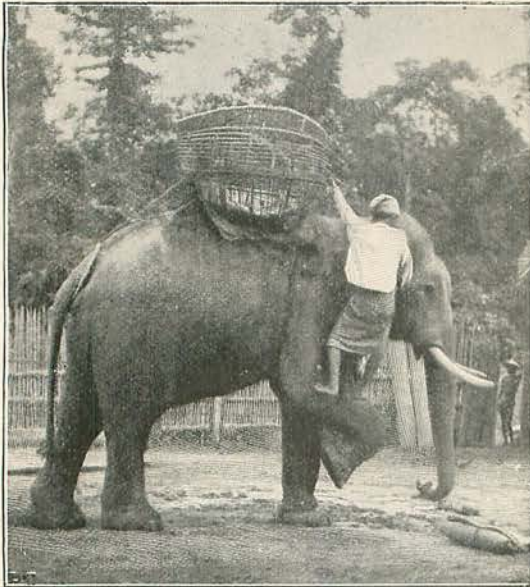


Elephants at Work.

BY L. S. LEWIS.

O all intents and purposes, the working elephants of Burmah, Siam, and India are trained labourers of enormous strength, and frequently possessing far more intelligence than their mahouts, or so-called drivers.



ELEPHANT ASSISTING HIS MAHOUT TO MOUNT.
From a Photo. by Watts & Skeen, Rangoon.

Thanks to the courtesy of Messrs. Duncan Ewing and Co., of Liverpool, we are enabled to reproduce a very interesting set of photographs illustrating work in the teak forests and saw-mills of Burmah, more particularly the operations of Messrs. Macgregor and Co., of Rangoon.

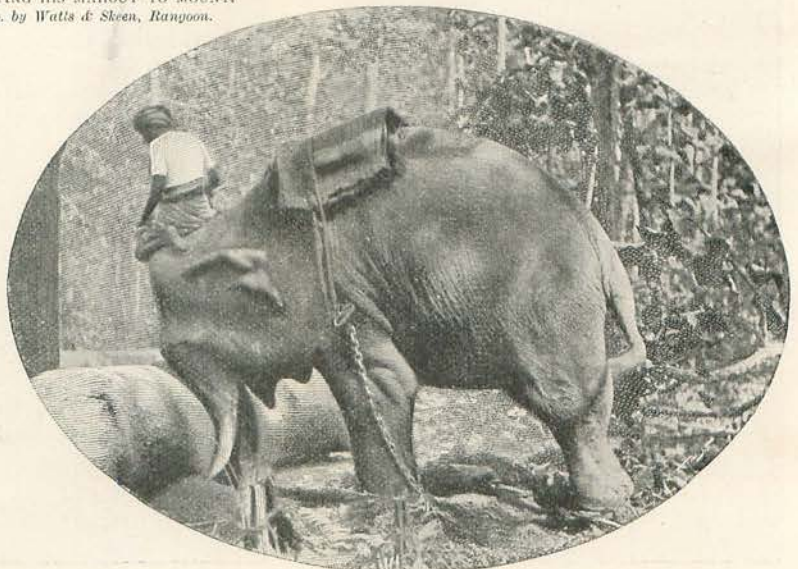
The first photo. shows at a glance how the mahout mounts. At the

word of command the elephant's right foreleg is lifted, and with this he literally swings his mahout up into position. For this and other photos., as well as for much information concerning the elephants of Northern Siam, we are greatly indebted to Mr. Keith Anstruther, of Mitcham, who for many years managed vast interests in Siam.

The next photo. shows an elephant rolling a huge log through the forest with his head and tusks. When the clearing is reached the great brute will be harnessed to the log, and will drag it down to the river. Great rafts of teak-logs are floated down to Moulmein and Rangoon, where they are received and dealt with by other elephants, the mere recital of whose daily labours would cause the uninformed to gasp with incredulity.

In all cases the teak forests are leased from the Government, and all felling operations are conducted under official supervision. Messrs. Macgregor's lease was granted by King Thebaw.

The teak trees are first "girdled"—*i.e.*, a circular strip of bark is cut out at the butt; and then the tree is left about two years to die, before being cut down. Girdling also prevents illicit felling. About the wood itself we cannot say



ROLLING A LOG THROUGH THE FOREST.



TWO "TUSKERS" TAKING A LOG TO THE SAW-MILLS.

