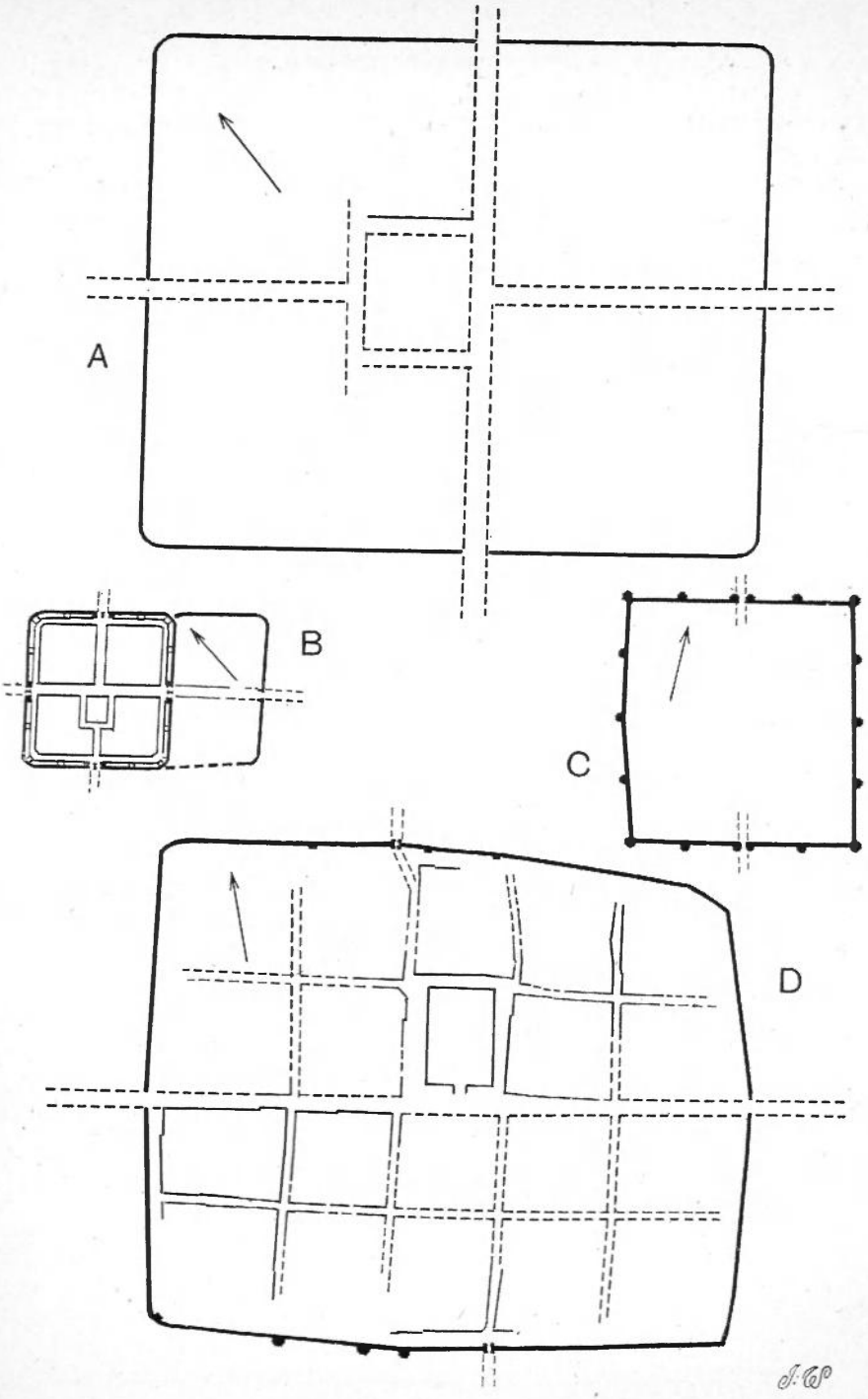

FIG. I. PLANS OF ROMAN CAERLEON (A), GELLYGAER (B), CARDIFF (C) AND CAERWENT (D). (All 500 ft. to 1 in.)

CAERLEON, CAERWENT, GELLYGAER AND CARDIFF CASTLE.

By JOHN WARD, F.S.A.

Within thirteen miles of Newport, in other words, within the littoral region of ancient Gwent lying between the Taff and the Wye, are four places notable for their Roman remains, Caerleon, Caerwent, Gellygaer and Cardiff Castle. These, however, are not alone. In the vicinities of the first two, especially at Pilbach and Great and Little Bulmore, have been discovered many structural and other remains of the Roman era. On Ely race-course, immediately west of Cardiff, a small building within a square entrenchment was partially explored by the Cardiff Naturalists' Society in 1894. Near Pontypool, Hengoed and Caerleon are visible stretches of Roman roads. Here and there have been found graves, hoards of coins, pottery and other minor remains, and there are a few earthworks which are said to be Roman. The four places named above, however, stand pre-eminent. The Roman remains at Caerleon and Caerwent are extensive and conspicuous, and at all four the spade has, within the last dozen years, unearthed many of their secrets to the enrichment of our knowledge of Roman Britain.

