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[British Religious Prophetess Joanna Southcott] A Medical Inspection or Miracles will Never Cease

Stock#: 87382
Map Maker: Sidebotham
Date: 1814
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 9 x 12 inches
Price: \$ 1,500.00



Description:

Crude British Satirical Print Decrying a False Prophetess.

Fantastic 1814 engraving showing the religious figure Joanna Southcott flashing various doctors; that year, she had promised to give birth to a new Messiah at the age of 64.

With over 100,000 followers in London alone by the time this caricature was made, Southcott was a major figure of English fascination. This print delves into the unnatural aspect of her prophecies, describing Southcott as "Aged 64 | Bladders of Corruption and Blasphemy sealed up and ready to burst." The doctors are shocked and pick up on the slightly suspicious nature of her pregnancy, the appearance of which was due to a deformity. The famous box of Joanna Southcote's Prophecy is shown in the lower left; this was a real case in which she included her predictions, only to be opened in case of a calamity.



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Southcott was a truly fascinating figure. She was born and raised in Devon and began publicizing her revelations in the 1790s. From her West Country roots, she came to London to collaborate with the engraver William Sharp to produce "seals of the Lord," which granted the purchaser membership to the 144,000 "elected" to eternal life. In 1814, Southcott claimed she was pregnant and would give birth on October 19th. A disconformity that she developed aided the appearance, but it also likely killed her, as she died in December of that year. She kept a following over a century after her death, and the Christian Israelite Church continues to follow her teachings.

Satirical prints of this matter were a popular form of political commentary at the start of the 19th century. This is a fascinating work representing one of the more crude examples of this genre.

Editions

This is a very rare variant edition of an already scarce print. This example mirrors the [Thomas Tegg issue of the print](#) and has the imprint in the lower right showing "Pub by Side Gotham Nassau St where all the new Caricats may be had for 4 d each."

J. Sidebotham was a British print-maker apparently simultaneously active in London and Dublin in the early 1800s. He frequently pirated London satires, escaping copyright laws by printing them in Ireland and exporting them to England for resale. Later in his career, he received some commissions and was apparently succeeded by E. Sidebotham.

Rarity

We trace only one example of the Gotham edition of this print, [misdescribed at the British Museum](#). The Tegg issue is also very rare, with copies at Yale, the Wellcome Library, the Met, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Harvard.

Detailed Condition:

Original hand-color.