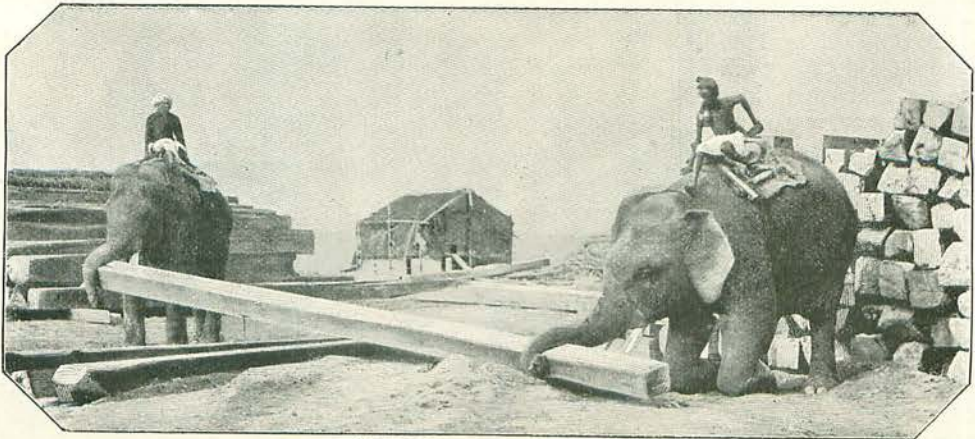
much, owing to lack of space. That it deserves its name of "king of woods," however, will be evident from the fact that it is extensively used in battle-ships, railway carriages, and great public buildings. And it is expensive, costing as much as five shillings per cubic foot retail in London.

When the trimmed and branded logs reach Rangoon, they are received by working elephants, who go to meet them, so to speak, and land them dexterously, afterwards conveying them to the saw-mills. The next photo. shows two powerful "tuskers" negotiating a big log; they work together admirably, and scarce need the least direction from their mahouts.

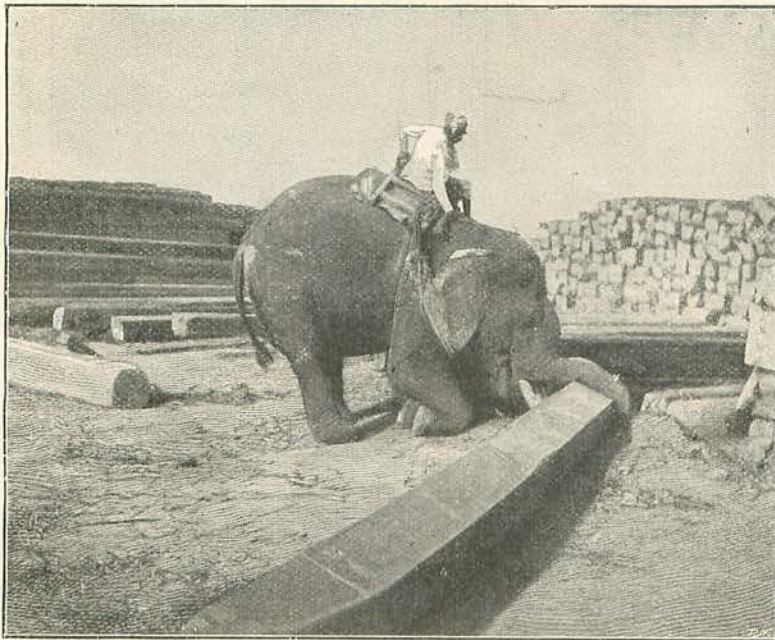
Messrs. Macgregor own about 130 trained

elephants. The males, or "tuskers," who lift the logs, are worth from £100 to £200; but the females, who drag only, fetch but about half the price of a full-grown tusker. The elephants in the saw-mills of Rangoon are fed on "paddy" (rice in the husk) and coarse elephant grass. Young animals are twenty-five years of age when they begin serious work, and they live to be over 100. At the age of seventy a working elephant is in his prime; he can then lift with his tusks a log weighing half a ton, or drag one weighing three tons.

We next see two fine elephants engaged in stacking the squared logs, after these have come from the saw-mills. Observe that the great log has been placed see-saw fashion, to



"TOO BIG FOR ONE TO TACKLE."



"NOT QUITE NEAR ENOUGH TO THE STACK."

