This book was printed fourteen years before the Armada sailed, and when Shakespeare was a boy of about ten. The date accounts for its "Emphaticall kind of speach", as stated in a marginal comment in MSS. on p. 265. Religious and Political Adversaries are denounced vehemently and with wearisome reiteration throughout its 635 pages. The date also assures us that the peculiar words and expressions with which the book abounds must have been familiar to literary men of the time. With many of its religious convictions we may be out of sympathy to-day; but as a mine of curious phrases it has been worth a careful survey.

No doubt most of its verbal curiosities, apart from varieties in spelling, are to be found in Murray's Oxford Dictionary [M.O.D.].

Golding liked to create long words, unbroken by hyphen,—Longlasteredness (255), Glancingly (276), Flabersauces (to drink) (290), Bastardship (185), Cuttedly (132), Brother-Queller (of Cain) (169), Courtmatters (281).

"Blind hasterers" (87) meaning 'turn-spits' is an unusual form of vituperation; "taken tardie with the fault" (178) is redundant for "being tardy", i.e. taken in the act [see M.O.D.]. We get "fightful" (124) for pugnacious; and "flightful" for temporary, a Golding word which puzzled our MSS. commentator at p. 266. "Battling" (feeding) pastures (113) here appears twenty-five years before its earliest record in M.O.D.

A man often "tries all the ways to the wood to" (104) do something; others "love their brethren from the teeth outward, but not in deed or in truth" (67).
"Pelting", trivial (155 and 187), appears in Shakespeare; but perhaps the following are of special interest as throwing some light on passages in Hamlet.

(a) "Restie", meaning indolent or lazy (58), is found but not "Rusty". Act II, Scene ii, when the Play Actors are mentioned.

1st Quarto—Ham. How comes it that they travel? Do they grow restie?

Gil. No, my lord, their reputation holds as it was wont.

1st Folio—Ham. How chances it they travaile? . . . Doe they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

Rosin. No, indeed they are not.

Ham. How comes it? doe they grow rusty?

Rosin. Nay, their Indeauour keepes in the wonted pace; But there is Sir an Ayrie of Children, etc., etc.

It is possible that "restie" was the original word, becoming obsolete by 1623.

(b) 'Quiddities' (128, 228b) is one of Hamlet's expressions in the Grave Digger Scene, but here used rather of Philosophers than of Lawyers.

(c) One of the commonest phrases in Golding's translation is "to do one to understand", meaning "to make one understand", e.g. "He doth us to understand" (35, etc.). "We be done to understand" (302b).

This may sound peculiar to modern ears, but it is amply recorded in M.O.D.

With this phrase in mind we may approach more hopefully the famous crux (Act I, Sc. 3) just before the Ghost appears to Hamlet for the first time.

The 2nd Quarto, which is the sole authority, gives a reading something like

"The dram of eale
doeth all the noble substance of a doubt
to his own scandal".
The word "dout" (small d) and the word "Act" (with capital A) in sixteenth-century writing can be practically identical. Because the capital A had two large loops and no cross bar; so that "A" and "do" may be very much alike. This gives a reading something like the following:

"THE DRAM OF E'EL
DOETH ALL THE NOBLE SUBSTANCE OFT TO ACT
TO HIS OWN SCANDAL"

which, if correct, is a noble sentiment and appropriate to the context.

The same sort of error in reading "do" for "A" may be responsible for calling King James's poet and the writer of "sombre tragedies" the Swannet of DOUEN (and not of AVON).

S. DANIEL, "Philotas", 1605. Epistle to the Prince [M.O.D. under "Swannet"].

(d) At p. 225 MARLORAT states that the "Disease of Naples" first appeared (i.e. in Europe) about 1524. This is the disease which, under its commoner name, the Grave Digger takes such relish in describing in its relation to Corpses. Although this had a contemporary allusion, like the CHILD Play Actors, it was for the history of Hamlet the Dane a complete anachronism.

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