

ever. The branch which comes off at Kara-tschatsch divides in the district of Tongusluk, the right branch being that beside which we travelled for so long, while the left branch joins the Jaman-ilek. The latter branch appears to be a double stream, or to possess in its lower course a divided bed, for although the confluence usually is at Tarascha-kotan, in the season of high-flood it takes place at Tongusluk. Formerly the stream used to enter the Karaunelik-köl, but that lake has dried up since the river ceased to discharge into it. The Jaman-ilek is excessively winding, and appears to be one of the rivers which is on the point of disappearing. It still carries water, it is true, though only a very small quantity. We again crossed this stream at Ävulluni-toghu, a district distinguished by a magnificent forest of tall, handsome trees. The name I have last cited indicates that a man named Ävul built here a dam (*togh*) for the purpose of procuring water to irrigate his fields near the river. Next comes the lonely homestead of Atta Kullunu-ottogho, buried in a poplar-grove. To the south we once more had glimpses of the poplar woods beside the Kara-



Fig. 380. NATIVE WOMEN.

tschatsch branch and the canal of Kosch-arik. We left the Jaman-ilek on the right at the homestead of Chodschem Kullunu-uji; its situation, as well as its age, which unquestionably is greater than that of the Tarim, are indicated by the belt of forest we saw in the distance. This same stream is again crossed by the great highway at the *örtäng*, or »rest-house» (caravanserai), of Dschan Kullu. At the present time the Jaman-ilek appears to issue into the Kok-ala at Tarascha-kotan, but it is doubtful whether its feeble current ever manages to get

as far as that. Just above our headquarters a little canal goes off and turns a mill at Tägirmän; while immediately below it is a cluster of tamarisk-mounds known as Mahmet-tschekan-dung.

The following days were spent at our headquarters camp at Jangi-köl, in making preparations for our next excursion. Meanwhile an unexpected change took place in the weather. The first real *kara-buran* of the year sprang up on 25th February from the east-north-east, bringing with it clouds of drift-sand and dust. We lost sight of the stupendous dune-wall which overhangs the right bank of the Tarim, although it was not more than two or three hundred meters distant, so thick was the dust-haze. This was unquestionably the signal for the mighty dunes to begin their annual westward march. On the morning of the 26th it began to snow pretty thickly, not in flakes, but in round, hard pellets, which rattled audibly on the tent-cloth. The ground, which had of late been quite bare, was again covered with a continuous sheet of white, though in the afternoon, when the sun peeped out, the snow melted in all exposed situations. I have frequently observed that, when there is here a downfall of snow, it generally follows immediately after a storm from the