

# Edward Lear

## A Collection



### BRUCE MARSHALL RARE BOOKS

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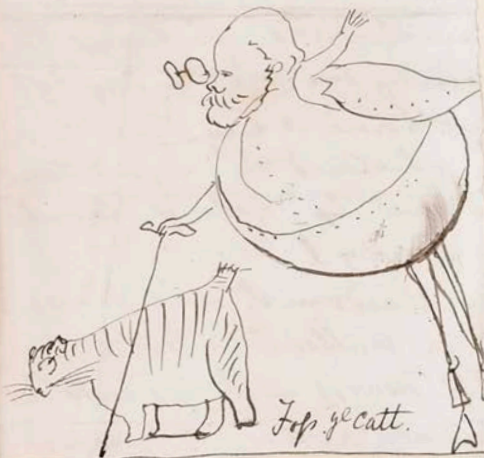
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2<sup>nd</sup> Villa  
no distant view  
Villa Tennyson

It was 3 months ago. Be  
the Sanremo air will de-  
the Brienza atmosphere. My  
you



View from the Lake first view

## EDWARD LEAR A COLLECTION

The British poet and painter known for his absurd wit, Edward Lear was born on May 12, 1812 and began his career as an artist at age 15. His father, a stockbroker of Danish origins, was sent to debtor's prison when Lear was thirteen and the young Lear was forced to earn a living. Lear quickly gained recognition for his work and in 1832 was hired by the London Zoological Society to execute illustrations of birds. In the same year, the Earl of Derby invited Lear to reside at his estate; Lear ended up staying on until 1836.

He is considered by many as the finest bird artist of the 19th century.

His first book of poems, *A Book of Nonsense* (1846) was composed for the grandchildren of the Derby household. Around 1836 Lear decided to devote himself exclusively to landscape painting (although he continued to compose light verse).

Between 1837 and 1847 Lear travelled extensively throughout Europe and Asia. After his return to England, Lear's travel journals were published in several volumes as *The Illustrated Travels of a Landscape Painter*. Popular and respected in his day, Lear's travel books have largely been ignored in the twentieth century. Rather, Lear is remembered for his humorous poems, such as "The Owl and the Pussycat," and as the creator of the form and meter of the modern limerick. Like his younger peer Lewis Carroll, Lear wrote many deeply fantastical poems about imaginary creatures, such as "The Dong with the Luminous Nose." His books of humorous verse also include *Nonsense Songs* (1871) and *Laughable Lyrics* (1877).

Lear died on January 29, 1888 at the age of 76.

Although the subject and form of his works varies greatly, all of Lear's poems can be characterized by his irreverent view of the world; Lear poked fun at everything, including himself in "By Way of a Preface." Many critics view Lear's devotion to the ridiculous as a method for dealing with or undermining the all-pervasive orderliness and industriousness of Victorian society. Regardless of impetus, the humour of Lear's poems has proved irrefutably timeless.

**The Collection £75,000**

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**A Very Scarce Group of Four Original Drawings by  
Edward Lear on Silk for his Nonsense Books.**

**Comprising:**

***There was an Old Man of Kilkenny***

***There was an Old Person of Tartary***

***There was an Old Man of the Nile***

***There was an Old Man of Madras***

Lear would draw examples of his famous illustrated limericks when staying with friends, but the examples executed on silk were usually reserved for presentation.

These drawings have been authenticated by Lear expert and biographer Vivien Noakes.

Lear had entertained his friends with rhymes and drawings from boyhood, but it was while he was at Knowsley in the 1830s, commissioned to draw birds and animals in the Earl of Derby's menagerie, that he was introduced to what was then a very new verse form.

Lear himself never knew the word limerick, says Vivien Noakes, but "...at once began to make 'Old People' as he called them... for the children in the nursery there, and A Book of Nonsense was born. Lear was writing for children constrained by the demands of perfection; for them he created single but powerfully drawn images of exuberant, sometimes disastrous excess and spontaneity."

Some of the limericks in this group only appear for the first time in the new and enlarged edition of A Book of Nonsense that Lear published in 1861, the edition which really popularised the limerick, and this led Noakes to suggest that this set may date from the early 1860s.