Caerleon is a little Usk-side town, two miles north-east of Newport. The valley here expands into a spacious but irregular basin with a flat alluvial bottom, on a broad tongue of which the town stands. Low-lying, it is true, it nevertheless crowns a gentle rise, scarcely perceptible from most points of view. An old-world place it is, with narrow crooked streets among which the stranger is apt to lose his bearings, but at almost every turn some evidence of an important past will reward his curiosity. In the midst is the large and ancient church. Hard by is the little museum stored with local finds and the memorials of the Second 'Augusta' Legion, which for three centuries or more was stationed here. Here and

there is a quaint bit of old domestic architecture. Around all is the fragmentary Roman wall, and beyond this, the huge hollow of the amphitheatre, known as "King Arthur's Round Table." History, tradition and legend enhance the interest of the place. In the twelfth century, Gerald the Welshman wrote in grandiloquent terms of the vestiges of its "ancient grandeur," of its baths, temples, theatres, and palaces once adorned (so he averred) "with gilded roofs"; and from Leland downwards, it has engaged the pens of many antiquaries and topographers. During the past sixty years remains of Roman buildings, one very large one, without the north-east wall, apparently baths,[1] have come to light and been described by local writers, but only since 1908 has there been systematic spade-work in the sole interests of science. In that year, a plot of ground about to be added to the churchyard was thoroughly explored by the Caerleon and Monmouthshire Antiquarian Society in conjunction with the Liverpool Committee for Exploration and Research in Wales[2]; and this was followed in 1909 by extensive diggings within the east corner of the town wall and some trenching of the amphitheatre.[3]

Caerwent lies ten miles east of Newport, and, like Caerleon, crowns an eminence, only more pronounced, along the south foot of which flows the Nedern or Troggy. Tradition has it that the place was a seaport. Even if the Nedern was of ampler volume (it is a mere brook now) it seems incredible that ships could have sailed it as far as Caerwent. But the tradition may have a foundation in fact, for east and then south-east its two-and-a-half miles' course of the sea is along low-lying land much of which at no distant date was a marsh, and Ballan Moor was in this condition before the Severn Tunnel was made. It is quite conceivable that in Roman times small vessels at high water could have reached within half a mile of the town. The mouth of the stream, the *Ostium Tarocum* of the *Liber Landavensis*, was still used as a port in the eleventh century. Roman Caerwent was of about the same size as Caerleon, but to-day it is a small and scattered

[1] Lee, *Isca Silurum*, p. 85.
[2] Evelyn-White, *First Annual Report*, p. 53.
[3] Not yet published.

village, clean and rural, with an ancient church shorn of its aisle. Its chief feature is its ruined town wall, which on the south is one of the most imposing vestiges of the Roman era in this country, and with the wall we couple the north and south gates which remain to the springs of their arches. From Leland, who recognised the place as "sumtyme a fair and large Cyte" wherein "in digging they finde foundations of Great Brykes, Tessellata Pavimenta et Numismata argentea simul et aerea," downwards, many writers have commented on the discoveries made here. What, however, gives greater distinction to Caerwent is the series of annual excavations which began in 1899 and ended in 1910,[1] to be resumed, let us hope, at an early date. This great work owes its inception to Mr. A. Trice Martin, F.S.A. The Caerwent Exploration Fund was started and a committee appointed with an executive consisting of Messrs. Martin, Alfred E. Hudd, J. E. Pritchard and the writer. The exploration has been carried out chiefly under the superintendence of the first two gentlemen, and Dr. T. Ashby, F.S.A. and Mr. Frank King. From first to last, Viscount Tredegar was president, and to his interest and munificence are very largely due the success of the undertaking. During the eleven years, considerably more than half the area within the walls was subjected to the spade, bringing to light a multitude of remains which will be briefly described presently. The museum on the site contains one of the best collections of the minor remains of the era in the country. Altogether, the exploration of Caerwent has yielded an insight into a Romano-British town, second only in value to that of Silchester.

Gellygaer, about twelve miles north-west of Newport, stands high and conspicuous, commanding a wide prospect of typical coal-measure scenery. Around are the evidences of mining enterprise and of an increasing population, but the town still retains an old-world look. Like many another old village of the south Welsh coalfield, it lacks the touch of picturesqueness, and even its ancient church is austere and sombre. Near the latter is a field, the

[1] For the reports of these excavations, see *Archaeologia*, lvii, lviii, lix, lx, lxi and lxii. A paper contributed to the Clifton Antiquarian Club by Mr. A. T. Martin, M.A. in 1894 gives a summary of what was known of Roman Caerwent at that date.

Gaer Fawr, marked with sundry inequalities, faint rises and hollows, which from time beyond the memory of man has been known as the 'camp' and accounted as Roman. This field, the Cardiff Naturalists' Society subjected to a thorough exploration in 1899, 1900 and 1901, and uncovered the remains of a small Roman fort.[1] Adjoining it is another, the Gaer Fâch, which the same society took in hand in 1909, 1910 and 1911,[2] and found therein the remains of the baths of the garrison, together with those of other buildings, all within a fortified annexe of the castellum. This work of archaeological research is as important in its way as that of Caerwent, as it has given the world the plan of a Roman fort of the type, unique for its completeness.

Cardiff Castle, ten and a half miles south-west of Newport, is in the midst of Cardiff, and one of the few reminders that this busy commercial centre of phenomenal nineteenth-century growth, has its roots deep set in the soil of the past. In the eighteenth century, its Roman origin was little more than a surmise based upon its quadrangular form and the occasional finding of a Roman coin. Baxter supposed that it was the Jupania of the Ravenna chorographer. It figures as Tibia Amnis in the forged itinerary of Richard of Cirencester. Later in the century, some one paraphrased the Welsh name of Cardiff, Caerdydd, as the camp of Aulus Didius, apparently intending thereby, Avitus Didius Gallus, the propraetor who followed Ostorius; and because Camden had conjectured that the Taff was the Rhatostathybios of Ptolemy, someone else fastened the name on the place. In the nineteenth century, most writers on the history of Cardiff crystallised these guesses into facts, sometimes with further embellishments. A date, A.D. 53, was invented for the foundation of Cardiff. It was said that Aulus Didius resided here and named it after himself; that it dates back "to epochs that are pre-historic," and so forth. In sober fact, nothing is known of the date of its foundation or of the Roman name.

