

show that its early function was entirely different from its present use. The etymology of the word, coming from both Latin and Greek sources, signifies that it was a sanctuary or place of shelter, an institution of the church, where criminals and debtors sought refuge from justice, and from which they could not be taken without sacrilege. The ancient Grecian temples had this right, and the custom, following Jewish analogy, passed into the Christian Church. From the time of Constantine downwards, certain churches in many Catholic countries were set apart as asylums for the protection of fugitives from the hands of justice. In England, down to the Reformation, any person taking refuge in such a sanctuary was secured against punishment (except when charged with treason or sacrilege) if within the space of forty-eight days he gave signs of repentance and subjected himself to banishment. By the Act 21, James I., cap. 28, the privilege of sanctuary for crime was finally abolished. Various sanctuaries for debtors, however, continued to exist in and about London till 1697, when they too were abolished. In Scotland, the abbey of Holyrood House and its precincts still retain the privilege of giving asylum to debtors, and one who retires thither is protected for twenty-four hours, but to enjoy protection longer the person must sign his name in the books kept by the bailie of the abbey ; since the abolition of imprisonment for debt this sanctuary is no longer used.

The right of asylum is still used as a term in international law, whereby persons committing certain crimes in one country may take refuge in another.

During all this time, while the Church and the State provided the right of asylum for criminals and debtors, no special provision was made for the care and treatment of the insane. They were confined in gaols, penitentiaries, hospitals and workhouses, and generally in filthy and wretched apartments. The only idea of treatment was that of forcible restraint, tied with chains to the wall and caged behind iron bars, with only a litter of straw to sleep on, like wild beasts ; they were lashed with the whip into submission, and confined in cold and damp apartments ; they soon pined away and died, and over the lintel of each door might be written the words : " Abandon hope all ye who enter here."

It was not until the middle of the last century that the first institution was erected at St. Luke's in London, whose avowed purpose was the cure of insanity. This was followed by the erection of the York Retreat by Tuke in 1792, who was the pioneer in introducing the treatment by non-restraint. * Contemporaneous with Tuke,