

successive steps in that eventful crisis were debated with a zeal commensurate with the important results involved, and with no less fiery ardour than that which characterised the bloody struggles they heralded. Here Montrose united with Rothes, Lindsay, Loudon, and others of the Covenanted leaders, in maturing the bold measures that formed the basis of our national liberties; and within the same Hall, only a few years later, he sat with the calmness of despair to receive from the lips of his old compatriot, Loudon, the barbarous sentence which was executed with such savage rigour.

When the overthrow of the Scottish army at Dunbar at length laid the capital at the mercy of Cromwell, new scenes were enacted within the Parliament House: "witness sindry English trouperis quha oppinlie taught there."<sup>1</sup> If Pinkerton<sup>2</sup> is to be believed, even the General, Cromwell, occasionally laid aside the temporal for the spiritual sword within the same august arena, to the great scandal of the Presbyterian citizens, who were horrified to find that "men war not aschamed to tak upone thame the functione of the ministric, without a lauchfull calling." But while such novelties were being enacted in the great Hall, the "laich Parliament Hous" was crowded with Scottish prisoners, and the building was strictly guarded by bands of the same English troopers, equally ready to relieve guard on the outer parade or to take their turn within, where

"Pulpit drum ecclesiastic  
Was beat with fist instead of a stick."

But Scottish strongholds proved insufficient for the detention of their old masters under the care of such novel foreign jailers. On the 17th of May 1654 the prisoners in the "laich Parliament Hous" effected their escape by cutting a hole in the floor of the great Hall above, and all but two got clear off. Only ten days afterwards Lord Kinnoull, and several other prisoners, were equally successful in getting out of the Castle, by letting themselves down over the rock with their sheets and blankets cut into strips; and others confined in the Canongate Tolbooth effected, by like means, a similar jail delivery for themselves.<sup>3</sup> When a better understanding had been

<sup>1</sup> Nicoll's *Diary*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> The Scottish prisoners would seem to have been better acquainted with the secrets of their own strongholds than their English jailers. Nicoll remarks, "It was a thing admirable to consider how that the Scottis prisoneris being so closlie kept heir within the Castle of Edinburgh, and in the laich Parliament Hous, and within the Tolbuith of the Cannogait, and daylie and nychtlie attendit with a gaird of sodgeris, sould sa oft escapit imprisonment. And now laillie, upone the 27 day of Maj 1654, being Settirday at midnight, the Lord Kynnoull, the Laird of Lugtoun, ane callit Marschell, and another callit Hay, by the moyen of one of the Ingliche centric escapit furth of the Castell of Edinburgh being lat doun be thair awin bedscheittis and blankettis, hardlie knut. All these four, with ane of the Ingliche centric escapit. Thair was are uther prettie gentill man, and a brave sodger, essaying to do the lyke, he, in his dounging, fell and brak his neck, the knotis of the scheittis being maid waik by the former persones wecht that past doun before him."—Nicoll's *Diary*, p. 128.