In 1889, a discovery was made which conclusively proved the Roman origin of the castle. The great earth-

[1] Ward, *Roman Fort of Gellygaer.*

[2] Ward, *Cardiff Naturalists' Transactions*, xlii and xliv.

work which closes in the square site on the east and north and extends a short distance on the west and south is almost certainly of Norman age, and within it was found a Roman wall, strong and thick, and already an ancient ruin when buried.[1] This wall, the late marquess of Bute decided to rebuild, a work which began in 1898 and is now almost finished, with the result that from the north and east the castle shows as a reconstructed Roman fort, a thing unique in this country. Critics may differ as to the treatment of the upper portion of this reconstruction, but it faithfully reproduces the Roman plan as the Roman masonry seen at the foot sufficiently proves.

Caerleon, Caerwent, Gellygaer and Cardiff castle stand for four phases of things Romano-British (fig. 1). Each is a type. In the first we have a legionary fortress, in the second a small town, in the third a small castellum modelled on the lines of the Hyginian camp, and in the fourth a bastioned post. The first two arose early in the Roman era and continued throughout. Gellygaer was also early, but appears to have been dismantled before the second century was far advanced, presumably because it had fulfilled its purpose. Cardiff castle may also have been early, but its existing remains savour of the third and fourth centuries, and recall the well-known forts of the Saxon shore, Burgh castle, Richborough, Lympne, Pevensey, and Porchester. Gellygaer suggests a post to overawe a newly-conquered people; Cardiff a naval base to protect a Romanised population from over-sea marauders. Caerleon and Caerwent are on the main Roman road, the so-called 'Via Julia,' which stretches from Gloucester to Carmarthen and beyond. Cardiff may be on the same road, but more probably on a southerly loop of it. Gellygaer is on a road from Cardiff to the great castellum, the Gaer near Brecon. There is literary evidence of the Roman names of Caerleon and Caerwent. Both figure in the Antonine Itinerary and the Ravenna list, and the former is also in that of Ptolemy. The one is Isca, or by way of distinction, Isca of the Second 'Augusta' Legion, and the other, Venta Silurum. Of the Roman names of Gellygaer and Cardiff, we know nothing.

[1] Ward, *Archaeologia*, lvii, 336; *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1908, 29.

In form they all followed the well-known military model, but not equally so.[1] Caerleon and Gellygaer were symmetrical oblongs with rounded corners and four gates symmetrically placed. Caerwent was similar, but somewhat irregular both in shape and in the positions of the gates. Cardiff differed, but without irregularities. It apparently had two gates medially placed, north and south, and two posterns similarly placed, east and west. But more markedly it differed in its bastions. Caerwent had three on its south side, but these were additions, whereas at Cardiff they are a regular feature and part and parcel of the construction of the wall.

Let us now compare the fortifications. At Gellygaer, the rampart was of earth derived from the single ditch. It was faced with a wall nearly four feet thick, built of dressed stones; and the foot of the bank behind was retained by a thinner and lower wall, the total width of the rampart being about 20 feet. The rampart-walk was on the summit of the bank at a height of about 10 feet, and the external wall was carried upwards to form a parapet, embattled we may be sure, and probably 5 or 6 feet high. The four gates were of like form and size, each containing two arched passages, side by side and between two towers. The fronts of the towers were flush with the face of the rampart, but the gate-structure was recessed 6 feet. There was a similar tower within each rounded corner of the fort, and one midway between each of these and the gates; twenty towers in all. How high the towers were we can only guess, but we know that they were roofed with red tiles.

Of the fortifications of Caerleon little is known. There was an earth-bank faced with a wall of moderate thickness. Within the east corner has been exposed the basement of a tower, but whether the towers were confined to the corners as often was the case, or also occurred at regular intervals along the sides, is unknown. Of the four gates only the sites are known. Outside the wall is the broad indent of a ditch, perhaps two.

[1] The following dimensions are taken along the central lines and include the ramparts:

Caerleon, 1615 × 1365 ft. (approximately 46 acres).

Caerwent, 1585 × 1346 ft. (approximately 41 acres).

Gellygaer, 402 × 385 ft. (approximately 2¾ acres).

Cardiff castle, 635 × 603 ft. (approximately 7¼ acres).

At Caerwent the wall and the bank behind it are on a grand scale. In one place the former still stands upwards of 24 feet, nearly 11 feet thick at the base and reduced by offsets at the back to 6 feet 6 inches at the summit, the front presenting a vertical face of roughly hammer-dressed masonry. Of the principal gates, those through which the 'Via Julia' passed, only small fragments remain. The north and south gates are in better plight. Each was a square structure containing a single passage, arched above, front and back. The large and well dressed masonry, the moulded imposts, the carefully shaped voussoirs, and the fragments of cornice found by the south gate, indicate that these structures had some degree of architectural distinction. Instead of hollow towers as at Gellygaer and Caerleon, the wall has shallow pilaster-like projections on the back. These were roughly 14 feet wide, but that within the south-west corner was larger and of greater projection. Probably they supported towers, or they may have simply provided solid platforms for *ballistae*. The three bastions, already referred to, are large polygonal structures, solid for a height of six feet, and containing above that level a chamber of the same shape. They are of later construction than the wall, and are toothed into large holes cut in the face of the latter, when they were built. On the north side of the town there was a double ditch, but whether this was continued all round is at present uncertain. One of the interesting discoveries of the exploration was the clear evidence that originally and for a considerable time the rampart was of earthwork only, but with stone gates, for these are almost certainly older than the wall.

