



A complete set of instructive celestial cards

LEIGH, Samuel.
Urania's Mirror, or a View of the Heavens.

London: Samuel Leigh, c.1824. Original box but lacking printed title label; complete set of 32 engraved plates laid on perforated card, backed with tissue as issued. Coloured. Each card 140 x 200mm.

£3,500

A full set of 32 cards illustrating the constellations visible from Britain, depicted in their classical form, perforated so the prime stars would shine through when each card was held up to light. The holes are of different sizes to represent the apparent magnitude of each star. On the lid of the box is an illustration of Urania, the muse of Astronomy. According to contemporary advertisements, the 'Mirror' was designed by 'a young Lady,' to make the study of astronomy 'familiar and amusing'; however the author has been identified as Reverend Richard Rouse Bloxam, an assistant master at Rugby School. Perhaps his wish to remain anonymous stems from his plagiarism of the designs of the constellations from Alexander Jamieson's 'A Celestial Atlas' of 1821. However the innovation of the perforations seems to have been his.

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