

Edward Lear



Near Calikut, India

Reference: 11224 / KT661

Dimensions:

Height: 10 cm / 4 in

Width: 20 cm / 7⁷/₈ in

Signed with monogram I.r., inscribed I.I.: near Calikut., watercolour heightened with touches of bodycolour

Provenance

Franklin Lushington (1823-1901)

KAREN TAYLOR

FINE ART

and thence by descent

Lear was invited to India by his friend and patron Lord Northbrook who was appointed Viceroy in 1871, and his journey there was the last and longest of his life. He was overwhelmed by the colour and vitality of India and enjoyed the bustle of Viceregal life.

Calicut, or present-day Kozhikode, is on the Malabar coast in Kerala and was a centre of the Indian spice trade. Edward Lear arrived there in October 1874, just as the monsoon began. He was warned about the dangers of contracting fever but stayed, despite the pouring rain, until the skies were clear enough to draw. He described the roads around the city as "of such redundant beauty one can hardly dream."

Franklin Lushington, Lear's close friend and first owner of this drawing, was the son of Edmund Henry Lushington. He was appointed judge to the Supreme Court of Justice in the Ionian Islands in 1855 and Lear went with him to live in Corfu. They first met in Malta in 1849, where Franklin's elder brother Henry was Chief Secretary to the government. On his death, Lear left all his papers to Lushington, who later destroyed most of them.