At Cardiff the wall was exhumed in the condition in which it was covered up some seven centuries ago. It remained to the tolerably uniform height of 12 or 13 feet, but in one place it exceeded this by 3 feet. In width at the base, 10 feet 6 inches, it is reduced above to 8 feet 6 inches by several step-like offsets at the back. Behind can be distinguished, below the Norman earthwork, the Roman bank about 10 feet high, derived from the foundation-trench of the wall, and probably also from an external ditch; but for this ditch there is no certain evidence, and if it existed, all trace of it

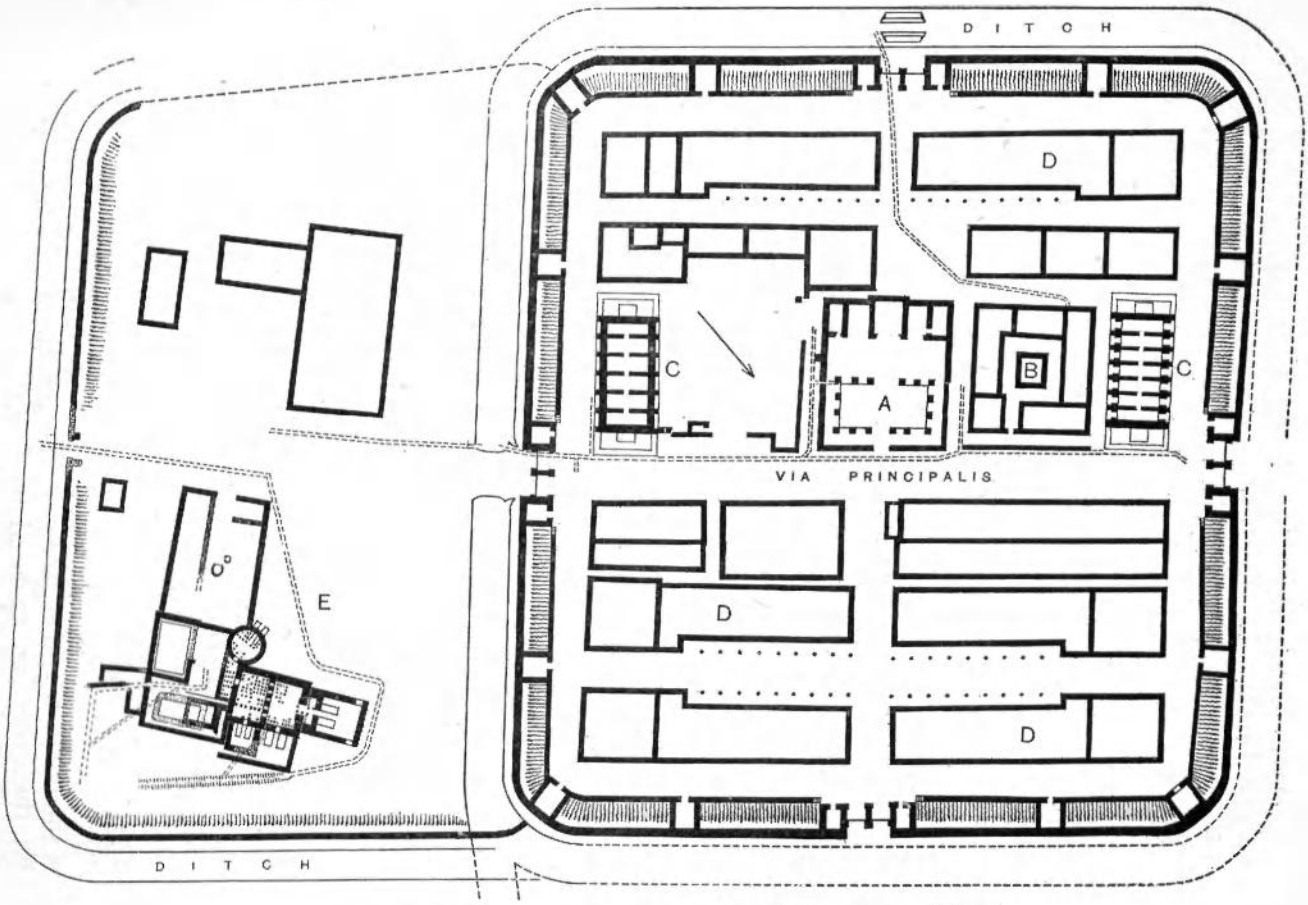

FIG. 2. PLAN OF ROMAN FORT AT GELLYGAER (100 ft. to 1 in.)

must be obliterated by the larger mediaeval ditch. The polygonal bastions that remain are bonded into the wall, and with one exception are solid structures. The exception is the middle bastion on the east side, which is hollow above the height of 6 feet 6 inches, and there is reason to think that it contained a postern. The only remaining gate is in the middle of the north side. It contained a single passage between two guard-chambers with projecting fronts of the same form as the bastions, but smaller. The mediaeval gate of the castle exactly balances this on the south, and with little doubt marks the site of the south Roman gate. From the existing remains and other indications, it is possible to restore the plan of the Roman fortifications with probable accuracy: two gates, north and south; two posterns, east and west; a bastion midway between each of these and the contiguous corner, and each corner capped with another. The facing-masonry throughout is of squared lias limestone, and the grouted core is of rock-like hardness.

We now pass to what the fortifications protected, the streets and buildings within and any notable structures without.

The plan of the streets and buildings at Gellygaer (fig. 2) is as complete as can be expected where little more than foundations remain. It recalls the camp attributed to Hyginus, except that the tents and other temporary shelters are here translated into stone, but it is a free and not a literal rendering. Between the lateral gates stretched the *via principalis*, and this was intersected, crosswise, by the main longitudinal street, save where interrupted by the *principia* or headquarters (A). Within the rampart and surrounding the interior ran another street which intersected the others at the gates. On one side of the *via principalis* stood the headquarters, medially placed and of the usual form, with a large porticoed courtyard next the street and five rooms at the back, of which the middle and largest was the shrine of the fort. On the one side was a house-like building (B), surrounding a small court, and regarded as the commandant's lodging; on the other, an enclosed yard with furnaces and other remains suggestive of industrial operations. Beyond these and next the lateral gates were two strongly built and

buttressed granaries with entrances and loading platforms at the ends (C, C). Behind this principal range were two other buildings of diverse shapes and divided into rooms, probably stores and workshops. On the opposite side of the *via principalis* were a long double building and two shorter ones, all of uncertain use. Thus we have in the middle region of the fort a number of buildings of diverse shapes and sizes, with the headquarters in the midst.

