



Lear wrote to his sister Ann: ‘You have no idea what delicious summer weather it is always! So bright, & yet with such air!’ This scene on the Nile captures the bright blue, cloudless sky Lear is conveying in his letter, but despite the atmospheric quality of his sketches, his working method was incredibly disciplined. He tended to date his sketches, often, as in this case at ‘noon’, including the exact time of day, which turns them into a visual log of his journey.

ON THE NILE  
3 JANUARY 1854  
WATERCOLOUR, GRAPHITE, INK  
66 X 155 MM



GEIADA  
3 JANUARY 1854  
WATERCOLOUR, GRAPHITE, INK  
60 X 154 MM

Lear made this sketch when passing a grove of tall palm trees beneath a craggy cliff. ‘Exquisite’ palm trees, striking vertical accents to many of his sketches, held a particular fascination for him, although elsewhere his letters also reveal delight in finding the familiar in unexpected places: ‘This morning I have had a delicious walk – through never ending corn fields [...] what pleased me very much, was to find a real vulgar old English *toad!* waddling in the field!’