



Fig. 2. Getting the flottilla ready at Konche

All the river baggage, including two months' provisions for fifteen men, was loaded at dusk onto three carts, which were to be driven to Konche during the night with a report to the *amban*. A fourth cart would convey two tents, our beds and the kitchen equipment by the same route the next morning.

At daybreak the members of the boat-party said farewell to the motor-expedition. The latter was to turn northward and proceed to a familiar bend of the river, Sai-cheke, where the two groups were to meet. It was impossible to fix an exact time for the meeting; our routes, both by land and by water, were too uncertain for that. The party that arrived first was to await the coming of the other.

FITTING OUT THE FLOTILLA

At the place of embarkation at Konche now lay six large canoes and as many smaller ones, each made fast to a paddle stuck into the sloping bank. There were also a whole pile of planks, as long as the breadth of two canoes, and a number of poles of the same length.

The *amban* introduced the ten *suchi*, or boatmen.

The canoe, the ordinary means of transport everywhere on the Tarim, from the region just below Yarkend to the river's end, is cut with axes out of a single poplar trunk. A middle-sized canoe is about four meters long, and so narrow that a man can sit in the bottom with legs outstretched and hands supported on the bulwarks, but with no room to turn sideways. The craft is round, like the poplar trunk from which it is made, and its balance in the water is therefore precarious. Its natural