***Book of Nonsense***

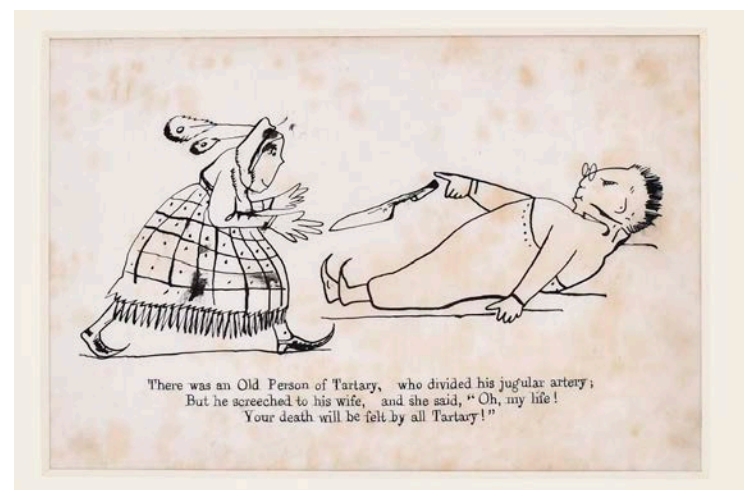
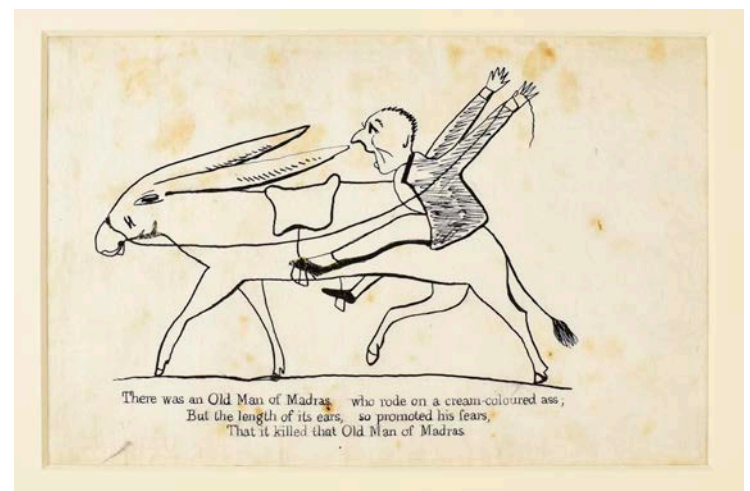
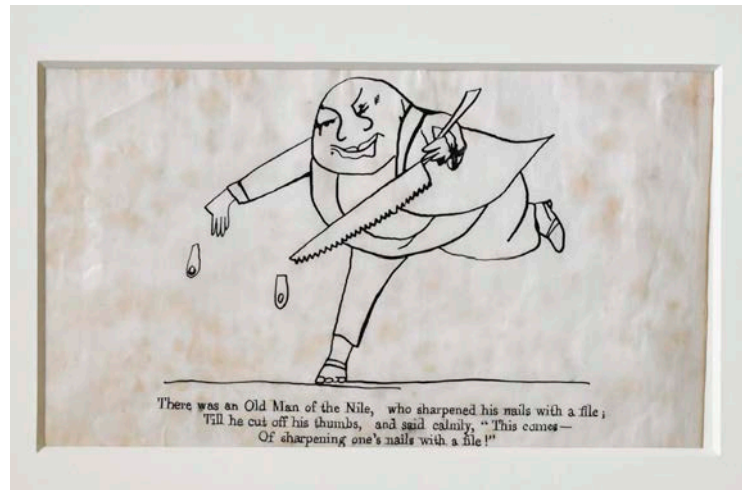
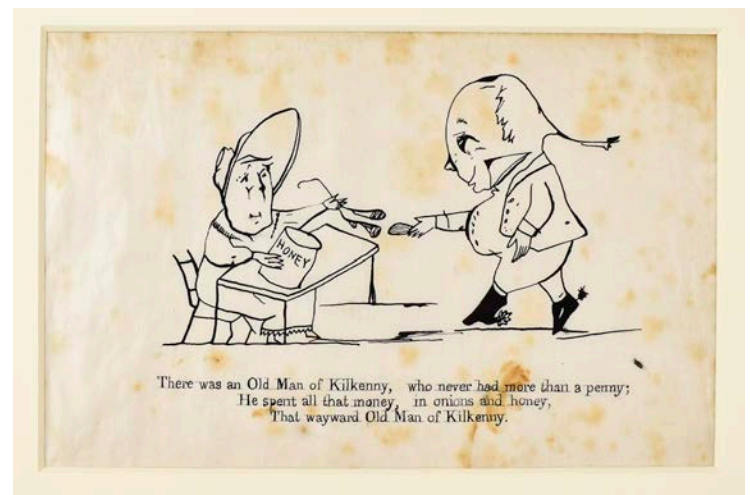
[London: Thomas McLean, c.1846]. 2 volumes, oblong 40. with 73 full-page lithographed illustrations by Edward Lear (of 74), a few leaves cropped as usual, imprints on titles trimmed, some spotting, 19th-century green half calf, spine with raised bands and lettered in gilt, gilt edges

