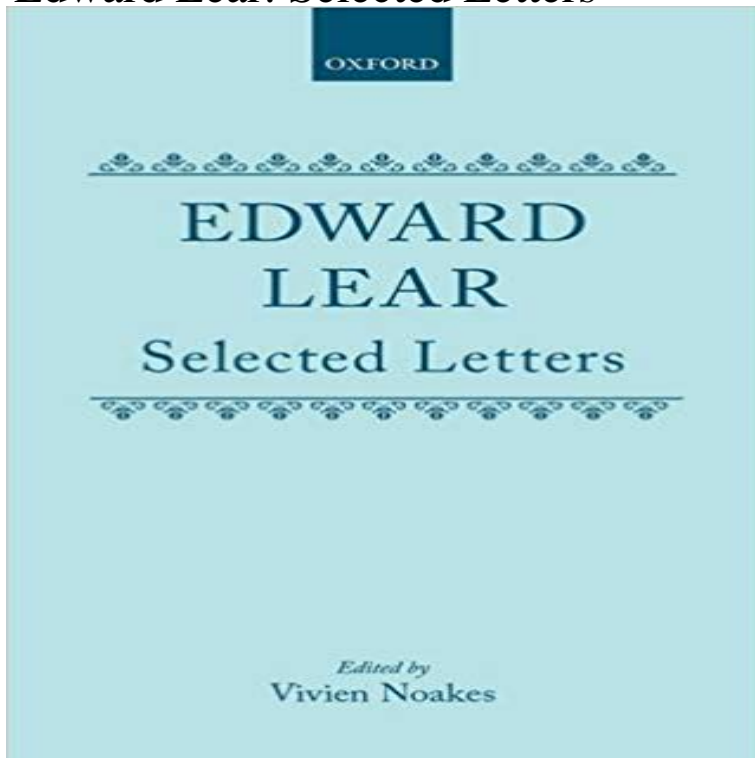


Edward Lear: Selected Letters



One of Edward Lear's best known poems begins, How pleasant to know Mr. Lear! / Who has written such volumes of stuff! / Some think him ill-tempered and queer, / But a few think him pleasant enough. As Vivien Noakes--author of the definitive biography of Lear--demonstrates in this remarkable collection of letters, it is indeed pleasant to know Mr. Lear. Though best known today for his volumes of Nonsense poetry and his classic work, *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat*, Edward Lear in his time was considered the finest ornithological draftsman in Europe (the equal of Audubon) and a highly accomplished landscape painter. Acquainted with the Tennysons and members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, he also corresponded with zoologists, politicians, peers, children. Indeed, his interests and travels were remarkably wide, and his collected letters range through a broad spectrum of Victorian life, from his early days as an ornithological draftsman, his eleven years in Rome, his return to England in 1850, his travels to remote parts of the world, and his retirement in San Remo. In addition to fascinating descriptions of the contemporary art world, his own painting and writing, and his voyages to far-flung places, the letters are filled with Lear's characteristic absurdities and Nonsense, often accompanied by whimsical pen-and-ink drawings of Lear and his beloved cat Old Foss. The only comprehensive collection of Lear's letters available, this charming volume will appeal to anyone who delights in the nonsensical or is curious about the lives of Victorian artists and writers.

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