

ARST 587: PRESERVATION

Assignment #1 Materials and Technologies: Examination and Documentation

TITLE: *Les Misérables*

AUTHOR: Victor Hugo

PUBLISHER: Collins' London and Glasgow Clear-Type Press

PLACE OF MANUFACTURE: Great Britain

PUBLICATION DATE: 1914 or prior (?)

LANGUAGE: English with French titling

DIMENSIONS: 15.5 cm (H) x 10.4 cm (W) x 3.1 cm (D)



Figure 1 An overall (recto) image of the book using regular, reflected lighting.

This pocket book is an English reprint edition that features all five volumes of the 1862 French historical fiction classic, *Les Misérables*, by Victor Hugo. Published as part of the popular Illustrated Classics Series (#142), the book includes several illustration plates by A.A. Dixon. The book is currently in poor condition with damages most likely due to poor quality materials, handling, and storage.

PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

Binding

Type of Binding (see Figure 2)	Case bound, tight back: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover attached to text block using glue adhesive at spine and endpapers
Leaf/ Page Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signatures sewn through centre fold with white thread (6 perforations) • Illustration plates glued individually

Support Materials

Cover	Imitation leather: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burgundy colour; consistent pebbled texture; gloss surface and finish • Covering brown paper boards
Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 900 (excluding nine illustration plates) • Size 15.2 cm (H) x 10 cm (W)
Signatures (see Figure 3)	Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thin; lightweight; machine-made; translucent; wove (?); short fibers; light cream colour; slight granulated texture; slight gloss surface • 28 signatures, approximately 16 leaves each

Illustration Plates (see Figure 4)	Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thin and lightweight (thicker and heavier than signature paper); machine-made; opaque • Illustration side: Gloss surface; smooth texture; white colour • Blank side: Slight gloss surface; slight granulated texture; light cream colour
Endpapers	Same paper as illustration plates (except burgundy on smooth side)

Media/ Information Layers

Signatures (see Figure 3)	Printer ink: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black, clear typeface • Pagination at top outer corners • Chapters indicated by roman numerals • Inconsistent margins with justified paragraph alignment
Illustration Plates (see Figure 4)	Printer ink: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grayscale watercolour prints; captions with pagination in clear typeface • Title page illustration plate: Black and white; woodcut print with border, the title, author, and illustrator • Media only on one side
Additional Markings	Handwriting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior owner signatures: “Minnie C. Hodgetts” at top of front free endpaper in blue pen ink; “Carol Wales, D.S.W. Xmas 1914” (?) at top right of front fly-leaf in pencil • “8⁰⁰ as is” at top right of front fly-leaf in pencil • “0S/3” (?) in bottom left of front free endpaper in pencil
Decorative Finishing (see Figures 1 and 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All edges gilt (false) • False gilded decorative embossing on spine including title and author in all capitalized typeface at head • Author autograph embossed and false gilded on upper cover, centre

Additional Physical Features

Sound	Fluttering (quickly turning pages)
Scent	Woody, smoky
Extraneous Materials	Small, pressed flowers (one pink, one purple) between pages 128 and 129
Evidence of Past Treatment	Pressure-sensitive tape used to mend head and tail of front free endpaper and front fly-leaf hinge (2 pieces, 1.8 cm (H) x 2.8 cm (W) each)

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Support Materials Condition

(Note: listed most to least prominent)

Cover/ Binding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached covers • Chipping (?) (irregular, head and tail of spine) • Broken spine, cracking (?) and creasing along imitation leather • Delamination (?) (irregular, imitation leather and paper board of upper cover) • Abrasions (overall, lifted fibers from adhesive on front paste-down, edges of covers, and scratches on lower cover) • Fading (irregular, imitation leather on lower cover, edges of covers, and spine) • Spine lean (slight) • Creasing (irregular, upper cover paper board) • Tears (irregular, front paste-down) • Cracking (irregular, back paste-down)
Text Block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detached pages (irregular, last two pages attached to detached lower cover) • Former treatment (irregular, pressure-sensitive tape) • Darkening (overall, all outer margins of signature pages) • Yellowing (?) (overall, slightly on signature pages) • Buckling (overall, signature pages) • Folds (irregular, select pages) • Tears (irregular, front free endpaper and select signature pages) • Accretion (irregular, dampstain (?) on front free endpaper) • Abrasions (irregular, scratches on free end papers) • Dog-eared (irregular, page 29) • Creases (irregular, gutter of select pages)

Media/ Information Layers Condition

(Note: listed most to least prominent)

Cover/ Binding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss (irregular, false gilding of embossed spine) • Flaking (irregular, false gilding of embossed spine title and author)
Text Block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fading (irregular, single illustration plate and some text on select pages)

