*

Even though Tumblety presented a diploma, real or fake, he would still have had to undergo an oral examination in front of three board members if he wanted to charge for treating patients with his patent medicines, i.e., practice physic, the source of his big money. He would not have been allowed to practice after the case and would have had to practice as a pharmacist, which is exactly what his advertisements show. Tumblety was allowed to seek out a license, and since he planned on making Toronto his home, this may very well have been his plan. The only problem is, the established medical community who comprise of the licensing board were now convinced Tumblety was a fraud.

The commentary in the April 3, 1857, issue of the *Toronto Globe* was titled, “The Medical Profession,” and it used Dr. Grant’s charge against Tumblety for practicing physic without a license to make the claim to their readers about bias in the medical profession against alternative, or nontraditional, medical practitioners. Acceptable accredited medical schools had to follow the requirements directed by the Medical Act of 1827, which meant they had to teach physic, or medicine, anatomy, surgery, and midwifery. Physic at the established traditional medical schools taught allopathic medicine, meaning to treat with the opposite, such as treat a fever (hot) with cold<sup>14</sup> Disease was caused by the imbalance of the four fluids. Diplomas from accredited alternative medical schools were actually accepted in Canada West, such as from homeopathic medical schools where the medicine was to treat with the same, as opposed to the opposite.<sup>15</sup> What makes a person ill also cures them. Homeopathic medical schools were still required to teach surgery and midwifery. The Homeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania (HMCP) was in Philadelphia, which obtained a charter in 1848.<sup>16</sup> Of the botanical medical systems, such as Thomsonian, Indian herb, or root, medicine, and eclectic, only the eclectic herbal system had accredited medical schools in the 19th century; albeit just a few. Certain states, such as Ohio, did indeed issue a charter for certain eclectic medical schools, specifically, the Eclectic Medical Institute (EMI), and Pennsylvania, with the Eclectic Medical College of Pennsylvania (EMCP). This meant that it was appropriate for a physician graduating at accredited homeopathic and eclectic medical schools to sign their name with M.D. at the end.

It is not a surprise that Tumblety claimed his medical diploma came from Philadelphia, since one of the only two herbal-based medical schools was there. It makes sense that Tumblety would claim to the board a medical diploma from an eclectic medical school, since his advertisements not only promoted botanical remedies but also rejected allopathic remedies. Corroborating this is an eyewitness account of Tumblety in St. John, New Brunswick, in 1860. In the *Montreal Gazette*, November 22, 1888, the St. John resident stated that Tumblety, “purported to be an eclectic physician.” This meant there was a path for the “eclectic” Dr. Tumblety to receive a license to practice medicine in Canada West, thus in turn, give him the credentials and justification for using title of medical doctor, or MD, for the rest of his life. Incidentally, newspaper reports in the United States subsequent to the *Montreal Gazette*, November 22, 1888, such as the *New York World*, November 27, 1888,

14 Whorton, J.C., *The History of Alternative Medicine in America*, 2004, Oxford Univ. Press.

15 Loudon, I., *A Brief History of Homeopathy*, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, National Library of Medicine, <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1676328/>>.

16 Philadelphia Medical History and the University of Pennsylvania, Extinct Philadelphia Medical Schools, University Archives and Records Center.

misread the word eclectic and published “electric.”

Actually, Tumblety fits into none of these respected 19th century botanical medical systems, even though he claimed publicly that he was an Indian Herb doctor. All honest medical practitioners, whether their approach was traditional or non-traditional, had a common goal; improving the health of their patients. While Tumblety advertised this, his true, hidden agenda was financial gain. He was a quack doctor; a conman, or confidence man, callously scamming the sick out of their money. He began his trade with a lie. Might Tumblety have been a true Indian herb doctor merely attempting to earn an honest living through questionable advertising techniques, or was he an actual quack doctor callously scamming his patients? We now have a window into how he interacted with his patients with an unsympathetic hand, deceiving them out of their money and having no remorse afterward. Recall the Toronto court appearance on March 27, 1857, when Adolphus Binkert visited Tumblety’s office for his acne problem. As recorded in the *Toronto Globe*, March 30, 1857, under sworn testimony, Binkert stated, “Tumblety felt my pulse and shook his head, saying to me ‘Poor fellow, it is all over with you, and you must die very soon. You’re a goner – you are in a consumption, but I can cure you for \$50’”

