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Difficulties of a Diplomat: George Mifflin Dallas in London

When George Mifflin Dallas accepted the English ministry in January, 1856, he realized he was by such action yielding any hope of being nominated as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. He was to replace his rival and fellow Pennsylvanian, James Buchanan, in London. In accepting a diplomatic post toward the close of an administration, Dallas was, moreover, setting out with his wife, only son, and three unmarried daughters on an assignment that might well be temporary. A Republican victory in November would insure the end of his mission. Then, too, the stay abroad might be but of a few months' duration if the furore over British recruitment of Americans for the Crimean War resulted in the dismissal of John Crampton, the British representative in Washington. In that case, Her Majesty's government might well hand the American minister his passport also. Even if Dallas remained after the expected dismissal of his counterpart in Washington, President Franklin Pierce's probable successor, James Buchanan, was not likely to retain in a prized foreign assignment his chief obstacle to the "favorite son" nomination in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, the veteran politician, former minister to Russia, and vice-president in the administration of James Polk, agreed to go to Eng-

land. He was advised that acceptance of the London legation would be a graceful way of withdrawing from the presidential campaign and of preventing further strain between himself and Buchanan.[1]

Though Dallas was to remain in London until May, 1861, his tenure was never secure. When the Palmerston government refused to recall Crampton, President Pierce dismissed the English minister. In consequence, Dallas was prepared for a request that he, too, depart, but the English cabinet surprised not only Americans but also British observers and the press by deciding not to retaliate.[2] In so doing, Lord Palmerston reversed his stand that the retention of the American would be "dirt eating and that food is never wholesome or strengthening."[3] While Dallas realized that he had not been long enough at his post to attribute the favorable decision to his own accomplishments, he did not know that Secretary of State William Marcy's "skilfully framed" dispatches had caused the reversal.[4] Marcy had inferred that the solution of the Central American problem depended on Dallas' presence in London for negotiations, and had been careful to point out that his government complained about the activities of Crampton as an individual, not as an official agent for Her Majesty. After such missives, to send Dallas home might have stirred popular resentment in England and endangered prospects for a treaty.

By the time of Buchanan's victory in the November elections the preliminary draft of the treaty on Central American possessions had been signed. It was not likely, however, that the president-elect

[1] Richard McAllister to George M. Dallas, Jan. 29, 1856, Dallas Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia. On Jan. 8, 1856, McAllister sent James Buchanan a copy of his letter to the Dallas Committee of Philadelphia urging that group to unite behind Buchanan for president. Buchanan Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). The research in various depositories of the United States and England was made possible by a faculty grant from Boston College.

[2] Dallas to William M. Marcy, June 17, 1856, Dallas Collection. The minister informed the secretary of state that Lord Palmerston had announced the determination of the Cabinet "not to terminate their present amicable relations with Mr. Dallas."

[3] Palmerston to Lord Clarendon, June 6, 1856, Clarendon Papers, Bodleian Library. Quoted by permission of the present Lord Clarendon.

[4] Clarendon to Lord Bloomfield, Sir A. Malet, Sir J. Milbanke, Mr. Hamilton, and Lord Stratford, June 17, 1856, *ibid.* The retention of Dallas was considered of such importance that the foreign secretary wrote a detailed explanation to each of the English ambassadors in important embassies on the Continent.

would allow Dallas to carry through a measure that Buchanan had not been able to persuade Pierce or Marcy to entrust to him while he was minister.[5] The fact that the negotiations had passed beyond the London stage eliminated at least one reason for Buchanan's retaining Dallas in London, but again the Philadelphian was to be pleasantly surprised. This time also his retention was not due to any personal achievement, though he had worked well on the Dallas-Clarendon Convention. The Lancaster resident in the White House thought it better not to alienate fellow Democrats who were friends of Dallas, particularly those on the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, whose chairman was James M. Mason of Virginia, a personal friend of Dallas.[6] The Palmerston government was happy to retain a minister with a "calm, candid, and inoffensive disposition" rather than risk another siege with a shrewd, active, presidential candidate. Lord Clarendon suggested that the new minister to Washington, Lord Napier, "intimate" if possible that no better proof of friendly feeling toward England could be given than that of leaving Dallas at his post.[7]

As Dallas' stay lengthened and his duties lessened, one of his assistants at the legation, Benjamin Moran, wondered plaintively why Buchanan, his former chief, retained a minister with no power.[8] But Dallas, as another Pennsylvanian and former Minister to London, Joseph R. Ingersoll, had forecast, continued to "carry on the game" with Buchanan, though the latter would have welcomed a resignation.[9] Lord Napier warned his chief that Dallas would no longer be useful, as neither Buchanan nor the new secretary of state, Lewis Cass, had confidence in him.[10] Nevertheless, Palmerston preferred

5 Clarendon wrote Lord Palmerston on May 9, 1857, about a letter received from the "Old Buck" in which he said he had not seen the Dallas-Clarendon Treaty nor conversed with any senator about it. "But Dallas *knows* that he [Buchanan] had been actually canvassing the Senate upon it." Palmerston Papers, by permission of the trustees of the Broadlands Archives.

6 The British minister in Washington, Lord Napier, in relaying the reasons for Dallas' remaining in London added that the Philadelphian might also be left at his post "as a mere blind" to please Clarendon. Napier to Clarendon, May 3, 1857, Clarendon Papers.

