

THE ROMAN VILLA AT CHEDWORTH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.¹

By G. E. FOX, F.S.A.

The Roman Villa at Chedworth, or rather in Chedworth woods, was discovered in 1864, and subsequently excavated under the direction of the late James Farrer, Esq., honorary member of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

The villa stands on land belonging to the Earl of Eldon, to whom archæologists owe a debt of gratitude for its continued careful preservation, and for the facilities afforded for study by the museum, there established, to receive the antiquities found on the site. It was described, and much of its detail noticed, by the Rev. Prebendary Scarth in a Paper published in the *Journal* of the British Archæological Association of 1869.

Since the date of its discovery, twenty-three years ago, the accumulation of facts relating to Romano-British antiquities, and the extension of the means for comparing these antiquities with continental examples of the Roman period, has rendered it possible to make an attempt, however imperfect, to assign to their various uses, the different parts of the building whose plan is here shown, and to form a reasonable conjecture regarding the comparative age and dispositions of its several portions.²

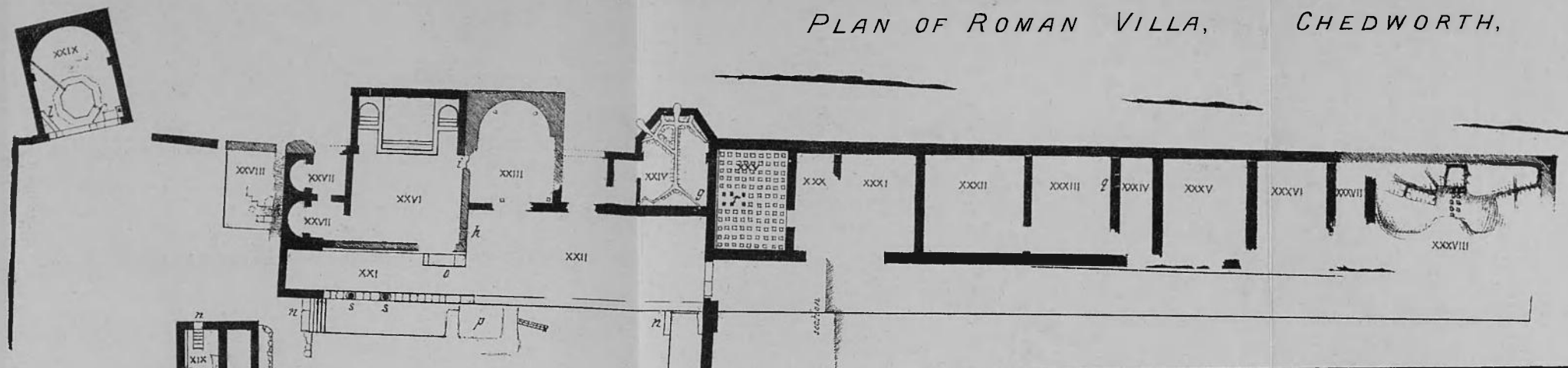
The villa lies in a wooded nook of the valley of the Colne, at seven miles distance from Cirencester, and rather more than two miles from the point where the great Roman way, the Fosseway, crosses the valley. In this respect it resembles other important villas which are not all situated close to the main roads.

¹ Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, July 7th, 1887.

