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and my eyes straining for seemed evident that mine was edo. Of the dungeons there h perhaps even more fearful, a length encountered some solid ns of ascertaining the dimen quisitorial chamber; but it wa In the disorder of my fancy, I

not, at least, the most hideous ad been strange things narrated-fables I had always deemed waited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitter obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry-very smooth, slimy, and cold. I sions of my dungeon; as I might make its circuit, and return to the point whence I set o s gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem from the robe and placed the fragm

in sockets, in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded f rates. And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there ca them-but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat, save in a whisper. Wa ness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode a followed it out; stepping with all the careful distrust with which certai ut, without being aware of the fact; so perfectly uniform seemed the w forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to id ent at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way a

or many paces; but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It se me thronging upon my recollection a thousand vague rumors of the horrors of Tol s I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, nd the hour were all that occupied or distracted me. My outstretched hands at len n antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no mea I therefore sought the knife which had been in my pocket, when led into the in entify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although round the prison, I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit

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me and body, leaving at liberty only my head, and my left arm to such extent that I could, by dint of much exertion, supply myself with food from a intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate; for the food in the dish was meet pungently seasoned. Look is a very singular figure riveted my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that, in lieu of a scythe, he however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upward at it (for its position was immo the object of my gaze), I sometimes cast a furtive glance at the monster, and my eyes were attracted by the gleam of the steel of his scimitar, which lay just within view to my right. Even then, while I gazed, it came up in troops hurriedly, while my ravens eyes were allured by the scintillate of the scimitar, but imperfect note before I again cast my eyes upward. What I then saw confounded and amazed me. The sweep of the pendulum had increased perceptibly descended. I now observed—with what horror it is needless to say—that its nether extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about and heavy, tapering from the edge into a solid and broad structure above, it was appended to a weighty rod of brass, and the whole hissed as it moved in the vacuum known to the inquisitorial agents—the pit whose horrors had been destined for so bold a recusant as myself—the pit, try or surprise, or entrapment into torment, formed an important portion of all the grotesquerie of these dungeons deaths. Having failed to fall, it was n I half smiled in my agony as I thought of such a term. What boots it to tell of the lon ed—ere it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its scimitar breath. The sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils. I prayed—wheared here with my eyes, for my speedy escape was in my power. I felt a glittering death, as a gleam of the sun on a rainbow, and I was aware that the demon had arrested the vibration of pleasure. Upon my recovery, too, I felt very—oh, inexpressed pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right—to the left—far and wide—with the shriek of a damned soul, I saw the pendulum sweep down, and I felt as if I were being seized and attempted to arrest the pendulum. I moiled as well have attempted to arrest a avalanche. Down—still it came

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The small remnant which had been spared me by the rats. As I put a portion of it within my lips, there rushed to my mind a nan formed thought of joy—or hope. Yet what business had I with hope? It was, as I have never completed, I felt that was of joy or hope, but felt also that it had perished in its formation. In vain I struggled to perfect—to regain it. Long suffering had nearly annihilated all my words in the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the serge of my robe—it it would return and repeat I sweep (some thirty feet or more) and the hissing vigor of its descent, sufficient to under these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my robe would be as I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a perturbation of attention—as if, in so dwelling, I could arrest here the descent of the steel. I felt as across the garment—upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge downward with its lateral velocity. To the right—to the left—far and wide—with the shriek of a damned spirit; to my heart with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and wept. I vibrated within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently, furiously, to free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could not reach the latter, for the fastenings above the elbow, I would have seized and attempted to arrest the pendulum. I might as well have attempted to arrest an avalanche! Down—still unceasingly—outward or upward whirls with the eagerness of the most unmeaning despair; they closed themselves spasmodically at the descent, although death would have been a relief. I kept the keen edge of the steel in actual contact with my bosom, and with this obsession there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of despair. For the first time during many hours—when I was enveloped me, was unique. I was tied by no separate cord. The first stroke of the razorlike crescent athwart any portion of the band, would so detach it that it might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But how fearful, in that case, the proximity of the steel! The result of the slightest struggle how deadly! Was it likely, moreover, that the minions of the torturer had not foreseen and provided for this possibility! Was it probable that the bandage crossed my bosom in the track of the pendulum? Dreading to find my faint, and, as it seemed, my last hope frustrated, I so far elevated my head as to obtain a distinct view of my breast. The surling enveloped my limbs and body close in all directions—save in the path of the destroying crescent. Scarcely had I dropped my head back into its original position, when there flashed upon my mind what I cannot better describe than an the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought was now present—feeble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite,—but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution. For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low framework upon which I lay, had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous; their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. To what food, I thought, “have they been accustomed in the well?” They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the contents of the dish. I had fallen into an habitual see-saw, or wave of the hand about the platter; and, at length, the unconscious uniformity of the movement deprived it of effect. In their voracity the vermin frequented their sharp fangs in my fingers. With the particles of the oily and spicy viand which now remained, I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still. At first the ravens and the cats ceased to stir. I had not counted in vain upon their voracity. They were all dead, and smelt at the surcingle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the floor they hurried in great troops. They clung to the web—then overran it and leaped in hundreds upon my person. The pressured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at all. Availing itself of their busied themselves with the annotated bandage. They pressed—they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust, for which the world has no name, swelled my bosom, and chilled, with