

to draw the line between the village and the »country». For instance Maral-baschi is regarded as a town, although it is a good deal less than the village of Kan-arik; but then this last is, properly speaking, a complex of more or less scattered villages with several bazaars. Again, the name Jupogha is generally understood to indicate simply a single village, although in reality it embraces quite a large number of other villages scattered about the vicinity. And even more difficult is it to discriminate between the several villages when we reach the environs of the large towns. For example, there are some hundred villages between Jarkent and Karghalik, and I have myself enumerated more than three hundred villages belonging to the oasis



Fig. 263. WOMEN (ABDAL).

of Chotan. It is obvious that all such hurried enumerations can never be complete, for even though one gathers information from different persons belonging to different parts of the oasis, it is highly improbable that each will know the names of all its villages. Indeed we may be quite certain, that there are hundreds of East Turkestan villages which are as yet absolutely unknown even by name. My 1895—96 journey alone enabled me to record some 500 the very names of which had hitherto never been noted down. Yet for statistical purposes the mere knowledge of names will help us but little. A village like Abdal (now Jurt-tschapghan) is far better known than, say, Merket, and yet the former numbers its inhabitants by tens only, whereas the latter runs up to 4,000 souls. Before Pjevtssoff's journey nobody had heard of Merket, and I was the first European to visit the village in 1895. Previous to my journey Kan-arik was unknown, although it is far larger than such old well-known towns as Maral-baschi, Utsch-turfan, and Korla. The town of Tscher-tschen has been known ever since Marco Polo's journey, over 600 years ago, and several of the towns of East Turkestan are named in the old Chinese chronicles.