

A Prophet of Evil

by Ambrose Bierce

An Undertaker Who Was a Member of a Trust saw a Man Leaning on a Spade, and asked him why he was not at work.

"Because," said the Man Leaning on a Spade, "I belong to the Gravediggers' National Extortion Society, and we have decided to limit the production of graves and get more money for the reduced output. We have a corner in graves and propose to work it to the best advantage."

"My friend," said the Undertaker Who Was a Member of a Trust, "this is a most hateful and injurious scheme. If people cannot be assured of graves, I fear they will no longer die, and the best interests of civilisation will wither like a frosted leaf."

And blowing his eyes upon his handkerchief, he walked away lamenting.