A Banyan Tree on the Galle Road near Colombo, Ceylon

Andrew Nicholl

Sold

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Description

Andrew Nicholl, R.H.A. (1804-1886)
A Banyan Tree on the Galle Road near Colombo, Ceylon

Signed lower left: Study from nature on the Galle road Ceylon/And… Nicholl 1847. and inscribed verso: Banian Tree on the Galle Road/near Colombo/1847/The light and shadow on this tree will give/an idea of the vivid light of the sun in this region/and I have suffered greatly by my imprudent/exposure to its terrible heat/To my old and valued friend/Mr F.D. Finlay
Watercolour over traces of pencil
53.1 by 36.3 cm., 21 by 14 ¼ in.

Provenance:
Given by the artist to the Belfast publisher and journalist Francis Dalzell Finlay (1793-1857)

Born in Belfast, Nicholl was the son of a bootmaker. From 1822 until 1829, Nicholl worked as a compositor for the Belfast publisher, Francis Dalzell Finlay and an inscription on the reverse of the present watercolour informs that Nicholl gave it to Finlay in 1847.

While employed by Finlay, Nicholl was working as a landscape artist and acquired a wealthy patron, the politician and writer Sir James Emerson Tennent (1804-1869) who financed a two year stay in London from 1830 to 1832. Tennent was M.P. for Belfast until July 1845 when he was knighted and appointed civil secretary to the colonial government of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). In 1846 Nicholl travelled to Ceylon where Tennent had found him an appointment as teacher of landscape drawing, painting and design at the Colombo Academy. Nicholl provided the illustrations for Tennent's book `Ceylon: an Account of the Island, Physical, Historical and Topographical' published in two volumes in October 1859.

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