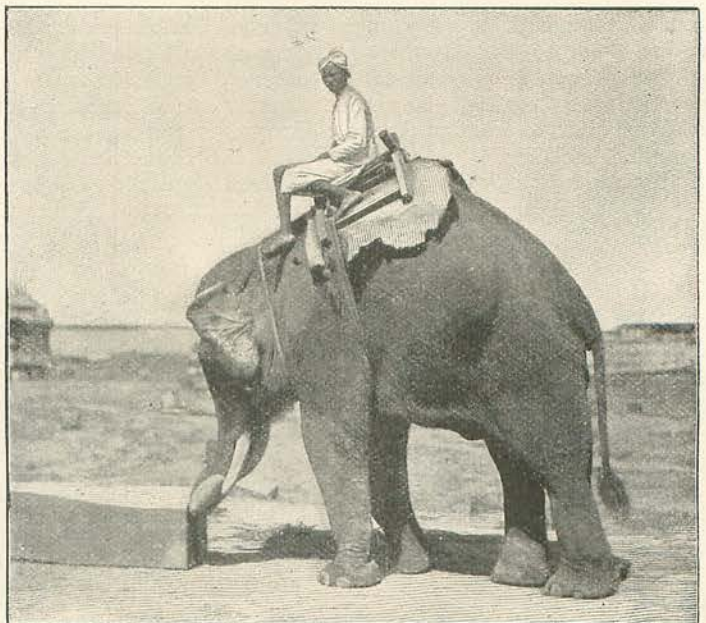
this illustration. He has brought his log near the stack, and is picking up one end to place it on top. He finds he has not brought it quite near enough, however. Like the skilled labourer that he is, he requires no orders from the foreman above him. He calculates the distance with his big eye. "Only another little shove is needed." He walks round to the end of the log, applies his trunk and tusks thereto, and gives a mighty push; see him doing this in the photograph.

allow the workers to get their trunks round the ends. When lifted, the log rests on the tusks, and is held in position by the trunk. Other elephants actually feed the circular-saws in the mill, and so marvellous is their intelligence that an astute little tusker was once observed to cease the pressure on his log, withdraw it anxiously, and then offer another part to the revolving saw, which was formerly going crookedly through the log.

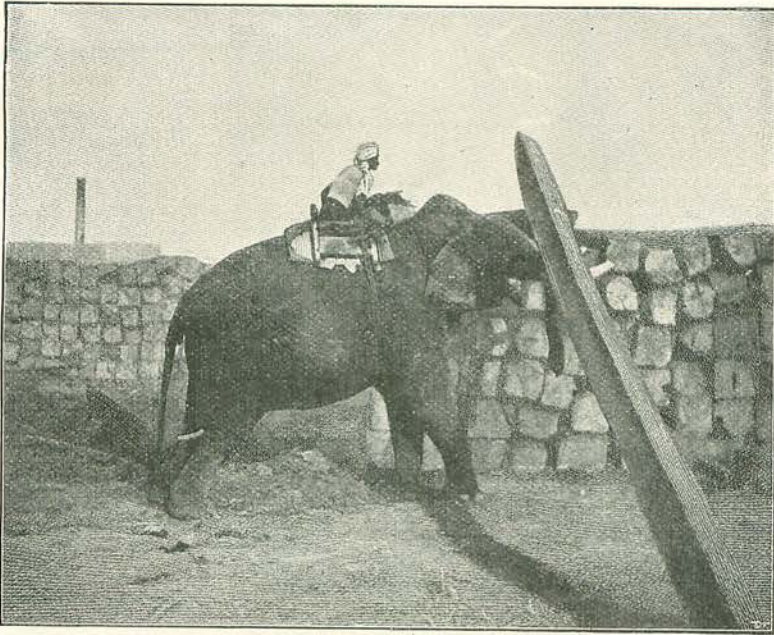
It sounds strange to say that these elephants are very human, but it conveys exactly what we mean. We are assured that at the sound of the dinner-bell, the saw-mill elephants will instantly drop their logs and scamper off, screaming with glee at the welcome respite. They will refuse absolutely to tackle a log which they consider too heavy, but if the mahout insists they may possibly call one of their mates to lend a "hand."

The stacking of the squared logs is wonderfully interesting to witness. Look at the elephant in

Once more he goes back to judge the distance. "Just right." He next places one end of his log on the stack, as is also seen in the photo., and then goes to the other end on the ground. This, too, is lifted and the whole log pushed home triumphantly, in the manner shown by the photo. opposite.



"JUST ONE MORE SHOVE."



PLACING THE END ON THE STACK.

In pulling a stack to pieces, or relieving a jam of logs in a flooded creek, the elephants pick out and remove the "key-log" with an intelligence that is absolutely astounding. The key-log is, of course, that one which, when pulled out, eases and loosens the whole stack.

