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SEE CLUB RATES

## India.

*Readings to be used in connection with the Woman's Missionary Society's Suggested Programme for June.*

ARRANGED BY H. I. MACCALLUM.

No country is more full of interest to the intelligent and thoughtful traveller than India. Its great extent, its climate and scenery, its enormous population, its varied races, its many languages, its different religions, its social organizations, its history, its ruins, its monuments, its arts and its peculiar government present a never-ending picture of interest and wonder and an inexhaustible subject of study and research.

India is generally understood to mean that country in Southern Asia, occupying the peninsula of Hindustan and certain countries beyond, subject to the Governor-General of India. It is bounded on the east by Siam, on the north by Thibet and the Chinese Empire, on the west by Afghanistan and Beloochistan, and on the south by the Indian Ocean.

In this territory Portugal and France have small colonies, but the rest of the country is under British control in whole or in part. Most of the country is under the full control of British officials, while the native or Feudatory States are governed by native princes with the advice of a British resident or agent. There are 72,000 British troops stationed in India.

Some people think of India as a very rich country, and forget entirely that in that very country about 2,000,000 die yearly of hunger or of utterly bad food. It is a rich country; but the wealth is in few hands, and much is uselessly buried in the temples. This is very striking in Malabar, where 81

per cent. of the population are small farmers, under extortionate landlords, and under the oppressive taxes of the Government, which fall so heavily on land and salt. And what makes this poverty ever increasing is the excessive over population of the country. The whole life of the native of India is a course of training for starvation. Even in good years he is soon deep in debt to the money-lender, and when in debt he hardly knows what it is to eat all he wants. All that is over and above the barest allowance for life must go to pay the increasing interest on the debt. His children grow up half-fed, and are inured from infancy to the repression of healthy appetite. When, therefore, the crops fail over large tracts of country, the people at large only suffer that distress collectively with which they are individually well acquainted. In the native of India hunger seizes a trained wrestler.

India is a country subject to famine. Fifteen great famines have occurred since 1769; in that year ten millions of human beings are said to have perished. It is only since the British constructed roads and railways all over the land that it has been possible to convey food to the starving people, prior to this the old Indian

tradition held true. "When the rains fail twice, the people must die."

Schwartz, the celebrated German missionary, who labored in India for over forty years, was by his foresight the means of providing food during a three years' famine

The present distress in India is due to a complete failure of the rains, following several seasons of partial failure and

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The Subject for Study for June is India, see articles and programme.

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