Detailed Descriptions of Select Conditions

<p>Detached Covers (see Figure 5)</p>	<p>Location: Upper and lower covers</p> <p>Extent of Condition: For the upper cover, the imitation leather, paper board, and front paste-down are detached at the hinge from the text block. For the lower cover, the imitation leather, paper board, endpapers, and last two pages of the last signature are detached at the hinge from the rest of the text block. The detached edges of the imitation leather are flaking and have some discolouration (fading).</p> <p>Evidence of Past Attempted Treatment: There is evidence of past attempted treatment of the upper cover. There are remnants of one piece of pressure-sensitive tape (2.5 cm (H) x 1.5 cm (W)) partially adhered to the tail of the gutter of the front free endpaper. On the corresponding tail of the gutter of the front paste-down, there is evidence of tape removal (lifted fibers).</p> <p>Impact on Function: The last two pages of the text block are detached with the lower cover, splitting the catalog of additional titles in the Illustrated Classics series into two.</p>
<p>Chipping (?) (see Figure 6)</p>	<p>Location: Head and tail of spine</p> <p>Extent of Condition: At the head of the spine, there is significant uneven chipping of the imitation leather (0.8 to 1.9 cm inward). This chipping includes the loss of the first word of the title (“LES”) and the flaking of the second word (“MISÉRABLES”) to the point of being illegible. At the tail of the spine, the chipping is more even (0.8 to 1 cm). This chipping has led to the exposure of the ends of signatures and the binding adhesive at both the head and tail.</p> <p>Impact on Function: With the loss and illegibility of the title, the spine no longer serves the function of identifying the book when in a shelved position. The book must not only be removed from the shelf, but also be opened to reveal its title, as there is no other indication of title on the cover.</p>
<p>Broken Spine (see Figure 7)</p>	<p>Location: Between signatures (most visibly between pages 98-99, 126-127, 226-227, 256-257, 418-419, 446-447, 702-703)</p> <p>Extent of Condition: All pages are still attached (apart from those detached with the lower cover). Many signatures are loose and out of alignment. The tight back binding is exposed at the hinge between signatures, this includes the sewing thread. There is creasing and cracking (?) along the imitation leather of the spine from these breaks. The book lays open flat at these breaks.</p> <p>Impact on Function: The pages of the text block do not turn with consistency as the book opens and stops at these breaks between signatures.</p>

APPENDIX



Figure 2 The book is constructed of 28 signatures that are sewn, case bound, and adhered to the cover using glue at the spine (tight back).

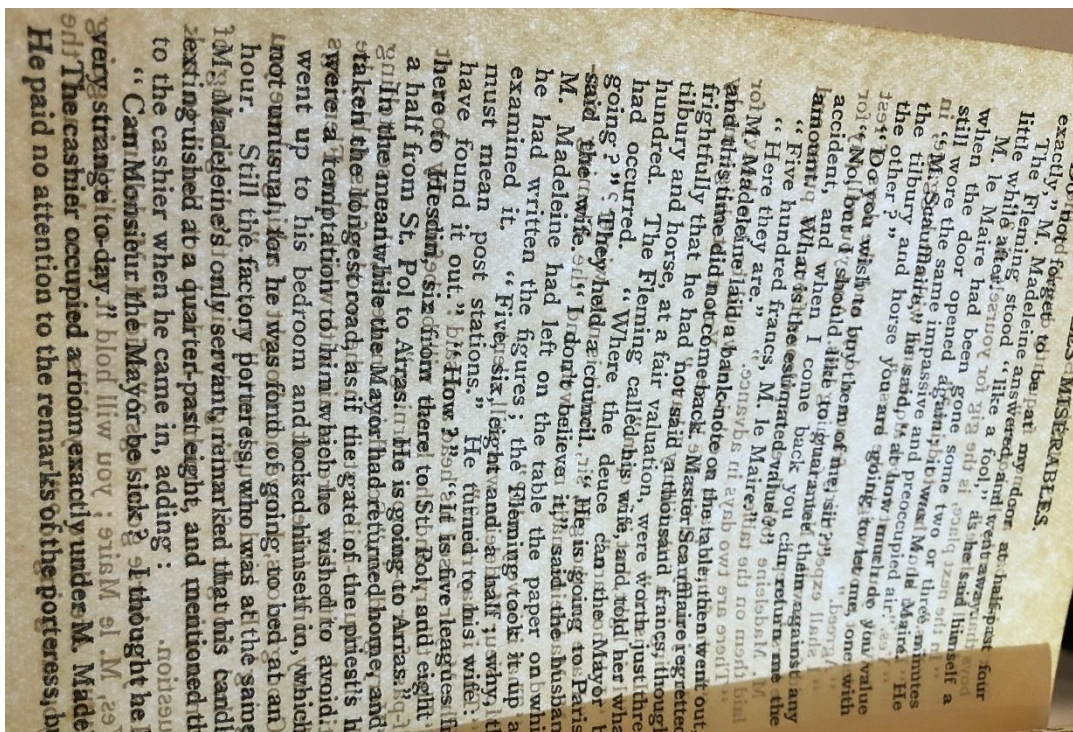


Figure 3 The signatures are made of thin, lightweight, machine-made paper that is translucent. Note the clear typeface in black printer's ink. This image is taken using transmitted lighting.