The rest of the interior was occupied by six long buildings of like size and distinctive form, four at one end and two at the other (D, D). Each was somewhat L-shaped, one of the side walls for two-thirds the length being set back several feet : in front of this was a verandah or portico, the roof of which was supported by wooden posts. These buildings were the barracks, each block being allotted to a century of an ordinary cohort (*cohors quingenaria*) consisting of six centuries, or about 500 men. In the 'head' or wide end, would be the quarters of the centurion and his staff, and in the narrower 'limb,' which, to judge from the analogy of barrack-blocks elsewhere, was divided into ten rooms, would be those of the men. The whole plan of the fort was symmetrical, instinct with military method and orderliness, and with neither waste of space nor overcrowding.

The 'suburbs' have not yet been fully explored. Within the past three years, the spade has traced an oblong annexe on the south-east side of the fort, of the same length as itself and a little more than half the width. It was closed in on the three free sides by a wall with a low bank on the inner side and a ditch on the outer. The *via principalis* passed through it and emerged through a gate on the south-east. Within the enclosed space were the baths of the garrison (E) which were on an ample scale for a small fort, two large yards and several small buildings, which, to judge from scanty evidence, were used for industrial purposes. It is clear that the civil settlement is yet to be sought elsewhere in the vicinity of the castellum.

Practically nothing is known of the internal planning of Isca. The excavations of the year 1909 afforded a glimpse, but the area was too small to throw any light

on the general scheme. The positions of the four gates indicate a cruciform arrangement of the chief streets, but only to a slight degree do the present streets coincide with the Roman. There is a considerable space unbuilt upon within the south wall, which may yield valuable results to the future excavator; but it is quite likely that mediaeval Caerleon stretched further to the south than the present town, in which case the Roman remains may be confusingly mixed with those of later times. Still Caerleon affords the best field for research on the site of a legionary fortress in this country: Chester, York and Lincoln are too densely built upon to allow of systematic excavation on a large scale. Although the complete plan is beyond recovery, sufficient may be brought to light to allow of comparison with those of Neuss on the Rhine and Lambaesis in Algeria. We may safely assume that what Gellygaer was in small, Isca was in large, making due allowance, of course, for the fact that the one was occupied by a cohort of auxiliaries, and the other by a legion. The plan of Isca would be more complex, but its general scheme would be similar. Although, unlike Chester and Lincoln, the streets have obviously straggled from their Roman lines, they still reflect their Roman planning. The line of the *via principalis* is clear, and the site of the *principia* is to a considerable extent represented by the churchyard, where sundry remains of a confirmatory nature have been found.

Of the suburbs we know a little more. The amphitheatre shows as an elliptical depression surrounded with an irregular raised rim. It is essentially an excavation, flat-bottomed for the arena with sloping sides for the spectators, the soil removed being heaped above to increase the slope. This heaped soil was supported by an outer ring of wall buttressed on each side, while the foot of the slope was retained by an inner ring of thinner construction enclosing the arena, which had a thick floor of sand. There were at least three entrances, one of which led to the arena. The longer diameter of the whole was about 274 feet, and the shorter some 50 feet less. The post-Roman history is simple. The masonry served as a convenient quarry. With the reduction of the outer ring, the fall of the upper part of the slope it supported soon buried what was left,

FIG 3. PLAN OF ROMAN REMAINS AT CAERWENT (300 ft. to 1 in.)

and so buried it remained until revealed by the recent excavations.

In the fields between the amphitheatre and the river on the south-west are the surface-indications of buildings of considerable extent, which are popularly known as the Baths, but whether correctly so, it is impossible to say. The remains of the large building in the castle grounds on the north-east, already referred to as excavated about sixty years ago, are known as the Villa, but to judge from the published plans and descriptions, both rather vague, they were certainly baths on a large scale. The site of the bridge is known, but there are no visible traces of it. Some coffins, tombstones, and other sepulchral remains have been found here and there in the vicinity on the north-west and north, and further away to the east beyond the Usk, where traces of other suburban buildings, probably houses, have been noted. The little museum collection, which for its size is rich in tombstones and other lapidary inscriptions, throws further light on Isca and its people.[1]

Roman Caerwent (fig. 3) was threaded east and west by the 'Via Julia,' which formed its principal street. Parallel to this were two other streets, one on either side, and all three were crossed at right angles by four others, thus dividing the town into twenty *insulae*, of approximately equal sizes. The main street was wide : the rest, with the exception of the two along the sides of the forum, were narrow, rarely exceeding 22 or 23 feet in width. This chessboard town-planning is characteristically Roman, but not exclusively so. It is seen in ancient towns of the Greek world ; occasionally in those of mediaeval creation, such as Conway ; in most American cities, and in many modern suburban districts in our own country. Silchester was similarly laid out. The plan of Venta Silurum, as we know it, is a portion only, and of the town in its latest Roman phase.[2] It reflects, as far as it goes, the original planning, but not exactly so. The exploration yielded evidence of encroachments on the streets, thereby rendering them

[1] *Isca Silurum* is essentially a catalogue of the museum in 1862.

