

## FROM BOOKBINDING, AND THE CARE OF BOOKS

BY DOUGLAS COCKERALL

### BOOKS IN SHEETS

The sheets of a newly printed book are arranged in piles in the printer's warehouse, each pile being made up of repetitions of the same sheet or "signature." Plates or maps are in piles by themselves To make a complete book one sheet is gathered from each pile, beginning at the last sheet and working backwards to signature A. When a book is ordered from a publisher in sheets, it is such a "gathered" copy that the binder receives. Some books are printed "double," that is, the type is set up twice, two copies are printed at once at different ends of a sheet of paper, and the sheets have to be divided down the middle before the copies can be separated. Sometimes the title and introduction, or perhaps only the last sheet, will be printed in this way. Publishers usually decline to supply in sheets fewer than two copies of such double-printed books.

If a book is received unfolded, it is generally advisable at once to fold up the sheets and put them in their proper order, with half-title, title, introduction, &c., and, if there are plates, to compare them with the printed list.

Should there be in a recently published book defects of any kind, such as soiled sheets, the publisher will usually replace them on application, although they sometimes take a long time to do so. Such sheets are called "imperfections," and the printers usually keep a number of "overs" in order to make good such imperfections as may occur.

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**Comment [1]:** He means a long sheet of paper for each signature. So, a book with signatures of 16 leaves (32 pages) would have 5 sheets if the book were 160 pages long.

## FOLDING

Books received in sheets must be folded. Folding requires care, or the margins of different leaves will be unequal, and the lines of printing not at right angles to the back.

Books of various sizes are known as “folio,” “quarto,” “octavo,” “duodecimo,” &c. These names signify the number of folds, and consequently the number of leaves the paper has been folded into. Thus, a folio is made up of sheets of paper folded once down the centre, forming two leaves and four pages. The sheets of a quarto have a second fold, making four leaves and eight pages, and in an octavo the sheet has a third fold, forming eight leaves and sixteen pages (see Fig. 2 ), and so on. Each sheet of paper when folded constitutes a section, except in the case of folios, where it is usual to make up the sections by inserting two or more sheets, one within the other.

Paper is made in several named sizes, such as “imperial,” “royal,” “demy,” “crown,” “foolscap,” &c. (see p.283 ), so that the terms “imperial folio” or “crown octavo” imply that a sheet of a definite size has been folded a definite number of times.

[Below, you’ll see an illustration for the four kinds of major folds.

The four leaf = quarto

Eight leaf = octavo

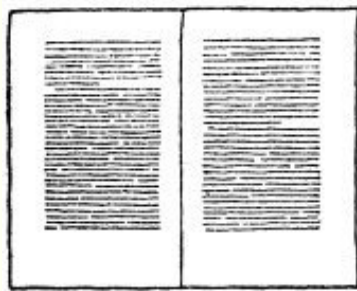
Sixteen leaf = duodecimo]

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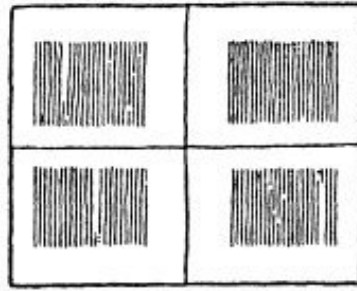
**Comment [2]:** Many early books were printed as folios, from 10 x 15” to 12 x 19” in size. These are big books and not meant to be carried around, obviously. Most commonly, this size was used for legal, scientific, and other learned books.

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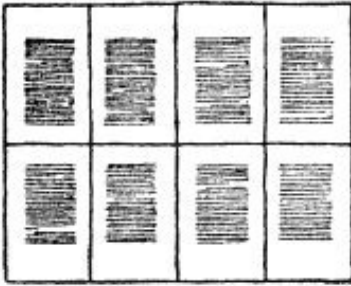
**Comment [3]:** There was never a strict size attached to these designations – they were approximations. Nowadays, as you know, we use the “A” designations for paper size.



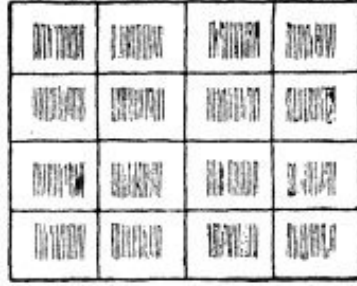
Folio



4<sup>to</sup>



8<sup>vo</sup>



16<sup>vo</sup>

Besides the traditional sizes, paper is now made of almost any length and width, resulting in books of odd shape, and the names folio, quarto, &c., are rather losing their true meaning, and are often used loosely to signify pages of certain sizes, irrespective of the number that go to a sheet.

On receipt, for instance, of an octavo book for folding, the pile of sheets is laid flat on the table, and collated by the letter or signature of each sheet. The first sheet of the book proper will probably be signature B, as signature A usually consists of the half-title, title, introduction, &c., and often has to be folded up rather differently.

The “outer” sides, known by the signature letters B, C, D, &c., should be downwards, and the inner sides facing upwards with the second signatures, if there are any, B<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, D<sub>2</sub>, &c., at the right-hand bottom corner.

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Comment [4]: Note.

The pages of an octave book, commencing at page 1, are shown at Fig. 3. A folder is taken in the right hand, and held at the bottom of the sheet at about the centre, and the sheet taken by the left hand at the top right-hand corner and bent over until pages 3 and 6 come exactly over pages 2 and 7; and when it is seen that the headlines and figures exactly match, the paper, while being held in that position, is creased down the centre with the folder, and the fold cut up a little more than half-way. Pages 4, 13, 5, 12 will now be uppermost; pages 12 and 5 are now folded over to exactly match pages 13 and 4, and the fold creased and cut up a little more than half-way, as before. Pages 8 and 9 will now be uppermost, and will merely require folding together to make the pages of the section follow in their proper order. If the folding has been done carefully, and the “register” of the printing is good, the headlines should be exactly even throughout.

5	21	6	8
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4	13	16	1 B
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Outer side: Downwards.

7	01	11	9
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2	15	14	3 B2
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Inner side: Upwards.

AN OCTAVO SHEET.

FIG. 3.

The object of cutting past the centre at each fold is to avoid the unsightly creasing that results from folding two or more thicknesses of paper when joined at the top edge.

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When a book has been folded, it should be pressed (see p. 87).

There will sometimes be pages marked by the printer with a star. These have some error in them, and are intended to be cut out. The printer should supply corrected pages to replace them.