

LIFE AND TIMES OF SIR A. T. GALT

to Constantinople. There the British ambassador, Stratford Canning, endorsed his plan of a large depot in the islands under government auspices, and promised to recommend Galt as director. Back in London, Galt at once approached the Foreign Office, but his proud and impetuous temperament could not brook official indifference and official red-tape, and though overtures were later made to him, he gave up the plan entirely. A little later he undertook for the same house of Kirkham Finlay to direct from Gibraltar the distribution of British goods throughout Spain, but the victories of Wellington soon brought this mission to a close. Galt had the satisfaction, however, of knowing that the route he had opened through the Balkans had been kept open; Lancashire cottons or sugar packed in two hundred pound boxes were shipped from England to Salonica, carried by horse and mule across the mountains to Hungary, and thence distributed throughout Germany and even France.¹

Absorbed in these commercial ventures, Galt had given up all thought of law. He had married in 1813, Elizabeth, the daughter of Alexander Tilloch, editor of the *Philosophical Magazine* and proprietor of *The Star* newspaper, and could not afford to wait for the slow rewards of the bar. Now, when the resistance of the Northern powers and the victory of Waterloo had opened the markets of Europe and brought these fascinating but precarious projects to an end, Galt turned to literature. He made no concealment of his belief that it was only a second best task. "Notwithstanding I have put together many books, and become so various an author," he declares in his *Autobiography*, "it has been rather in consequence of the want of active engagements than from a predominant predilection for the art. I would no doubt, unless my time had been fully occupied with business, have still

¹Tooke, *History of Prices*, vol. i, p. 311.