[2] Modified from Mr. Frank King's general plan of Caerwent (*Archaeologia*, lxii, plate lxiv). There is a discrepancy between this and his large scale plan of houses xviii to xxv (plate lx). As the latter is undoubtedly correct, I have followed it (plate lxii).

somewhat irregular and here and there curtailing their former widths.

The forum (A)[1] occupied the central *insula* on the north side of the main street, and corresponded both in position and in form with the *principia* of the forts. It resembled the corresponding building at Silchester, but was smaller and simpler. A large gateway, probably as at Silchester a conspicuous architectural feature, gave access to its spacious paved courtyard, enclosed on three sides by a portico, and on the fourth or further side by the basilica. Behind the portico was a narrow range divided into shops, except on the west side which had been altered to admit of a rectangular structure, perhaps a temple or a shrine. The basilica was divided as usual into a nave and aisles[2] by two rows of large and lofty columns of Corinthian type, and at the ends and along the north side were courts and other official rooms. The street on the west appears to have retained its original width of about 45 feet; that on the east had been somewhat reduced by the encroachment of a temple and its precincts at the south end; that on the north was narrower, but still wider than the average; while the main street on the south was wider than elsewhere. The forum thus stood distinctive, the chief feature of the ancient city.

Of the buildings that lined the main thoroughfare,[3] many have been excavated, and most of them were long and narrow, with gables to the street and closely packed together, but rarely touching. These were the shops. Originally their frontage lines were set back some 15 feet from the side drains of the roadway, the intervening spaces apparently being foot-walks. The front room was usually large. It was the workshop or *officina*, for the trader was a craftsman. Many of these workshops yielded evidences of industrial operations to the explorers' spades: furnaces and hearths, in one a baker's oven, and in another the indications of a smithy. The living-rooms were generally at the back and looked upon a small garden or yard.

[1] Messrs. Ashby, Hudd and King, *Archaeologia*, iii, lxi, 569; and Ward, *Romano-British Buildings and Earthworks*, 220.

[2] Mr. W. H. St. John Hope claims that the basilica had a north aisle only and that what is assumed to be the south aisle was the fourth ambulatory of the forum. *Archaeologia*, lxi, 577, note *a*.

[3] *Archaeologia*, lxii, 7, 421.

Similar buildings have been found at Silchester, chiefly along the street leading to the west gate; but the Caerwent examples show interesting developments. In early days the traders erected verandahs or porticoes over the footwalks supported on timber posts or stone columns; and under these they appear to have displayed their wares, for later the verandah became a closed-in shop with doorway and large opening answering to the modern shop window; and later still a shop here and there encroached upon the roadway itself. These buildings were too closely packed together to have admitted of side windows, hence we may conclude that they were of a single story, with skylights, or more probably with simple openings in the roofs for the admission of light and the escape of the smoke of the furnaces and hearths. The roofs were clothed with stone shingles of well-known Roman shape, which in combination produced a pleasing lattice of pointed scales, and here and there a gable point was adorned with a stone finial. A few buildings there were with wider frontages and courtyards accessible from the streets. These may have been private houses, but more probably inns, and they recall the arrangement of the mediaeval hostelries of which the "Tabard," the "Talbot" and the "Bull and Mouth" in London are notable examples.

The encroachments, whether by consent of the municipal authority or otherwise, did not seriously obstruct the street, for it was of spacious width. At one place near the west gate, the roadway was about 45 feet between the side drains, but it is tolerably clear that it expanded towards the forum, and culminated in front of that structure in a width of 80 feet or more. There is, however, reason to think that that front was adorned with a portico which would somewhat reduce the width. At one end of this open space, at the foot of the wide street on the west of the forum, were found the vestiges of apparently a public monument,[1] of which the damaged inscription remains, indicating that it was erected to some high official by order of the local government, the council or senate of the *Civitas Silurum*; and balancing this at the other

[1] *Archaeologia*, lix, 115.

end was the temple already referred to. The remains of this structure are still open to view. It is rectangular, 42 by 45 feet, with the east and west walls buttressed and the entrance on the south. The square *cella* has an apse on the north. In its main features it resembles the much larger temple of Nodens at Lydney Park, but is simpler.[1] It stood at the north end of an oblong enclosure, along the south end of which stretched a narrow hall-like building with an apse on the east and a wide doorway on the south leading to the temple and its precincts from the main street.

To the north-east of the forum, and, contrary to the general rule, within the town walls, are the remains, also still exposed to view, of what is believed to be a small amphitheatre (D). It was of late construction, for several buildings had been pulled down to make room for it, and it appears never to have been finished.[2] In a similar position on the north-west was exhumed a portion of a large hypocausted building, which seems to have been the public baths (C).[3] Towards the north-east corner of the town, and still exposed to view, is a tangle of remains of buildings of three periods, the intermediate of which has some claim to be regarded as a little Christian church of primitive type (G).[4] Like the well-known example at Silchester its apse faces the west. South-west of the forum and set back from the south side of the main street is a building (B) almost identical in size and shape with the temple already described. One is tempted to regard it as the temple of Mars Ocellus, as an inscribed altar to this god was found hard by on the east, and an inscribed pedestal of his statue further away to the south-east.[5] Further to the west, and set back from the same side of the street, were excavated the scanty remains of what has been supposed, but with considerable doubt, to be those of a shrine, on the site of which was found the rudely carved head presumably of a god.[6] Near the south-west corner of the town was discovered a large building remarkable for its internal peristyle of strong and good construction

[1] *Archaeologia*, lxii, 4. For comparative plans of these two temples, see *Romano-British Buildings and Earthworks*, 239.
[2] *Archaeologia*, lix, 104.
[3] Ibid. lix, 97.
[4] Ibid. lxii, 416.
[5] Ibid. lxii, 439.
[6] Ibid. lviii, 148.