7 Napier to Clarendon, Jan. 12, 1857, *ibid.*; Clarendon to Napier, Apr. 10, 1857, *ibid.*

8 Sarah A. Wallace and Frances E. Gillespie, eds., *The Journal of Benjamin Moran 1857–1865* (Chicago, 1948–1949), I, 235.

9 Ingersoll to Francis Markoe, July 9, 1857, Galloway-Maxey-Markoe Papers (Markoe Papers), Library of Congress (LC).

10 Napier to Clarendon, May 3, 1857, Clarendon Papers.

the "extinct politician" to any other and up to the time of Dallas' return to the United States considered him useful: "Dallas, it is true, is not a political friend of Lincoln but on the contrary rather leans to the South but still he might be an organ, if it should be deemed prudent to take any step."[11] The British government, however, did not take "any step" toward mediation of American affairs in May, 1861, and Dallas, on his return that month to the United States, assured William Seward he had no information not already known by the secretary of state.[12] The returning diplomat did not even report personally to Washington.

Dallas may never have known that the British government expected he might be useful in the critical year of 1861. Also, he might not have realized that one reason for the graciousness of his English hosts was the consideration that he was not a serious presidential contender, therefore, not one who would deliberately seek British ill will so as to gain American votes. Friends of Dallas, like Francis Markoe in the State Department, and unknown foes, such as Benjamin Moran, thought, however, that Dallas had not lost his desire for the White House.[13] The former vice-president had, it seemed, yielded in 1856 to Richard McAllister's appeal that he make way for Buchanan. Yet he later admitted that it was the "dead silence" concerning his candidacy at the convention that convinced him he had no chance.[14] In 1858 Ingersoll told Markoe that Dallas should be content to retire gracefully to the shade of a dignified position, such as judge, for the residue of his days.[15] In 1860 Markoe rather wistfully wrote to his friend in London that the Democrats at Richmond would do better to choose "a certain Pennsylvanian" than the expected nominee.[16] Senator Mason, however, in his letters

11 Palmerston to Lord John Russell, May 5, 1861, Palmerston Papers.

12 June 2, 1861, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 72, National Archives, Washington (NA).

13 *Moran Diary*, I, 365. Clarendon believed Dallas was not a man trying to make "political capital" out of his position. Clarendon to Napier, May 22, 1857, Clarendon Papers.

14 Dallas to Col. Page, Aug. 12, 1856, Dallas Collection. Jeremiah S. Black, who was to be attorney general and then secretary of state in Buchanan's administration, praised Dallas' prudence in not accepting a public dinner at Philadelphia before he set out for London. This should have satisfied the McAllister faction. Black to Dallas, Aug. 11, 1856, *ibid.*

15 Ingersoll to Markoe, Mar. 4, 1858, Markoe Papers.

16 Senator Robert M. Hunter of Virginia was the expected nominee. Markoe to Dallas, June 23, 1860, Dallas Collection.

mentioned no possibility of his friend being considered by the delegates.[17]

The ever-vigilant Moran repeatedly informed the Chief Executive about Dallas' alleged connivance and the family's hopes. Every move that Dallas made was represented as motivated by his desire to attain the presidency. The possibility at various times of Dallas' recall was presented as a move wished by Dallas so that he could capitalize on his "political" martyrdom: "The inordinate desire for the next Presidential nomination governs all Mr. Dallas's movements. . . . if you would only kindly *martyr* him, he would return at once and consider his fortune made."[18] Moran insisted his employer's presidential hopes were high in 1860.[19]

> There is a strong hope, although great efforts are made to conceal it, that Mr. Dallas will be nominated at Charleston. It is really amusing how this deal haunts the family. Phil [*Dallas' only son and secretary of the legation*] has also told us that the family would at once return should the father be the nominee. I think Mr. Dallas ardently desires such a result, but he wisely avoids an open expression of his true feelings. Occasional letters from home raise pleasant dreams of success.

Such letters were not new to Dallas. The same had been the case in 1848, 1852, and 1856, but experience had made him less credulous as each convention drew near.[20]

Moran's reports did not improve the relations, always cool, between the two Pennsylvanians whom he served. Dallas seemed unaware of his assistant's derogatory remarks. The minister was confident that Moran would be "faithful as well as industrious" and welcomed a congressional increase of funds that enabled him to bring Moran back to the legation after a short period of absence.[21] Charles Francis Adams on his arrival in 1861 formed the same favorable impression of Moran: "Indeed I know not how I should get on without him."[22] Buchanan had additional reasons, aside from Moran's slan-

