

nearly making it a semi-consonant. That it was not a purely consonantal sound is plain, for the following reasons:

1. The same sign for *u* and *v* was used in classical Latin, and this sign readily assumed the character of a vowel or consonant. We can only infer from this that the two sounds of this letter were closely allied, so that the one could readily pass into the other. Under these conditions, does English *v* or *w* best represent its consonantal sound? We know that the vowel sound of *u* was *oo* in Latin. Now, what is the relation of the *w* to the *oo* sound? Bell says: "By a slight appulse of the lips *oo* becomes the consonant *w*." Compare *u-enio* with *w-enio*, *ser-u-os* with *ser-w-os*. Then attempt the same comparison with the English *r* sound instead of *w*, and notice how much greater the transition is from one sound to the other. The reason is plain: in the one case, it is passing from a vowel to a semi-vowel; the other is passing from a vowel to a consonant; or *u* and *w* are both labials, whereas *v* is a labio-dental.

2. Which of the two sounds must we give in *quis*, and in all words where the combination *qu* occurs? That is, which coalesces most readily with the *K* sound, *v* or *w*? Shall we say *Kwis* or *Kwis*?

3. Note Bell's statement: "When *w* is before *oo*, the combination is rather difficult from the little scope the organs have for their articulate action. The *w* is, in consequence, often omitted by careless speakers: *wool* becoming *ool*." Now, compare this fact with the well-known tendency in classical Latin of retaining *o* after *v*, in *sercos* for *serrus*, *quom* for *quum*, etc., while in all other cases an *o* following a consonant became *u*, according to a well-known principle of vowel reduction. Bell's statement accounts accurately for this fact, if we regard the Latin *r* sound as *w*; the *o* was preserved to avoid the difficult combination of *w* and *oo*.

4. *u* and *v* were often interchangeable in Latin words: for example, *sila*, *solrus*, *milrus*, and similar words could be employed by the poets, either as dissyllables or trisyllables. Such a license can only be understood on the supposition that the vowel-sound and consonant-sound of *u* were nearly related.

5. Latin *r* between two consonants fell away; for example, *am̄areram* contracted into *am̄aram*, *am̄avissem* into *am̄assem*, *providens* into *pr̄udens*. This contraction is likewise impossible of explanation if *v* was here a pure consonant.

On most of the other sounds we have the direct evidence of Latin Grammarians, from Varro, 64 B.C., to Priscian, 570 A.D., as