

The area is rich in rubies, which are chiefly mined in Upper Burma, as well as in sapphires, gold, and jade. Petroleum occurs in the Valley of the Irawadi, and coal is worked in Upper Burma and North-East Tongking. On account of the wild nature of the country, the district where Tongking, Siam, and Burma adjoin is almost independent, and constitutes the Shan States.

**The Lowlands.**—The great rivers of Indo-China are much impeded by rapids, the best waterway being the Irawadi, which is navigable for some distance north of Mandalay. Boats can ascend the Songkoi to the Chinese frontier, and the Mekong nearly to the point where it forms the



AN ELEPHANT HAULING TEAK LOGS.

boundary of Siam. All the rivers are loaded with sediment, with which they have built great deltas, and are subject to floods at the season of the south-west Monsoon.

These floods are utilized in growing rice, which is the chief export of the area, and forms with fish the main diet of the inhabitants. The fish are not only caught in the sea, but also in the rivers and lakes, especially in the great Lake of Cambodia, which is connected with the Mekong River. Much of the fish is preserved with salt, obtained by evaporation from inland saline swamps and from lagoons round the coast. In many parts the coasts are fringed with mangroves, forests of bamboo and palms.