17 James M. Mason to Dallas, Apr. 13, 1860, and May 12, 1860, *ibid.*

18 Moran to Buchanan, Sept. 17, Nov. 12, 1858, Buchanan Papers.

19 Moran to Buchanan, Apr. 4, May 19, 1860, *ibid.*

20 Dallas to Markoe, n.d., 1856, Markoe Papers.

21 Dallas to Marcy, Oct. 14, 1856, Marcy Papers.

22 Charles F. Adams Diary, May 15, 1861, Reel 56, Adams Papers, Boston College. Quotations from the Adams Papers are from the microfilm edition, by permission of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

ders, for continuing to dislike Dallas. Before departing from London in 1856, Buchanan had reminded Marcy that Dallas had not written a line to tell of his coming nor to ask any advice.[23] After the Democratic success in November, Dallas delayed any congratulatory message to Buchanan until he was practically forced into such expression when asked to forward the good wishes of Sir Robert Peel's widow.[24] The President was annoyed at Dallas' continued lack of direct communication with him, though Clarendon, the English foreign secretary, did not hesitate to correspond. In defense, Dallas maintained that such writing on his part would be considered as "courting the eye of the Executive." He felt the President was simply seeking a pretext for another complaint about his minister in London.[25] Although the minister never regarded Secretary of State Cass highly, he continued to report fully to him and to bypass the White House. Cass's resignation at the end of 1860 brought the diary notation "General Cass has resigned. Governor Dickinson is mentioned as his successor. So we go, from one unfit to another more so!"[26] Charles Francis Adams in this instance also had the same impression of Cass, whose instructions to Dallas were "impudent and surly" and disclosed the whip of the slaveowner.[27]

In Dallas' outline of important topics for a book on his term as minister, the problem of recall, the possibility of a presidential nomination, and the difficulties of his relations with the Chief Executive and the secretary of state are not listed. As a diplomat he expected his greatest contribution would be the Dallas-Clarendon Convention.[28] Throughout the summer months of 1856 Clarendon and the American minister worked to reach an agreement. In the fall Dallas exulted in the news that he was authorized to exercise "Full Power." The negotiators then anticipated no necessity of later

23 Buchanan to Marcy, Mar. 7, 1856, Marcy Papers.

24 Dallas to Buchanan, Dec. 26, 1856, Buchanan Papers.

25 Dallas to Markoe, Jan. 9, 1859, Julia Dallas, ed., *A Series of Letters from London Written during the Years 1856, '57, '58, '59, and '60. By George M. Dallas* (Philadelphia, 1869), II, 79.

26 Susan Dallas, ed., *Diary of George Mifflin Dallas While United States Minister to Russia 1837 to 1839 and to England 1856 to 1861* (Philadelphia, 1892), 425.

27 Adams Diary, Mar. 29, 1861, Reel 76.

28 Dallas and Clarendon tried to work out an amicable settlement that would incorporate the Bay Islands and the Mosquito Protectorate in Central America into existing governments there, viz., Nicaragua and Honduras.

amendments to the Convention.[29] Lord Palmerston was pleased that Clarendon could "get rid of the Mosquito Mill stone honorably and with dignity."[30] The prime minister advised the foreign secretary to avoid arguing with Dallas over unnecessary differences about details. Consequently, all in London were disappointed when Senate amendments were added that made an exchange of ratifications impossible from the British point of view. London was inclined to blame the new President. Marcy told Dallas that during the Senate discussion the general belief was that the President-elect opposed the terms of settlement.[31] Clarendon believed that the Senate "or rather the President, for it has all along been his hobby" was trying to force Britain to yield the Bay Islands to Honduras before provisions had been made for the safety and property of British settlers in the region.[32] After Buchanan's inauguration, Secretary Cass withdrew from Dallas his powers to negotiate as far as the amendments were concerned. From thenceforth, as Ingersoll predicted to Markoe, Washington had no intention of carrying on any important diplomatic matters through Dallas.[33] Buchanan's first annual message was hardly complimentary to him in its references to the unsuccessful treaty. The President called for the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 by mutual consent and then a commencement of new negotiations.[34]

Despite the failure of the Central American Convention in the Palmerston regime, Dallas hoped, during the short term of Lord Derby, to obtain a public British affirmation of the American posi-

29 Dallas to Marcy, Oct. 17, 1856, Marcy Papers.

30 Palmerston to Clarendon, Oct. 14, 1856, Clarendon Papers.

31 Marcy to Dallas, Feb. 16, 1857, Marcy Papers.

32 Clarendon to Napier, Apr. 10, 1857, Clarendon Papers.

33 Ingersoll to Markoe, Dec. 16, 1857, Markoe Papers.

34 John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works of James Buchanan* (Philadelphia, 1908–1911), X, 139. In Buchanan's own account of his administration he asserted that the Central American question was "amicably and honorably settled, under his advice and approbation by treaties between Great Britain and the two Central American states in accordance with our construction of the Clayton and Bulwer Treaty." James Buchanan, *Mr. Buchanan's Administration on the Eve of the Rebellion* (New York, 1866), 261. Dallas in notes for his proposed book spoke of the "masterly but ineffectual efforts" of Buchanan as minister in London in regard to the Central American problem. In 1861 Dallas insisted he had understood that the Dallas-Clarendon Convention was necessarily *ad referendum* and that he realized all treaties negotiated with England bore the "special cross of doubt, interpretation, and dispute." Dallas Collection.

tion on the right of search. In his dispatches to Cass and his Fourth of July address in 1858, he rejoiced at Foreign Secretary Lord Malmesbury's "abandonment of the vexed and vexatious pretension of visit and search." Such interference by British ships on the high seas was declared "frankly and finally ended."[35] The American press applauded him and questioned the sending a special agent to discuss a coinage problem, for, "Mr. Dallas is quite adequate to manage all international matters with England."[36] Dallas' efforts were not the only cause of the British declaration. Lord Napier advised the Foreign Office that the President and Senate were reflecting the sentiments of the majority of the populace in their insistence on American rights on the sea, despite the British moral attitude on slave trading.[37] Former minister Ingersoll refused to admit that Dallas had settled any question or brought about any compromise,[38] and Moran delighted in reporting to Buchanan that Dallas' "inexcusable language" to Malmesbury had caused offense. He assured the President that it was executive firmness, not Dallas' cleverness, that was responsible for the temporary settlement of the problem.[39] Dallas, meanwhile, complacently recorded in his diary that in the House of Lords Lord Lyndhurst had praised his work and the American stand.[40] Additional problems regarding the slave trade arose in 1859 and 1860, but Dallas, in his outline of 1861, still considered his achievement in 1858 as outstanding.

