

MONMOUTHSHIRE.

INSCRIPTIONS AND SCULPTURED STONES AT CAERLEON.

The Roman station of Caerleon was in all probability founded by Julius Frontinus about A.D. 70, and for a long series of years was the residence of the Second Augustan Roman Legion (which from its protracted stay in our island obtained the name of Britannica). It derives its present name from a corruption of the British word for a fortified city, *caer*, and *leon*, a corruption of *legionum*, thus making it the City of the Legions. Owen, a famous Welsh scholar, considered the proper spelling to be *Caer-llion*, or the City of the Waters, the town being nearly surrounded by the windings of the river Usk; but the former derivation is supported by the British name of Chester, *Caer-leon-vawr*, where the twentieth legion was stationed, and *Mynydd Caer Lleion* or the *Kaer Lleion* mountain, near *Caerhun*, in *Caernarvonshire*, where the tenth legion was stationed. It was also named *Caer-Wysc*, and *Isca Silurum*, and *Isca Augusta* in the *Ravenna List*, and in *Gale's* copy of *Antoninus* it is called *Isce Legua Augusta*, i.e. *Isca Legionis secundæ Augustæ*: the name *Isce* being in fact the British word *Wysg*, signifying a place situated on the banks of a stream, and which is here preserved in the name of the river Usk on which Caerleon is situated.

The very numerous Roman remains found in Caerleon and its immediate vicinity attest its importance, and almost justify the flaming description of the place given by *Giraldus Cambrensis* (vol. iii. p. 108). It became in fact the capital of the Roman province of *Britannia Secunda*.

In the early days of the British Church it also became the metropolitan see of Wales (*Usserii Antiq.*, cap. v., and *Bingham, Antiq. Chr. Church*, ix. cap. vi. sec. 20). But *Henry of Huntingdon* towards the close of the twelfth century tells us that, although it had been the seat of an archbishop, the walls were then scarcely visible. For several centuries after the departure of the Romans, and even during their occupation of the place, scarcely any record has been preserved of its history. In 892 the Danes ravaged the whole district and plundered the town, and during the latter half of the tenth and eleventh centuries various notices occur of its troubles, arising from the dissensions of the Welsh princes and the attacks upon the place both by the Danes and Saxons, as fully described by *Mr. Wakeman* in his memoir on Caerleon printed in the third volume of the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, and abridged by *Mr. Lee* in his '*Isca Silurum*.'

In the year 1849, by the strenuous exertions of the *Monmouthshire and Caerleon Antiquarian Association*, a small elegant building in the Grecian style, near the present church of Caerleon, was erected for a museum for the reception of such of the remains as could then be secured. These have been described and figured by *Mr. J. E. Lee* in his '*Delineations of Roman Antiquities at Caerleon*,' and more fully in his '*Isca Silurum*,' large 8vo., 1862, pp. 148, with 52 plates. These works are now out of print. The inscribed stones occupy the first eight plates, and have afforded portion of the materials for my figures given in *Plates XCI-C*, corrected in many instances by drawings and rubbings of the stones made by myself, the palæographical

peculiarities of these inscriptions not having received so much attention in Mr. Lee's works as the philological determination of their meaning. In the following pages I have availed myself very fully of Mr. Lee's descriptive text, often indeed giving his own words, adding also various monuments which have been discovered since the publication of Mr. Lee's works, or which had been previously recorded but which had escaped his notice.

PLATE XCI. FIG. 1. (Lee, *Isca Sil.*, Pl. VIII. Fig. 1; Hübner, *Inscr. Brit.*, p. 38.)