FIRST EDITION, including the 3 limericks discarded after the 1855 edition. The first limerick in each volume ("There was an old Derry down Derry") incorporates the title "Book of Nonsense" although Lear's name was not used until the third edition of 1862. This copy has just 3 limericks printed in 5 lines (in addition to those on the title pages), as called for in the first edition of 1846, namely "There was an old person of Cadiz" and "There was an old man of the Wrekin" in vol. I and "There was an old man of Kildare" in vol. II.

Extremely scarce First edition of Lear's best known work.

Lear recalled in 1871: "Long years ago in days when much of my time was passed in a country house, where children and mirth abounded, the lines beginning, 'There was an Old Man of Tobago,' were suggested to me by a valued friend, as a form of verse lending itself to limitless variety for Rhymes and Pictures; and thenceforward the greater part of the original drawings and verses for the first 'Book of Nonsense' were struck off with a pen, no assistance ever having been given me in any way but that of uproarious delight and welcome at the appearance of every new absurdity" (Noakes 72 note).

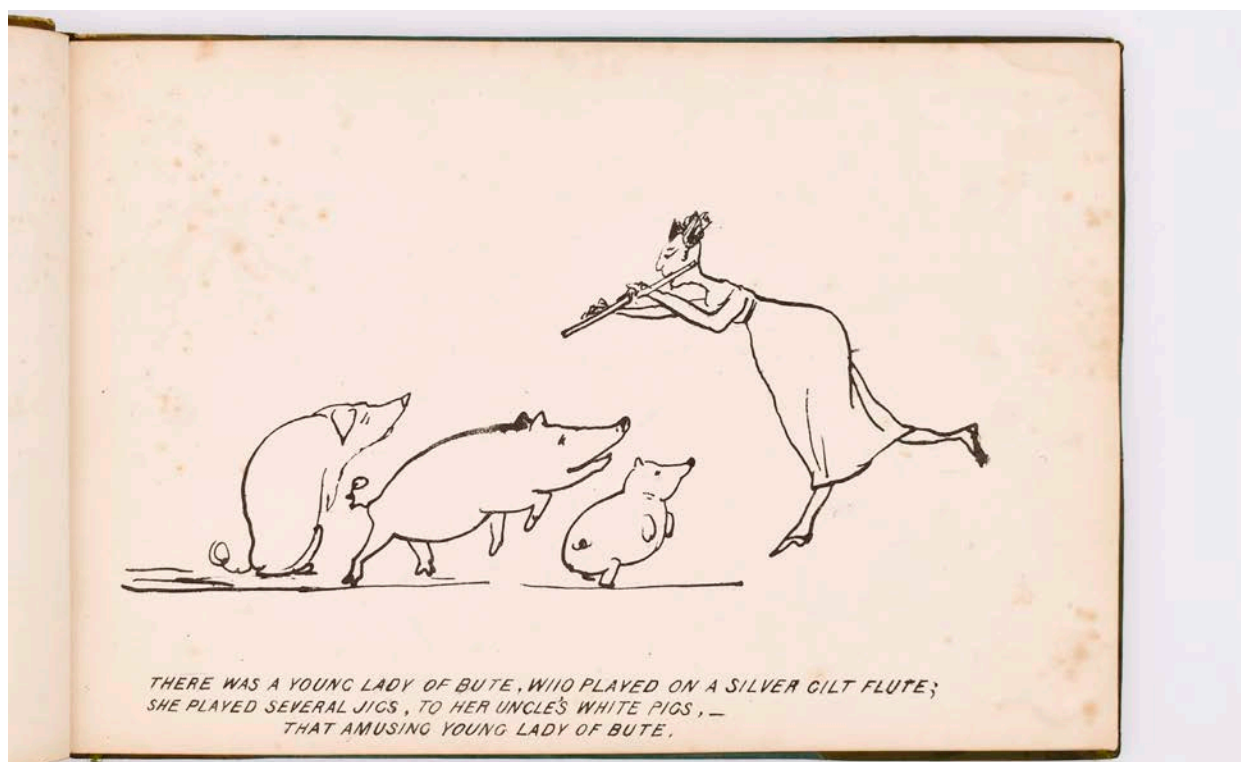
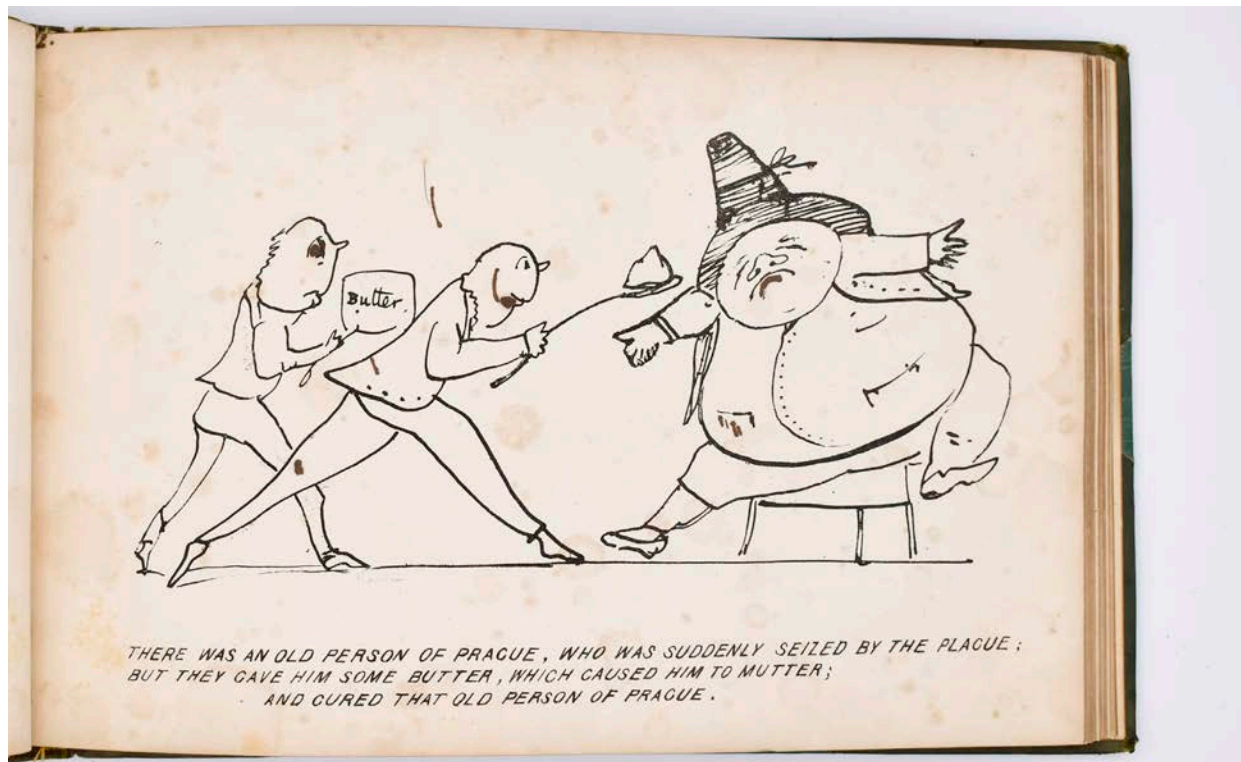
The work "limerick" came much later, and was never used by Lear himself. The first edition was published by Thomas



McLean on 10 February 1846. There were altogether seventy-two limericks in two volumes selling at 3s 6d each. It was the convention at the time for children's books to be published anonymously, so there was no mention of Lear's name in the book. It finally appeared in the third edition, published by Routledge, Warne & Routledge in 1861. Three limericks which were published in the 1846 edition were discarded and have been published only in recent editions.

