

**ACROSS THE ZODIAC: THE
STORY OF A WRECKED
RECORD, VOL. II**

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Across the Zodiac: The Story of a Wrecked Record, Vol. II by Percy Greg

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PERCY GREG

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ACROSS THE ZODIAC:

The Story of a Wrecked Record

DECIPHERED, TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY

PERCY GREG

AUTHOR OF "THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE" ETC

"Thoughts he sends to each planet,
Uranus, Venus, and Mars;
Soars to the Centre to span it,
Numbers the infinite Stars."

Courtthop's Paradise of Birds

VOL. II.



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ACROSS THE ZODIAC.

CHAPTER XIV.

BY SEA.

AN hour after sunrise next morning, Esmo, his son, and our host accompanied us to the vessel in which we were to make the principal part of our journey. We were received by an officer of the royal Court, who was to accompany us during the rest of our journey, and from whom, Esmo assured me, I might obtain the fullest information regarding the various objects of interest, to visit which we had adopted an unusual and circuitous course. We embarked on a gulf running generally from east to west, about midway between the northern tropic and the arctic circle. As this was the summer of the northern hemisphere, we should thus enjoy a longer day, and should not suffer from the change of climate. After taking leave of our friends, we went down below to take possession of the fore part of the vessel, which was assigned as our exclusive quarters. Immediately in front of the machine-room, which occupied the centre of the vessel, were two cabins, about sixteen feet square, reaching from side to side. Beyond these, opening out of a passage running

along one side, were two smaller cabins about eight feet long. All these apartments were furnished and ornamented with the luxury and elegance of chambers in the best houses on shore. In the foremost of the larger cabins were a couple of desks, and three or four writing or easy chairs. In the outer cabin nearest to the engine-room, and entered immediately by the ladder descending from the deck, was fixed a low central table. In all we found abundance of those soft exquisitely covered and embroidered cushions which in Mars, as in Oriental countries, are the most essential and most luxurious furniture. The officer had quarters in the stern of the vessel, which was an exact copy of the fore part. But the first of these rooms was considered as public or neutral ground. Leaving Eveena below, I went on deck to examine, before she started, the construction of the vessel. Her entire length was about one hundred and eighty feet, her depth, from the flat deck to the wide keel, about one half of her breadth; the height of the cabins not much more than eight feet; her draught, when most completely lightened, not more than four feet. Her electric machinery drew in and drove out with great force currents of water which propelled her with a speed greater than that afforded by the most powerful paddles. It also pumped in or out, at whatever depth, the quantity of water required as ballast, not merely to steady the vessel, but to keep her in position on the surface or to sink her to the level at which the pilot might choose to sail. At either end was fixed a steering screw, much resembling the tail-fin of a fish, capable of striking sideways, upwards, or downwards, and directing our course accordingly.