View from St Hospice, France

Edward Lear

Sold



REF: 2967

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Description

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Edward Lear (1812-1888)
View from St Hospice, France

Signed lower left: from Saint Hospice/Edwd Lear del.
Pen and brown ink and watercolour over traces of pencil heightened with bodycolour
13.1 by 35 cm., 5 by 13 3/4 in.

Provenance:
Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, 14th November 1991, lot 175;
Private Collection until 2024

The present highly finished watercolour is based on an on-the-spot study begun on 30th November 1864 and completed on 15th January 1865, which was sold at Christie's on 5th June 2003, lot 154.

Lear decided to spend the winter of 1864-5 on the French Riviera arriving in Nice on 5th November and spent several weeks sketching and exploring the region. In early December Lear and his manservant Giorgio embarked on a month's walking tour along the coast to Genoa. They set off on 6th December returning to Nice on New Year's Eve. Lear's diary entries for Wednesday 30th November 1864 and Sunday 15th January 1865 record his days in detail. In November he records that the 'pines are most lovely, & the contrast of their parrot-green with the purple-gray sea & hill, & the sparkly little town below, vastly pretty. Walking to S. Jean, we got to some olives, facing the long Mountain Corniche wall, & there lunched'. Having not finished all the drawings he had begun in November, he 'resolved then to go & finish all the farthest subjects, so passed … along the narrow path to St. Jean, & beyond to S. Hospice. Here, sheltered partly from an orfle wind ? lunch. Quirt & pleasant…this, I think & hope, is my last visit to this promontory, drawing various times ? the Esa coastline is very grand.' (Edward Lear diaries, 1858-1888. MS Eng 797.3 (7) and MS Eng 797.3 (8). Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.).

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