HINDOO MYTHOLOGY

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ANONYMOUS

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POPULARLY TREATED:

BEING AN EPITOMIZED DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS HEATHEN DEITIES ILLUSTRATED ON THE SILVER SWAMI TEA SERVICE,

PRESENTED AS A MEMENTO OF HIS VISIT TO INDIA

TO

H. R. H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G., G.C.S.I.

BY

His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda.

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INTRODUCTION.

In the preparation of the following pages, it has been considered desirable to class the various subjects under the particular heads of which they form a part;—namely, Siva the destroyer, Vishtnoo the preserver, and Brahma the creator. The difficulty in comprehending the various deities, contingent upon the many existing inconsistencies, not only of their respective titles, but also of the orthography of the names, has in a measure been met, by the insertion, under the same headings, of the different names appertaining to each *Swami*, together with the different modes of spelling the names. Should the perusal of these few pages excite a desire for further knowledge regarding the multifarious deities comprised in the Hindoo Pantheon, a study of "Moore's Hindoo Mythology," and the "Vishnu Puranas, translated by H. H. Wilson, Esq.," from whence many of the following particulars have been gathered, is calculated to afford much information relative to the subjects so briefly treated herein.

F. W. E.

SIVA *or* SIVEN.

Siva generally ranks as the highest deity although sometimes credited with a less exalted rank in the Hindoo Pantheon. He personifies destruction or reproduction, has neither beginning nor end, and is without outward form; but is the distinguished possessor of four hands and arms, and has a centre eye placed in a perpendicular position in the forehead. He is usually represented riding on a bull, the emblem of divine justice, but occasionally appears in a standing posture, holding in one hand an antelope, and in the others are placed variously a trident, a boar's tusk, a rosary, a human skull, &c. A tiger's skin is wrapped around his loins, and the hide of an elephant furnishes him with a cloak. He is decorated with serpents, and garlands of skulls, bones, and the eyes of fishes. This deity is supposed to have once appeared as a mendicant in the Taruka forest. The wives of certain devotees resident there, fell in love with him and lost their virtue. Their lords greatly incensed, exerting their supernatural powers for the de-

struction of Siva, dug a pit from which issued a tiger which he slew and wrapped the skin round his loins; a deer followed, which he picked up and retained in his left hand; next a red hot iron bar, which he also seized and used as a weapon; then serpents, which he caught and hung about his person. He is likewise believed to have accomplished the destruction of an Asura who had obtained from Brahma a grant of victory over all gods, except Siva. He appeared in the form of an elephant, and forthwith proceeded to employ his strength, pursuing several Munis into a Siva temple, when the god rushed upon him; and after killing him, he stripped off his hide and threw it over his shoulders.

——:o:——

VEERABUTHREER, VEERABUTHREERSAWMY
or
VIRA BAHDRA.

Veerabuthreer.—Considerable variation exists in the accounts relative to the birth of this divinity. Some say that he sprung fully armed from Siva's central