TO THE READER.

TIMES have changed since our earlier British Novelists, when they sought to make the incidents lie thick in their fictions, gave them the form of a journey, and sent their heroes a travelling over England. The one-half of "Tom Jones," two-thirds of "Joseph Audrews," not a few of the most amusing chapters in "Roderick Random" and "Launcelot Greaves," and the whole of "Humphrey Clinker," are thrown into this form. They are works of English travels; and the adventures with which they are enlivened arise by the wayside.

It would be rather a difficult matter, in these later times, to make a novel out of an English tour. The country, measured by days' journeys, has grown nine-tenths smaller than it was in the times of Fielding and Smollett. The law has become too strong for Captain Macheath the highwayman, and the public too knowing for Mr. Jenkinson the swindler. The journeyer by moonlight, who accidentally loses his road, stumbles on no "Hermit of the Hill," wrapped up in a grotesque dress of skins; but merely encounters, instead, some suspicious gamekeeper, taking his night-rounds in