Christopher Clarke Antiques

Dealers in Campaign Furniture & Travel Items

Major Charles Duperier Portrait by Francis Lane

Sold

Christopher Clarke Antiques
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REF: 83338

Height: 111.08 cm (43.7")

Width: 90.13 cm (35.5")

Depth: 6 cm (2.4")

Description

An oil on canvas portrait of Major Charles Duperier (b.1808 d.1874) by Francis Lane in its original gilded frame.

The picture was painted in 1864 or just before by Lane, a well-known Plymouth portrait artist. Duperier had retired from the army in 1854, moving to Plymouth in Devon. In 1860 he joined the 3rd Battalion Devon Rifle Volunteers as Adjutant and a year later became a Captain of the 2nd Administrative Battalion. Francis Lane showed Duperier's portrait, along with that of the late Earl of Mount Edgumbe and The Cottage Window, in an exhibition to celebrate Tavistock's opening of The New Hall on Tuesday the 2nd of February 1864. The exhibition was described by The Tavistock Gazette on the 5th of February 1864, noting many of the artists and their works.

The painting was the second commissioned by Charles Duperier following an earlier portrait approximately 20 years before. The first painting, is shown in the Archive under Artwork, on this website and the sitter is not named. However, the unique combination of the medals and the regiment identify Charles Duperier as the subject. The first portrait shows Duperier wearing the Persian Imperial Order of the Lion and Sun in silver gilt and the 1st China or Opium War medals. The most interesting medal is the Persian Lion and Sun, a rare award and the key to identifying Duperier. This, the second portrait, shows Duperier with his third medal, the India General Service awarded in 1854.

The picture has three labels to the back of the frame or canvas. The largest, which is to the frame notes 'Portrait Majr. Duperier, Painted by F. Lane, Plymouth'. The other two labels are to the canvas stretcher. One notes 'Portrait of Major Charles Duperier when adjutant of the 2nd Battalion Rifle Volunteers, Plymouth'. The final label is for a later owner who was likely a descendant and reads 'C/O Lt. Col M. D. MacLagan. RE "Sc####ton" Chobham Road, Camberley'.

The painting shows Duperier in his mid 50s wearing the uniform of the Devon Rifle Volunteers and with his sword under his arm, clasped firmly with his right hand. The light to his face and the colour to his medal ribbons and collar badges contrast well with the dark colour of his uniform. He is shown as an important man to the regiment, an administrator who helps make it tick. His medals indicate his experience as a soldier. Perhaps both were important to a man who had worked his way up from the ranks without the luxury of being able to buy his commissions. Duperier took his own life in 1874 fearing he was going insane and wishing to avoid the embarrassment to himself and his family of entering an asylum.

The painting has been professionally cleaned and restored to a previous tear to the canvas above Duperier's head. It has also been relined.

Major Charles Duperier had a fascinating career in the Victorian army made all the more interesting because he didn't come from a monied background. Circa 1864

The size given includes the frame.

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