SARAH COLEGRAVE
FINE ART

John William North - Courtship

John William North

£950



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Sarah Colegrave Fine Art
London & Oxfordshire
+44 (0)77 7594 3722 sarah@sarahcolegrave.co.uk

Description

JOHN WILLIAM NORTH, ARA, RWS(1842-1924)
Courtship - Bicknoller, Somerset
Signed with initials l.r.: JWNWatercolourFramed
17.5 by 13.5 cm., 7 by 5 ¼ in.(frame size 36.5 by 30.5 cm., 14 ½ by 12 in.)
In 1884 North married Selina Weetch at Bicknoller Church, Somerset. The present watercolour shows a view of Bicknoller Church. The male figure on horseback is carrying a red rose and seems to be heading toward a meeting with the female equestrian figure who waits for him by the small area of woodland. Perhaps this is a record of the courtship between North and his future wife.
John William North was born in London, the son of a draper. When he was 14 his father's business began to fail and his parents decided to emigrate to Canada. They took their youngest son with them but left John and his two other siblings in England to be looked after by relations. He showed his artistic ability at an early age and at the age of 16 was apprenticed to produce black and white illustrations for the wood engraver Josiah Whymper. There he met Frederick Walker, Arthur Boyd Houghton and George John Pinwell, who would later become associate with the Idyllic School. He experienced great success as an illustrator but also developed his skill as a watercolourist, abandoning his illustration work and taking up watercolours full time in about 1867. In 1868 North and Frederick Walker moved to the Somerset village of Woolston from where he sent his watercolours for regular exhibition at the Royal Academy, Grosvenor Gallery, New Gallery and Royal Watercolour Society.