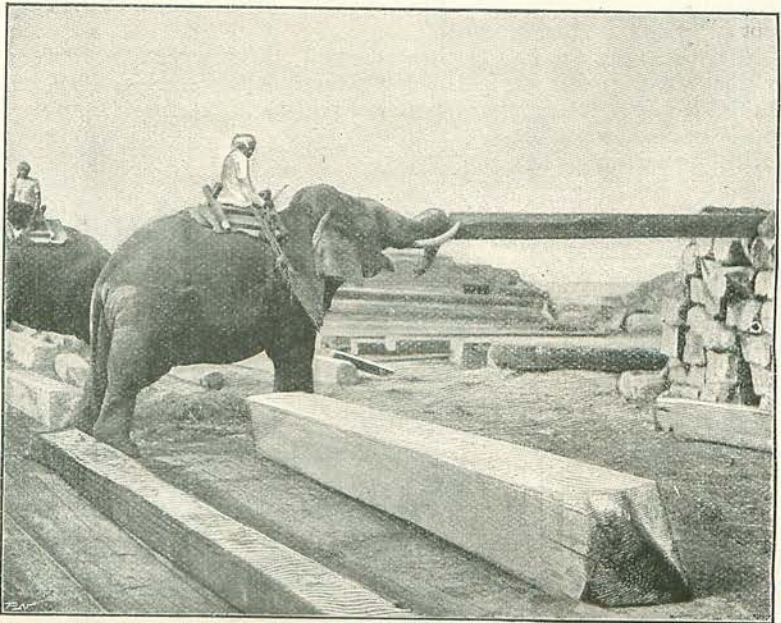
Although appearing to the uninitiated veritable monuments of innocence and docility, these workers are amazingly tricky. They don't need a trade union, every elephant being very well able to look after his own interests. A heavy trailing chain is sometimes fixed to elephants that are turned loose to feed in the jungle at night; this is in order that wanderers may be traced by the trail left by the chain in the jungle. Well, it has been known that when an

elephant has "made up his mind" to bolt, *he has carefully gathered up the tell-tale chain and carried it for miles on his tusks!*

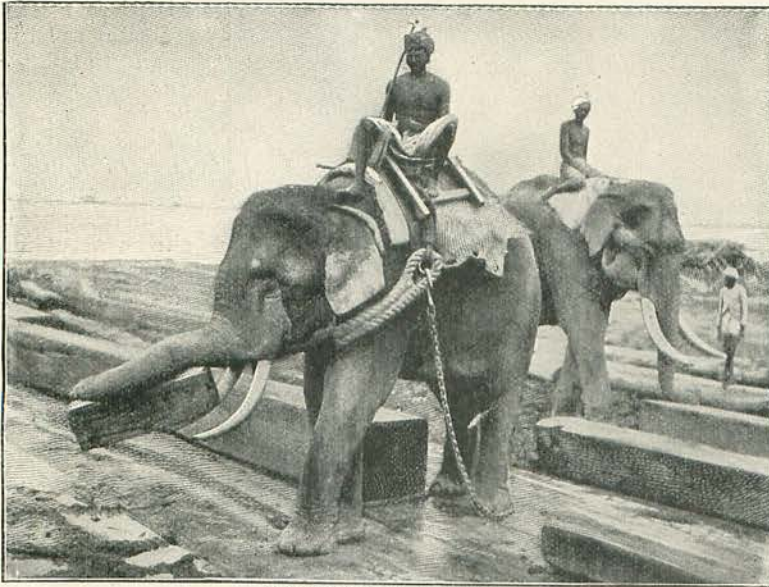
The next photo. shows a tusker carrying a short end of a log. Notice how it is kept in position on his tusk. These elephants are both timid and delicate. They are mightily careful about crossing a rustic wooden bridge, and always test the structure with their trunks before venturing on it. They are

dreadfully afraid of ponies, which latter are compelled by Siamese law to give place to elephants, and get out of their way on all occasions.

The elephants work three days and then rest three days; more work would break their big hearts. In the Lao States of Northern Siam elephantine invalids receive



PUSHING HOME.



HOW SHORT LOGS ARE CARRIED.

elephants, which, belled and hobbled, have been turned loose in the jungle overnight to feed. The elephants, be it observed, are no expense when working in the forest; they don't need stabling, and they find their own food.

