

**HOLIDAY LETTERS
FROM ATHENS,
CAIRO, AND WEIMAR**

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Holiday Letters from Athens, Cairo, and Weimar by M. Betham-Edwards

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M. BETHAM-EDWARDS

**HOLIDAY LETTERS
FROM ATHENS,
CAIRO, AND WEIMAR**

HOLIDAY LETTERS.

(Belle in Edward's
writing)

HOLIDAY LETTERS

From Athens, Cairo, and Helms

By *Mrs. Lida Barber*
BETHAM-EDWARDS

AUTHOR OF "EGYPT," "A WINTER WITH THE SWALLOWS," "DR. JACOB," ETC.



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LETTER I.

AT SEA.

'Thrice happy sails that bear to unknown lands!'

I HAD longed all my life for a sea-voyage, and felt as if I had come into a fortune when I found myself, on the 1st of April, 1871, on board a Peninsular and Oriental steamer bound from Southampton to Alexandria. Egypt, Greece, perhaps Constantinople, Heaven only knows what enchanted places seemed possible of attainment in those first hours of freedom and exhilaration. Could any one help going well-nigh crazy with delight at such a prospect?

Yes, it is good to be at sea. We are passing the Bay of Biscay in the first sweet days of

spring. What a quiet bay it is, a very bear asleep! untroubled grey water, pale, unchangeable sky, were all that we saw for several days. As we get farther and farther south, the sea becomes purple, the sky of a deep blue, the nights wondrously lovely with myriads of stars. There is an astronomer on board, and it is his delight to gather a few of his fellow-passengers around him, and gaze with them on Polaris, the sailor's friend and guide, the blue Spica, the fiery red Arcturus, Aldebaran, the poetic Pleiades, pointing out this constellation and that, and telling us much that is new and captivating. Our captain, too, like all sailors, had studied the heavens, and many a time I paced the deck with him in talking of the stars and the navigators of old whom they so well befriended.

A first experience of sea-life is that we suddenly find sunrise and sunset turned into events. At home we have, perhaps, neither