

Yet nothing was known of the existence of the important village of Jupogha previous to 1895, for the simple reason that, like Kan-arik and Merket, and a host of other places, it lies off the main high-road.

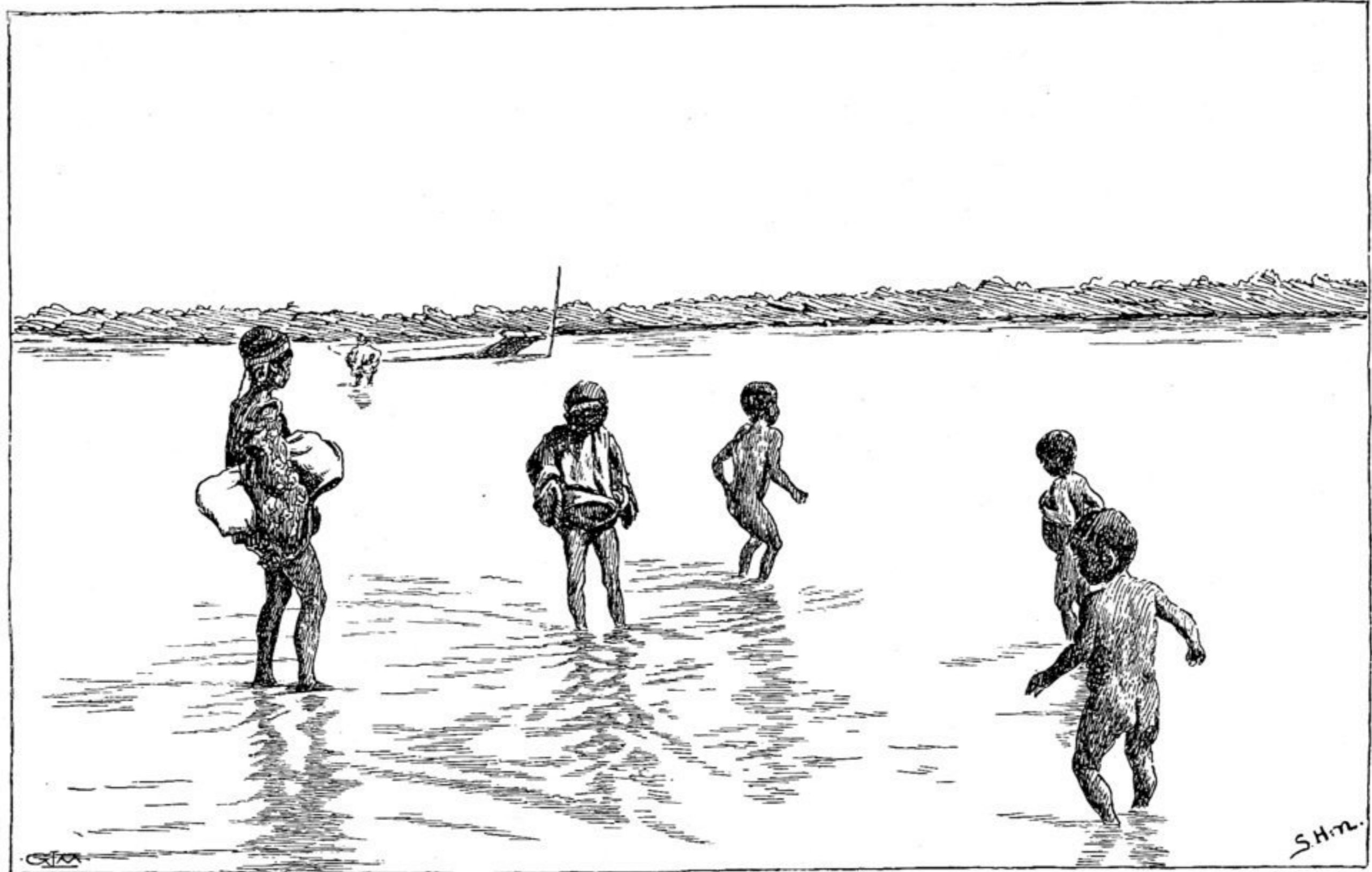


Fig. 264. CHILDREN (LAJLIK).

In the course of my travels through that country, I have habitually noted down the names of all the villages, not only along the routes by which I have actually travelled, but also along the cross-roads and side-roads leading from them. In this way I have been able to pick up a very great number of names; and yet, I am quite aware, a great number has escaped my observation, for the simple reason that they were not known to my informants themselves. In comparison with the routes I have travelled over, those I have had no opportunity to travel over are more unfortunate in the matter of geographical names, and consequently present a barer appearance on my general map of East Turkestan. This does not however by any means prove that there really is a smaller number of villages dotted along them. All the same I think it probable, that the only one of the great caravan-routes which I have not traversed, namely the road from Maral-baschi *viâ* Ak-su, Baj, and Kutschar to Korla, really does not possess a great abundance of inhabited places; at all events long stretches of the road lead through uninhabitable tracts of desert.

What I desire to say is that at the present moment it is quite impossible to state precisely, how many villages there are in East Turkestan. During the journeys I carried out in 1894—96 I took note of 985 villages, and this covers the principal highways and the most densely peopled districts. Hence I may safely say, that this number contains all the more important places, and that the places which are not