Though Dallas was, aside from the problem of Court costume, personally acceptable to his English hosts, he was regarded as the representative of an administration that favored slavery, a practice that had become abominable to most Britishers. The British press in 1856 had heralded the new Republican Party as a group dedicated to antislavery and had been disappointed by the Democratic victory. Although from Pennsylvania, a free state, Dallas was a thorough

35 Dallas to Cass, July 23, 1858, *Letters from London*, II, 37; *Times*, July 5, 1858.

36 *New York Times*, July 21, 1858.

37 Napier to Malmesbury, May 31, 1858, Foreign Office 115/133, Public Record Office (PRO). Malmesbury believed Dallas was pressing for a "hasty" declaration by the British on the point that the American interpretation was a tenet of international law. Malmesbury to Dallas, June 6, 1858, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 68.

38 Ingersoll to Markoe, Aug. 10, 1858, Markoe Papers.

39 Moran to Buchanan, Sept. 10, 17, Oct, 29, 1858, Buchanan Papers.

40 *Dallas Diary*, 284.

Democrat, one quick to take offense at English "bigotry against black slavery."[41] He had little use for propagandists such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose citizenship he rhetorically questioned.[42]

> Judging by the pertinacity with which she applies her talents to undermine the constitution and degrade the character of her country, she is far worthier of repudiation and banishment than ever was Arnold or Burr. Genius does not always choose patriotism for a companion.

One reason he gave in 1858 for obtaining the cessation of visit and search by the British was the fact that the demand for black labor in the West Indies was loud and imperative.[43] His daughter wrote of the industry of the Negroes on the land of his son-in-law.[44] As late as May, 1861, Moran asserted that the "secession virus" was strong in the minister and that he was "clearly strong in the States Rights folly."[45]

Dallas' vulnerability on the slavery issue gave the aging Lord Brougham a public opportunity in July, 1860, to emphasize the enlightened attitude of the English government in contrast to the undemocratic practice of the American administration. At the opening session of the International Statistical Congress in London, Brougham, in the presence of Prince Albert and the invited delegates, rose and addressed the American minister directly: "I beg my friend Mr. Dallas to observe that there is in the assemblage before us a Negro and hope that fact will not offend his scruples."[46] Dallas, in an agitated eight-page report to the Secretary of State, explained that he had remained silent and composed rather than give Brougham the opportunity to provoke an "unseemly discussion." The American minister, of course, attended no further sessions of the Congress and Judge Augustus Longstreet, official United States representative,

41 Slavery is the fifth item mentioned by Dallas as in his outline of topics to be covered in his book on the years in England. The other topics included the Central American negotiations, the enlistments by British Minister John Crampton for the Russian War, the right of search, cases of international courtesy, the building and sailing of the *Great Eastern*, the Atlantic Cable, ceremonials, General Harney at San Juan, and, under the general heading of "Work during my five years," mention of other foreign nations. Dallas Collection.

42 Dallas to Marcy, Nov. 7, 1856, Marcy Papers.

43 Dallas to Cass, Jan. 8, 1858, *Letters from London*, II, 246.

44 Charlotte Morrell to Dallas, Dec. 11, 185–, Dallas Collection.

45 *Moran Diary*, I, 806.

46 Dallas to Cass, July 20, 1860, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 71.

also withdrew from the conference. Lord Brougham's public expression of regret that his remarks might have been interpreted as disrespectful to the United States did not satisfy outraged Americans.[47] Reproofs from Washington, from a friend in the Senate, and from Ingersoll for his having kept silent instead of responding to the insult disturbed Dallas.[48] Four years earlier his judgment had been questioned because he withdrew from the Queen's levee when an American companion was rebuffed. Then he was accused of drawing too much attention to republicanism. Now he was reprimanded for not having reacted publicly to the affront to an American diplomat.

Brougham's shaft, though deplored by other English nobles who sought to apologize, might well have been occasioned by the increasing dissatisfaction of English reformers with Washington's position on the slave trade.[49] Dallas had rather noisily exploited his role in preventing the seizure of suspected slave traders.[50] In 1860 British surveys showed that the trade was increasing. From New York alone nearly fifty to sixty vessels had set out in 1859 to engage in the African slave trade. Havana was reported as "teeming" with vessels bringing slaves to Cuba. To the British, the American regulations for their naval officers seemed so restrictive that the patrols could not even in good faith use their best endeavors to deter and capture slavers.[51] Secretary Cass insisted in 1860 that in regard to the slave trade "what our moral duties demand of us is a case for our exclusive consideration."[52] Such statistics and assertions did not make it easier

[47] *Harper's Weekly*, Aug. 11, 1860.

