BRITISH SATIRICAL REBUSES ON THE U.S. ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE, 1778

In February 1778, after months of negotiations in Paris, France and the United States signed a treaty of alliance, news which Britain dreaded as a harbinger of defeat. Two months later, a British delegation arrived in America in a last-ditch attempt at reconciliation, which Congress rejected. In May, an English printmaking house published two rebuses satirizing the plea of the rejected mother (Britain) and the reply of the rebellious daughter (U.S.) **Full-page rebuses appear on pp. 2-3, and the solutions on p. 4.**

■ Rebus #1: Britannia to America, 6 May 1778.

Britannia to America.

My dear daughter, I cannot behold without great pain your headstrong backwardness to return to your duty in not opposing all the good I long intended for your sole happiness, and being told that you have given your hand to a base and two-faced Frenchman, I have sent you over five wise men,¹ the greatest of all my children, to put you to rights and hope you will listen to them and mind what they say to you. They have instructions to give you those things you formerly required. So be a good girl, discharge your soldiers and ships of war, and do not rebel against your mother. Rely upon me and do not trust to what that French rascal shall tell you. I see he wants to bring on an enmity to all unity between you and I, but listen not to him. All the world takes notice of his two faces. I'll send him such messages from my great cannons as shall make his heart repent and know that one

8 full-page rebus, p. 2 rebus solution, p. 4

good or ill turn merits another. N.B.² Let not hate take too much hold of your heart.

I am your friend & mother.

¹ The British reconciliation commission that offered autonomy within the empire but not independence. Congress rejected the proposal. ² *Nota Bene*: Note well; commonly used abbreviation of the time.

Rebus #2: America to Her Mistaken Mother, ca. 12 May 1778.

America to her mistaken mother.

You silly old woman, that you have sent a dove to us is very plain, to draw our attention from our real interests, but we are determined to abide by our own ways of thinking. Your five children you have sent to us shall be treated as visitors and safely sent home again. You may trust them and admire them, but you must not expect one of your puppets will come home to you as sweet as you sent him. 'Twas cruel to send so pretty a man so many thousand miles and to have the fatigue of returning back after bobbing his coat and dirtying those red-heeled shoes. If you are wise, follow your own advice you gave to me. Take home your ships [and] soldiers. Guard well your own trifling³ and leave me to myself, as I am at age to know my own interests without your foolish advice, and know that I shall always regard you and my brothers as relations but not as friends.

adapted in 2 million for som and 1 million in 19 million i

I am your greatly injured Daughter Amerik.

³ trifling : trivial matters.

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Shold we thout DO Daughter nels a ret a a Duty in an Long Intended for Lo Hap Duck 280 have Fin You and North told t 5 wise Me the A est of I my & ren s put I is reghts & Lwa last s them & mand we they say they have Enstrict Fons a gove It With angs ? erly required, some a good & descharge I Th A. And red against I wer rely upon me & 2 00 P+ w to trench Roch & shit tall LIC he w == > 10 on an enmiting 20 setween 2 x 800 195X 00 the the take to be to be of he 93 Ill send h. Im such MessaGG from my the s as s I hoss repent & hnow t 🗫 1 good or Fill t I mer To a Waher NB let an 80 take 2 much hold of 20 Fam & freend x 2

Britannia to America, satirical rebus puzzle, engraving, Matthew & Mary Darly, London, 6 May 1778 Courtesy of the Library of Congress, British Cartoon Prints Collection, LC-DIG-ppmsca-17533.

- Mt - Chave sent a www us is very Draw our at xt Fon from our re 2 To norests I we are determ Ind a ab Fde by our own ways of the Ink ong I 5 Deren & have sent to us sh I in treated as Var Stors, & safely sent home aga In & may It there & admore them , De must De X pect 1 of In's w Ell m home a Las surcet as Levent home, twas cruel send so pretty a The so many 1000 miles 2000 have the fat gue of re Ing A after tong hos & a dortong t W red - are W To follow Down ad 1 Q gave me take home . sold er guard of rom to the flore & leave me my self as an at age hnow my own Intrests. wethout & Kash ad V & know the Ish & regard & & my Brothers as relat Fons a to Sa as friends. am I A ty Injured Daughter Amer

America to Her Mistaken Mother, satirical rebus puzzle, engraving, ca. 12 May 1778 orig. publ: Matthew & Mary Darly, London, May 1778; reprint 1794, Laurie & Whittle Courtesy of the Library of Congress, British Cartoon Prints Collection, LC-DIG-ppmsca-19160.

