

# THE LIMNER COMPANY



**WILLIAM GRIMALDI**

**Portrait miniature of a young girl, called the Honourable Miss Esther Herbert, wearing a white dress, a straw hat with blue ribbon, holding a basket of grapes, with a landscape background**

Circa: 1787

1787

*Watercolour on ivory (licence 35D1T1RM)*

Oval, 103 mm (4 in) high

Signed 'Grimaldi' (lower right)

Inscribed verso '*Esther/ Miss: Herbert./ By/ Wm Grimaldi/ Enamel painter to his Royal/ Highness the Prince/ of Wales/ and/ Enamel and Miniature/ painter to Their R. Hs/ Duke and Duchess/ of York*'

Wood frame with inner gilded mount

There are two watercolour versions of a portrait of 'The Honourable Miss Herbert' listed in the 1873 catalogue of Grimaldi's works. Both watercolours are recorded to have been painted in 1787, though it is not possible to distinguish which of these two miniatures the present work is. It is stated that the watercolour miniatures are painted after a portrait by Joshua Reynolds, however, there are no extant records of the original painting. It has also not been possible to trace an 'Esther' Herbert who would have been addressed as 'The Hon.', meaning she was the daughter of a baron, viscount, or lord.

One possibility is Charlotte (1774-1784), the daughter of Henry Herbert, 10th Earl Pembroke (1734-1794), though she died at the age of ten in 1784. For the girl in this picture to be her, Grimaldi would have had to copy Reynolds' portrait after her death. Another potential identification is Frances Herbert (d.1830), the daughter of Henry Herbert, 1st Earl Carnarvon (1741-1811). The mothers of both of these girls were painted by Reynolds. However, both of these girls were daughters of earls, and the title Hon. is only given to their sons.

Even without a certain identification, the young Miss Herbert painted here is a quintessentially Reynoldsian girl, and Grimaldi has captured this well in a miniature form. Her basket, filled with grapes, is reminiscent of Miss Crewe (Tate Britain, L02926), though this depiction is much lighter; she has a sun hat on to protect her from the bright day behind.

### **Exhibitions**

*Possibly* London, An Evening Soiree at King's College, 1857;

*Possibly* London, Ironmongers Company Fine Art Exhibition, 3-5 May 1861.

### **Literature:**

A.B Grimaldi, *A Catalogue, Chronological and Descriptive, of Paintings, Drawings, & Engravings, by and after William Grimaldi, R.A., Paris.*, London, 1873, no. 29/30, p. 14.