

**A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF DR. FRANCIS  
TUMBLETY: PRESENTING AN OUTLINE OF  
HIS WONDERFUL CAREER AS PHYSICIAN,  
PROFESSIONAL SUCCESSES AND  
PERSONAL INTIMACIES WITH RENOWNED  
PERSONAGES OF THE TWO HEMISPHERES**

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A Sketch of the Life of Dr. Francis Tumblety: Presenting an Outline of His Wonderful Career as Physician, Professional Successes and Personal Intimacies with Renowned Personages of the Two Hemispheres by Francis Tumblety

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INCLUDING LETTERS FROM THE LATE

EMPEROR NAPOLEON, PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN, RIGHT HON.  
BENJAMIN DISRAELI, LORD STANLEY, SIR WILFRED LAWSON,  
CHARLES DICKENS, PROF. WILLARD PARKER, LORD HEADLEY,  
PROF. S. F. B. MORSE, HENRY W. LONGFELLOW, OLIVER  
WENDELL HOLMES, FRIEND JOHN A. BEST, REV.  
FATHERS A. HOECKEN AND THOMAS B. CHAL-  
MERS; AND GEN. SHERMAN AND LEE,

ALSO,

Extracts of Letters written from abroad from friends at home, with  
personal notices and effusions from the Canadian, New York,  
Washington, St. Louis and San Francisco Papers,  
Reminiscences of Foreign Travel, etc., etc.

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SECOND EDITION.

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## PREFACE.

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It has been said that the man without the capacity of wonder resembles a dull pair of spectacles behind which there are no eyes. The bitter persecution, venomous assaults and the impudent curiosity which, when balked, becomes malevolent, aimed at the writer from the reptile section of the public press, justify the assumption that the authors of such attacks can only be likened to serpents and similar crawling nuisances. These unjust and infamous slanders, amazing in their frequency and absolute lack of foundation, have almost deprived me of the wonder capacity. But far from reducing me to the other miserable level, such rascally endeavors to subvert an honest reputation have only filled my mind with contempt. I have been too much engrossed with larger themes than matters of mere personal discussion to justify myself from malignant and, I trust, palpably mendacious newspaper assaults. Yet, absurd and farcical as these are in one sense, as slightly as they appeal in general to intelligent readers, it may be that there are some who have been influenced by their iteration and the fact that their victim has remained silent. At the urgent request of friends, therefore, I hence concluded to offer the best refutation of them, the testimony of an honest, upright and useful life, which has been cordially recognized by eminent personages in this and other lands alike in its social and professional relations.

In the pursuit of the healing art I have striven assiduously to extend investigation into that special branch of the *materia medica* which I have practiced so successfully, and which research and common sense unite in pronouncing the sole trustworthy arsenal whence the weapons of true therapeutics are drawn. My studies have extended to various countries and climates, and I have had the satisfaction of knowing—the noblest return that can satisfy honest effort—that my researches in the ambition to benefit my fellow men have not been fruitless, and certainly not unrecognized by those whose ability, rank and integrity have placed them among the leading spirits of their time.

In writing this pamphlet, which, of course, has compelled me to enter into many personal details, I utterly disclaim any petty vanity or egotism. It is not merely to tell the public that my life has been a somewhat notable one, or distinguished by the intimacy of many eminent personages, or dedicated to the accomplishment of a great

medical reform. Were this my only end I should be, indeed, an object of ridicule. But my reputation as a man has been blackened by hideous malice. I need not quote the hackneyed but powerful lines of Shakespeare in this connection: "He who steals my purse steals trash," etc., to justify my action in defending my reputation, which is dearer to me than all else that earth can give. I have chosen to do this by a plain, unvarnished detail of the leading events of my life, a life entirely inconsistent with the foul indictment which has been hurled against my innocent head without warning or shadow of cause. I leave the matter to the honorable and fair-minded public, confident that there can be but one verdict. To my assailants, one and all, I leave my contempt, proud in the consciousness of my own integrity; and to each one of them I answer in the words of one of the most noted victims of Junius's attacks to that savage and bitter writer:

"Cease, viper, you bite against a file."

Prejudice, that bigoted monster of the past, though still exerting its evil forces, is gradually losing its vitality in matters of science. No better example of this can be cited than the late history of the medical art. Nature, as represented by the more progressive physician, is asserting her supremacy over the ignorant usages and superstitions of a bygone age. Her life-giving remedies are almost infallible, though simple, and to the student the expanding horizon of her beneficent kingdom is as extensive as the ocean.

In faithfully observing her laws and embodying her teachings, so far as my professional practice has been at stake, my consistency has never swerved. That the success of my efforts has been commensurate the documentary evidence of the following pages will amply testify. With these proofs of an upright and honorable career and of successes, which have been worthily and, I trust, modestly worn, I have the honor to subscribe myself the public's obedient servant,

FRANCIS TUMBLETY, M D.

ONE OF SEVERAL  
DIPLOMAS HELD BY THE AUTHOR.

(Translation.)

MILITARY AMBULANCE.

SIEGE OF PARIS—HELD DURING THE YEARS  
1870 and 1871—*versus* THE PRUSSIAN ARMIES.

