SUMMER RESORTS.

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

HOTEL CORNELL, MARYLAND AVE., 2D HOTEL FROM BEACH. Rooms, single or en suite, overlooking ocean. All conveniences. Service and cuisine unsurpassed. Summer rates—$10, $12.50, $15. Third season. jy23-17t,6

Avon Inn, Ocean end Va. ave., near Steel pier. Capacity, 200. Elevator; superior table; cool rooms. Special rates, $10 up wkly., $2 up daily. H. W. WILLIAMS. jy23-sa,Su,tu,th,30t,4

La Fontaine, Ky. ave. and Beach, center of all attractions. Large, airy rooms. Special rates, $8 to $12.50 wkly. Bklt. Superior table. S. J. KELLEY. jy21-14t,4

HOTEL SOTHERN, Virginia ave. and Beach. Fifth season under same liberal management. G. L. CAKE. jy21-10t,4

HOTEL NEW ENGLAND South Carolina ave. and the Beach. Private baths; elevator to street; fine porches, etc. Capacity, 350. Superior table. Booklet. jy20-30t,6 BRYAN & WILLIAMS.

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La Belle Inn, South Carolina ave. and Beach. Convenient to piers and all amusements. Rates, $1.50 day up. Special weekly. White service. Booklets. Write for rates. J. YOUNGBLOOD. jy15-30t,5

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SUMMER RESORTS.

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CITY OF ASKAHBAD

Capital of the Province of Trans-Caspia.

GREEN SPLOTCH ON DESERT

Fifteen Thousand Inhabitants; Garrison of 10,000.

WIDE AND SHADED STREETS

Strategically Situated as Regards Khiva and Persia—Apprehension by English of Russian Advance.

BY WILLIAM E. CURTIS.
Special Correspondence of The Star and the Chicago Record-Herald.

ASKAHBAD, Asia, June 20, 1910.

All Turkestan, like Gaul, is divided into three parts—the Khanate of Bokhara, which retains its former limits; the province of Trans-Caspia, which lies between Bokhara and the Caspian sea, and the province of Turkestan proper, which lies on the eastern boundary between Bokhara and China. Askahbad is the capital of the province of Trans-Caspia, the residence of the governor general and commander-in-chief of the military forces, and headquarters of the several branches of the civil and military administrations. The Russians have avoided the difficulty which has perplexed England in India, by concentrating both civil and military authority in a single head, which is supported by a cabinet or ministry and a large staff of civil and military officers, each having his own bureau and jurisdiction. The organization is similar to that in Poland, the Caucasus and other outlying provinces of the Russian empire. Civiliars are employed in the financial, auditing, post office, judicial and other departments where the duties are purely civil. The railway, the engineering works and similar technical branches of the government are under military control.

Local Home Rule.

The people of the towns and villages take care of themselves and have as much home rule as is practicable, the local government being organized on the regular Russian plan. Trans-Caspia is divided into several districts and each district into volosts. Each volost elects an elder, called an aksakal, who acts in an executive and a judicial capacity and is assisted in the administration of his office by representatives of the people chosen usually for their dignity and wisdom. The aksakal is a little czar in his own jurisdiction, and the government officials do not interfere with him so long as he does nothing to weaken their authority. The iron hand is hidden in a velvet glove.

The most important feature of the government is the management of the irrigation systems, because the life of the country depends upon the economical use of the water. Irrigation is looked after by an official called the mirab, and under him are special agents who turn on and turn off the water in the private ditches as it is needed. It is their duty to investigate and settle disputes between the farmers over the use of water, for nearly all the trouble between neighbors arises from a suspicion that one man is getting more than his share.

The police, called gens d'armes, are a separate organizations from the army and are under the control of their own officers, who report to the governor general and commander-in-chief. There are officers on every railway train, usually a captain or a lieutenant, or both, who exercise almost arbitrary sway so far as the passengers are concerned, and can put them off the train and send them to prison from any station, according to their judgment. These train officers have regular beats, covering distances from 250 to 300 miles, and a compartment is always reserved for them in the first-class coach.

Green Splotch on Desert.

Ashkabad is a splotch of green upon the desert—a city of about fifteen thousand inhabitants, in addition to a garrison of 10,000 soldiers living in enormous white barracks, one-story adobe buildings, and long rows of tents inclosed by mud walls, that have been whitewashed. The town covers a very large area, like all Russian settlements in Turkestan. The streets are very wide, and every one who settles here is allowed all the ground he wants, for there is plenty of room. Trans-Caspia is a big country and most of its surface is unoccupied.

The streets are wide and well shaded with trees. The railway station is hidden in a grove of locusts and mulberries, and for a wide area around the city are luxuriant gardens inclosed within mud walls.

In the center of the town is an obelisk erected in memory of the artillerymen who were killed at the massacre of Geok-Tepe and around the pedestal are planted several guns that were captured from the Afgans several years ago. The green domes of two big Russian churches arise above the greener boughs of the trees, and the gilt crosses upon their crests signify much to the people. The German element, from the Baltic provinces of Russia, have a Lutheran church of neat design, near the railway station, but there is no sign of a mosque or a synagogue, although the activity of the business quarter has attracted a large number of Persians and Jews.

Diversion for Military.

There is a neat museum, filled with military mementoes and specimens of natural history; there is a high school for boys and one for girls, and a military school in which young Turkomans, the sons of the chiefs and other men of importance, are educated for military careers. There are several newspapers printed in the Russian language, a theater, subsidized by the municipality for the diversion of army officers who are exiled here; a military club, numerous shops with attractive show windows, and various other features of a flourishing Russian city.

This leads me to remark that the government of the United States might find it profitable to imitate the Russian policy by furnishing more diversions for the officers and soldiers it sends to the Philippines.

The Russians act on the theory that contentment is necessary for the proper performance of military and civil duty, and to make their officers contented a good deal of money is expended for amusements. There is always a race course, a theater and a club for social purposes, and the government usually provides the land and the buildings.

Center of Fertile District.

Ashkabad is an ancient settlement, although it never had any particular importance, and it is in the center of a very fertile district and a prosperous population. An idea of the financial condition of the Turkoman may be judged from the official statistics relating to the Akhal district, an oasis about 200 miles long and 150 miles wide, which is well watered from a never-failing source of supply in the mountains of Persia. In this district, according to the latest returns, there are about 113,000 inhabitants, housed in villages and in 27,812 kibitkas, the circular tents or tepees used by the nomadic portion of the population. There are in this district 111,000 camels, 27,500 horses, 1,530,000 sheep and 160,000 other cattle. The tendency of the population is to settle down into fixed places of abode and increase the area of cultivated land, so far as the supply of water will permit. The government gives every encouragement to agriculture.

Ashkabad was selected as the capital of Trans-Caspia because of its highly strategical situation, regarding both Khiva to the north, and Persia to the south. Fine macadamized roads, twenty-four feet wide and of easy grades, so that artillery and army wagons can be hauled over them rapidly, have been constructed in both directions. That which runs southward to Persia reaches the two great pilgrim centers, Meshed and Sabzevar, and thence to the Persian gulf. Many of the towns and villages take care of themselves and have as much home rule as is practicable, the local government being organized on the regular Russian plan. Trans-Caspia is divided into several districts and each district into volosts. Each volost elects an elder, called an aksakal, who acts in an executive and a judicial capacity and is assisted in the administration of his office by representatives of the people chosen usually for their dignity and wisdom. The aksakal is a little czar in his own jurisdiction, and the government officials do not interfere with him so long as he does nothing to weaken their authority. The iron hand is hidden in a velvet glove.

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