

SUPERSTITION IS QUITE ABUNDANT IN GREEK CITIES

Ancient Fetishes Hamper Work of American Nurses in Athens.

BY MAJOR JAMES A. MILLS.

ATHENS, April 16.—American nurses in the Balkan countries have met with some curious customs and superstitions among the natives, particularly in the matter of the care of children. In their daily round of duties they have encountered all the evils of witchcraft, charm cures and weird beliefs which the centuries have handed down.

They have found it difficult to overcome these hoary, moss-grown traditions and "wisdom" of the ages. The methods of the medicine men of the North American Indians are not more fantastic than those employed by the untutored mothers of the Balkans.

Vital Point.

From the moment a baby is born the vital point in his life, as the mother sees it, is to protect him from the spirits of evil which hover over his cradle and follow him through the day, always seeking to do him harm, always hoping for their opportunity. Some of the means employed by Greek mothers to banish these sinister spirits are most extraordinary. The poor child has to endure many strange ceremonies before his parents feel at all sure of his future.

One method much in vogue is to place behind the baby a dab of mud. With this "charm" in position, the mother thinks, has nothing to fear. Nearly all the children brought to the American Red Cross clinic in Athens have this smear of mud on them. Only after frantic pleading on the nurse's part was this weird custom abandoned.

Nail Myth.

The finger nail myth is also much respected. The belief is that if a baby's nails are never cut and are permitted to grow pointed and long he will when he waxes his arms about scratch the face of the demon or thief and the demon disliking it will fly away and not possess himself of the baby's soul. The crust that lack of care and dirt forms upon a baby's head is the sign of such a frightening reverence. On his charmed presence and thickness some Balkan mothers believe depend many vital things. The cutting of the infant's teeth, the sureness of vision, the activity of his limbs, and most important of all, his intellect, rely entirely upon its preservation. When the American nurses go to the root of the belief they find that it is revolved about the old fear of the soft skull opening and exposing the brain.

Deep Seated.

So deep seated is the belief in evil that even at the solemn ceremony of Greek baptism the priest and the godmother exercise the demons by blowing their breath in the form of a cross over the baby and also about the room and all the doors and windows.



The Last Review at Potsdam

Prince Sigismund and other prominent Germans who attended the farewell services when the non-commissioned officers' school at Potsdam was abolished. The review took place in front of the statue of William I, who was the founder of the school.

MOVE TOWARD SECESSION IN MEXICO GAINS

List of Loyalists Published by Carranza Fails to Show Strength.

By United Press.

WASHINGTON, April 17.—Civil war throughout Mexico between the forces of Pres. Carranza and Gen. Alvaro Obregon, candidate for the Mexican presidency, may break out if the federal government proceeds

to suppress with military force the secessionist movement in Sonora, officials here feared today.

The Sonoran movement is primarily an Obregon demonstration against the Carranza government. Military intelligence officials here believed. They pointed out that Gov. De La Huerta of Sonora is a

supporter of Obregon for president and that Sonora is Obregon's native state. The Sonora revolt may enlist other Mexican states, they believe, and develop into an extensive revolution against Carranza with the object of making Obregon president.

Gen. Alvaro Obregon, candidate for the Mexican presidency, is understood to have been Carranza's

candidate for the presidency, but is believed to have been angered by the support Carranza gave Bonilla, former ambassador to the United States. Obregon was not among the army generals listed by the embassy as having assured allegiance to Carranza.

Among the gypsies that wander over the Balkans the work of the Red Cross nurses is more difficult. It will be necessary to give education and education to enable them to merely to begin to understand the idea of child welfare. For the moment "Kisim" and "Allah" rule their lives, will all fate, good or ill, and kill all initiative.

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