The Director of the Ambulance of Brittany, established at the RUE DU QUATRE SEPTEMBRE, 14 No., presents to Monsieur Tumblety (Francis), M. D., the Brittany Cross, insignia of the act, as well as the DIPLOMA, in remembrance of the kind concourse and devoted services that he rendered in the qualification of Doctor during the war.

Paris, the 29th Jan., 1873.

P. HERVE DU LORIN,

Chevalier, Commandant of the Ambulance of  
Brittany.

Seen and approved.

(Signed), P. HERVE DU LORIN,

21, Rue d'Arcole, 21,  
Paris.



## PART I.

### CHAPTER I.

#### *A Statement of My Position.*

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE—BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND IN THE PAST—A NEW SYSTEM OF MEDICAL SCIENCE—COMMON SENSE VS. PRESUMPTION AND MERE SPECULATION.

I think it is but proper that I should give a brief glance at the more salient features of the theories and views which have inspired my practice of the medical profession, before entering on matters more purely personal, or, in other words, the facts of my professional career, extending over a period of more than thirty years. The lesson to be drawn from this experience, as it may indeed be deduced from lives of other sincere reformers, is that calumny is but too often the payment of original thinking; and that the rebel from the yoke of tradition who dares to pursue original research and apply his discoveries, must fortify his soul with dauntless patience and courage.

At the beginning of my professional career I recognized this broad principle, that a *system* is necessary to the successful practice of the medical science, and that a system should consist of just, logical deductions, drawn from familiar, known, indubitable, and undoubted *facts*. Instead of this, all or most of our systems are either false conclusions from mere imaginary whims, begged principles, or mere suppositions—or even false conclusions from erroneous principles. Many systematizers pretend to build upon facts, but their facts are *pressed* and *whipped* into their service. The doctor first spins his system out of the cobweb of his fancy, and afterward squeezes some facts into forms resembling proofs of it, and very honestly shuts his eyes against all such facts as are at

variance with his beloved air castle. He creates distinctions, when in nature all is whole, and forges classifications, when in nature all swim together. Thus Boerhaave, Cullen, Brown, Darwin, Staehl, were all blind leaders of the blind; and the young physician who thinks he has in his notes and books a remedy for every disease, when he comes to the sick bed finds all a chaos; no rule will apply. He looks in vain for the vaunted effects of his cure—all nostrums; forsakes in disgust a practice which may lead him to manslaughter, or from experience chinks himself out some dictionary; this is good for that, or that is good for this, and becomes a *quack*—for practice without system is the very definition of quackery.

I offer to the public a *new system of science*, which I have formed conscientiously clear of all the impediments I have enumerated, and which is confirmed in its salutary effects by the experience of a lifetime.

We know, from what we see and feel, that the animal body is, in its organs and functions, subject to derangement, inducing pain and tending to its destruction. In this disordered state we observe nature providing for the re-establishment of order by exciting some salutary evacuation of the morbid matter, or by some other operation which escapes our imperfect senses and researches. She brings on a crisis by stools, vomiting, sweat, urine, expectoration, etc., which for the most part ends in the restoration of healthy action. Experience has taught us, also, that there are certain substances by which, applied to the living body internally or externally, we can at will produce the same evacuations, and thus do in a short time what nature would do but slowly, and do effectually what perhaps she would not have strength to accomplish. Where, then, we have seen a disease characterized by specific signs or phenomena, and relieved by a certain *natural* evacuation or process, whenever that disease occurs under the same appearances, we may reasonably count on producing a solution of it by the use of such substances as we have found *by experience* produce the same evacuation or movement. Thus, fulness of the stomach we can relieve by emetics;

diseases of the bowels by purgatives, etc., etc. Here, then, the judicious, the moral, the humane physician should stop.

But the adventurous physician goes on and substitutes presumption for knowledge. From the scanty field of what is known he launches into the boundless regions of what is unknown. He establishes for his guide some fanciful theory of corpuscular attraction, of chemical agency, of mechanical powers, of stimuli, or irritability, accumulated or exhausted, of depletion by the lancet and repletion by mercury, or some other ingenious dream which lets him into all nature's secrets at short hand. On the principle which he thus assumes he forms his table of nosology, arrays his diseases into families, and extends his curative treatment (says he) by analogy to all he has thus arbitrarily marshaled together.

I have lived myself to see the disciples of Hoffman, Boerhaave, Staehl, Cullen and Brown succeed one another like the shifting figures of the magic lantern, and their fancies, like the drosses of the annual doll babies from Paris, becoming from their novelty the vogue of the day, and yielding to the next novelty their ephemeral favors. The patient, treated on the *fashionable* theory, sometimes gets well in spite of the medicine. The medicine, therefore, restored him, and the young doctor receives new courage to proceed in his bold experiments on the lives of his fellow-creatures.

I believe we may safely affirm that the *inexperienced* and *presumptuous* band of medical tyros let loose upon the world *destroys more human life* in one year than all the Robin Hoods, Cortouches and Macheaths do in a century.

It is on this part of medicine I wish to see a reform—an abandonment of hypothesis for sober *facts*—the *first* degree of value set on *clinical observation*, and the *lowest* on *visionary theories*.

There is no science that has so much needed reform as the science of medicine, for it is a science in which the happiness of mankind is more closely woven than any other. All reformers have to struggle with prejudice and superstition, but none so much as the hardy individual who dares to attack