

all times have had a sort of veneration for this first of animals. The ancients considered the elephant as a prodigy, a miracle of Nature, and he is in reality her greatest effort; they have attributed to him without hesitation, intellectual qualities and moral virtues.

Pliny, Ælian, Solinus, Plutarch, and other more modern authors, have even given to this animal rational faculties, a natural innate religion, the observation of a daily worship, such as that of the sun and moon, the use of ablution before adoration, a spirit of divination, piety towards heaven and their fellow creatures whom they assist at their deaths; and after their decease, express their regret by tears, and cover them with earth. The Indians, prepossessed with the opinion of the metempsychosis, are to this day persuaded, that a body so majestic as that of the elephant cannot be animated but by the soul of a great man, or a king. They respect at Siam, * Laos, and Pegu, white elephants

* The white elephant, so much respected in India, and who has been the cause of so many wars, is very small and wrinkled with age. He is attended by several mandarins who are appointed to take care of him, and his victuals is presented to him in large golden vessels; his apartment is very magnificent, and gilt all round. At about a league from the country-