

or the other town. I content myself with merely mentioning at the end of this chapter a few of them *en passant*, such as Kuropatkin, Pjevtsoff, and Grenard, whom I regard as being the most reliable. Most other travellers quote more or less at random any figures that happen to be given them in the towns they visit; consequently there is no need to cite them. For some of the larger towns I have retained the figures which were communicated to me verbally by Consul-general Petrovskij, who in virtue of his official position as the agent of the Russian government in that country, and owing to his many years of residence in it, is in a better position than anybody else to have formed a definite and trustworthy opinion in these matters. Taking the whole of East Turkestan together Petrovskij estimated its total population at 2,000,000, which agrees excellently well with the result at which I arrived by estimating on independent lines. By East Turkestan I mean only the lowlands, and consequently I exclude those parts of the basin which are situated amongst the mountains. Karaschahr and its district are not therefore counted in this enumeration, and the country of Lop is taken to be the extreme boundary in the east.



Fig. 262. MEN (TSCHIMEN).

Of the inhabitants of East Turkestan by far the greater part, or about 75 per cent., live in the villages, the remainder living partly in the towns and partly scattered as shepherds through the forests that accompany the rivers. Let us consider first the rural or village population. In the first place it is difficult to attach any clear and precise meaning to the term »village», for the so-called villages vary far more in respect of size than do the few towns which the country boasts of. While, for instance, Jarkent is twenty-five times bigger than Maral-baschi, Kan-arik is fully 120 times bigger than Jas-julghun. Add to this the difficulty of determining where