THE LIMNER COMPANY



SWISS SCHOOL

Jacques Samuel Pons (1767-1855), aged eighteen, wearing jacket with waistcoat and stock

Circa: 1787

1787

Watercolour and graphite on card

Set into a later gold-plated locket case, the reverse glazed to reveal inscription

Circular, 55 mm (2 $^{1}/_{8}$ inches) diameter

This delicate portrait of writer Jacques Samuel Pons was painted likely to commemorate his eighteenth birthday and was originally set into a snuff box. It may have been in the possession of his first wife, whom he married in 1802, and later with his second wife, Catherine Stevens, who he married in 1831 (at the grand age of sixty-four) and who gifted this snuffbox to Pons's grandson.

Despite his rakish looks in this portrait, it seems that Pons was a highly religious man, becoming a Minister of the French Episcopal Church (Eglise des Grecs) and the author of a book of sermons entitled "The Doctrine of The Church of Geneva".

The style of portrait here was popular in the later 1780s, when a love of monochromatic portraiture, derived from a fascination of all things Classical (including marble busts from antiquity) was in vogue. In Switzerland, Johann Jakob Müller (1762-1817) produced small, monochromatic portraits, which were fashionable all over Europe, although the present work is softer in tone and less formal in style than his work.