

HOW I WAS RUSTICATED FROM CAMBRIDGE.

From TEMPLE BAR for April.

I ALWAYS thought it a very hard case, but I could never bring my irate father and my weeping mother to view the matter in that light. I appeal to an impartial public. This was how it happened :—

My name was put on the boards of St. Blasius in October, 185—, and after a most tender parting from my household gods in Warwickshire, I commenced residence in all the glory of a promising freshman. I do not know that I ever had very sanguine hopes of academic distinction, so I received the full blessing of expecting nothing, inasmuch as, in this respect, I met no disappointment. I had a hard battle with my revered father, and afterwards with the tutor of the college, to be allowed to rent an extra room in which I might carry on my favourite relaxation. This was the unusual pursuit of amateur organ-building. My father said that the idea was preposterous and expensive. The tutor affirmed that such things ruined a young man's prospects, and made him idle. But, nevertheless, I carried the day through the intercession of my mother; and my carpenter's bench, with the appurtenances thereof, were duly accommodated in a small room opening out of my gyp-room, on staircase letter C. I was not long in maturing my plans for erecting a small chamber-organ of two manuals, with all kinds of ingenious mechanical appliances in the way of stops and couplers. I was naturally both of a mechanical and musical turn of mind; so, by my favourite pursuit, I gratified both sides of my disposition. I often tried to convince my father that it was a most economical step thus to kill two birds with one stone, but he could not see it. I explained how I might develop my mechanical talent by building an expensive steam-engine, and indulge my musical propensities by insisting on running up to London every week to enjoy the Opera or Philharmonic concerts. I proved on

paper that this method would consume more time and money than a little quiet organ-building could ever absorb. But it was all no use. My father had not a logical mind, and he drove away conviction in a manner most irritating to a sound reasoner like myself. However, I had my own way at Cambridge, but under protest.

Now the organ in the Chapel of St. Blasius was an old organ, which had been renovated and added to by several builders, till the inside of the instrument was crowded beyond all reason. For the most ordinary processes of tuning and regulating, the unfortunate operator had to perform the feat of an acrobat before he could get at either pipes or key-action. The bellows had to be emptied and the swell closed before he could get in at all. And after he was in, it was only by getting over sundry massive beams, under cross-beams not more than two feet from the ground, and through apertures scarcely big enough for a rabbit, that any of the important working-parts of the instrument could be reached. To tie oneself into a knot, as tumblers do, was nothing to this. Unless a man could double himself up into the space of a cubic foot or so, unless he could wriggle along yards upon his back, and stand for many miserable minutes in the most apoplectic postures, he could not hope to do anything to the interior of the St. Blasius organ. It was from this untoward instrument that I obtained all my patterns and measurements for my own chamber-organ. I formed the acquaintance of the organist, and, after a vast amount of strategy, won his consent to my venturing into the hidden depths of his hideous old machine. Week after week did I attempt new feats with the view of getting hints for my own amateur work. I lived in a chronic state of broken head and contused shins. Every now and then I appeared with one or more black eyes; and on two occasions I was most suspiciously