(E). It hardly seems to have been a private house. From its analogy to a larger building at Silchester it has been regarded as a *hospitium*.[1]

The private houses, with two or three known exceptions, were scattered behind the main street. Most of them were of the so-called "courtyard type," and several were large and elaborate, and their remains proved that they had been altered and extended from time to time. As at Silchester, and contrary to our custom, they turned their backs to the streets and fronted their courtyards. Their good construction, rich decorated mosaic pavements, gaily coloured wall-plaster, hypocausts, window-glass, and stone roofing-slates indicate that they were the houses of well-to-do people who were by no means strangers to the refinements of civilised life. Caerwent was something more than a little commercial centre. It was the seat of the local government, and we can well imagine that some of these larger houses were the residences of the official class. Here and there was a workshop or a small building of uncertain use, or a well or rubbish-pit from which the explorers extracted a harvest of finds.

Compared with Calleva, Venta Silurum was more thickly strewn with buildings. It was smaller, of course, and probably less important, but in many ways it enlarges our knowledge of Romano-British town life.

The finds of the exploration are housed in a temporary museum on the site, and form one of the best collections of the kind in this country. It is especially rich in pottery and small metallic objects, and nowhere else is to be seen a larger display of decorated wall-plaster. Several of the Caerwent mosaic pavements are set up in the museum at Newport, and large portions of two others in the Welsh Museum at Cardiff.

Of the interior of Cardiff castle we know next to nothing. Roman pottery and coins are turned up in diggings if deep enough, for the Roman surface is five feet or more below the present. Buried walls and foundations have been found from time to time, but how many of these were Roman it is impossible to say. Probably most were mediaeval or later. This much, however, can

[1] *Archaeologia*, lvii, 301, *Romano-British Buildings and Earthworks*, 166.

be said for certain, a hypocaust was found near the south-west corner in 1778, and on two recent occasions a hard roadway of iron *scoriae* was touched, running east and west across the middle of the area, while a similar road entered the north gate. Of the 'suburbs' we scarcely know more. Roman pottery has been found in High Street to the south of the castle, and further away to the north-west, on Penhill and at Llandaff; while as far due west was the small building partly excavated in 1894, and referred to in the opening paragraph.

Of the four places we have considered, Caerleon, Gellygaer and Cardiff castle were military stations. Can we draw any inference as to the local military conditions which brought these into being? The chief interest from this point of view centres in Caerleon. Why was a legionary station placed on the Usk? For a solution, we must turn to history.

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the Roman conquest of Britain began in A.D. 43, and that with remarkable rapidity all the more fertile portion of the island south-east of a line from the Wash to the Severn passed directly or indirectly under the Roman sway. In this process, the Second 'Augusta' ever trended westwards until the vicinity of the latter river was reached. Perhaps the Romans did not contemplate further advances. But the Wash-to-Severn line was by no means a scientific frontier. Beyond it, the wastes and hills of the north midlands and of Wales were held by warlike tribes, safe from attack and ever prone to harassing incursions into the province. By force of circumstances, the Romans, like ourselves in India, had to extend their conquests. Under Ostorius a definite forward movement began. Much of North Wales succumbed to the Roman arms, but in the south the resistance of the Silures remained unbroken, and in A.D. 54 the governor died, worn out by anxieties. What happened under his immediate successors little is known, but there seems to have been nothing in the way of expansion. Perhaps the policy of the government was the consolidation and development of what had already been gained. But under Frontinus (A.D. 75–78) was effected the subjugation of the Silures, and under his successor, Agricola, was completed the conquest of Wales.

