

by them from, and credited by them to, the sacred volume. It is to that vast repository of the national traditions, that well-known, but little understood, compilation, the Talmud, and to their later casuists, that we must turn, would we find and correctly estimate the multifarious, important, and highly interesting sanatory constitutions of a people who honoured these constitutions with a most scrupulous observance, not merely because they regarded them as mere matters of expediency, utility, or profit, but as the strict, unavoidable, and uncompromising requirements of their heaven-born religion. The pains and penalties following dereliction or neglect—in some cases amounting even to excision—also tended, both in Biblical and Post Biblical times, to secure from the Hebrews a scrupulous observance of their sanatory laws. We are well aware, that some few, writing in an unfriendly spirit of the book in which they are contained, have condemned them as overloading men with useless ceremonies, which enter into every hour of his existence and make him the mere creature of ablutions and precautions. But it is very evident, that this objection must be pronounced quite futile, until it can be shown that a careful and strict attention to the promotion of health is at all condemnable, pernicious or unwise. By another class a further objection has been made to them, that, although their tendency may be good, yet is the minuteness of detail employed in the books of Hebrew jurisprudence highly objectionable, and not to be tolerated in the present refined state of society. But here it is also evident, that such an objection is utterly groundless, and could only be adduced but for a sinister purpose. For if they become objectionable and intolerable on this account, then equally objectionable and intolerable must we pronounce every medical book, tract, or treatise, from the days of Galen downwards; since it needs no very extensive knowledge of both classes of authors to decide that the former are clearly and indisputably more measured in their *modus scribendi* than the latter; notwithstanding which but few would recommend the suppression of valuable medical treatises on this account. The truth is, that, equally with any modern casuistic or scientific writers, the Jewish Doctors or Rabbis wrote for intelligent, considerate, truth-seeking men. They wrote neither for children, for fools, nor for blind zealots. And when they entered into details designed to promote the bodily, and consequently the mental, health of their people, they knew that they addressed men who would only consider themselves "a wise and discerning nation" accordingly as they respected the "statutes and judgments so righteous," upon which their teachers amplified—men, who, whatever their faults otherwise, could yet duly appreciate recommendations to purity, chastity, and sobriety, and could not only ostensibly, but actually and in reality, act up to them,