



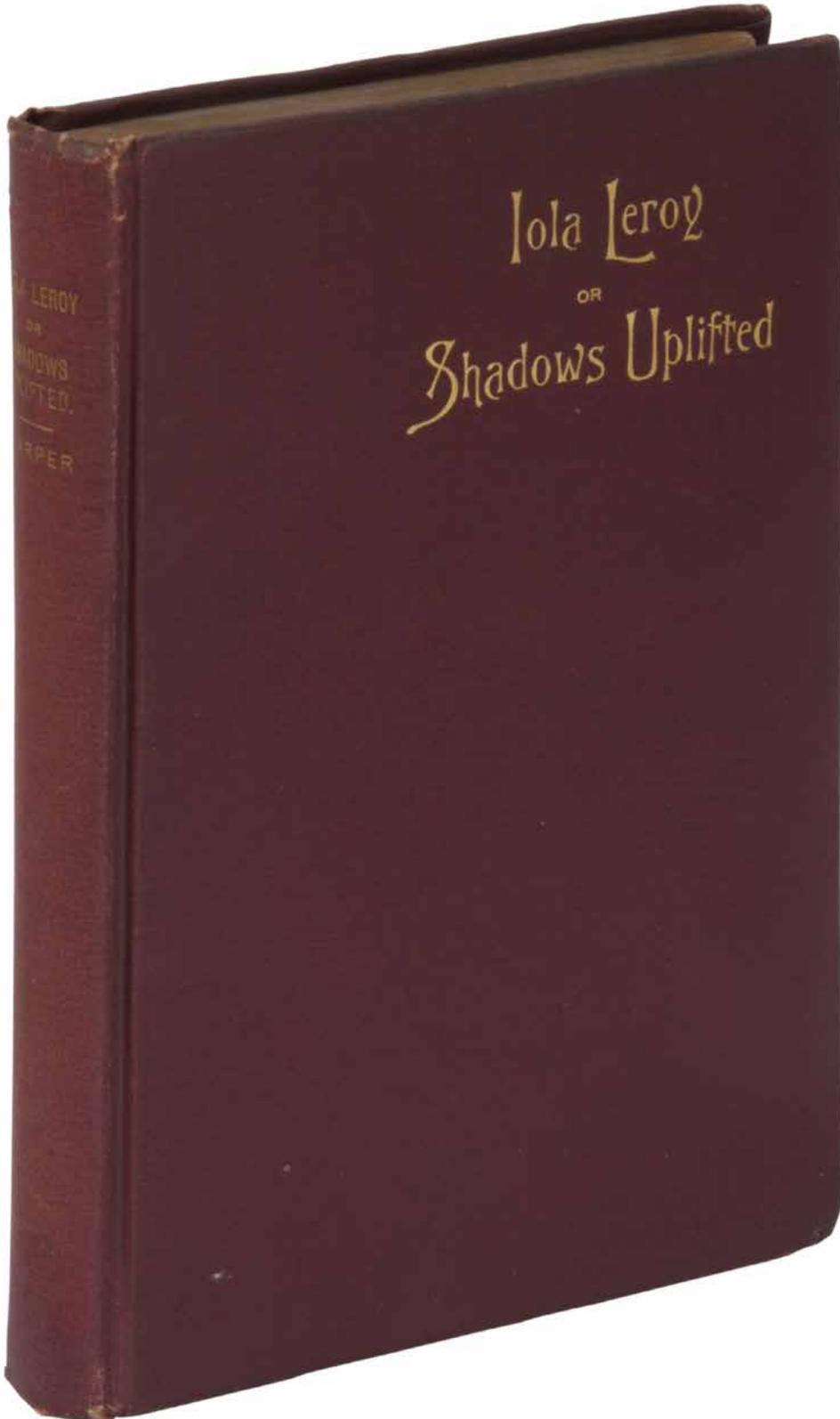
An Inscribed Copy

Frances E.W. Harper

Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted

Philadelphia: Garrigues Brothers 1892

\$35,000



First edition. Brown cloth gilt. Frontispiece portrait of the author. Introduction by William Still. A fine copy with just the slightest of bumping at the corners and hinges repaired, the gilt bright and unrubbed. Small stamp of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society on first blank, and beneath that Inscribed by Harper in lightly pencil: "C. Impey. Street Somerset 1893 from the Author (and Publisher W. Still)".

The only novel by Harper, better known for her poetry and essays, this was long considered the first novel to be published by an African-American woman, until Henry Louis Gates, Jr. advanced the cause of Harriet E. Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859).

Although this novel contains many conventional elements, it also concerns itself with the personal independence of women of color, and particularly of the race in general. The protagonist, the daughter of a wealthy white father, is unaware that her mother is not only of mixed race, but also the property of her husband. Iola and her brother and sister lead lives of privilege in North Carolina and at an expensive boarding school until her father dies, when her uncle claims them as slaves. Soon liberated by the Union Army, she offers her services as a nurse, and attracts the attentions of a white doctor, who discovers she is of mixed race, and encourages her to “pass” for white, which she rejects, setting off to seek her surviving family accompanied by a light-skinned black doctor instead.

Iola commits herself to the education and furtherance of her race, and particularly of the freed slave, but is especially adamant about maintaining her status as an employed woman, saying at one point: “I think that every woman should have some skill or art which would insure her at least a comfortable support. I believe there would be less unhappy marriages if labor were more honored among women.” Iola is also strongly in support of the temperance movement and in the principles of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union in particular. While the novel has a conventional ending – Iola marries the black doctor – she continues her educational endeavors and social work as a married woman.

The inscription in this copy is to Catherine Impey a British Quaker activist against racial discrimination who founded Britain’s first anti-racist journal, *Anti-Caste*, in 1888. The journal focused largely on issues of race in America. In 1893, she formed The Society for the Recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of Man, with the American Ida B. Wells, who visited her in Britain to campaign against lynching.

This is the first of only four 19th Century editions. In addition to this first edition, there was a second edition published by Garrigue Brothers in 1893; the third edition, published by James H. Earle, which is dated 1892 (but is stated third edition, and was probably published after 1893); and a fourth edition, also published by Earle, in 1895. *OCLC* locates 28 copies of the first edition, a surprisingly large number, all but a handful are found in the libraries of traditionally black colleges, where they would have been of particular interest, and more readily available at an early date. However, the list of institutions that do not have a copy of the first edition is impressive. Only a single inferior copy has appeared at auction in the past 25 years. We have occasionally, if infrequently, seen copies of the later printings, this is the third copy of the first edition we’ve seen in 30 years; in beautiful condition, the only signed copy of which we are aware, and a pleasing association. [BTC#384147]

