

than simple *h*; and accordingly they now ignore both. But the *gh* remains—a moss-grown boulder from an ancient glacial period, when guttural were precious, and men still believed in the truthfulness of letters.

The work done by the letter *e* is perhaps the most remarkable instance in our language of union in one letter of real work with superfluous busyboddiness. Like the learned counsel in Chaucer's *Prologue*:

And yit he seemēd busier than he was.

There is—

- (1) Its usual work before consonants, as in *wet* and *wen*.
- (2) Its use to lengthen the preceding vowel, as in *mate*.
- (3) The doubling of itself to make its own long sound, as in *feed*.
- (4) Its combination with *a* for the same purpose, as in *meat*.
- (5) Its combination with *a* for the opposite purpose, as in *bread*.
- (6) Its coming after *i* to make a long sound, as in *pie*.
- (7) Its coming before *i* for the same purpose, as in *eider*.
- (8) Its combination with *i* for a quite different purpose, as in *piece*.
- (9) Its combination with *i* to make its own long sound, as in *receive*.
- (10) Its going before *w* to make a long *u* sound, as in *few*.
- (11) Its going after *u* for the same purpose, as in *due*.
- (12) Its going after *u* to make a quite different sound, as in *true*.
- (13) Its following *o* to make a long *o*, as in *foe*.

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