

ditional inch or so. It was now breast high, within two inches of my face. To raise my head was impossible, for, as I before remarked, a row of sharp screw ends (technically called "tapped wires") was directly over the nape of my neck. All this time, though it was but a few seconds, I was acutely conscious of the steady progress of the sermon. I can even now remember every word of the enormous Dean's peroration. A sudden thought flashed across my mind: "What a fool I am!—why not open the escape valve?" Now the escape valve, which is an arrangement for preventing the bellows from bursting, was as usual, in the middle of the wide expanse of the bellows' top. If I could only press this down, the air would escape, the bellows would sink and I might yet get free. I strained and reached, but in vain; my longest finger could not be got within six inches of the valve. I thought of my two foot rule; but, alas! in consternation I had let it drop. On went the sermon; "beat, beat," went my heart. The bellows top was now touching my nose, and the sharp points were being gradually driven into the back of my neck. I struggled, but in vain. It was no use. I was wedged in like some poor victim in a torture machine of the Inquisition. "Pump, pump," went the bellows-handle; down came the blood from innumerable punctures in the back of my neck. My agony was intense. My face was literally jammed between the ever-rising bellows below and those hideous spikes above. I dare not cry out; for was not the Dean in the finest passage of his peroration?

In the midst of my agony I heard a sound, and felt a movement in the mechanism near me. It was the organist pulling out the great organ-stops. At the same instant my eyes caught

sight of the "pull-downs" leading from the great organ wind-chest. Some little demon whispered in my ear; and in a moment I saw my only hope of release from the intense and increasing agony I was suffering. I must open the nearest pipes, and thus release the accumulating wind. I knew, of course, the uproar I should cause, and I still heard the interminable Dean at his interminable sermon. But I could not help it. With one hand I grasped about eight of the brass "pull-downs," and with the other I laid hold of the nearest pedal-trackers. A roar of the most awful character ensued: it was as though fifty healthy bulls and five active volcanoes had burst into the chapel. The Dean's sermon was effectually quenched. One of his finest periods was brought to an unexpected full stop. The unfortunate organist bounded off his stool, and swore audibly. The bellows-blower rushed off, thinking, no doubt, the devil was inside the organ. But, oh joy! the bellows sank, and in a fainting state I clambered over the top, stumbled out through the little side-door, and fell into the arms of two Senior Fellows who had hastened up to the scene of disaster. The commotion among the gownsmen in the chapel, I was afterwards told, beggared description. Laughter, horror, exclamations of surprise and indignation, were all to the front by turns. The Blessing was pronounced amidst the greatest confusion; and altogether the scene was such as those sacred walls had never witnessed before.

I was politely conducted to my rooms. The next morning I appeared before the Master and Seniors, and though I pleaded loud and long, I was rusticated for two terms. I never went back to Cambridge. I always considered that I had been very badly treated.