■ Rebus #1: Britannia to America, 6 May 1778.

(Britannia) (toe) Amer(eye)ca.

My (deer) Daughter (eye) (can)(knot) (bee)hold w(eye)thout (grate) pa(eye)n (ewer) (head)strong (back)-(ward)ness (toe) re(turn) (toe) (ewer) Duty in (knot) op(posy)ing (awl) the good (eye) long (eye)ntended for (ewer) (sole) Hap(pie)ness & (bee)ing told t(hat) (yew) have g(eye)v'n (ewer) (hand) (toe) a (base) & (double-faced) (Frenchman) (Eye) have sent (yew) $5 \frac{\text{over}}{\text{wise}}$ (men) the (grate)est of (awl) my (child)ren (toe) put (yew) (toe) r(eye)ghts & (hope) (yew) w(eye)[11] l(eye)s(ten) (toe) them & m(eye)nd w(hat) they say (toe) (yew) they have (eve)nstr(vew)ct(eve)ons [instructions] (toe) g(eve)ve (vew) t(hose) th(eye)ngs (yew) (form)erly required so (bee) a good (girl) d(eye)scharge (ewer) (soldiers) & (ship)s of war & (doe) (knot) re(bell) aga(eye)nst (ewer) (moth)er rely upon me & (doe) (knot) (console)t [consort] to w(hat) t(hat) french R(ass)c(awl) sh(awl) tell (yew) IC he w(ants) (toe) b(ring) on an enm(eye)ty (toe) (awl) (union)^{*} (bee)tween (yew) & (eye) (but) l(eye)s(ten) (knot) (toe) h(eye)m (awl) the (world) takes (knot)(eye)ce

PR DAT SNO 2-1 Suconal A In Annie nut 200 a. 5 gave Lel +1.00 TA d Schame A 1007 1 m A a Rothe & shad well RIC he was en en to a 10 mouren 2 3 to a las X 00 - ham I the B take the of ha 53 as a d mile rend h. In such Massold from my 1950) repent si know t 🌨 1 godo oi All t 🕏 mer A How NB let as 80 take 2 much hold of Do A frond 28 and es 1

[notice] of h(eye)[s] (doubleface). I'll send h(eye)m such MessaGG [messages] from my (grate) (gun)s as s[h](awl) make h(eye)s (heart) repent & know t(hat) (one) good or (eye)ll t(urn) mer(eye)its a (knot)her. NB[†] let (knot) (eighty) [hate] take (two) much hold of (ewer) (heart).

(Eye) am (ewer) fr(eye)end & (moth)er.

Rebus #2: America to Her Mistaken Mother, ca. 12 May 1778.

(America) (toe) her (miss)taken (moth)er.

(Yew) s(eye)lly (old woman) t(hat) (yew) have sent a (dove) (toe) us is very (plain) (toe) draw our at(ten)t(eye)on [attention] from our re(awl) (eye)ntrests (butt) we are determ(eye)n'd (toe) ab(eye)de by our own ways of th(eye) th(eye)nk(eye)ng (Ewer) (five) (child)ren (yew) have sent (toe) us sh(awl) (bee) treated as V(eye)s(eye)tors, & safely sent home aga(eye)n (Yew) may (console)t them & adm(eye)re them, (butt) (yew) must (knot) (x)pect (one) of (ewer) (puppet)s w(eye)ll (comb) home (toe) (yew) as sweet as (yew) sent h(eye)m, twas cruel (toe) send so pretty a (man) so many 1000 miles & (toe) have the fat(eye)gue of re(urn)ing (back) after (spike)(eye)ng h(eye)s (coat) & d(eye)rt(eye)ng [dirtying] t(hose) red (heel) shoes [shoeheels] (Eye)f

-Daughter Amer

(yew) are w(eye)(eye) [wise] follow (ewer) own ad(vice) (yew) gave (toe) me take home (ewer) (ships) sold(eye)(ears) guard (well) (ewer) own tr(eye)fl(eye)(ling) & leave me (toe) my self as (eye) am at age (toe) know my own (eye)ntrests. W(eye)thout (ewer) (fool)(eye)sh ad(vice) & know t(hat) (eye) sh(awl) (awl)ways regard (yew) & my Brothers as relat(eye)ons (butt) (knot) as fr(eye)ends.

(Eye) am (yewer) (grate)ly (eye)njured Daughter Amer(eye)k.