

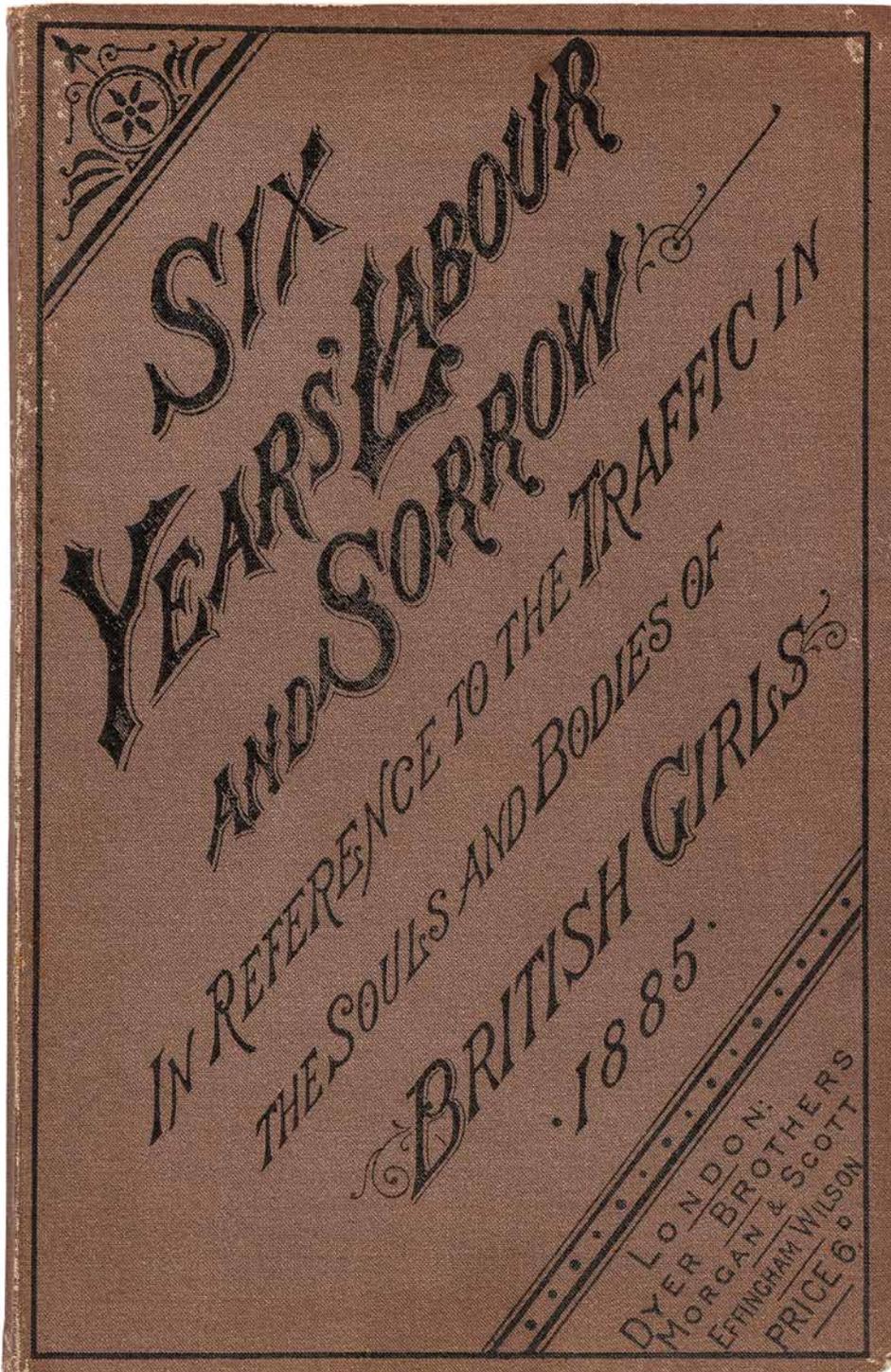
Elizabeth Blackwell's Copy with her Notes

(Elizabeth Blackwell). London Committee for Suppressing the Traffic in British Girls

Six Years' Labour and Sorrow, Being the Fourth Report of the London Committee for Suppressing the Traffic in British Girls for the Purposes of Continental Prostitution 1885

London: Dyer Brothers [1886]