Every driver knows the bell of his own elephant—when it is on. Artful beasts, with a sudden antipathy to work, have been known to remove their bells altogether, and

nearly all medicine *through the eyes*. "After a long day's work," says Mr. Keith Anstruther, "I have seen pills made principally of chillies rubbed into the eyes of a tired elephant. He instantly pulled himself together, brightened up wonderfully, and ate his food with immense gusto." As anyone knows who has ever been to the court of a native Asiatic prince, the lives of some elephants are cast in very pleasant places. We allude to the elephants kept for State pageants.

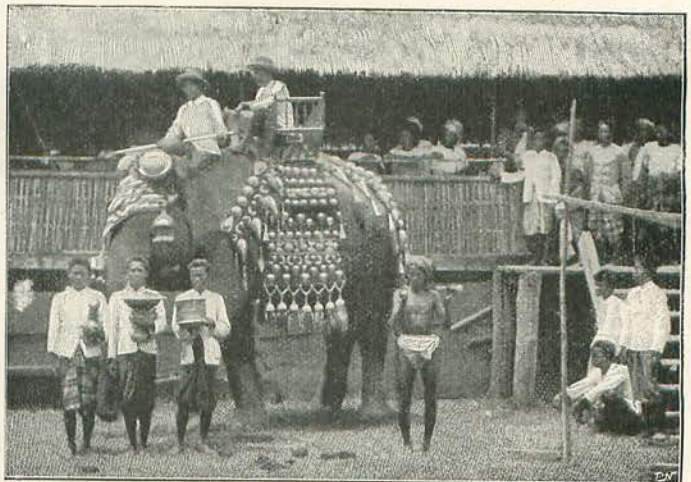
Now, here we see a Lao elephant dressed in what we may call Bank Holiday attire. He is decked out for some great festival, and is resplendent in glittering bosses of gilded metal.

In the Lao States, by the way, the whole work of the tree-felling, etc., is given out to native and other contractors, the great timber merchants "taking over" the logs at the river's bank. Many of these contractors own over 100 elephants, and employ a great number of Kamook labourers from Luang Prabang.

The Kamooks of the Lao States go forth long before daylight to find their

then either run away or hide themselves. One elephant was vainly sought for days in every direction, only to be found at length in a clump of bamboos not a hundred yards from the camp. There he had remained quietly, listening to the cursings of the search parties who went forth to scour the country, and coming out at night to feed.

Each elephant has a mahout or driver and a footman, the work of the latter being to fix the chain in the *tamook* or hole drilled in the log. We next see a couple of elephants loading teak-logs on to some railway trucks. The scene is a siding on the Assam Railways and Trading Company. A kind of inclined

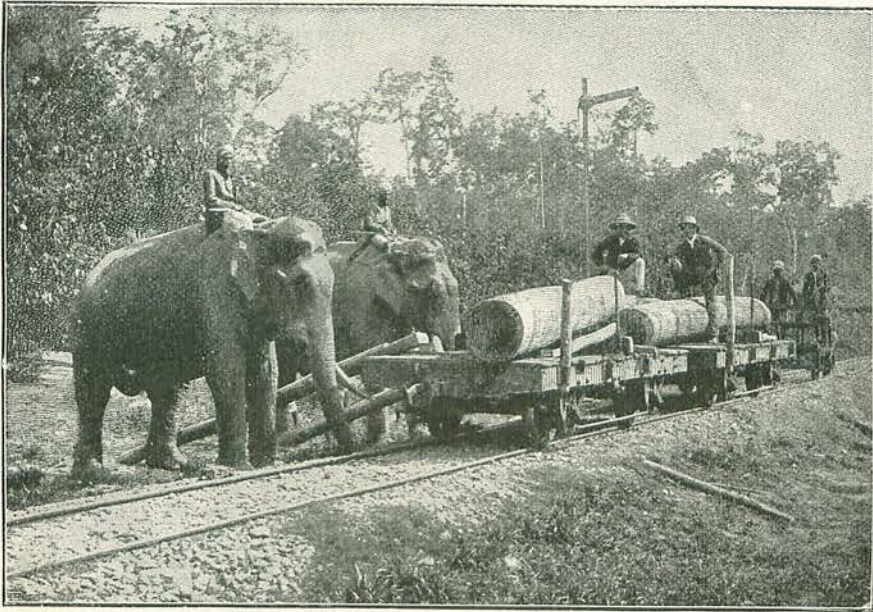


From a Photo. by] A STATE ELEPHANT IN FESTIVAL DRESS. [Watts & Sheen, Rangoon.

plane has been formed of two stout planks, and up these the great log is being skilfully rolled by the intelligent comrades.

