

THE
FEARSOME
ISLAND

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The Fearsome Island

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The
Fearsome Island,

Being a Modern Rendering
of the Narrative

OF one Silas Fordred, Master Mariner of Hythe, whose shipwreck and subsequent adventures are herein set forth. Also an appendix accounting in a rational manner for the seeming marvels that Silas Fordred encountered during his sojourn on the fearsome island of Don Diego Rodriguez.

By *Albert Kinross.*

NEW YORK
DUFFIELD & COMPANY
1906

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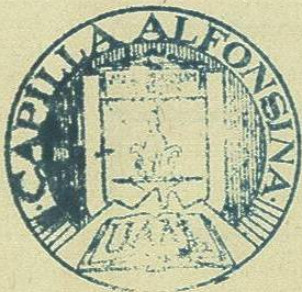
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ACERVO DE LITERATURA
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DEDICATION.

Dear Zangwill,

I have to thank you for so much in the past, present, and I think I may venture on prophesy and say the future. Kindly accept this inscription as some small token of that gratitude. As for the book, I fear its contents will surprise you as much as they surprised

Yours most sincerely,

ALBERT KINROSS.

January, 1896.

THE PREFACE.

La Felicità del Terror

Passaggio per me
dalla Felicità al
Terror originale

THE PREFACE.

IN the reproduction of this narrative it was my intention to modernise the English of the original version. I am no great scholar, being more interested in the humanity of things than in their æsthetics; and, in the retelling of this story, I find that I have been completely overpowered by the original version, so that the language in which this history is here set forth is no language. I have, however, let it stand, as I feel that the leisurely dialect that I have instinctively adopted is more in keeping with the character and surroundings of Silas Fordred than the crisp, clear-cut phraseology of to-day.

The Preface.

Also in the original manuscript were many coarse phrases that I have all but eliminated; should one or two such have crept into this version, will the indulgent reader kindly pass them by, merely regarding such in the light of landmarks of a day that was wont to express its thoughts and sentiments with no uncertain voice.

ALBERT KINROSS.

Hampstead, 1896.

INTRODUCTION

I WAS staying down at Hythe last winter, and, among other occupations, I found time to assist my very good friend Cobb, Town Clerk of the old cinque port, in sorting a mass of ancient documents but recently discovered in a musty chest that Back the beadle had stumbled across in the Town Hall cellar. These papers were, for the most part, connected with the businesses transacted by Cobb's remotest predecessors; with meat and drink furnished at the Lord Warden's banquets, and tithes paid to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. Our national enemy across the channel had given the worthy Councillors of those days much food for thought, and there were

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many accounts of moneys spent with the object of offensive and defensive chastisement to be inflicted on that relentless foe.

But, among all these documents, many of which might possess great interest for the antiquarian or social economist, there was one that I read and re-read thrice before imparting its contents to my good friend Cobb; or stay, such rather was my intention, but, on second thoughts, I carefully placed the time-worn sheets in my ulster pocket — there was quite a bundle of them — and here in town I am turning into modern English what Silas Fordred penned with great labour and difficulty in the days of good Queen Bess.

Fordred shall tell his own story, and you, my readers (among whom I hope friend Cobb will occupy a foremost place,) believe or doubt! The story rings honest and the truth was more in

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favour in those days than in this sceptic age.

Here follow the time-stained papers of Silas Fordred worked up into a narrative of some literary merit; for style and polish had he none, this blunt mariner of yester-year.

For want of a better title, and I hold that all things should have a distinctive name, I have headed this narrative:

The Fearsome Island

Before the assembled Town Council of Hythe Borough I have read and set my name to this true statement of what befell me in my last voyage to the Southern Seas. If any there be that doubt, let them go down to my house in Stade Street and inspect the strange barque that carried me from the Fearsome Island to the good ship *Queen Marie* that brought me hither. Further, have I not shewn you vessels of gold that

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were in the Dark Chamber, likewise the thirteen great diamonds that hung round the neck of the bronze idol? Also have you seen the knife of Spanish steel with the round ruby at its hilt and the two fangs that broke on my hand from the mouth of the Hag of Turret? The captain and seamen of the ship *Queen Marie* have spoken of the hairy man that was a-dying when I was discovered afloat and without food. What I have written is true on my oath and by my hope of entering heaven.

(SIGNED) SILAS FORDRED.

WITNESSED BY

EVAN the Welshman,
Town Clerk.

Chapter I

ON the third day of June, 1558, Mary that was called Bloody being then our Queen, Thomas Snoad and I set out from Hythe for the great port of Dover, where lay the ship *Brave Luck* that we had jointly purchased to trade with for our own profits and benefaction. Previously, both of us had been in the employ of Deedes, the great London merchant, who hath more ships than I have toes or fingers. We rose early in the morning, so that when we reached Dover the sun was close on midday and we were greatly athirst. Straightway we boarded our ship, in whose cabin was meat and drink in plenty, and, our appetites being stilled, we went into Dover town to prepare for the voyage