

rather singular — quite out upon the floor by itself. And stop — is not this wood that they have laid by way of lid over the marble? — 'tis so white with age that I took it for stone too at the first. You should push this off, I think. It only hides the top of the carved work."

I was approaching closer to it, when the old miller said, with a very grave and solemn sort of smile upon his face, "Nay, sir, you must not touch that part of it — 'tis not the custom. You had better leave it as it is."

"Why, what folly is this? — You may be sure such a fair tomb must have something pretty on its own cover. — I must see it, my friend."

"Nay, sir, you may do what you please; but I warn you, that you will wish it undone afterwards. You will only frighten yourself."

"Fright! old boy," said I; "nay, then, here for the adventure."

I touched the edge of the timber, and found it rise easily; — but, at that instant — at that very moment when I raised it — I heard a little, feeble cry come out from below it. I leaped back, and cast my eyes upon the old man. He met my look without changing his. — And then, from the same tomb, came three distinct sobs — the same tomb, but not the same voice — and all was again silent.

"Old man," said I, "what is this? Can the dead people utter sounds like these from their coffins? — Surely, I thought there had been rest in the grave, old man —"

"Ah, sir," said he, moving now at length from the door-way, in which he had all this while been standing, — "we cannot tell what strange things are in this world; the quick and the dead have their marvels. — But you have broken the spell, sir — you may lift the lid now — there will be nothing more to alarm you. They never do so, but at the first touch."

His coming so near me gave me courage, and I touched the wood again. No sound followed; — and I moved it gently — quite off its place.