Great care has to be taken of these splendid brutes. In Siam they have a bath

This brings us back to the elephant's tricks. Some will sway from side to side, inclining over at an extraordinary angle, so as to throw off the hated mahout. And once this trick is learnt the elephant is



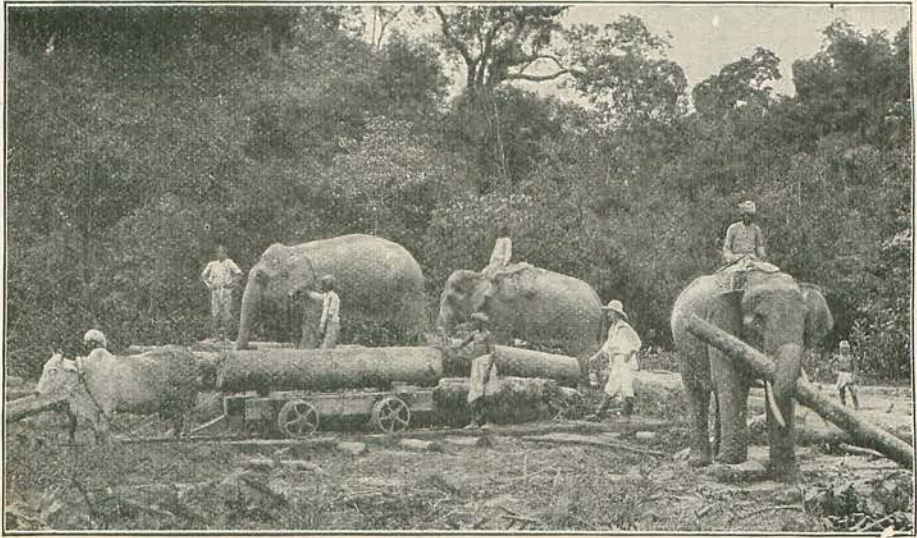
LOADING LOGS ON THE ASSAM RAILWAY.

every morning, and are humoured in every way. For example, they dislike to drag a log, say, three miles without stopping, so they are allowed to have their own way. They drag the log three-quarters of a mile, then leave it, and drag another the same distance, eventually proceeding another stage with all the logs.

The drivers carry an iron hook, and occasionally use it far too freely. Mr. Anstruther has seen a mahout drive his implement so far into an elephant's forehead that it could not be dragged out again without great difficulty. No wonder the "butcher's bill" is so considerable, both in elephants and human beings. The vicious elephant has a simple way of dealing with his driver, when he makes up his sagacious mind to put an end to that gentleman. He merely lays him on the ground and puts his foot on him, using his tusks but very rarely. Nor is the mahout safe when on the elephant's back. Mr. Anstruther has known a vicious monster to extend his trunk backwards, pick off the driver by his hair, and crush the life out of him on the ground.

practically no more use. Another powerful brute, who had dragged logs for years, one day found out that if only he stepped back sharply he could rid himself of every vestige of harness. It was magnificently simple, and the elephant wondered he hadn't thought of it before. Better late than never, however, and the beast never dragged another log thereafter. He had to be used as a travelling elephant, and in that way he certainly became very useful, his enormous body making a regular road through the densest forest.

The following illustration shows some fine elephants removing timber for tea-boxes in Assam. This photo. was kindly lent by the Planters' Stores and Agency Company (Limited), of 1, Great Winchester Street. The logs are brought to the saw-mills, and there cut up into small pieces suitable for the making of tea-chests. Fancy elephant police settling an elephant strike! It seems that when one of the animals refuses to work, a monstrous tusker of great reputation for decency and steadiness is selected to bring his recalcitrant brother to reason. The persuasion is essentially of a material kind, being mainly



