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and Songs

A Yankee

Pennsylvania Mercury, 21 February 1788

“In consequence of which the Boston folks had a GRAND Procession—

There they went up, up, up,
And there they went down, down, downy,
There they went backwards and forwards,
And poop for *Boston* towny!

“This *grand intelligence* reached Philadelphia, on Saturday evening last, when the bells
of Christ Church were rung—

Here they rung, rung, rung,
And here they bobb’d about, abouty.
Here were *doubles* and *majors* and *bobs*,
And heigh for *’delphia* city!”

In March Francis Hopkinson of Philadelphia satirized this verse in an unpublished piece
entitled “Literary Intelligence Extraordinary” in which he charged that the author was a
professor at the University of Pennsylvania, a “Dr D—.” . . .

Mr. Humphreys, The Independent Gazetteer has been long famous for its Attic salt; and it
now lays a claim to Parnassian wit. I am sorry, however, that an Hibernian muse should be
invoked to give an account of the proceedings at Boston; for, however meritorious Dean Swift’s
“O my kitten, my kitten, my deary,” may be, yet *Yankee doodle* seems best adapted to this country,
and you know we ought to encourage our own *spiritu* as well as *manu* factures. So please to
accept the following from

A YANKEE.

The ’Vention did in Boston meet,
But State-house could not hold ’em,
So then they went to Fed’ral-street,
And there the truth was told ’em—
Yankee doodle, keep it up!
Yankee doodle, dandy,
Mind the music and the step,
And with the girls be handy.

They ev'ry morning went to prayer,
And then began disputing,
'Till opposition silenc'd were,
By arguments refuting.
Yankee doodle, keep it up! &c.

Then 'squire Hancock like a man,
Who dearly loves the nation,
By a concil'atry plan,
Prevented much vexation.
Yankee doodle, &c.

He made a *woundy* fed'ral speech,
With sense and elocution;
And then the 'Vention did beseech
T' adopt the Constitution.
Yankee doodle, &c.

The question being outright put,
(Each voter independent)
The Fed'ralists agreed t' adopt,
And then propose amendment.
Yankee doodle, &c.

The other party seeing then
The people were against 'em,
Agreed like honest, faithful men,
To mix in peace amongst 'em.
Yankee doodle, &c.

The Boston folks are *deucid* lads,
And always full of notions;
The boys, the girls, their mams and dads,
Were fill'd with joy's commotions.
Yankee doodle, &c.

So straightway they procession made,
Lord! how *nation* fine, Sir!
For ev'ry man of ev'ry trade
Went with his tools—to dine, Sir.
Yankee doodle, &c.

JOHN FOSTER WILLIAMS¹ in a ship,
Join'd in the social band, Sir,
And made the lasses dance and skip,
To see him sail on land, Sir.
Yankee doodle, &c.

Oh then a *whapping* feast begun,
And all hands went to eating;
They drank their toasts, shook hands and sung,
Huzza! for 'Vention meeting.
Yankee doodle, &c.

Now Politicians of all kinds,
Who are not yet decided;
May see how Yankees speak their minds;
And yet are not divided.
Yankee doodle, &c.

Then from this 'sample let 'em cease,
Inflammatory writing,
For FREEDOM, HAPPINESS, and PEACE,
Is better far than fighting.
Yankee doodle, &c.

So here I end my fed'ral song,
Compos'd of thirteen verses,
May agriculture flourish long,
And commerce fill our purses!
Yankee doodle, keep it up!
Yankee doodle, dandy,
Mind the music and the step,
And with the girls be handy.

1. During the Revolution, John Foster Williams commanded several Massachusetts vessels and privateers, taking many prizes. In the procession, Williams was “Commander” of “The Ship federal constitution,” “Manned by thirteen seamen and marines.”

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