A significant and uncommon children's book, credited with popularizing the limerick. Justin Schiller's 1988 Nonsense located just twenty-three copies, of which only eleven were complete.

*Provenance: Henry Arthur Clowes (armorial bookplate)  
-- small original contemporary sketch [unsigned] on final blank of vol. II.*

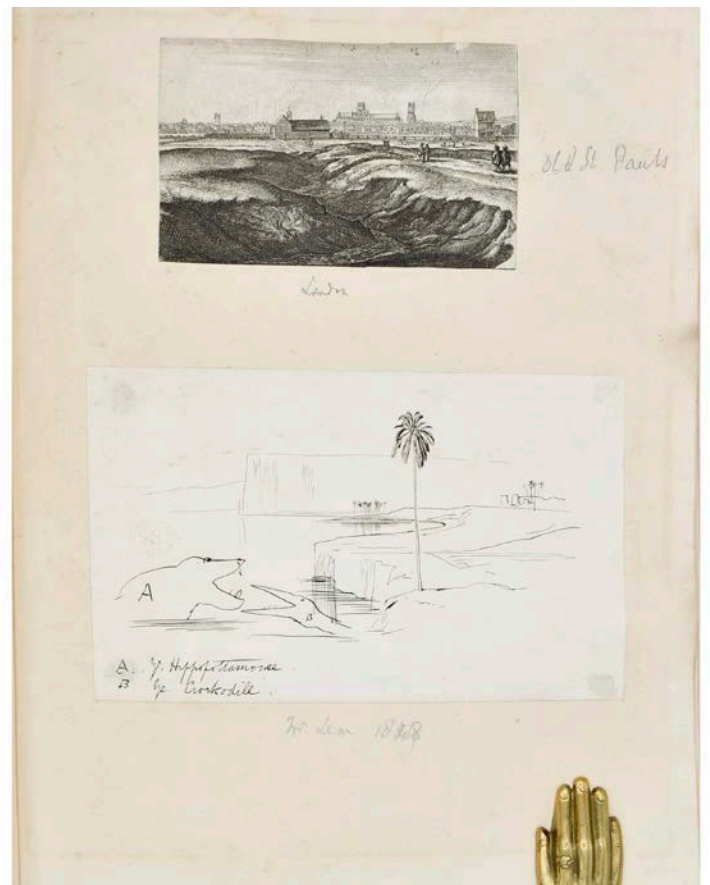
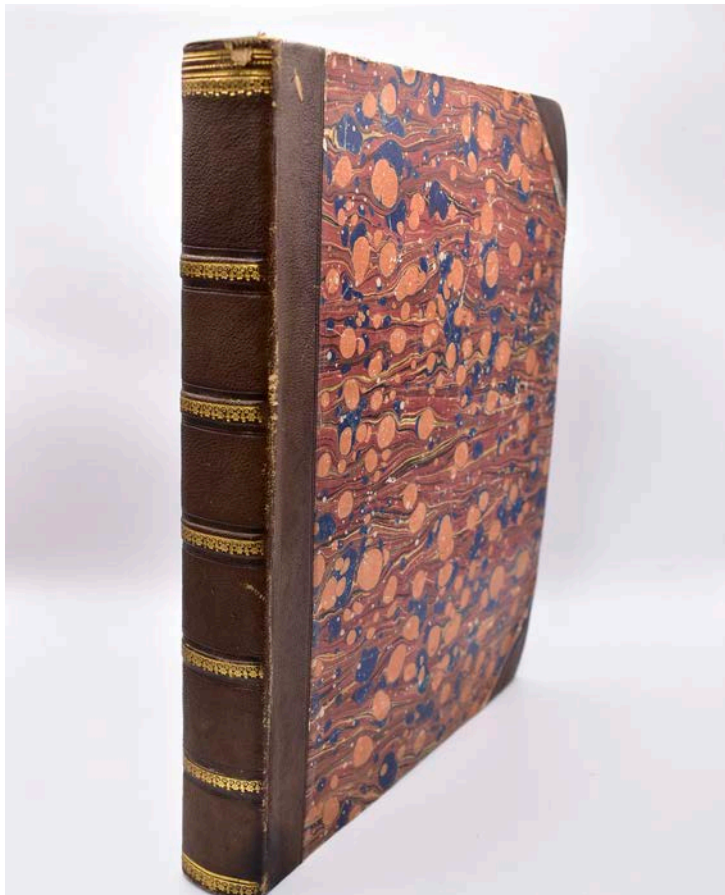




