

THE CHERRY RIBBAND

"You have rested long enough, Sir Robert," counselled Lord Liddesdale, "you had better march to-night for Sanquhar. There may be more need for you in the west."

"Ah," said Lag, "I presume there will, so soon as the King finds out that proclamations do not put down rebellion so well as old-fashioned powder and shot!"

And with that he mounted his horse and rode away.

The prisoners were left with My Lord—the sailors' too.

"Men," said My Lord, addressing the seamen, "I presume that you could not, on oath, recognise any of these late prisoners?"

"*Swiftsures*, turn your backs!" commanded Captain George.

The whole crew faced about instantly as one man.

"Swear that you could not tell one of them, not if they were your own brothers!" cried Captain George.

"We swear!" cried all the crew in chorus.

"You never remarked whether they were old or young, naked or clothed, black or white. In fact, you would swear on the Book that you know nothing about the matter!"

"We swear!" cried the *Swiftsures*, manfully.

"Good lads," said Captain George Teddiman; "that is Mr. Pepys's way! He is the king of all seafaring men, though he is always sick aboard. But, Lord, he knows more than fifty admirals, as I think I have mentioned already to your Grace to-day!"

"Certainly," said the peer, "a hundred times at least—I must make this Mr. Pepys's acquaintance when next I go to London."

"A fine man," said Captain George; "keeps a coach, and learned—all the Bishops cannot pose him. Anything more I can do for you, My Lord?"

"Only keep your men as they are for a moment," said Lord Liddesdale.

"*Swiftsures*, shut your eyes!" commanded their captain; "fifty lashes to the man that opens them till I tell him—Mr. Pepys's way—plain and simple, easily understood—no mistakes!"

"Gentlemen," said My Lord, addressing the released prisoners, but also abstaining from looking at them, "I do not know you. It is better that I should not know you, either names or faces. Pass on your way. If ye cannot serve the King, at least lead a quiet life, until the better days come. If any of you be Mr. Peden, or Mr. Rendwick, or Mr. Shields, or any against whom there are special