A Cottage at Portishead, Somerset, 5th August 1830

James Stark

Sold



REF: 3034

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Description

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James Stark (1794-1859)
A Cottage at Portishead, Somerset, 5th August 1830

Inscribed lower left: Portishead and dated lower right: August 5.th 1830
Watercolour over pencil heightened with bodycolour
18.4 by 26.1 cm., 7 ¼ by 10 ¼ in.

James Stark was an integral member of the Norwich Society of Artists, becoming Vice President in 1828 and President in 1830. Stark spent much of his life in his native East Anglia, although he spent a number of years in London between 1814 and 1821 and again in the decade from 1830, the year the present watercolour was painted.

Although Stark suffered from poor health throughout his life, something which eventually forced him to give up painting, he travelled regularly throughout Britain. The present watercolour would have been produced during one of his many summer visits to different parts of the country. Portishead was a peaceful fishing village, which in the early 19th Century became a fashionable seaside resort for wealthy Bristol businessmen, initially arriving by paddle steamer and later by train. As its popularity grew, the port also developed becoming a busy industrial hub.

The present lively watercolour captures a rural aspect of the small town. The artist's delight in the subject is evident in the bold, rapid pencil under drawing and the broad washes of clear, fresh colour and is characteristic of Stark's spontaneous style that he developed during this period which enabled him to study nature on the spot. He often left his watercolours unfinished and rarely signed his work. That this is inscribed and carefully dated is an indication of the satisfaction the artist felt in the work.

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