**An Album of Photographs and Drawings Compiled  
by Lady Margaret (Needham) Littleton of  
Hatherton, Stafford.**

1880 -1890, folio, half calf over boards.with over 100  
photographs, a few damaged due to adhesion.  
These images include 16 photographs concerning Lear and  
his Villa Tennyson at San Remo.  
This album also has 19 drawings by Lear and displays Lear's  
enthusiasm for supplying humorous limericks and some fine  
sketches of his favourite Parrots for the Littleton family and  
for the young Sybil. There is also a self-portrait with his cat  
Foss.  
The drawings include:  
Self Portrait with Cat Foss  
Three drawings of Parrots and Parrakeets  
An Owl  
Two Landscapes  
Sunset & Periwinkles  
Hippopotamosee & Corkodile  
A sheet of pencil sketches of Three Birds of Prey.

The album also includes some photographs concerned with  
and of Prime Minister William Gladstone and his family.  
Provenance Lady Margaret Littleton of Haversham Hall,  
Stafford, wife of Rear Admiral Algernon Littleton and  
daughter of Francis Jack Needham, Viscount Newry &  
Mourne. Lifelong friend of Edward Lear.





2<sup>d</sup> Villa  
no distant view  
Villa Tennyson

From here 3 minutes up. No  
the Sarsens air with the view  
the Borgia atmosphere. all day  
from



F. J. Catt



View from the Villa Tennyson



1884  
L. J. Catt



Mr  
Dean  
1882

Sunset & periwinkles



## *Journal of a Landscape Painter in Corsica.*

London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin for Robert John Bush, 1870. 8° (258 x 175mm). Half-title and title. Wood-engraved frontispiece and 39 plates by Pibaraud, Pégard, Pannemakèr, Badoureaux and Cooper after Lear and others (3 before letters), wood-engraved map and illustrations. 4-page subscribers list on larger sheets [not included in published edition] and 28 blank leaves bound in at the end. (Some gatherings a little spotted, D4.5 detached.) Original cloth [variant [?]] binding, boards with central circular design in blind, blind-ruled borders, spine lettered and decorated in gilt (extremities a little rubbed and bumped, short tears on spine, a few light marks).

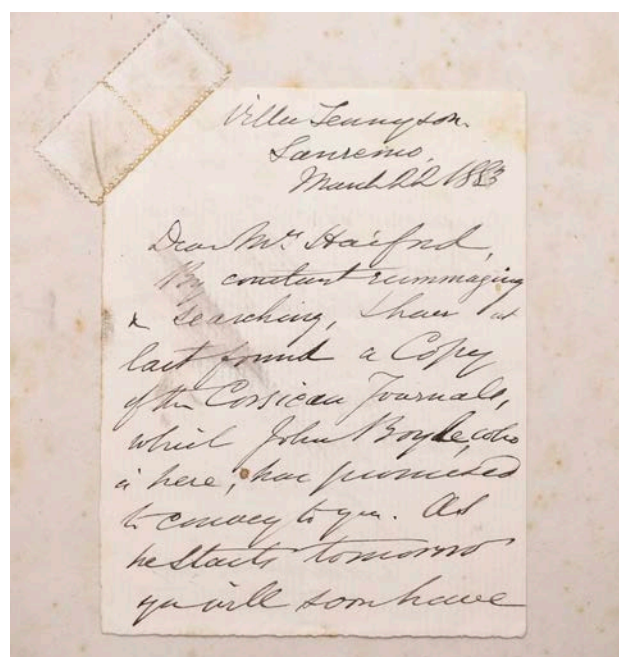
### **FIRST EDITION. LEAR'S CORRECTED PROOFS IN A VARIANT BINDING, INSCRIBED BY HIM AND WITH A 2-PAGE AUTOGRAPH LETTER SIGNED.**

