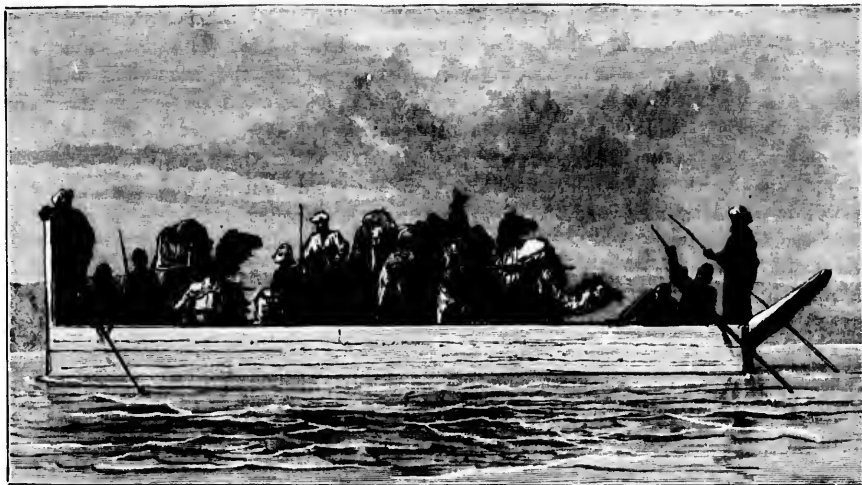


and the Turkoman country nearly 180,000—these figures being, however, in every case little better than estimates, or even guesses. The only inhabited or fertile part of Khiva is that watered by the irrigating canals along the left bank of the Oxus, not far from where it falls into the Sea of Aral. It yields grain and fruit in abundance, and the people produce considerable quantities of inferior silk from the silkworms which are reared here in great numbers. But the trade of the Khanate is almost entirely in the hands of the Russians, who have a flotilla on the Sea of Aral, and have of late made efforts to make the Amu Darya, or Oxus, navigable on to the borders of Afghanistan.\* The Uzbeks, Turkomans, Kirghiz, and Persians also carry on



CROSSING THE SYR-DARYA.

some commerce by means of camel caravans, which cross the Steppes to Orenburg and Astrakhan, and to Krasnovodsk, on the Caspian, where there is a Russian port through which goods are introduced into the country. But in this we have no share. Trade with Khiva is strictly confined to the subjects of the Czar, whose vassal the Khan is. For the present he still maintains a semblance of authority in the town of Khiva, situated on one of the canals drawn from the Oxus, and which prior to the Russian conquest was one of the most infamous of the Central Asian nests of the slave trade. The greater number of these captives were Persians, either taken in raids by the Turkomans, or obtained directly by the robber clans of the Khiva sovereign. But there were also Russians and Russian subjects among those who had been kidnapped on the shores of the Caspian. This circumstance first brought the Khan into collision with the Czar's troops, and finally led to the invasion of 1872, which lost him

\* Wood: "The Shores of Lake Aral," (1876); Morgan: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XLVIII. (1878), p. 301, &c.