

ILLUSTRATIONS, &c.

THE criticisms on "Sir Andrew Wylie," at the time of its appearance, were of a very mixed character. Some of them were tissues of sheer abuse, against the reception of which the obvious malignity was a sufficient caveat; and some were prompted by an evident envy of that popularity which "The Annals," "The Legatees," and "The Provost," had secured to the author. Only one or two were fair, and acknowledged the merits of the book—when compared with the productions just mentioned—as of a mixed character.

For the first time in this series of works, the author trode upon English ground, and ventured upon a delineation of the most artificial of all states of existence—aristocratic society. The task was one for which neither his powers nor his tastes were peculiarly adapted; but when we regard the character of Lord Sandysford, which is drawn with philosophical nicety, it would be harsh to say that he has altogether failed. The episode of the gipsies, although in some degree an excrescence on the main story, is acutely and picturesquely managed; and the language of the old mother, in assuming the tone of the sybil, is often impregnated with high poetical feeling.

It would be vain, however, to conceal that the Scottish parts of the narrative are by far the best, and that the characteristic genius of the author is much more vividly displayed in the first and third volumes. The old grandmother, Martha—Tannyhill, the gentle and modest "dominie"—Miss Mizy—the Laird—and Mary Cunningham—are all sketches full of life, and faithfully true to nature; nor do Bell Lampit and Daft Jamie find less willingly a place in our recollections. The hero himself is drawn with great vigour and boldness, but, perhaps, is after all the most questionable in the book if we regard its probabilities.

Sir Andrew Wylie was in England the most popular of all Mr