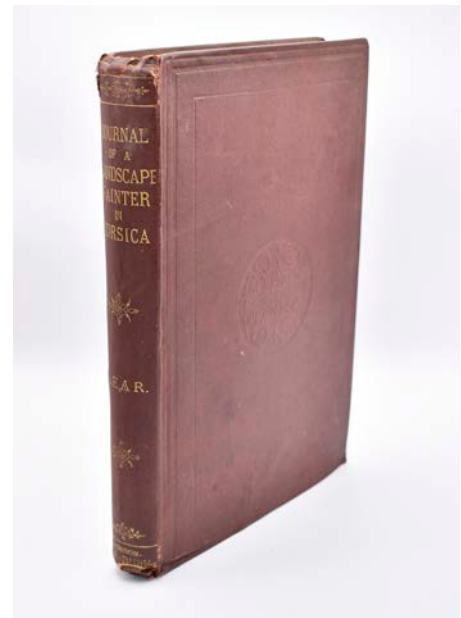
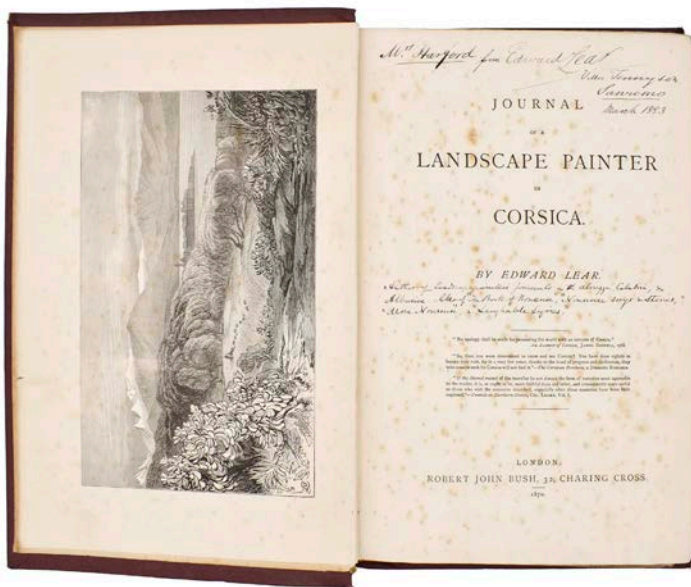
In his letter to Mrs Harford (presumably the wife of J.B. Harford, whom 'in 1862, [Lear] listed as no. 4 of his ten original friends', [Selected Letters, ed. V. Noakes (Oxford: 1988), p.294]), Lear explains that 'by constant rummaging and searching' he has finally located a copy of the work which John Boyle will convey to her. However, the book 'will require to be rebound, & there are many press-corrections through the volume; but these drawbacks are not very great'. The corrections in Lear's hand occur throughout the text (together with a few in other hands), and are generally concerned with layout and mis-set type -- e.g. lowering the caption on the map, numbering footnotes, suggesting an additional illustration -- but also correct misspellings. The corrections are particularly frequent on gatherings G-I, and the volume appears to have been corrected in sections and the following leaves bear the word 'Revise' and the date: B1 (20 October [1869]); E1 (27 October); F1 (28 October); J1 (4 November), and leaves L1 and M1 are simply marked 'Revise'. A second hand (possibly Mrs Harford) has identified some of the characters named only their initials in pencil in the margins, including John Battersby Harford ('Behold,

it was my friend J.B.H.', p.64; Harford also subscribed to two copies of the book according to the subscribers list).

The binding is executed in a darker cloth than that of the published edition, and although the number and spacing of the rules that form the borders remain the same for both, this copy has an additional circular design of foliate sprays blocked in blind in the centre of the boards, and the spine is decorated with gilt foliate devices not employed for the standard edition binding, but does not include the date '1868' in the title

Edward Lear -- Mrs Harford (presentation inscription 'Mrs. Harford from Edward Lear, Villa Tennyson, Sanremo, March 1883' and tipped-in autograph letter signed ('Edward Lear') to Mrs Harford, Villa Tennyson, 22 March 1883, 2pp., 16°) -- John Charles Harford (bookplate) -- Stanhope Shelton (bookplate) -- [sale, Sotheby's London, 5 July 1977, lot 290.]