This stone, 51 inches high by 24 inches wide, is one of the most interesting of the Roman remains at Caerleon. It records the erection of the stone to Fortune and Bonus Eventus by Cornelius Castus and Julius Belisimnus together with their wives. Above the inscription are sculptured two figures in full relief within a sunk panel, the left of which is so defaced as to render it impossible to say whether it was intended for a male or female¹, although the Rev. C. W. King, when he first saw it in a more perfect condition than at present, had little doubt that the two figures represent the two men mentioned in the inscription; which seems the more reasonable idea, as it was hardly to be supposed that one of the two men who had raised the stone would have been thus represented with his wife, the other having had an equal share in its erection. The drawing then made, given in the '*Isca Silurum*,' Pl. VIII. fig. 1, exhibits some details which are not now to be found; the right-hand figure holding a patera in his hand in the act of sacrificing², and the middle portion of the stone representing a square altar with fire at the top. The inscription has been read as follows:—*Fortunae et Bono Evento Corneli(us) Castus et Juli(us) Belisimnus conjuges(que) posuer(unt)*. The last word however was left incomplete, and there are no letters now visible at the end of the third line to represent the *QUE*, although in Mr. King's drawing there appeared something like an *e*, which that writer thought might be one of the 'sigla' for *que*. In the bottom line also at that time there was no *v*, the letters being simply *POSER*, bringing it very near to the word *posero*, the modern Italian corruption of the original word *posuerunt*. Beneath the inscription the stone is made hollow, probably to receive offerings. It is certain that both Fortune and Bonus Eventus were deified by the Romans; in fact, a stone dedicated to the Goddess Fortune is noticed in p. 99, and another is described and figured, Pl. XCIII. fig. 3, and several Roman coins are inscribed with the name Bonus Eventus, and have upon them a nude figure sacrificing, with a patera in his hand.

Some difficulty has arisen as to the meaning of the word *conjuges*, which has been maintained to refer not to the wives of the two men, but to themselves as intimate friends and companions (rendering the insertion of the *que* unnecessary), although no such inter-

¹ Hübner describes this figure as '*Fortuna stans cum cornu copiae*,' and he reads the second name as *Iulia Belisimius*, whom he regards as the wife of Cornelius Castus.

² At the Meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute on May 1, 1879, Mr. M. H. Bloxam read a paper on the right-hand figure, describing it as clad in the *Tunica*, *Clavus* and *Pænula*, prototypes of the ancient ecclesiastical vestments, the *alb*, the *stole*, and the *chasuble*, and suggesting that this very remarkable figure represented a costume such as was probably worn by the bishops of the early British Church who attended at the Council of Arles in the fourth century.

pretation of the word occurs in Gruter, Facciolati, or other available work on inscriptions. Mommsen further considered it possible that the reading of the third line might be *Belisama ejus conjuges*, the name *Belisama* (also that of an English river) occurring in certain inscriptions as a female. And a third reading has been attempted, the stone being considered as a sepulchral stone dedicated to *Fortune* and *Bonus Eventus* in memory of the two men by their widows, the name of the deceased sometimes occurring in the nominative case (as in Pl. XCIV. fig. 3). In answer to which, Mr. Lee naively remarks that *Fortune* and *Bonus Eventus* were certainly gods of the living and not of the dead, and he would not willingly libel these two Roman-British ladies by supposing them to have erected a monument to *Fortune* and 'Good Luck' on the decease of their husbands.

PLATE XCI. FIG. 2. (Lee, *Isca Sil.*, Pl. VIII. Fig. 2; Hübner, *Inscr. Brit.*, p. 1*.)

This stone, 50 inches high by 39 wide, contains in the upper part the half-length figure of a Roman emperor sculptured in a round-headed niche, over which are inscribed the letters *AUG. CAES.*, and *W. K.* on the edge. Of these inscriptions, however, Hübner affirms 'novicium esse titulum utrumque statim vidi.'

It was found at Little Bulmore, a farmhouse between Caerleon and Bulmore.

PLATE XCI. FIG. 3. (Lee, *Isca Sil.*, Pl. IV. Fig. 2; Hübner, *Inscr. Brit.*, p. 38.)

This stone, which was found in the Castle Villa at Caerleon, has the appearance of a portion of a column, and was probably used as an altar. It measures 3 feet 8½ inches high, the diameter of the shaft being 18 inches and of the top 23 inches. The letters are unfortunately rather indistinct and weathered, but the following may be discerned:—

NCTO **THRAE **S FUSTU* C. II. AVG. M F.

The first words seem to have been *Sancto Mithrae*, but they may, as Mr. Way suggested, have been in the usual formula, *Invicto Mithrae*, or *Deo Sancto Mithrae . . . s ivrvs c. ii. avg.*, as also read by Hübner; and there can be no doubt of its having been erected to *Mithras*, thus affording a fresh illustration of the prevalence of the worship of this deity even in these remote parts of the Roman world. (See hereon Hodgson in *Arch. Æliana*, ii. 263; Hodgson's *Northumberland*, iii. 190; Bruce, *Roman Wall*, p. 407; and *Journ. Arch. Institute*, viii. p. 159.)

