

place. We are apparently on the eve of great events. The spring is advancing rapidly, and hastens catastrophes. Our trust must be lively in Christ, for the end may overtake us with but short notice.

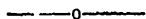
Of our health I can say, thank God, the best. My family is well. May God continue His favor towards us.

Awaiting your remarks and notice,

I remain, Dear Brethren,

Your fellow-laborer in Christ,

EPH. M. EPSTEIN.



INFANT BAPTISM IN THE GREEK CHURCH OF BITOLIA AND ANCIENT MACEDONIA.

All the services as well as well as other religious performances take place at an early hour in the morning, viz., 2 o'clock Turkish, which is about 7 a la Franka. This morning at that time I had the pleasure or rather the misfortune of witnessing the baptism of four little children of three days old, of which one of them is the grandchild of our landlady whose house we are now occupying. So at 7 o'clock this morning I was already on my way to the church for the first time. The street as well as courtyard of the church was crowded with people because the service of the day was just over. I entered the church, which was as cold as an ice-house, and took seat near the door, in order not to attract any attention, and as the service was just finished, and many of the people were yet helping themselves to the communion, which was in great heaps prepared for them. Every one of them before and after partaking of it made the sign of the cross, and before leaving the church kissed the crucifix, holy Mary, and other saints, and went their way. Shortly after the church was nearly empty of people, excepting of a few who remained to witness the baptism. For about a half hour there was a perfect chaos, and I thought myself in the midst of a market-place, for persons were going and coming in all directions, and were talking and laughing as loud as they pleased. And several of the "papas" passed by them as indifferently as could be. I became a little impatient, and asked when the baptism would take place, for it was an hour behind the time already. I was informed that the friends were there already, and were only waiting for the "papa" (minister in the Greek language). Immediately one of them appeared, arrayed for the occasion, and with a book in his hands. At that moment I removed myself to the centre of the church in order that I might see all and lose nothing. From there I saw all the women standing with the babies in their arms in the outer porch of the church, where it was freezing cold, but fortunately the little ones were well wrapped-up. There stood also

to them for about half an hour. During that time great preparations were made for the baptism. A very old man, called also papa, appeared, who looked as if he could neither see nor hear, performed the greatest part of the ceremony. The preparations were these: A little stand was brought in, upon which a tub with cold water was placed. Near by that stand was another one with a great many little wax candles which stuck to it, and which were lit on the occasion. And by that stand there was attached a little tin dish to it, with a cover that had many holes in it, and which was filled with incense. It was also lit as soon as the time for baptism approached. At that hour the chaplain got through with his reading, and the godmothers with their little charges walked into the church, and placed themselves where the incense was burning. The old man presided, and at a sign from him the four little infants were placed on the floor, which was of marble, and were immediately uncovered, notwithstanding their being entirely naked. But soon the old papa appeared with a small dish in his hands which contained holy water, and with which he sanctified the little creatures previous to the baptism by making the cross upon them. As soon as this was over, some hot water was brought and put into the tub of cold, and then the old Pope took up one child after another and bathed them in the tub as if they really needed it. Not a word or remark was said while the immersion was going on, and yet there was no appearance of solemnity whatever. After having washed them thoroughly well, he gave them back to their respective godmothers, who received them in parts of the clothes in which they were brought; and, after having allowed a little time for drying, he came with a small can of oil, and anointed them with it, both boys and girls. After this he fetched an old pair of scissors, which looked very much like old snuffers, and with it cut the hair of each infant. What he did with the hair, I cannot tell, but as soon as he got through with all this, an old woman appeared with soap and water, and waited upon the holy man in pouring the water over his hands. The baptism was now closing, and the chaplain took up the book and read out of it without any air of solemnity whatever, for he knows that the people do not understand it, and, while he was reading, talking and laughing were going on from all sides. After the reading both the old and young papas began to sing a psalm, and while they sang, the godmothers with their little charges were obliged to go round the circle where all the ceremonies were performed, and every time they came in at the front of the crucifix they bowed. This they repeated three times, and when there was no more to do, the old man said something to the women and disappeared. The women soon advanced to the altar, where I followed them, and where I saw what