

(Extracts from the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.)

Missions of Europe.

GREECE.

Letter of the Right Rev. Dr. Blancis, Bishop of Syra, Delegate Apostolic in Greece, to the Members of the Central Committee at Lyons.

Syra, 11th August, 1838.

"GENTLEMEN,

"Since the day I received the pious alms of your Association, but especially, since I read in the Annals my name with the sum affixed to it which your benevolence induced you to grant me. I have felt a strong desire to inform you of the uses to which it was necessary to devote it, and of the advantages which have accrued to religion from its employment.

"The wants of the Catholic Missions of Greece were at all times great and numerous; but the most urgent claim upon your funds was, to obtain the recognition of the title of Apostolic Delegate, with which His Holiness Gregory XVI. was pleased to honour me. It was in vain that in the ordinary forms, I solicited the Greek government to recognize it: a new dignity; it was impossible for me to appear at Athens in the character of delegate, to correspond as such with the minister of public worship, or to make my pastoral visitation. I was forced to be satisfied with sending a few Missionaries to those parts of the kingdom which appeared to be most in want of their presence; though even on this point I was exposed to violent opposition. I resolved, therefore, to undertake a journey to the capital, in order to ascertain the causes which retarded the satisfactory termination of this affair; and in this, my design was happily facilitated by the seasonable arrival of your charitable succours.

MISSION OF ATHENS.

"I therefore set out from Syra on the 20th of April, immediately at the close of the Easter festivities: the government steam-boat, which affords but indifferent accommodation, granted me a free passage in my quality of Bishop of the country, and on the morning of the 21st. I reached the celebrated harbour of the Pæneus,

Having received the visits of some Catholic inhabitants, I set out in the evening for Athens, which is about five miles distant, that I might be able to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice on the next day, Sunday: I lodged at the house of the chevalier Prokesch d'Osten, Austrian minister, and president of the administrative Council of the Catholic church. The following day I visited the church: it is situated below the Acropolis, between the ancient market-place and the temple of Eolus, and is not sufficiently large for the number of the faithful who frequent it; its narrow nave was not long ago a Turkish school, and the sanctuary is formed by a paltry addition which has since been made to it. At ten o'clock I celebrated Mass and announced to the people the object of my coming, requesting at the same time the fathers of families to have their children instructed in the sacrament of Confirmation, which I intended to confer in the course of fifteen days. My recommendation was attended to: during this time, the three Priests attached to the Mass were occupied in giving catechetical instructions.

"On the following day I entered upon my business which had brought me to Athens. I would be tedious to enter into details; therefore I obtained of his majesty, the king of the Greeks, the gracious courtesy with which I was received at the royal table, my visits to the ministers of state, and the explanations had with them, together with the good offices of Mr. de Lagrene, charge d'affaires of France, and those also of the chevalier Prokesch d'Osten, gave me every reason to hope that my efforts would be crowned with success, and allowed me to pursue my pastoral duties without any anxiety as to the result.

"On the third Sunday after Easter, the day fixed for the confirmation of the Children. I dressed, after Mass, a few words to the congregation, observing, 'How much happier I am upon entering Athens, than did the Apostle Paul: I was not, like him, obliged to pollute the altar of an unknown God, in order to convert them to the knowledge of the true God. It is the happiness to address Christians, when