

From the Diary of Bishop John Francis Norton – 1925

Inscription....

*Diary kept for my dearest Mother
on the P. & O Steamer "Mongolia"
by John F. Norton
With the Australian National
Pilgrimage to Rome & Lourdes 1925.*

10th April, 1925



A party of us spent the forenoon in a long motor drive up Mount Wellington to a place called "The Springs". The road was a beautiful one, lined on both sides by fine trees, and at every turn, by looking backwards one got wonderful views of the city, and the Derwent, and the mountains beyond. After a drive of about an hour, during which we climbed nearly 2000 feet, we came on a level place. There the car stopped. Here is built a fine hotel, so we had tea and enjoyed the wonderful panorama. The city lay spread at our feet. Out on the bay was the "Mongolia" like a toy boat. While the great expanse of the Derwent with its innumerable bays and islands stretched to the North and South as far as the eye could see. Upwards and above us, rose the bare and rocky peak of Mount Wellington; for the wonderful vegetation, green as that of Ireland, does not continue much further than where we were.

We returned by another and longer route, so as to get other sights of the district. All of them were beautiful. Finally, we spent some time in a Museum, filled I am sorry to say, with relics of the bad old days of the penal settlement, leg irons, handcuffs, guns and bayonets, arrest warrants (there was one for the apprehension of Terrence Bellew McManus).

In the afternoon, Fr Cullen took me by train in to show me the house of Mr Manning, in which John Mitchell hid on the night before his escape, and the very spot on Sandy Bay from which he was rowed to his friends and freedom. I must read the "Jail Journal" again, for its pages will have a different meaning, now that I have actually seen some of the places in its pages. So the whole place is full of memories for an Irishman. Not many miles away - at Richmond - is the grave of a child of Thomas F Meagher - Meagher of the Sword - who died during his father's exile there. Then there is the house in which lived Smith O'Brien, whose statue stands as it well should at one end of the O'Connell Bridge in Dublin. Father Cullen is steeped in the history of this place, and I could not have chosen a better guide.

I concluded the day by a visit to the Cathedral to take part in the Stations of the Cross. Also said "goodbye" to the Archbishop, and he said, "Give my love to All Hallows".