U or u, the 20th letter and 5th vowel of our alphabet, is formed in the voice by a round configuration of the lips, and a greater extrusion of the under one than in form­ing the letter o, and the tongue is alſo more cannulated. The sound is short in *curst, must, tun, tub ;* but is lengthened **by** a final *e,* as in *tune, tube,* &c. In ſome words it is rather acute than long ; as in *brute, flute, lute,* &c. It is mostly long in polyſyllables ; as in *union, curious,* &c. but in some words it is obſcure, as in *nature, venture,* &c. This letter in the form or V or v, is properly a conſonant, and as ſuch is placed before all the vowels ; as in *vacant, venal, vibrate, &c.* Though the letters v and u had always two sounds, they had only the form v till the beginning of the fourth century, when the other form was introduced, the inconve­nience of expressing two different sounds by the same letter having been obſerved long before. In numerals V stands for five ; and with a dash added at top, thus V, it ſignifies 5000.

In abbreviations, amongst the Romans, V. A. stood for *veterani assignati ;* V. B. *viro bono ;* V. B. A. *viri boni ar­bitratu ;* V. B. F. *vir bonae fidei ;* V. C. *vir consularis ;* **V.** C. C. F. *vale, conjux charissime, feliciter ;* V. D. D. *vote dedicatur ;* V. G. *verbi gratia ;* Vir. Ve. *virgo vestalis ;* VL. *videlicet ;* V. N. *quinto nonarum.*

VACCINIUM, the whortle-berry, or *Bilberry,* in botany : A genus of plants of the claſs of *octandria,* and or­der of *monogynia ;* and arranged in the natural ſystem under the 18th *order, Bicornes.* The calyx is ſuperior ; the co­rolla monopetalous ; the filaments inſerted into the recep­tacle ; the berry quadrilocular and polyſpermous. There are 15 species ; the most remarkable of which are,

1. The *myrtillus,* black-whorts, whortle-berries, or bil­berries, growing in woods and on heaths abundantly. The flowers frequently vary, with five ſegments at the rim, and with ten stamina. The berries when ripe are of a bluiſh black colour ; but a singular variety, with white berries, was discovered by the duke of Athol, growing in the woods, about mid-way between his two seats of Dunkeld and Blair. The berries have an astringent quality. In Arran and the Weilern Isles they are given in diarrhoeas and dyſenteries with good effect. The Highlanders frequently eat them in milk, which is a cooling agreeable food ; and ſometimes they make them into tarts and jellies, which last they mix with whisky, to give it a relish to strangers.— They dye a violet colour ; but it requires to be fixed with alum. The grous feed upon them in the autumn.

2. The *uliginoſum,* or great bilberry-buſh, is found in low moist grounds, and almost at the ſummits of the High­land mountains. The leaves are full of veins, ſmooth and glaucous, eſpecially on the under side; the berries are eatable, but not ſo much esteemed as the preceding ; as they are apt, if eaten in any quantity, to give the headach.

3. The *vitis idaea,* or red whortle-berries, frequent in dry places, in heaths, woods, and on mountains. The berries have an acid cooling quality, uſeful to quench the thirst in fevers. The Swedes are very fond of them made into the form of a rob or jelly, which they eat with their meat as an agreeable acid, proper to correct the animal al­kali.

4. The *oxycoccus,* cran-berries, moss-berries, or moor-berries, frequent on peat-bogs in the Lowlands, but not ſo common in the Highlands of Scotland. The stalks are long, slender, woody, weak, and trailing : the leaves are stiff, acutely oval, glaucous underneath, their edges turned back, and grow alternate ; two or three flowers grow singly on long red footstalks out of the extremity of the branches ; the flowers are red, divided deeply into four acute ſegments, which are reflexed quite backwards ; the filaments are dow­ny ; the antheræ ferruginous and longer than the filaments : the berries red, and about the size of the hawthorn ber­ries At Longtown, on the borders of Cumberland, they are made ſo considerable an article of commerce, that, at the ſeaſon when they are ripe, not leſs than 20 l. or 30l.'s worth are sold by the poor people each market-day for five or six weeks together, which are afterwards diſperſed over different parts of the kingdom for making the well-known cranberry tarts.

VACUUM, in philoſophy, denotes a ſpace empty or de­void of all matter or body.

It has been a matter of much dispute among philosophers whether there be in nature a perfect vacuum, or ſpace void of all matter ; but if bodies consist of material ſolid atoms, it is evident that there must be vacuities, or motion would be impossible (See Metaphysics, n⁰ 193). We can even produce ſomething very near a vacuum in the receiver of an air pump and in the Torricellian tube (see Pneumatics, *passim)* ; and it is very doubtful whether the particles of the denied bodies known be in perfect contact. See Op­tics, n⁰ 63—68.

VADIUM, a pledge in law, is either *vivum* or *mortuum.*

*Vadium Vivum,* or *Living Pledge,* is when a man borrows a ſum (ſuppoſe 200l.) of another; and grants him an estate, as of 20l. *per annum,* to hold till the rents and profits ſhall repay the ſum ſo borrowed. This is an estate conditioned to be void as ſoon as ſuch ſum is railed. And in this **case** the land or pledge is ſaid to be living : it ſubsists, and ſurvives the debts; and, immediately on the diſcharge of that, reſults back to the borrower.

*Vadium Mortuum,* or *Dead Pledge.* See Mortgage.

VAGABOND, or Vagrant, one who wanders illegally, without a settled habitation. Such persons are cognizable by the laws. See Idleness.

VAGINA, properly ſignifies **a s**heath or ſcabbard ; **and** the term *vagina* is uſed in architecture for the part of a ter­minus, because reſembling a sheath out of which the statue ſeems to iſſue.

Vagina, in anatomy, a canal reaching from the external orifice, or os pudendi, of women, to the uterus.

VAILLANT (John Foy), a physician and great medalist, to whom, according to Voltaire, France was indebted for the ſcience of medals, and Louis XIV. for one half of his cabinet, was born at Beauvais in 1632. Through the means of the minister Colbert he travelled into Italy, Greece, Egypt, and Persia, to collect medals for the royal cabinet ; and returned with ſo many as made the king’s cabinet su­perior to any in Europe. In one of his voyages the ship he sailed in was fallen upon and taken by an Algerine corsair. After a captivity of near five months he was permit­ted to return to France, and received at the same time 20 gold medals which had been taken from him. He embark­ed in a vessel bound for Marſeilles, and was carried on with a favourable wind for two days, when another corſair ap­peared, which, in ſpite of all the sail they could make, bore down upon them within the reach of cannon-shot. Mr