

Increase of Crime

I've been thinking of late, I've been thinking,
My thoughts can scarcely define;
I've been thinking why people can wonder
At this terrible increase of crime.
Cries old Uncle Sam. It's a "poser,"
There's something I can't understand,
I would just give a trifle to know, sir,
Why crime should increase in our land.

I'm sure we have plenty of gold, sir,
Our banks are as full as can hold, sir.
We can buy the whole world, I am told, sir,
Yet still there's an increase of crime.

It's true what you say, Uncle Samuel,
We've plenty of gold laid away,
Mouldy with mildew and rust, sir,
Guarded by night and by day,
While you, like a dog in a manger,
Your gold to yourself confine,
When a little would make a great change, sir,
In this terrible increase of crime.

For expenses you don't care a groat⁽³⁾, sir,
Politicians you feed a whole lot, sir,
While this poor man with hunger may rot, sir,
And still you wonder at crime.

I'm sure you will own, Uncle Sam, sir,
Temptation is hard to resist
Just look at our poor working girl, sir,
Striving her best to exist!
Can you wonder at weak constitutions,
When your blood-sucking firms barely give
Enough to keep off destitution,
A girl though she's poor, she must live.

There's our poor needle girl, God bless her,
With feelings as proud and as tender
As your proud city lady, remember,
Uncle Sam can you wonder at crime.

Can you wonder at crime, can you wonder.
When you see the police on his beat
Arresting a poor starving man, sir,
For begging his bread on the street.
While the thief on the corner stands grinning
In the broad open light of the day,
Your pockets he'd pick for a shilling,
And the law cannot touch him they say.

He smiles with contempt and derision,
He defies the whole police division,
While the poor man is sent off to prison,
And still you wonder at crime.

Just think while you're drinking your wine, sir.
How the poor of our land are fed.
While you with your rich folks can dine, sir,
'Tis a God-send for them to get bread.
Go visit the home of the poor sir,
Such sights you will never behold,
To our prisons then go and explore, sir,
And scatter your hoardings of gold.

A little would break asunder.
The chains the poor are under.
Go list to that great voice of hunger
And you'll never more wonder at crime.

-J.C.J. , 1872