

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.*



7th May

Aden by day light looks hideous. The houses of whatever unfortunates who were forced to dwell there, are squeezed in between the mountain and the sea, and the mountains are bare black rocks, like a heap of gigantic cinders. Not a trace of vegetation, for it rarely rains here. The fortifications are visible reminding one that we are in an important naval station, and a strategic point of the British Empire. God help the poor beggars who have to garrison it though. What a life they must lead. I am told there is a priest there too and also a Convent. Hats off to those nuns and the priest!

We got away at seven, so we have gained almost all the time we lost.

All the forenoon the Arabian coast is in sight, and just at midday we are passing the island of Perim, in the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. Now we are in the Red Sea. It is beginning well for a strong haze tempering the heat of the sun and there is a slight breeze. Three days of this and then all will be well. Hottest day 88.