

**THE LIFE AND
LABOURS OF SIR
CHARLES BELL**

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The life and labours of Sir Charles Bell by Amédée Pichot

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AMÉDÉE PICHOT

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THE
LIFE AND LABOURS
OF
SIR CHARLES BELL,
K.G.H., F.R.S.S., L. & E.

BY
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"CHARLES THE FIFTH," "CHARLES EDWARD, THE LAST OF THE STUARTS,"
ETC. ETC.



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To my friend,

DOCTOR FAGES,

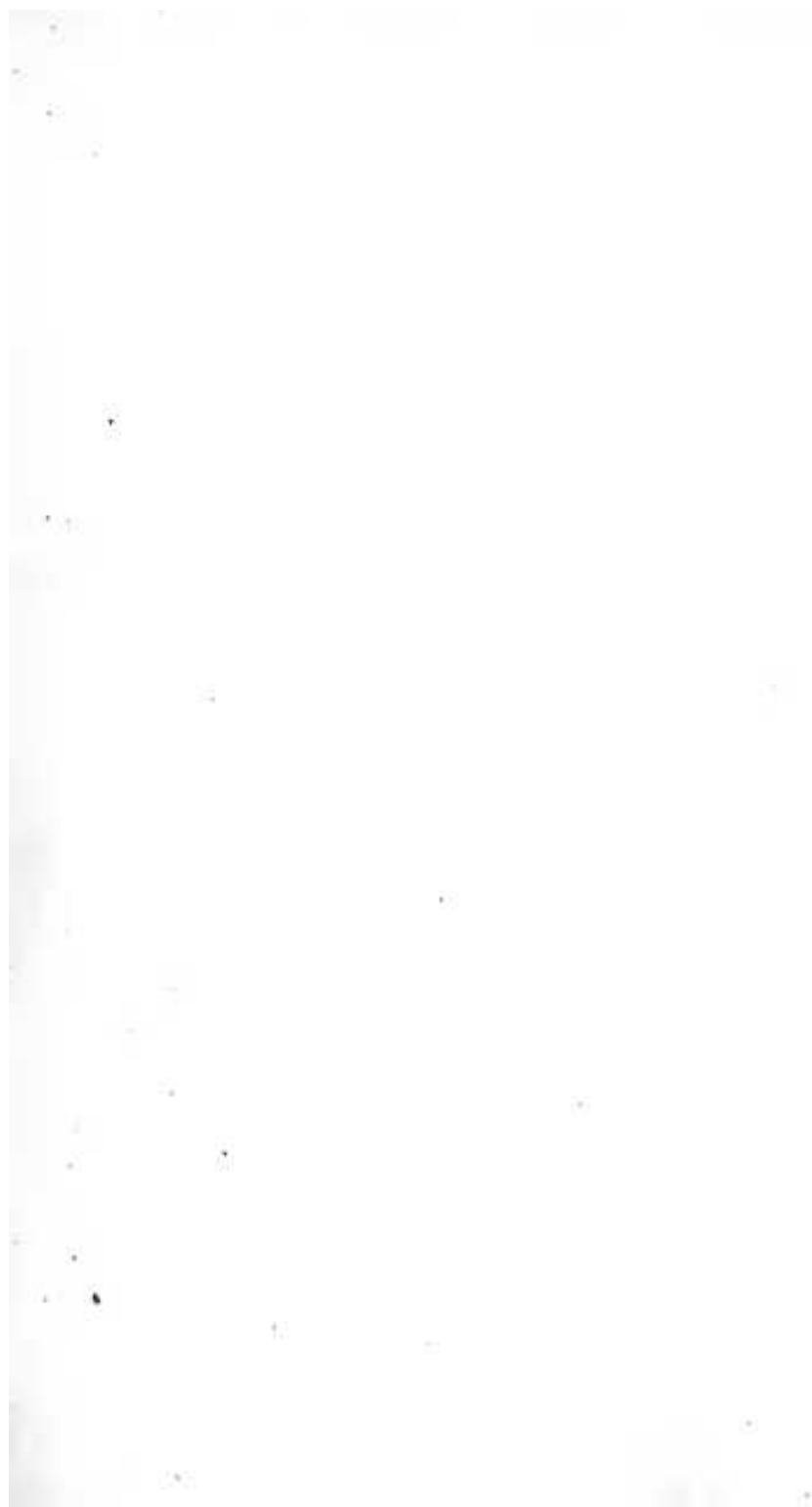
PROFESSOR-SUBSTITUTE IN THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT
MONTPELLIER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I dedicate to you this little work; in memory of the days when we were seated on the same bench, at the foot of the chair of your illustrious father; and also to thank you for the first lessons in natural history which you have given to my beloved children.

AMÉDÉE PICHOT, M.D.

Sèvres, Villa Boson, May, 1858.



PREFACE.

THE eminent physiologist, of whose life and labours I here offer a sketch, passed almost incessantly from enthusiasm to despondency, from the intoxicating illusions of his renown to indifference for his most important discoveries. It is related, that, struck by a sudden idea in one of his nights of meditative sleeplessness, he awoke his wife, exclaiming, with Archimedes, "*Eureka!* I pray God," he said, "not to have sent me an empty dream, or to suffer me to recover in the morning the thread of this nocturnal vision: if I see with my waking eyes what I have caught a glimpse of in slumber, I shall assuredly leave behind me an immortal name." This was the dream of the man of genius, who retires to rest and rises with his dominant thought,—one of those ideas ripened by the union of inspiration and study which science adopts, sooner or later, as the long sought for reve-

lation of truth. It was the glory alone that proved to be an illusion to Sir Charles Bell.

I had little personal acquaintance with Sir Charles Bell, and after we had exchanged one or two visits of courtesy, and a few unimportant letters, I lost sight of him for several years, devoting myself to different studies from that which had procured for me the good fortune of being introduced to him in 1822; but I had not forgotten him when his death revived all my sympathy with his character and admiration for his genius, joined to the regret of having given up a work in which he would have occupied a foremost place, and the title of which remained, barren of fruits, on the cover of my "Historical and Literary Travels in England and Scotland." I therefore seized the opportunity offered by the only article in the English Reviews which spoke of Sir Charles Bell in any detail, to write the first sketch of the biography I now publish in a more complete form; after expecting for fifteen years that a pen more distinguished than mine would associate itself with a name well deserving one of the formal panegyrics awarded by our academics to foreign scholars and artists.* But neither in England, nor even in

* The *Quarterly Review*, for May, 1843, contains a critique,

Scotland, has any history yet appeared of the life and works of Sir Charles Bell. This has emboldened me to place my obscure escutcheon under his illustrious hatchment, not without my own dream of vain-glory, in fancying that I may one day or other figure in some bibliographical note, in return for the hints or information which a future biographer may extract from this little work.

My first sketch has already been considered worthy of quotation by competent judges, such as Messrs. Flourens, Roux, and Magendie; and I have received, through Mr. Henry Reeve,* the thanks of Lady Bell, which deeply affected me. These, and other incitements, have contributed not a little to the new task I undertake in the hope of deserving them; for in this respect I resemble Sir Charles Bell;—I require encouragement before I can advance.

I have said that I was personally acquainted with Sir Charles Bell, and I shall mention here for the second time that I was indirectly indebted for equally profound and acute, which I found very useful, especially in the quotations from Sir Charles Bell's journals. The eighth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* has a biographical article by Sir John MacNeil, which is little more than a very laconic summary of the various notices, all extremely imperfect, published since 1843.

* The present editor of the *Edinburgh Review*.