[48] Cass to Dallas, Sept. 11, 1860, Diplomatic Instructions: Great Britain, Roll 76, NA; Robert Winthrop to Dallas, Aug. 23, 1860, Dallas Collection, HSP; Moran to Buchanan, Sept. 29, 1860, Buchanan Papers; Dallas to Cass, Oct. 2, 1860, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 72. Ingersoll criticized Dallas for not having vindicated the honor of his country by a fitting reply to Lord Brougham. Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., *A Philadelphia Perspective, The Diary of Sidney George Fisher* (Philadelphia, 1967), 359.

[49] The elderly Lord Lansdowne called personally to tell Dallas that members of Lord Brougham's "class" condemned his conduct. The humanitarian social reformer, the Earl of Shaftesbury, however, sent a note in which there was an attempt to laugh at Americans for being oversensitive about what Englishmen said to them about slavery. *Moran Diary*, I, 697.

[50] From the time that the British man of war off the coast of Africa had seized the American bark *Panchita* in 1857, Dallas had strongly represented the American insistence on a cessation of forcible detention by the British. Dallas Collection; see also, Samuel F. Bemis, ed., *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy* (New York, 1928), VI, 316–318.

[51] Duke of Somerset to Palmerston, Jan. 11, 1860, Palmerston Papers.

[52] Cass to Dallas, Oct. 27, 1860, Diplomatic Instructions: Great Britain, Roll 76.

for the English to correlate American insistence on noninterference at sea with Dallas' oratory of 1858 on safeguards of freedom.

Probably Dallas was wise in not attempting to answer Brougham publicly. He would no doubt have revealed the prejudices and convictions that resulted from his background, friendships, and party affiliations. Even after a few months' reflection on the British charges Dallas declared: "The Plant is no longer capable of eradication, even if desired, by human hands. It was, in a spirit of profound wisdom and charity, entwined by the authors of our Federal constitution around the pillars of our political edifice."[53]

In the summer of 1860, while waiting for further reaction to the Brougham affair, Dallas was consoled to hear of the accusations made by Lord Brougham against a fellow Englishman, this time in Parliament. Sir Samuel Cunard was openly reproved for having refused to allow a "colored" woman to share a table with white passengers on a Cunard ship.[54] Dallas sympathized with Sir Samuel in the publicity about his treatment of the "sable" lady, and for his painful experience in undergoing the "bolt of popular excommunication" from government officials and the general population.[55] The Pennsylvania Democrat believed that Cunard was right in regarding the matter as one to be determined by his own interest in controlling his own business.

If Dallas had obtained access to the memoranda circulated in cabinet circles in the closing days of his mission, he would have understood Palmerston's dilemma in regard to American affairs. The prime minister would have liked to play the role of mediator and pacifier in the American crisis, but the established English position on slavery deterred him: "We could not very well mix ourselves up with the acknowledgment of Slavery, and the Principle that a Slave escaping to a Free Soil State should be followed and claimed and recovered like a horse or an ox."[56]

In the last year of his stay in London, Dallas had his own difficult choice to make. Early in 1860 he had responded to the request of commissioners from the Governor of Virginia that he help them

53 Dallas to Cass, Oct. 2, 1860, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 72.
54 *Harper's Weekly*, Aug. 11, 1860.
55 Dallas to Cass, July 13, 1860, *Letters from London*, II, 218.
56 Palmerston to Edward Ellice, May 5, 1861, copy in Palmerston Papers.

obtain armaments from English firms, and provide specimens of muskets, carbines, pistols, sabres, and swords.[57] Whether he realized the future use of these supplies is questionable, but Moran was glad to recall his commission a year later.[58] The minister also received in 1861 his old friend Colonel Dudley Mann, who was in London as a southern commissioner. But Moran, in informing Buchanan, reported the visit as a "personal" one, though in his diary the assistant recorded his suspicion that the interview might have been "treasonable."[59] Before Mann's visit Dallas' daughter wrote to her sister that the southern "minister" had not yet made his appearance and she hoped he never would.[60] From that letter and later correspondence one can judge that the women in the family were definitely on the side of the Union.[61] Sophie's opinions would seem a more accurate gauge of the family's loyalties than the reports of the prejudiced Moran.

A short time after Dallas had returned to the United States, another Philadelphian, Sidney George Fisher, temporarily withdrew his castigation of his fellow citizen as "an old hack politician." The occasion was the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.[62]

> I must do him the justice to say that [the speech] is a good one. He paints in strong colors the guilt and folly of those who are attempting to overthrow the Constitution . . . and he sustains fully the war, appealing to the people to be united in their efforts to prosecute it with success. As Mr. Dallas is a leading Democrat, his speech will have a good influence throughout the country.

Dallas, like many other Democrats from free states, accepted until 1861 the reasoning of his southern friends and party adherents that slavery was necessary in their region, but there is no indication, aside from Moran's warped accusations, that he ever countenanced secession. In his last months in London he carefully followed the instruc-

57 Commissioners of the Governor of Virginia to Dallas, Mar. 26, 1860, Dallas Collection.

58 *Moran Diary*, I, 837.

59 *Ibid.*, I, 799.