Figure 4 The frontispiece and title page of the book are printed on gloss paper. Both are illustration plates, but the frontispiece is a grayscale watercolour print and the title page is a black and white woodcut print.

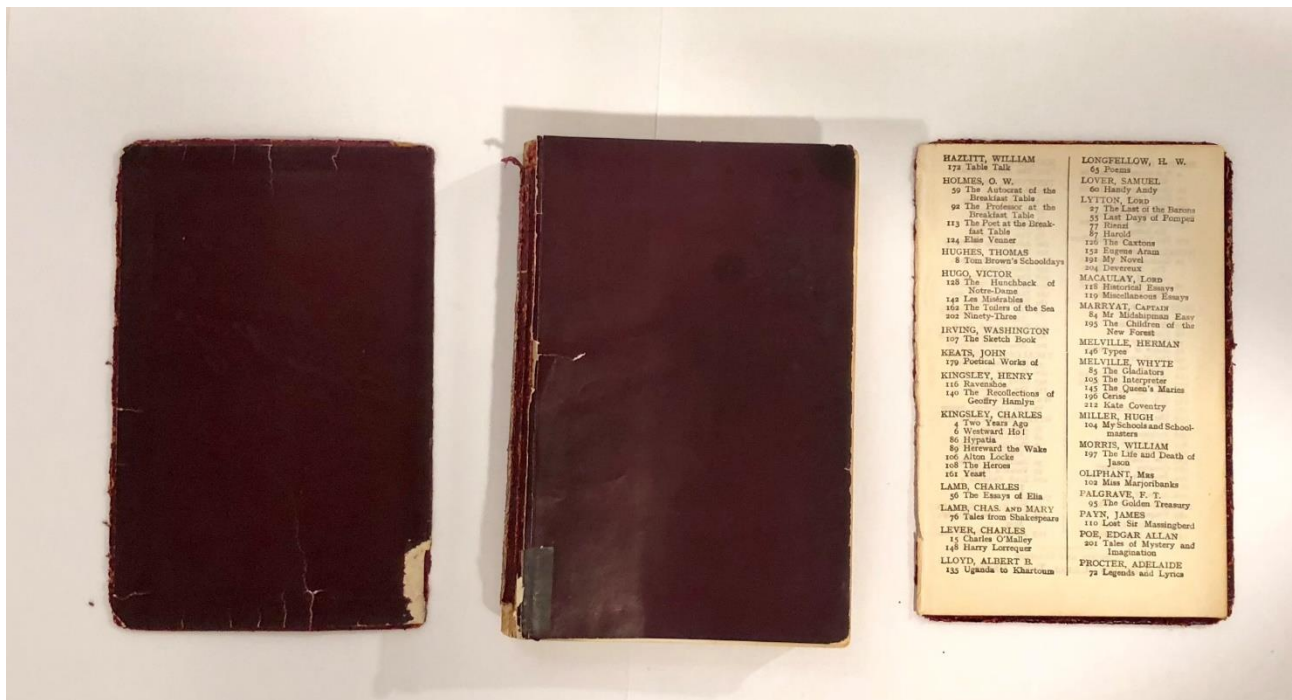


Figure 5 The detached upper and lower covers. The last two pages of the catalog featuring additional series titles are also detached with the lower cover. Note the evidence of previous attempted treatment of the upper cover with pressure-sensitive tape.