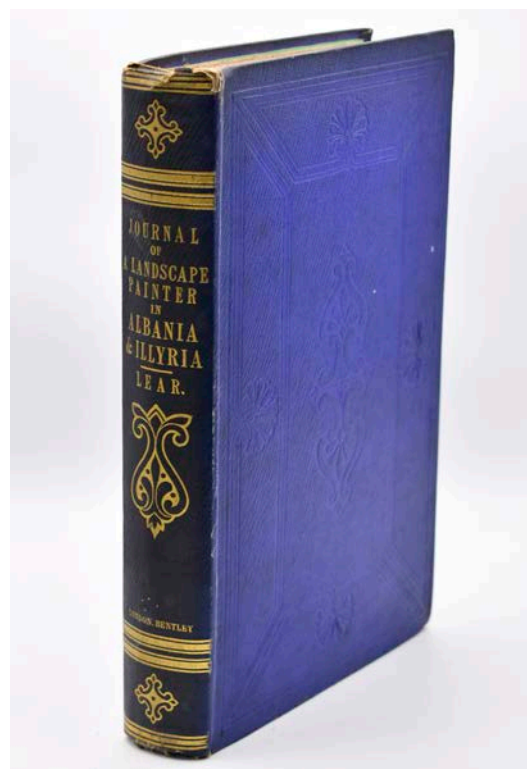
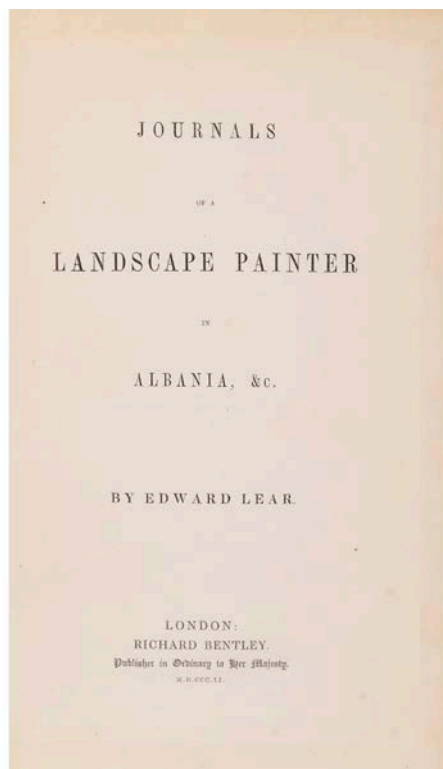


### ***Journal of a Landscape Painter in Albania &c***

London, 1851, First Edition, map and 20 tinted lithographed plates, original blue blind stamped cloth, spine gilt, binder's ticket at rear.

There is luxury and inconvenience on the one hand, liberty, hard living and filth on the other. So Edward Lear described the mysterious and often misunderstood country of Albania. Edward Lear's travels through Albania and Macedonia in 1848 came about when an outbreak of cholera closed off all other routes out of Salonica - the port in which he arrives as these journals begin - setting him off on this unusual adventure.

His meticulous journals offer a unique insight into the Balkans in this period; the difficulties and romance of travelling in Albania - especially as an Englishman, visiting places never previously seen by foreigners; and the profound effect of the landscape and its people on an artist's mind. Illustrated with the artist's own paintings and suffused with a unique charm, Edward Lear in Albania catalogues his idiosyncratic observations of this beautiful and unknown land. Including vivid insights into the environment, culture and politics of the period, these Journals offer an intimate portrait of a wild yet captivating corner of Europe.





**Ten Hand Coloured Lithographs of Birds by  
Edward Lear for John Gould's Birds of Europe.  
1832-37. Folio, (545 x 380mm).**

Comprising:

Pelican  
Capercaillie  
Rock Ptarmigan  
Great Bustard  
Raven  
Chough  
Cinereus Vulture  
Common Buzzard  
Black Grouse  
Maguari Stork

Highly expressive images. The birds drawn by Lear seem to  
have characters of their own!





CINEREA VULTURE.  
*Vultur cinereus* (Linn.)



GREAT BUSTARD.  
*Otus stelleri* (Linn.)