Notice how Tumblety used a strawman trick to first convince a patient of a serious affliction, then effectively cure them of that affliction with his own vegetable medicine. Little did the patient realize that they never had the affliction in the first place. Binkert came into Tumblety’s office for a minor issue and Tumblety convinced him that he had consumption, or tuberculosis, which was incurable in the 19th century. This explains why so many patients believed Tumblety cured them. Once convinced, the patient would be ecstatic about being cured of an incurable disease and likely tell others of the miraculous Tumblety. Point; at no time was Tumblety concerned about the health of his patient.

Tumblety continued to maintain an office in Toronto, so he clearly wanted to keep it his headquarters, but he no longer earned the big money. The only solution was to get a license to practice medicine as a physician by convincing the board his knowledge of anatomy and surgery and of midwifery. Tumblety had a huge problem, though. He never actually attended medical school. Corroborating this was a 1905 court case where Tumblety’s nephew Michael Fitzsimmons affirmed to the court under oath that Tumblety never went to medical school.<sup>17</sup> This means Tumblety had no formal education and training in anatomy and surgery, so if a medical board in Toronto composed of licensed physicians drilled him with questions, they would quickly realize his Philadelphia medical diploma is a fake. He needed to prove his anatomical knowledge and surgical skills to prove his diploma was not a fake. But is there any evidence that Tumblety attempted to learn anatomy and surgery after losing the case in May 1857? Researcher Roger Palmer discovered an article in the June 19, 1857, edition of the *Toronto Mirror* titled Medical Improvements that connects Tumblety with learning the human anatomy:

*“Dr. Tumblety has recently purchased a splendid set of physiological engravings and representations, which can be seen at his rooms, opposite the St. Lawrence Hall. They consist of no less than ten set of fine plates, superbly mounted on rollers, and exhibiting the nerves, muscles, bones, and aorta, so clearly and beautifully as to convince the beholder, in truth and in very deed, that “we are fearfully and wonderfully made.” They have been imported at considerable expense from Rochester, in which city the Doctor practiced his peculiar department of medicine with success for several years.”*

<sup>17</sup> Circuit Court Archives, City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, Case Number 31430, Series A., 1904 – 1908.

The nerves, muscles, and bones are entire systems (“aorta” likely meant the circulatory system) in the body, so the 10 plates were clearly illustrations of the entire human anatomy. These were educational tools to increase one’s knowledge of anatomy. This is the first time Tumblety was directly connected to anatomical knowledge. The fact that Tumblety was not trumpeting himself as an Indian Herb Doctor as he always did meant he was attempting to focus the readers’ –including members of the licensing board- attention to other areas of his medical expertise.

In part 2 of this article, Tumblety makes his way to Canada East, or Lower Canada, specifically, Montreal, opening up a “medical institute” while still maintaining his headquarters in Toronto, which he also called a medical institute. A medical institute would be tailor-made for gaining anatomical knowledge and honing surgical skills in preparation for a future oral medical examination. Also, did prominent Montreal “first citizens” really ask Tumblety to challenge Thomas D’Arcy McGee in upcoming elections? Did he truly received a gold medal valued at \$800 from these same citizens? No.

*Michael Hawley is the author of several Ripper books focused on the suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety: Jack the Ripper Suspect Dr. Francis Tumblety, The Ripper’s Haunts and Dr. Francis Tumbley & the Railway Ripper. He has appeared on numerous television documentaries and podcasts. He is based out of Buffalo, New York.*

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## WEIRD COINCIDENCES

The main witness in the murder of Martha Tabram was Pearly Poll.

The next victim was Mary Ann ‘Polly’ Nichols...

Catherine Eddowes gave her name as Mary Kelly when she was released from custody the night she died.

The next victim was Mary Jane Kelly...

Martha Tabram was thirty-nine when she died, she was stabbed thirty-nine times...

Elizabeth Stride’s partner was Michael Kidney...

Less than an hour after Stride’s murder Catherine Eddowes had her kidney removed...oo-ee-oo.