² I take this opportunity of acknowledging the assistance rendered me by


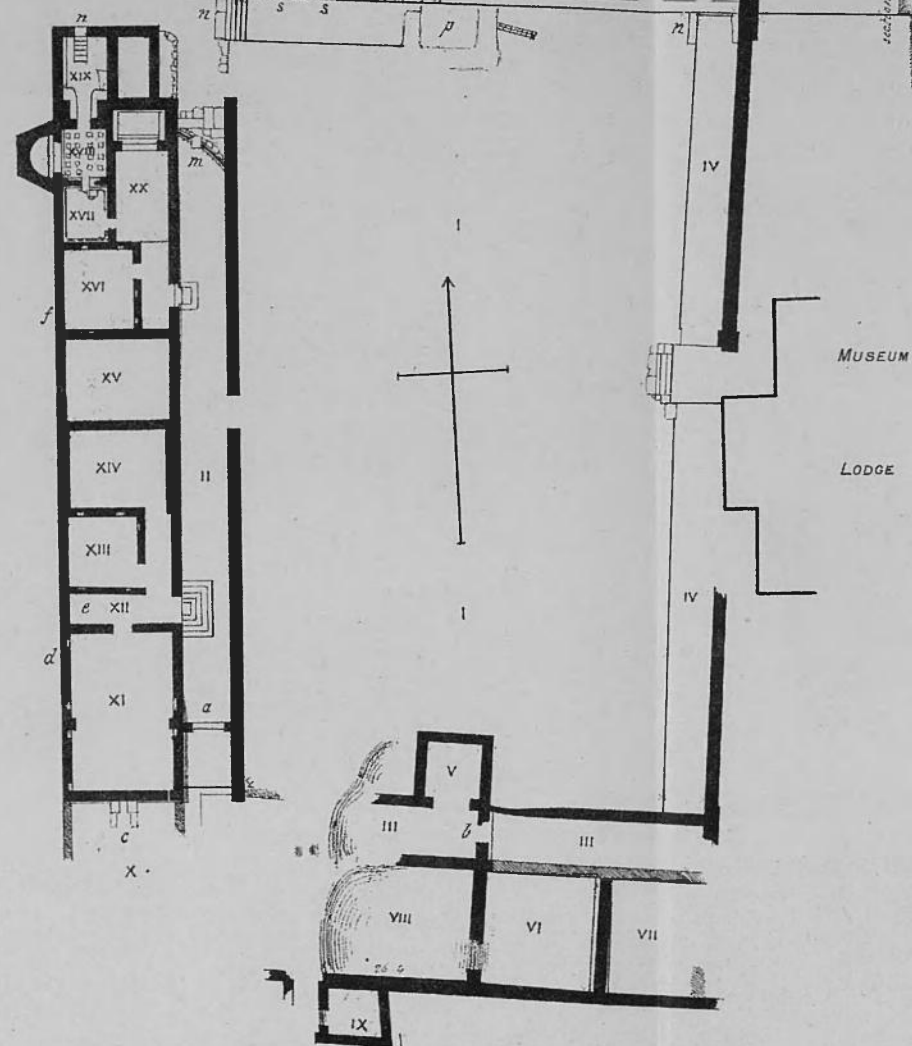
Messrs. Jacobs and Master of Cirencester in determining the larger measurements of the site.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

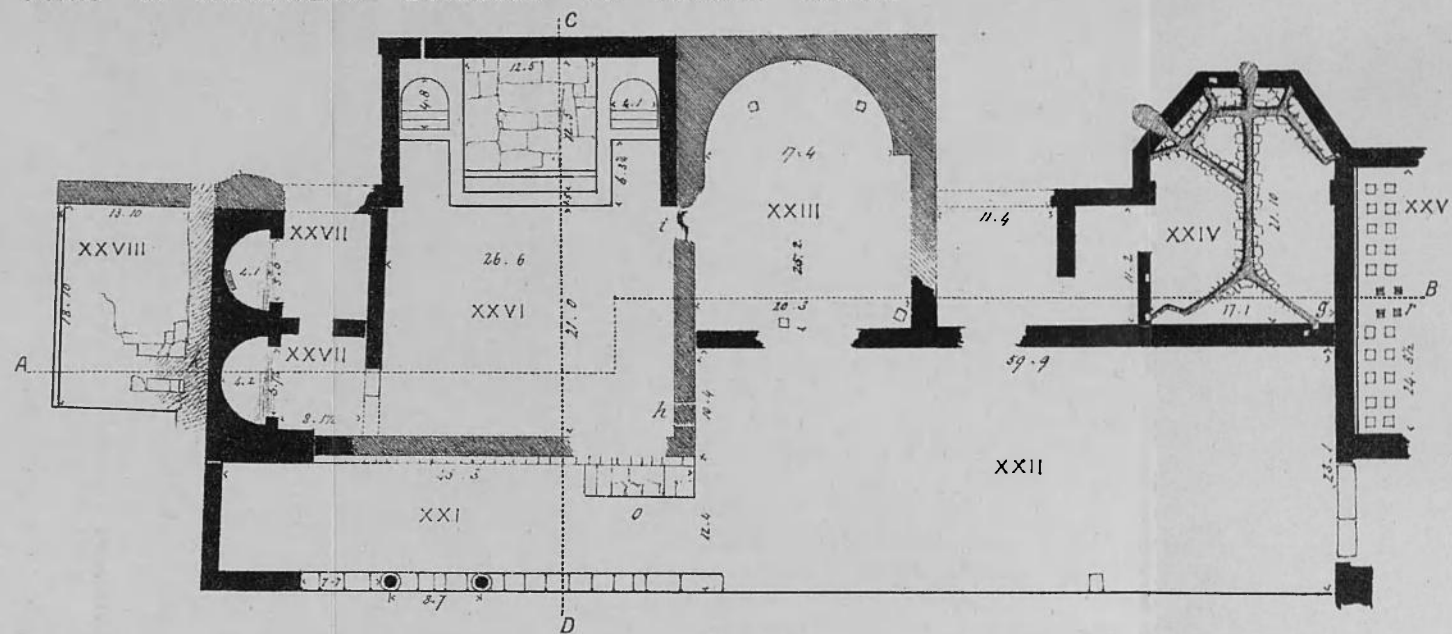


- a. Doorway to Western Porticus.
b. Doorway
c. Furnace of Hypocaust. to N^{os} XI. XIII.
d. Opening into Hypocaust
e. Lararium.
f. Furnace of Hypocaust of N^o XVI.
g. Blocked furnace of Hypocaust of N^o XXV
h. Blocked doorway
i. Break in wall
k. Furnace to Hypocaust under Tanks
l. Original basin of spring
m. Drain from cold bath.
n. Modern steps
o. Steps to Court
p. Rain water tank
q. Blocked doorway.
r. Brick pilæ of Hypocaust
the rest are of Stone
s. Bases of Columns in situ
- Note. In N^{os} II. XI. XII. XVI. XVII
XX. XXI. and XXII. mosaic floor
exist or have been traced.

