

**THE CAPTURED
CUNARD: AN EPISODE
OF THE ATLANTIC**

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The Captured Cunarder: An Episode of the Atlantic by William H. Rideing

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WILLIAM H. RIDEING

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The
Captured Cunarder
An Episode of the
Atlantic

BY
WILLIAM H. RIDEING



BOSTON
COPELAND AND DAY
MDCCCXCVI

TO MY FRIEND,
DAVID A. MUNRO.



“SLAINTE MHATH”

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THE CAPTURED CUNARDER

I

IT was the night of an Irish debate in the House of Commons, and among the listeners in the Strangers' Gallery, who were twisting themselves this way and that to catch a glimpse of the speakers — listeners mostly from the provinces, who willingly put up with the atmosphere of a common lodging-house for the sake of so unusual a treat — was a handsome man, who, dark naturally, had been tanned by exposure to tropic winds and suns to the complexion of a young and healthy Indian, brown

THE CAPTURED CUNARDER.

but not sallow, the full undercurrent of blood making itself visible like the glow of a ruby in his cheeks. Plainly from certain movements, as well as from the cut of his clothes, he was a seafaring man of some sort, though, unlike most seafaring men, who when ashore are very deliberate in their bearing, he had a quick intense way with him, particularly with his eyes, which were so sweeping and penetrating that anybody directly behind them might have been conscious of them, though their habit was to look directly ahead. Nothing was unobserved by him, nothing unheard. But the fault of so much intelligence was that his mobile face had no capacity for the concealment of feeling; approval or disappro-

THE CAPTURED CUNARDER.

val was at once recorded on it for all the world to mark.

The home-rule members were up in arms, and no dictionary in the world could show more synonymes of "vileness" than the member for Castle Magillicuddy had found to "hurl" (his own word) at the gentlemen on the Opposition benches.

The division bell rang sharply in the lobbies, on the terrace, in the corridors, and in the dining-room; and members scurried — without regard to convenience, to dinners, and conversations just begun — to be counted with their respective parties.

The government was defeated on the division, and the young man in the gallery, who had been listening with much greater interest than