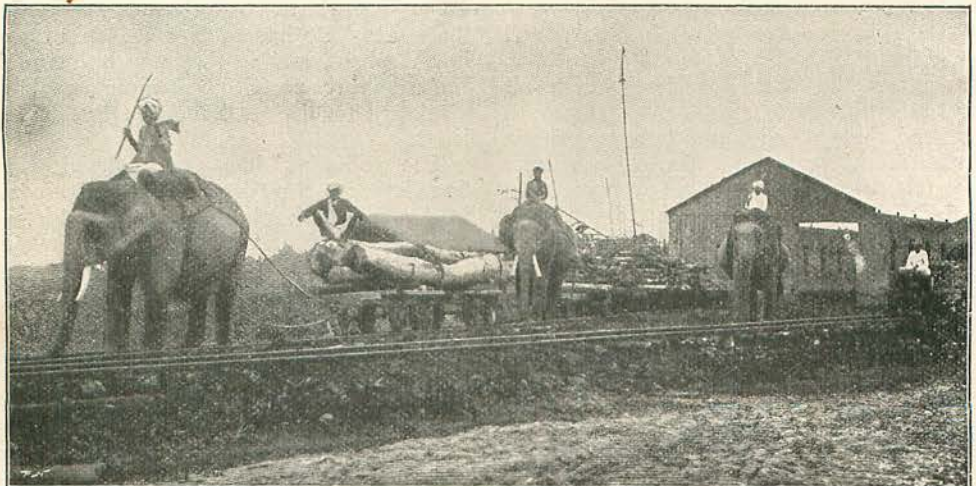
BRINGING LOGS FOR TEA-BOXES.

conducted at the point of the tusk. It is, we are assured, a beautiful sight to see one elephant compelling another to go on with his work—not to be a fool, and so on. Occasionally the great animals fight among themselves; they may be heard screaming and trumpeting in the forest at night. They are much addicted to biting off one another's tails. When one elephant does succeed in getting rid of his hobbles, with the view of getting clear away, he has to be shot in the knee so as to facilitate his capture.

We next see elephants acting as railway engines; this photo. also shows a siding of the Assam Railways and Trading Company, and the elephants have to haul the trucks

(which they themselves have loaded) on to the main line. Much depends upon the mahout. Up-country in Siam there was once a magnificent elephant who had been driven for years by one mahout. The two understood each other perfectly. They conversed, so to speak, in low tones all day, the elephant performing prodigies of labour. The mahout died and was succeeded by a brutal, loud-voiced Kamook. What did the elephant do? Well, he did nothing. No power on earth could make him do a stroke of work at the bidding of the new-comer, and when the latter persisted one day, he was cast off and literally flattened out.

Skilful mahouts earn much extra money



ELEPHANTS AS RAILWAY ENGINES.



AN ELEPHANT POST.

by working vicious elephants. Ordinarily the pay is five or six rupees a month, but as much as fifteen rupees has been paid to a man who succeeded in inducing a vicious beast to do its daily work. In such cases it often happens that the elephant will refuse to assist the mahout to mount in the way hereinbefore shown. It then becomes necessary to mount the vicious one from the back of another elephant.

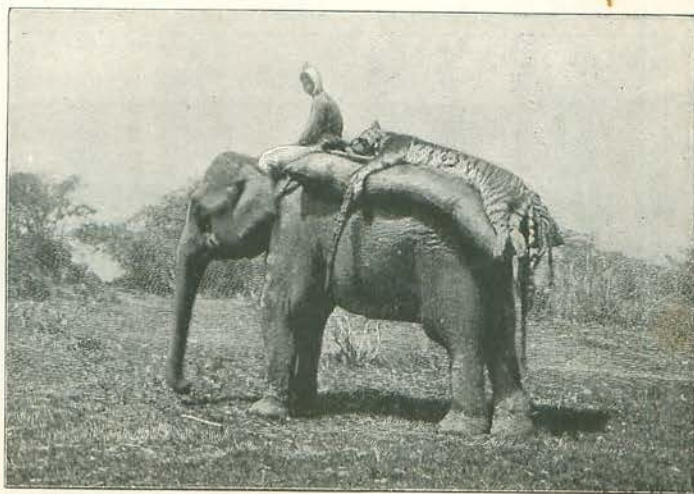
Next is seen an elephant calling for letters at a post and telegraph office in one of the tea districts of Assam. The photo. was taken during the rainy season (July-September), when the roads become raging torrents.

Hard-working elephants are as fond of a bit of sport as anyone, and the form of sport they love best is "running amok" in a quiet village. Often in the Lao States there will be a terrible commotion in a peaceful village; a vicious or playful elephant is at large, tearing through rice-fields and plantations, and knocking down dwellings like nine-pins. The village fathers beat their tom-toms, and the uproar is great. So is the damage done, and the brute's owner has a pretty bill to pay, *plus* the value of the depredator himself, who probably has to be shot.

