

CONDITION OF WOMAN.

ETH. 5: 33.—*Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

Among most of the heathen nations the practice of polygamy prevails. Among many negro tribes the idea of marriage is wanting. The government, usages and order of the family are abolished. In some places the king reserves the right of selling the women. Only such as pay a certain sum and prostrate themselves before the royal throne in the dust can have wives. The Bushmen and Hottentots use the women merely to gratify their lusts and in the performance of the severest drudgery.—Whoever can get many wives takes many. If they become burdensome he drives them away again, and hunger and suffering are their lot. The Indians of North America are too lazy for any continuous exertions, and find their delight and employment in the chase alone. Hence all the burden of the work falls upon women. She is the slave of the man. Their condition is often so miserable that the mothers destroy many of their new-born daughters, so that they may not grow up to experience the like distress. Upon the South Sea Islands, before the reception of the Gospel, the females were treated as if they had been beasts of the field. They dared not wear the materials worn by their husbands, nor eat the same food with them. They might not touch the ground, which was regarded as holy, with their feet. They were obliged to work like slaves. They did not eat their meals with their husbands, but had to wait on them by putting their food into their mouth. On the Feejee Islands, at the death of prominent chiefs, several of their wives were regularly strangled, often by their own children, and buried with them. For example, there were chiefs on the Friendly Islands who had from thirty to forty wives. The slightest mistake on their part was enough to put their lives in jeopardy. Turn now and look upon a civilized heathen country: we mean the East Indies. There the girls grow up in neglect and ignorance. Only those attached to the idol worship, called *Bavaderes*, who are compelled to serve the vilest purposes in the pagodas, are taught certain branches of art and science. The girls are betrothed at the most tender age, principally in the fifth and sixth year. It is indeed their wish and prayer, and the object of many incantations, to become the only wife of their husband. But the parents make no inquiry on this point. The Hindoos, particularly the great and rich take many wives. With the wedding day commences a period of absolute slavery for the wife. After the wedding the young

wife draws back her veil and older members of the family behold her countenance for the first and last time. For after the ceremony, she is taken into the apartment of the women. Now she is not allowed even for once to behold the face of her father-in-law and brothers-in-law, or speak to them—only her own sons up to a certain age may she see without her veil. On the wedding day, she eats for the last time in company with her husband; afterwards when the husband eats, his wives stand around with veils on, and wait upon his nod or command. After the husband is done the women withdraw and eat up the fragments he has left. Even the wives of wealthy and respectable men are often obliged to work at the severest labour in the field. The poorer women have the lot of slaves and nothing more. To escape the misery and often too, the abuse to which they are subjected they sometimes fly to the house of their parents, but the husband may at any time come to demand their return. No better lot can befall a woman than to die while a wife. The sacred book regards this as a special favor at the hands of the Deity. Should she survive her husband her misery begins with his dying day. The Hindoo suppresses all sympathy for her, with the saying: "She is accursed, and has earned all her present sufferings by her sin in her former life." All ornaments and all handsome clothing are taken from her; she is allowed no share of her husband's property. She becomes the slave of distant relatives, who often require of her the severest labors. She may take part in no season of rejoicing, her appearance at such a time is a sign of ill-luck. Every ten days she must shave her head and perform the appointed ablution in the river in every kind of weather, and even during sickness. She is permitted to eat but once a day, and the bare ground is her couch. Second marriage is not allowed. Hence it was, that formerly many Hindoo widows preferred to such a despised widowhood, a death, which the people regarded as honorable and happy, upon the burning funeral pile of their husbands. Even yet in parts of India, not under British rule, instances of widow-burning occur, though they are not frequent.

The Power of Pennies.

The following suggestive article is taken from the *New York Chronicle*:—

Rev. Halsey W Knapp the pastor of the Hudson City Baptist Church, in New Jersey, has prepared and issued to his congregation the following pithy and suggestive circular. It does people good once in a while to have brought before them the handsome figures which result from an aggregation of mites.