

debtors from their creditors and persons suspected of capital offences from justice. And authority was unable to restrain the fanatical violence of the people, who protected the crimes of men as a part of the worship of the Gods."

Here, too, the Mosaic law abstains from abolishing the custom, which could not have been done without antedating the progress of society and taking man out of his own hands; but it guards against the abuse. The cities of refuge were not to be for the wilful murderer, but "that the slayer may flee thither which killeth any person *unawares*^h." "These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person *unawares* may flee thitherⁱ." The number of the places of refuge is strictly limited to six; and they are to be cities, not holy places to which any superstition could attach. Further to guard against such superstition, it is expressly declared that the holiest of all holy places shall not shelter the criminal. "But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him *from Mine altar*, that he may die^k."

In other nations of antiquity, and in Europe during the Middle Ages, the fugitive had to take up his abode for life in the asylum or sanctuary; at least he could never leave it with safety: and thus these places became nests of crime, as the neighbourhoods of some of them, Westminster for instance, are at the present day.

^h Numb. xxxv. 11.

ⁱ Ib. 15.

^k Exod. xxi. 14.