60 Sophia Dallas to her sister, Mrs. F. E. Dixon, Mar. 21, 1861, Dallas Collection.

61 On Dec. 28, 1861, Sophia wrote to two of her sisters that if Mason and Slidell were surrendered she would never call herself an American again. *Ibid.*

62 *Fisher Diary*, 404.

tions of the Republican secretary of state. He welcomed his successor graciously and then returned home, knowing that his days of influence in Washington were now definitely at an end. Instead of retiring completely from public life, he delivered speeches on the necessity of upholding the Union. Despite the shadow of his attitude toward slavery, he remained respected in England. Indeed, the opportunistic Moran, in offering his maligned former chief the presidency of the Atlantic and Great Western Railway in 1863, stressed that "his name will give the road a solid foot-hold in England."[63]

The Central American negotiation of 1856 was the highlight of Dallas' first year as minister in London. The Confederate commissioners' play for British recognition lent importance to his role in his last months as United States envoy extraordinary. Much of his work in the intervening years had been less spectacular, less interesting, more annoying, and more resultant in petty repercussions. Charles Francis Adams, his successor, thought nothing could be more dull than Dallas' voluminous reports to the State Department.[64] While William Marcy was at the desk in Washington, Dallas' dispatches were sent to a friend, but his dutiful reports to the rigid and unsympathetic Cass seemed most tedious to the conscientious Adams who was briefing himself in long, uninterrupted sessions at the State Department before his departure. Since for four years Dallas had been entrusted with no important commissions, his messages inevitably seemed trivial.

Excluded from international problems, Dallas found the etiquette of ceremonials a significant topic. Each time he appeared at Court or introduced a male visitor to the Queen the question of costume arose.[65] Americans were given instructions as to dress but sometimes the guests followed the English manual and then presented a contrast to the somber garb of their minister. On other more notorious occasions they dressed too simply. Dallas would not disobey the instructions that had been sent out by his old friend Marcy nor did he modify the "republican" outfit upon which Buchanan had decided. He did admit to Cass:[66]

63 *Moran Diary*, II, 1103.
64 Adams Diary, Mar. 29, 1861, Reel 76.
65 Dallas to Cass, Mar. 26, 1858, *Letters from London*, II, 7.
66 *Ibid.*, II, 8.

Now that this fourth of July equipment has reached the zenith of its triumph, I am tempted to show that it has its injurious as well as its beneficial influences. But I won't. Let me say only that when worn amid a thousand embroidered red coats, it produces a peculiarity which necessarily gives it the very distinction it professes to avoid, and so cultivates in the wearer anything but a plain republican spirit.

This time Moran agreed with the minister that there was "so much nonsense about this 'old clothes' business" it would be well to abolish the restriction.[67] Dallas' expenses would have been lower had the Marcy circular prescribed ladies' dress also. Andrew Stevenson, on learning that there would be four ladies at the legation, had warned him, "Then, by God, you're ruined."[68]

In addition to the problem of dress at Court, Dallas had to determine whom to present. His ever-watchful employee insisted that with a presidential attempt in mind the minister too readily accommodated his old political friends and possible allies. Buchanan was dutifully informed of the presentation of a sports writer and a promotion manager at the time of the Anglo-American boxing contest in 1860, the Heenan-Sayers bout.[69] Naval officers who had given assistance to British ships were assertedly passed over in the lists for presentation at Court, while a request by a "Mr. Obscurity" was honored by the amiable legate.

As far as contacts with royalty were concerned, Dallas had to his credit an invitation for a weekend at Windsor, a "command" Buchanan had regretted never receiving during his years in London. (In Buchanan's last audience with the Queen in 1856, she observed that he could have gone to see Windsor whenever he wished and that, as for his being invited there, such was not the custom for every foreign minister.)[70] Dallas, however, readily acknowledged that his

[67] *Moran Diary*, I, 81.

[68] *Ibid.*, I, 127.

[69] Moran to Buchanan, Apr. 20, June 8, 1860, Buchanan Papers. Moran enclosed in his June letter a clipping from the *London Telegraph* of June 4, 1860. The article expressed the "belief" that there must have been some "egregious hoax" played on Dallas or he would not have presented backers and betters of the prize ring to Her Majesty. One of those so introduced was George Wilkes, editor of *The Spirit of the Times*, a Philadelphia journal for which Dallas had written articles. He bore with him to Dallas a letter from John Forney, Office Clerk of the House of Representatives. Stephen A. Douglas had also written to Dallas about Wilkes' coming to London. Dallas Collection.

[70] Palmerston to Clarendon, Mar. 17, 1856, Clarendon Papers.

good fortune was the result of the cordial reception given to the Prince of Wales in the United States in 1860. Buchanan's graciousness as presidential host was responsible for Dallas' receiving an honor not accorded to an American minister since 1842.[71]