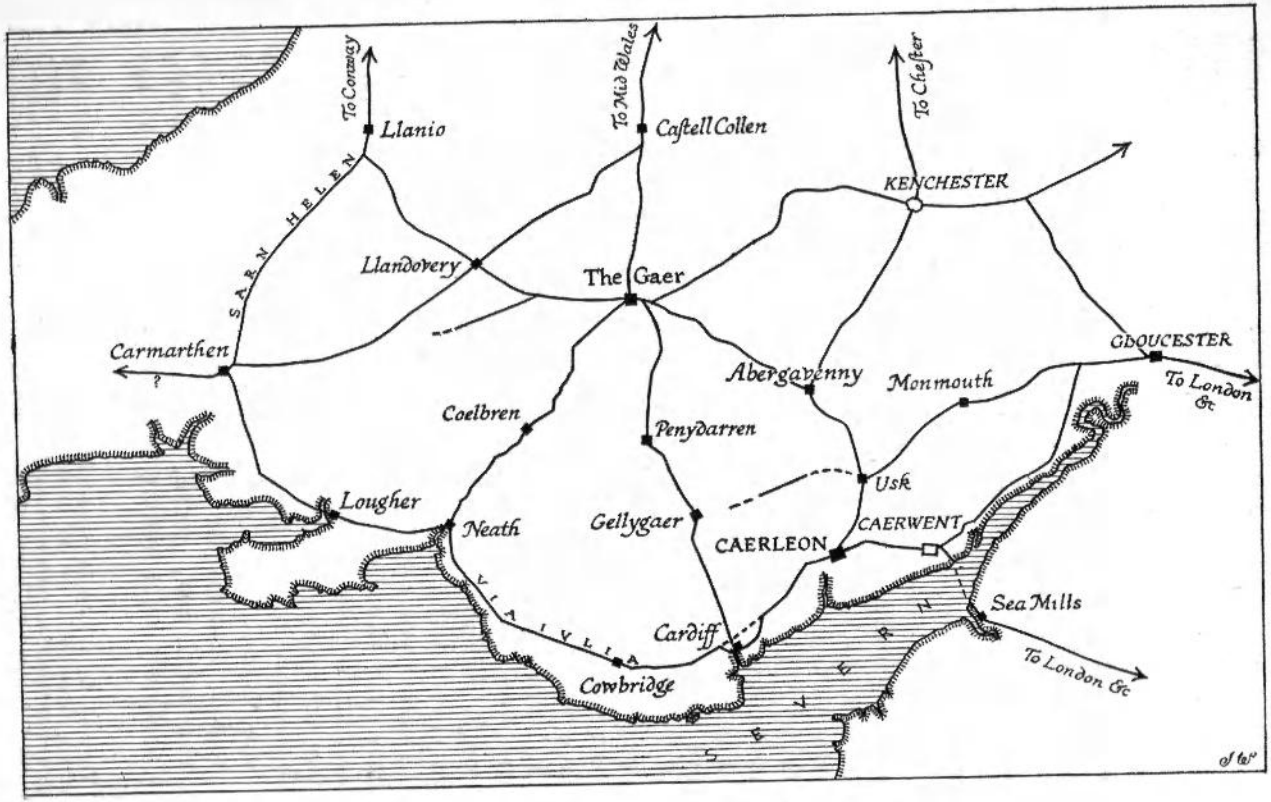

FIG. 4. ROMAN ROADS AND PLACES, SOUTH WALES, ETC.

Although subjugated, mountainous Wales was tardy in acquiescing in Roman rule. Remains of forts and roads we find, but nothing to indicate that the hillmen ever became as Romanised as the dwellers of the lowlands elsewhere. Hence the protracted presence of a legion on the Dee and another on the Usk, the latter, because Monmouthshire is the gate of South Wales.

There were two essentials. Isca must have easy access, and in its turn it must have easy means of communication with the scattered garrisons of auxiliaries in mid and southern Wales. This brings us to the admirable system of roads and castella.[1] Some of these roads can be traced archaeologically, but for the approximate lines of others we have to rely upon the Antonine Itinerary. Three routes to Isca from the east and south-east can be distinguished. Two of these passed through Gloucester, the one following the Severn through Chepstow and Caerwent and already referred to as the 'Via Julia'; the other, more inland, through or north of the Forest of Dean and by way of Blestium (Monmouth or some place in its vicinity) and Burrium (Usk). The third was the more direct, but it involved crossing the Severn by boat somewhere near the present tunnel, and this done the 'Via Julia' was reached near Caerwent. Another important route from the north linked Chester with Isca, passing through Virioconium (Wroxeter), Gobannium (Abergavenny) and Usk.

There were two chief routes from Isca into Wales. There was the continuation of the 'Via Julia' which threaded the littoral region of the Severn Sea; but perhaps of greater military importance was an Usk-valley road from Abergavenny to the large castellum near Brecon, known as the Gaer. This post was a road-centre of great strategical importance. From it radiated other roads, to the north-east, north, west, south-west and south, the southerly ones ending with the 'Via Julia,' and the

[1] The map, fig. 4, must be regarded as somewhat diagrammatic, for the Roman roads of South Wales have not as yet received the critical attention they deserve, still less have they been studied as a system. There is, however, fair evidence that all the roads shown existed, but in many cases their exact courses are conjectural. The solid black squares represent the military stations, but here again there is no definite evidence that all were so, although most are beyond doubt. Caerwent and Kenchester were certainly towns.

easterly, with the Sarn Helen[1] from Carmarthen to Conway. At each point of junction with these was a castellum, and on most of the radial roads were others, as Gellygaer, for instance, on that between Cardiff and the Gaer. In this military scheme, the Gaer seems to have been a sort of distributing centre. From its large size, we can well imagine that it contained a reserve of auxiliaries always available to reinforce the garrisons of the smaller posts; while it and all were in easy touch with the legion at the base.[2]

As time went on, the local conditions allowed of relaxation. Some of the castella, as that at Gellygaer, were early dismantled, and others later; but Cardiff castle evidently played an important part in late Roman times, and a part similar to that played by the forts of the Saxon Shore. We know that from the third century onwards, Britain was increasingly menaced by the hardy sea-pirates from the opposite shores of the North Sea and in less degree from Ireland, hence these coast-forts and the fleets which policed the seas. It would be passing strange if the estuary of the Severn with its important tributaries, the Usk, the Wye and the Avon, all natural highways to fertile regions well populated in Roman times, was left unguarded. We should expect at least one strong fort to bar this access, and we find Cardiff castle admirably placed and late in type.

Since the above was written, there has been a movement for the complete excavation of the amphitheatre at Caerleon and the permanent preservation of the remains thus exposed. The preliminary steps have already been settled, and there can be no question that if the full end is attained, the remains will be a monument of national interest, for no other amphitheatre in Britain is more promising in this respect, as its masonry is strong and massive and can be easily treated to withstand the effects of the weather. An appeal for the necessary funds will shortly be made, and it is hoped that it will meet with a wide response.

[1] The road from Neath to the Gaer, the exact course of which is the best known of any on the map, is another 'Sarn Helen.'

[2] In Prof. F. Haverfield's *Military Aspects of Roman Wales (Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1908–1909) we have a valuable conspectus of present knowledge of the Welsh castella.

The preservation of these remains might well be the prelude of a similar treatment of the Roman fort at Gellygaer. Its site is free from buildings, and it has the advantage that already having been thoroughly explored, we know exactly what it contains. The buried walls could be carried up as dwarf walls; the old streets be re-gravelled; and eventually some of the structures be completely rebuilt, the south-west gate for instance, which would serve as an entrance to the enclosure. No other site of our Roman forts better lends itself to the purpose. It could be so treated as to provide a pleasance for the rapidly-growing population and an object-lesson in archaeology. The dwarf-walled spaces could bear inscriptions explaining their original uses, and from an elevation, as from the summit of the reconstructed gate, the site would present the plan in stone of a Roman fort unique in its completeness.