

**Y** and **Z** began to be used in the first century B.C., in a few words borrowed from the Greeks, to represent sounds foreign to Latin. The Romans themselves used but one sign **V** for both the vowel **U** and the semi-consonantal **V** (pronounced *u*), and similarly one sign **I** for both the vowel **I** and the semi-consonantal **J** (pronounced *y*). For the sake of convenience and clearness, however, many modern books (especially those for beginners in Latin) follow the custom that arose in the middle ages, of using distinct signs for the different sounds.

Only the capital letters (*majuscles*) were used by the Romans; while the use of the smaller "Roman" letters (*minuscules*) dates from the eighth century A.D.



DIVVS IVLIVS

*Divus Julius: The Divine Julius.*



IVDAEA CAPTA

*Judaea Capta: Judea Conquered.*

Roman Coins.

#### SOUNDS OF THE LETTERS.

##### Vowels.

6. Each of the five\* vowels, **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, **u**, has but two sounds, a long and a short. The long sounds differ from the short chiefly in requiring a distinctly longer time to utter them.

\***V**, which rarely occurs, has a sound between *u* and *i* (French *u* or German *u*).