Anglo-American friction at sea formed a notable part of the history of both nations in the nineteenth century. Less publicized was the mutual assistance provided by the navies of both countries in times of distress at sea. The United States minister in London and Her Majesty's representative in Washington spent much time exchanging messages of appreciation and delivering tokens of gratitude. Dallas, with his strict adherence to constitutionality, sought instructions from the State Department about the acceptance of gifts from a foreign head of state. He also asked for guidance in the framing of a courteous refusal.[72] During his period in London the outstanding instance of American aid and the occasion also of a diplomatic problem was the restoration of the vessel *Resolute* to Great Britain at the close of 1856. As the English earlier in the year had sent ships to try to locate the lost liner *Pacific* of the American Collins line, so the Americans had joined with the British in a prolonged search for Sir John Franklin's expedition in the Arctic.[73] In both cases Anglo-American co-operation had been unable to save the lives of crew or passengers, although an American ship did find the *Resolute* and the American government provided a crew to sail the ship to England.[74] In the midst of the festivities and honors accorded captain and seamen, Dallas found himself in an embarrassing predicament. He had acquiesced too quickly to the British offer to return the American crew to their homeland in an English ship.[75] The American captain, fearing that "undisciplined" elements in his crew might cause trouble during the voyage, preferred that they return on an American ship,

71 Dallas to Cass, Nov. 27, 1860, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 72; *Dallas Diary*, 415. Dallas, after talking to the Duke of Newcastle at a dinner given by Lord Palmerston, was pleased to refute the "gross misrepresentation" of the Prince of Wales' reception at Richmond, the only southern city the heir visited. The Duke assured Dallas there had been only "lively animation" not discourtesy to the titled guest. *Dallas Diary*, 420.

72 Dallas to Marcy, Dec. 30, 1856, Marcy Papers.

73 Dallas reported to Marcy on Lord Palmerston's sending two ships in search of the *Pacific*. Palmerston to Dallas, Mar. 24, 1856, Dallas Collection; Dallas to Marcy, Mar. 28, 1856, Marcy Papers.

74 *Times*, Jan. 9, Nov. 8, 1856.

75 Dallas to Charles Wood, Dec. 15, 1856, Clarendon Papers.

"if it could be done properly."[76] Dallas became involved in correspondence to insure that no offense was taken on the part of puzzled British officials who could not be told the actual reason for transferring the crew to an American ship.

Such an example of lack of discipline on ships made Dallas anxious to complete a convention that would, through a strong extradition clause, allow the home government to try offenders on the high seas. Dallas' attempts failed, as former preliminaries had, because of the different attitudes of the British government and the Democratic administration about the status of Negroes involved in such crimes.[77] The British had no intention of becoming signers to an international agreement that had any resemblance to a fugitive slave act. As a result, American sailors arrested for a crime committed on the way to an English port were tried by British judges. American sympathizers could not believe that John Bull would be just, and Dallas was plagued with requests for intervention. The most notable case was that of a Maine seaman in 1859. Dallas was inundated with letters from executive and legislative leaders, as well as the citizens of Portland, Maine, and even one from his nephew Alexander Dallas Bache,[78] but this time he was not at the center of the diplomatic problem involved. He did not have to discourage the community from making a personal appeal to the Prince of Wales when he embarked at Portland for his return trip to England.[79] The case was reviewed by the Home Office in London in 1861 but the decision was not reversed.[80]

The successful laying of the Atlantic Cable in 1858 had diplomatic implications. Beforehand, Dallas was entrusted with Buchanan's message to the Queen in case the transmission should be faulty.

76 Capt. Hartstone to Dallas, Dec. 23, 1856, Dallas Collection.

77 Dallas to Sir George Lewis, Jan. 18, 1860, *Letters from London*, II, 183; Dallas to Cass, Jan. 13, 1860, *ibid.*, 181; *Dallas Diary*, 377; *Moran Diary*, I, 117.

78 Correspondence concerning John Moody, Feb. 29, 1860, folder in Dallas Collection; Dallas to Cass, Apr. 12, 1860, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 71.

79 The British consul in Portland asked for guidance as to the procedure for presenting another petition for Moody. He told of the strong feeling in the community for the young man and said outright that a favorable result would earn the heartfelt gratitude of the people of the city. Henry Murray to Lord John Russell, Oct. 13, 1860, Foreign Office 115/230, PRO. Moran had noted the original trial of the "brutal" American second mate for the murder of another seaman. The sentence was penal servitude for life. *Moran Diary*, I, 613.

80 G. C. Lewis to Dallas, Jan. 21, 1861, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 72.

Again Dallas had no problem as no mishap occurred in the sending of greetings from Washington, though trouble did develop during the sending of the Queen's message to Buchanan.[81] Americans were temporarily upset by the apparent brevity of the Queen's message, but the British welcomed the President's warm greetings. Dallas, enthusiastic about the cable, was disappointed that English attention so soon reverted to happenings in Louis Napoleon's France while his own countrymen continued to celebrate the new form of communication.[82]

In 1860, when Buchanan invited Queen Victoria's heir to include the United States in his tour of North America, the Chief Executive sent his personal note through Lord Lyons, the British minister in Washington, instead of through the usual channel, the American minister in London. Lyons explained carefully that he understood the president's reason for conveying the message through him was that the action was personal and not an official invitation in the name of the United States.[83] Dallas must have enjoyed being able to report to Washington that Lord John Russell was telling him "informally" of the Prince of Wales' route.[84] Buchanan, nonetheless, continued to bypass his minister in making arrangements, even to that of requesting permission to publish correspondence between Her Majesty and the Chief Executive about the Prince's coming.[85] Dallas' humiliation, if he felt any, was ended when the heir and his party returned and both Queen and prime minister pressed the American minister with invitations.