PLATE XCI. FIG. 4. (Lee, *Isca Sil.*, Pl. III. Fig. 1; Hübner, *Inscr. Brit.*, p. 38.)

This inscribed altar, measuring 40 inches high by 20 inches wide, was found at the depth of some feet in the churchyard of Caerleon in 1845. The top was hollowed out into a large basin to receive the fire. The inscription has been read, '*Saluti reginæ Publius Sallienius Publi filius Maeciâ et Thalamus Hadrianus Præfectus Legionis secundæ Augustæ cum filiis suis Ampeiano et Luciliano dono dederunt*,' and is particularly interesting, having been erected by the identical individuals mentioned in the votive tablet (Plate XCIV. fig. 4) which was dug up at Caerleon more than 200 years ago, and which a careful examination of both will show to have been the work of the same sculptor.

There are several peculiarities worthy of notice in this inscription. The title *Regina* applied to *Salus* does not occur in any of the inscriptions given by Gruter, although there are examples of its being given to *Juno*, *Diana*, *Isis*, and *Fortuna*; and Horace may be quoted for the application of *regina* to a personification: 'Et genus et formam regina Pecunia donat' (Epist. i. 6. 37).

The name *Sallienius*¹ does not occur in Gruter; *Salenius*, *Salanius*, and *Salienus*, however, are there met with. *Thalamus* occurs frequently, and *Luciliana* is found as a woman's name. The name of the tribe *Maeciâ* is used in the same manner as in the time of the republic, e. g. *Q. Verres Romiliâ*, *Q. Claudius Palatinâ*.

In addition to the Roman altars above described, there is another in the Museum (Lee, I. S., Pl. VIII. fig. 4) which once bore an inscription, of which it is now impossible to decipher any portion². Another fragment, being the upper portion of an altar, is represented in his Pl. VIII. fig. 3, but no letters are to be found upon it: on the right side is however to be traced the figure of part of a *præfericulum* or sacrificial vessel. Various other fragments of stone carvings with mouldings and other slight ornamental devices are also represented in Mr. Lee's plates. One of these (Lee, I. S., Pl. VII. fig. 7) is here (Pl. XCI. fig. 5) represented, on account of the likeness which it bears to the Christian monogram; probably however this is merely the result of accident. It was found in making a drain near the Red Lion Inn.

PLATE XCI. FIG. 7. (Lee, *Isca Sil.*, p. 22; Hübner, *Inscr. Brit.*, p. 40.)

This small stone (9 inches long by 4 wide) is represented as a woodcut in Mr. Lee's *Isca Silurum*, p. 22, and was found built in an old wall at the parsonage of Malpas. It consists simply of the centurial mark and four letters, which appear to me to be intended for *PIAN*; but Mr. King and Hübner considered the second letter to be an ill-formed *L*, so that the whole inscription as read by them is intended for *Centuria Plan(c)i*, probably indicating work done by the Century of *Planecus*.

PLATE XCI. FIG. 6. (Lee, *Isca Sil.*, Pl. VII. Fig. 4; Hübner, *Inscr. Brit.*, p. 41.)

Portion of a sepulchral inscription, measuring 13 inches by 12 inches, from the burying-place between Caerleon and Bulmore. Only a very small portion now remains, containing the following letters—(D) M ORVI (AN)NIS XVII, read by Hübner (D.) M (C)ORVI (VIXIT) ANNIS XVII, or possibly (VICT)OR VI(XIT) ANNIS XVII. It was found used as the cover of a cinerary urn.

PLATE XCII. FIG. 1. (Lee, *Isca Sil.*, Pl. VII. Fig. 9.)

This fragment, measuring 23 inches by 12, was found in the Castle grounds. It bears a figure of a child (possibly *Cupid*) riding on a dolphin, designed with spirit, and formed of rather deeply-incised lines. My figure is drawn by camera from a careful rubbing.

¹ 'SALTINIUS primum incisum erat sed delevit quadratarius postea I litteram alteram utpote errore adiectam.' (Hübner, *l. c.*)

² Hübner (*Inscr. Brit.*, p. 38, No. 102) however gives seven lines to this inscription, commencing
VICAPA—GP/ OVSAVCN—/—MNILCA/—DIA/—/—ΓΓ/V.S.L.M./