

face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot. I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage. And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. At length it ceased.