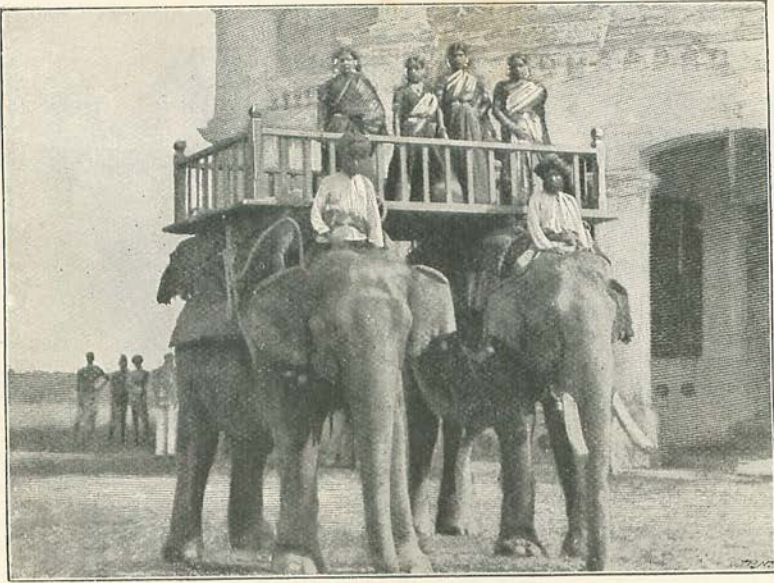
Besides working and travelling elephants, there are also hunting elephants. When an extensive "shoot" is organized in India one of the very

first considerations is the elephants, on whose backs are placed the howdahs, or towers, wherefrom wealthy Britons take pot-shots at big game. Our next photo., which shows a hunting elephant bringing home the dead body of a tiger (shot in Assam), was taken by the Hon. Sydney Parker, to whom we are indebted for permission to reproduce it.

Here are a couple of elephants supporting what is virtually a peripatetic theatre. At a recent wedding in the family of His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore, a novel feature was introduced into the marriage procession. It consisted of a large platform, more than 12ft. square, supported by two large elephants. During the procession—which was by torchlight—the platform, gorgeously decorated, was occupied by a number of gaily dressed nautch girls, who danced at intervals along the route. The



A HUNTING ELEPHANT—BRINGING HOME A DEAD TIGER.



A TRAVELLING THEATRE.

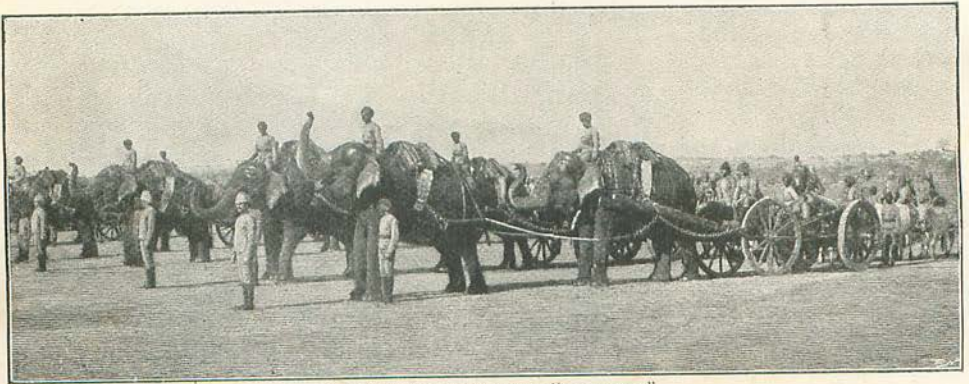
whole "travelling ballet" was illuminated by means of dazzling Bengal lights. This is said to have been the first time such an experiment with elephants has ever been tried, and it shows to what perfection these animals can be trained; for had they shown the least disposition to go in different directions it would have been more than awkward for the *corps de ballet* above. We are indebted for this interesting photo. to Mr. Chas. H. Payne, of Sefton Hall, West Cliff, Bournemouth.

In Ceylon elephants may be seen acting as masons' labourers. The mason himself will have a huge block of stone ready, with

mortar on top, when up comes the elephant with another big block. This the animal will lay carefully on the prepared stone; and then, stepping back to see if it is straight, he will probably come again and give a dab here and a pull there, with tusk and trunk, until the block is perfectly in position.

The last photo. reproduced shows the elephants of an Indian gun-battery saluting. The photo. was taken by a lady, who writes:—

"I managed to secure this one morning as they were returning from drill. The officers in command asked me if I would like to see the elephants salute, and at the word of command up went all their trunks!"



AN ELEPHANT GUN BATTERY "SALUTING."