

PAUL CLIFFORD

BY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

"Many of your lordships must recollect what used to take place on the high roads in the neighbourhood of this metropolis some years ago. Scarcely a carriage could pass without being robbed; and frequently the passengers were obliged to fight with, and give battle to, the highwaymen who infested the roads."—Duke of Wellington's Speech on the Metropolis Police Bill, June 5th. *Mirror of Parliament*, 1829, p. 2050.

"Can any man doubt whether it is better to be a great statesman or a common thief?"—JONATHAN WILD.

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To
ALBANY FONBLANQUE,
WHOSE ACUTENESS OF WIT IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THOSE WHO
OPPOSE HIS OPINIONS,—
WHOSE INTEGRITY OF PURPOSE IS YET MORE RESPECTED BY THOSE
WHO APPRECIATE HIS FRIENDSHIP,
THIS WORK
IS INSCRIBED.

July, 1840.

PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1840.

THIS Novel so far differs from the other fictions by the same author, that it seeks to draw its interest rather from practical than ideal sources. Out of some twelve Novels or Romances embracing, however inadequately, a great variety of scene and character,—from *Pelham* to the *Pilgrims of the Rhine*—from *Rienzi* to the *Last Days of Pompeii*—*Paul Clifford* is the *only one* in which a robber has been made the hero, or the peculiar phases of life which he illustrates have been brought into any prominent description.

Without pausing to inquire what realm of manners, or what order of crime and sorrow, are open to art, and capable of administering to the proper ends of fiction, I may be permitted to observe, that the present subject was selected, and the Novel written, with a twofold object:

First to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions; viz., a vicious Prison discipline, and a sanguinary Criminal Code,—the habit of corrupting the boy by the very punishment that ought to redeem him, and then hanging the man, at the first occasion, as the easiest way of getting rid of our own blunders. Between the example of crime which the tyro learns from the felons in the prison-yard, and the horrible levity with which the mob gather round the drop at Newgate, there is a connection which a writer may be pardoned for quitting loftier regions of imagination to trace and to detect. So far this book is less