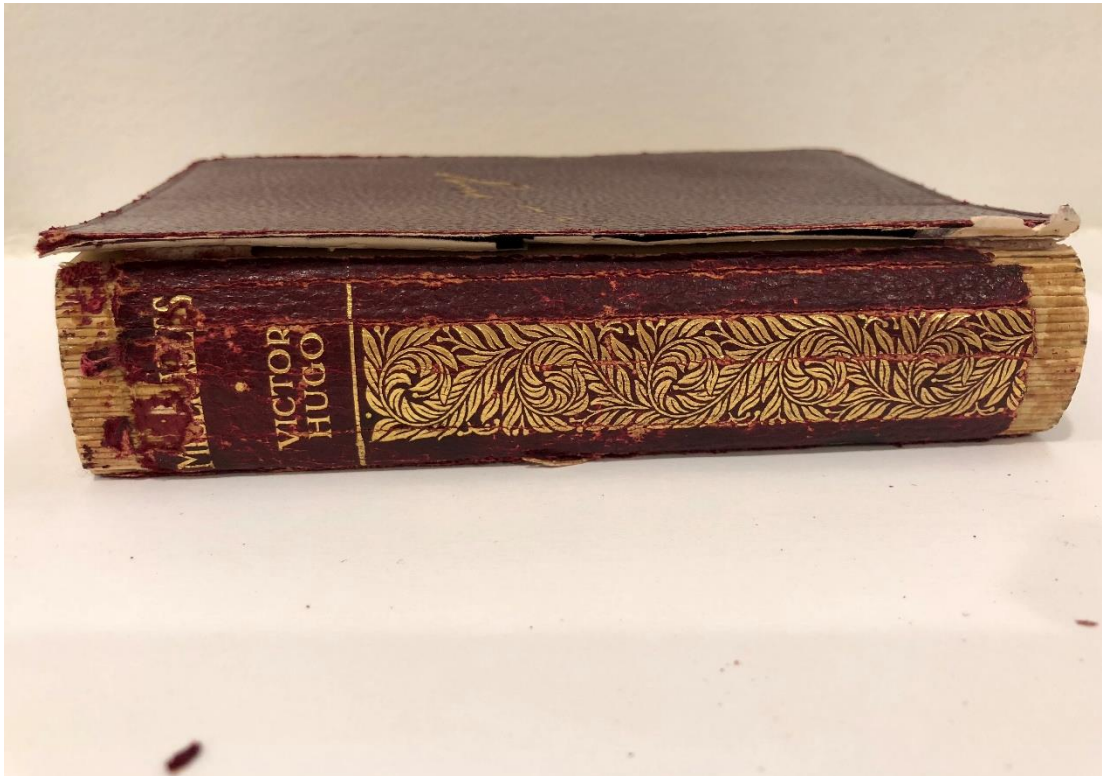


Figure 6 The chipped tail and head of the spine. Note the flaking and loss of the false gilded titling at the head making it illegible, and the exposed signatures.

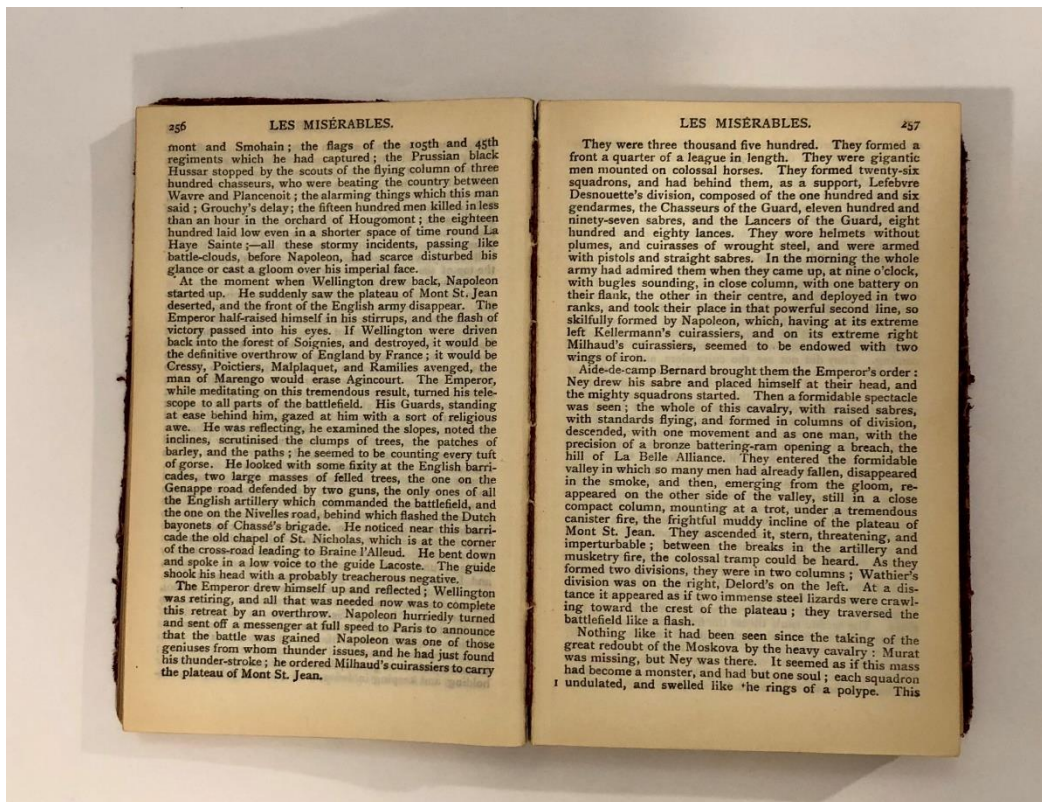


Figure 7 One of the seven locations that the spine is broken. Here the sewing thread (count 6 perforations) and tight back binding is exposed. The book also lays open flat.