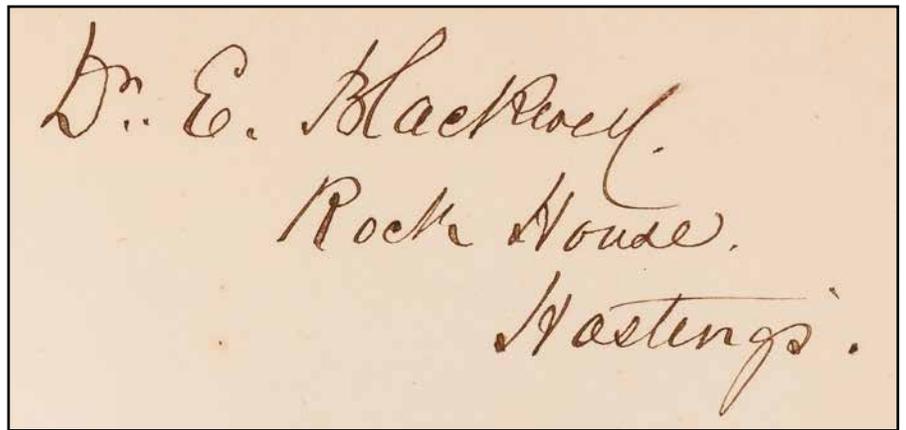
\$9500



First edition. Tall octavo. 111, [4] appendix and ads for two other books on prostitutes pp. Pale brown cloth over flexible card wrappers, elaborately titled and decorated in black. Two short tears on front fly, a bit of rubbing and a tiny crease on the rear wrap, very good or better. Elizabeth Blackwell's copy Inscribed on the half-title in ink: "Dr. E. Blackwell / Rock House / Hastings" with a substantive note in her hand on page 19.

Blackwell is renowned as the first woman to receive an American medical degree (Geneva, 1849). Born in Bristol, England in 1821, Blackwell moved with her family to the United States in 1832. After earning her degree, she practiced medicine in New York, and in 1857 she and her colleagues founded the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. In 1869 she returned to England where she remained until her death, at Hastings, in 1910.

Blackwell gradually withdrew from medical practice in the 1870s and devoted her energies to moral reform and women's rights. This particular report, the fourth (and final) in a series that began in 1881, would have had special meaning for her at the at a time when she was deeply involved in the debate over prostitution. In 1883 Blackwell published *Wrong and Right Methods of Dealing with Social Evil*. In an earlier book, *Counsel to Parents on the Moral Education of their Children*, published in 1878, she argued against the Contagious Diseases Act which, in her opinion, was nothing less than official condoning of prostitution.



Dr. E. Blackwell.
Rock House.
Hastings.

Publications such as this report would have enabled her to keep current with this burning controversy and meet opponents head-on. Here, on page 19, is an example. She has circled this provocative text: "If a woman determine to sell herself body and soul - to commit moral suicide - she must herself bear the responsibility of so doing." To that statement made in a report to Parliament, the Committee declares its "uncompromising opposition." Beneath this statement Blackwell has written: "A male view. Poverty is more inexorable on women than on men, on account of the function of maternity. Therefore, whilst strongly condemning a life of vice, it must be recognized that the bribery of women to vice by men through money payments, is the deepest root of woman's degradation!"

The fervor of this concise statement is typical of her writings on social justice during this time. Another note, written in pencil in another hand reads: "Dr. E. Blackwell has this Blue Book which should be pondered by Christian women." The reference is to a government report on the law for the protection of young girls, cited in a footnote on page 6. *OCLC* locates three copies of this pamphlet in the U.S. (NYPL, DePaul, University of Michigan), and *COPAC* locates four in the U.K. [BTC#421044]

tration of prostitutes and licensing of debauchery.

Such a remedy is *morally* inadmissible. It is impossible that a Christian government can consistently take part in any plan for permitting women to take upon themselves the trade of prostitution. If a woman determine to sell herself body and soul—to commit moral suicide—she must herself bear the responsibility of so doing. But when the

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SIX YEARS'
LABOUR AND SORROW:

BEING THE FOURTH REPORT OF THE LONDON
COMMITTEE FOR SUPPRESSING THE **TRAFFIC**
IN **BRITISH GIRLS** FOR PURPOSES OF
CONTINENTAL PROSTITUTION.

1885.

“ They murder the fatherless ; yet they say, The Lord shall not see it.”

(Ps. xciv. 6, 7.)

“ This is a people robbed and spoiled ; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison-houses, they are for a prey and none delivereth ; for a spoil and none saith, Restore. Who among you will give ear to this ? Who will hearken and hear for the future ? ”

(Isa. xlii, 22 & 23.)

LONDON :

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