

There was no object in prolonging my visit to Dali; the tombs of ancient Idalium had already been ransacked by the consuls of various nations; and had I felt disposed to disturb the repose of the dead, nominally in the interests of science, but at the same time to turn an honest penny by the sale of their remains, I should have been unable to follow the example of the burrowing antiquarians who had preceded me; a prohibition having been placed upon all such enterprises by the English government.

It is supposed that Idalium is one of the largest and richest treasuries of the dead in Cyprus. For several centuries the tombs had been excavated and pillaged in the hopes of discovering objects of value. The first robbers were those who were simply influenced by the gold and other precious ornaments which were accompaniments of the corpse; the modern despoilers were resurrectionists who worked with the object of supplying any museums that would purchase the funeral spoil.

It is a curious contradiction in our ideas of propriety, which are measured apparently by uncertain intervals of time, that we regard as felonious a man who disinters a body and steals a ring from the fingers of the corpse a few days after burial in an English churchyard, but we honour and admire an individual who upon a wholesale scale digs up old cemeteries and scatters the bones of ancient kings and queens, princes, priests, and warriors, and having collected the jewellery, arms, and objects of vanity that were buried with them, neglects the once honoured bones, but sells the gold and pottery to the highest bidder. Sentiment is measured and weighed by periods, and as grief is mitigated by time, so also is our respect for the dead,