At all times, despite the cordiality of his reception in English circles, which contrasted with the rebuffs by the administration in Washington, Dallas was strongly American. He assured his son-in-law that he had decided, in speaking about relations between England and America, to ignore "all the nonsense about 'mother and daughter, cousins,' etc."[86] Within a month of his arrival he refused an invitation to a display of British naval prowess. The new minister

81 *New York Times*, Aug. 18, 1858.

82 Dallas to Cass, Aug. 27, 1858, *Letters from London*, II, 46.

83 Lyons to Russell, June 1, 5, 1860, Correspondence book, Lyons Papers, Arundel Castle. The Lyons Papers are not yet fully available, as the cataloging has not been completed.

84 Dallas to Cass, June 22, July 13, 1860, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 71.

85 Lyons to Russell, July 11, 1860, Foreign Office 115/227, PRO.

86 Dallas to F. E. Dixon, Apr. 18, 1856, Dallas Collection, HSP.

felt the English were overly anxious that he accept so that he might be impressed by British superiority.[87] He was not alone in his suspicions. His colleague in Paris, J. Y. Mason, informed Marcy that the maneuvers of the "most formidable naval armaments which the World has seen" were intended as a holiday treat to the American minister. Mason added a nationalistic flourish:[88]

> How little they know of us. The natural reflection of an American witnessing the great review is that of the Yankee skipper who on a similar occasion said, that there was presented, some good pickings for our cruizers.

Moran, however, annoyed that Dallas had not provided him with a ticket, declared that the Dallases had stayed away from Spithead because the expense would have been too great, though "it is pretended diplomatic reasons were at the bottom."[89]

In both the Palmerston and Derby governments there was one outstanding instance in which Dallas came close to becoming at least temporarily *persona non grata*. Each situation concerned American tradition. With Palmerston the annoyance was the minor issue of court dress, particularly the Mahan instance in 1856.[90]

> . . . such unreasonable pretensions ought to be resisted. Foreigners ought to conform to usages of the Court . . . if Dallas does not choose to go to Court unless he can bring countrymen in any Dress the result will be that Dallas will have more time for other things. . . . We have given way quite enough to these people, who after all only want to see how far they will be allowed to encroach.

A week later, in reference to the same occasion, Palmerston remarked: "I am sorry to see Dallas such a shuffler and so little of a gentleman."[91] That summer Dallas redeemed himself, however, by his diligence and openness with Lord Clarendon in trying to settle Central American difficulties.

87 Dallas to Marcy, Apr. 25, 1856, Marcy Papers.
88 J. Y. Mason to Marcy, Apr. 17, 1856, *ibid.*
89 Moran to Buchanan, Apr. 25, 1856, Buchanan Letters.
90 Palmerston to Clarendon, June 25, 1856, Clarendon Papers.
91 Palmerston to Clarendon, July 3, 1856, *ibid.*

With the Derby ministry the controversy over seizures of suspected American slave ships at sea was a more sensitive issue than Court dress. The quiet American minister surprised the Conservative government with his demands for recognition of the American principle against such actions and by his Fourth of July oratory. For a short time the minister acted like a presidential candidate, and coolness developed between him and Lord Malmesbury, the foreign secretary,[92] but before long friendly relations were restored and Dallas was once again a guest of Lord Malmesbury. The year 1858 ended in mutual accord, as even Moran testified.[93]

Dallas believed that he should inform his government about Continental affairs, specifically Prussian, Spanish, French, Austrian, and Italian problems, as well as English action in China and India, but Washington was not inclined to heed his messages on these subjects. After his first intensive summer of work on the Dallas-Clarendon Convention, he was practically ignored in Central American affairs, yet he reported assiduously on the various Central American agents in London. Were it not for his cordial relations with the English ministries of Palmerston and Derby and the foreign office under Clarendon, Malmesbury, and Lord John Russell, Dallas might well have fulfilled Moran's spoken wish (and Buchanan's unexpressed desire) that he resign. He remained at his post, not because of any expression of favor on the part of the home administration but because he was fortunate, on most occasions, in his dealings with the government to which he was sent. Beneath his plodding, tedious reports and his calm, courteous exterior, Dallas, with a lifetime of political experience, must have enjoyed the discomfiture of his chief and rival. Buchanan refused to entrust the minister with negotiations, yet he dared not recall him. Such an act would have increased party division at home and perhaps harmed the Anglo-American harmony that had developed after Pierce's departure from the White House.

George Mifflin Dallas never became an Anglophile; such would have been impossible for a true Democrat of the Young America era. Yet he and his family found life in London pleasant. When Charles

92 Dallas to Cass, July 23, 1858, Diplomatic Despatches: Great Britain, Roll 68; *Moran Diary*, 364–365; Moran to Buchanan, July 9, 1858, Buchanan Letters.

93 Moran to Buchanan, Sept. 17, Oct. 19, Nov. 12, 1858, and Jan. 27, 1859, *ibid.*

Francis Adams began a term that would indeed be difficult and delicate, he had the advantage of following a gentleman who had left behind him an aura of harmony and mutual esteem. Nothing is detracted from Adams' finesse by the recognition of Dallas' contribution during a period that Asa Briggs characterizes as *The Age of Improvement.* Certainly the American minister in London from 1856 to 1861 made that phrase applicable to Anglo-American diplomatic relations.

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