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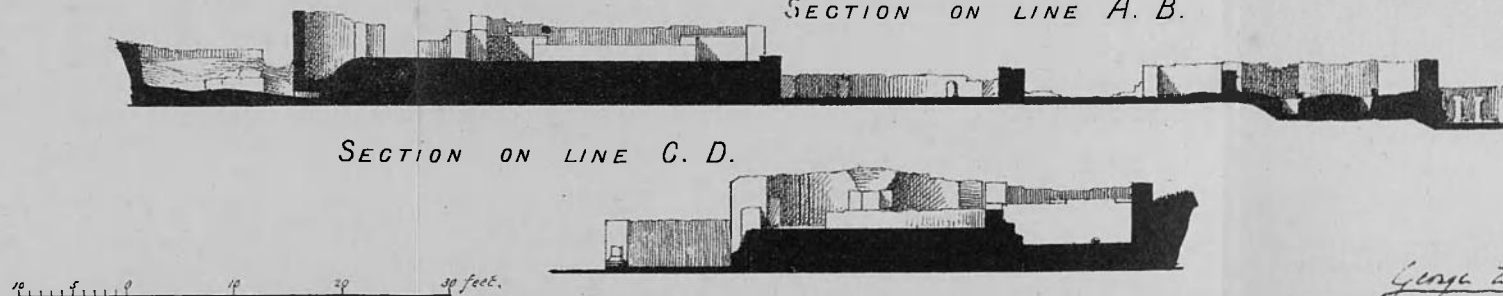
 Foundations

PART OF NORTHERN BUILDING TO LARGER SCALE.



SECTION ON LINE A. B.

SECTION ON LINE C. D.



George E. Fox 1886.

The establishment is composed of a court or garden No. I, roughly 148 ft. by 82 ft., surrounded on three sides by ranges of buildings, completed on the fourth side by a long gallery or corridor, No. IV (Crypta) whose western wall is destroyed, and, having near its centre a passage way through to the court. Whether this corridor had rooms on its eastern side or not, it is impossible to say.¹ The little modern lodge and museum are built in front of it.

From the building at the northern end of the court, a long wing extends eastwards with an indication of what may have been a crypta, or crypto-porticus in front of it. A corresponding wing probably ran in the same direction from the southern building. The ruined chambers at its eastern end seem to show such an extension. Perhaps this wing, with part of the northern one, together with rooms lining the wall of the western corridor, sufficed for the accommodation of the slaves employed on the estate as farm labourers or artisans, and would have contained all the necessary stables, cart sheds, workshops, &c. The walls of the villa's enclosure are traceable on its north and west sides; and in the woods at a distance of 170 yds. from the north-west corner, are the remains of a structure, never, I believe, thoroughly explored, generally called a temple, but which may with more probability be regarded as a tomb-house.

In a general survey of the site, a lime kiln, built from the materials of the ruined walls, and buried in the steep hill side some 50 feet behind the little court No. XXVI, in the northern building, must not be omitted. It has doubtless been an active agent in the destruction of the villa's remains.

Proceeding now to a more detailed examination, attention must first be directed to the long range of rooms forming the western side of the court or garden. In it may perhaps be perceived the germ of what the villa afterwards grew to be.

¹ Long closed corridors, partly sunk in the ground as this is, were used as store rooms for provisions of various kinds, contained in large jars. For an example see J. B. L. G. Seroux d'Agincourt. "Recueil de Fragmens de Sculpture

Antique &c.," Pl. xix, p. 45, where a long crypta found near the Villa Borghese, Rome, is shown filled with jars sunk in its floor of sand. This corridor was probably subterranean.

This *corps de logis*, complete in itself, is entirely detached from other buildings at its northern end, and whatever additions it may have afterwards received at its southern end, the appearance of the foundations might lead to the conclusion that it was equally detached here. The eastern face of the building is covered by a porticus, No. II, whose columns probably stood on the low existing wall which served as a continuous base for them. This porticus was floored with coarse mosaic for part of its length (none now remains), and from it short flights of steps ascended to the two groups of chambers of the western building, whose floors, owing to the rapid slope on which the house is built, are from 2 ft. 3 in. to 2 ft. 11 in. higher towards the porticus than on the opposite side, where they are on the ground level.

The above mentioned body of rooms with the porticus in front, in all likelihood represents the original house, most, if not all the other buildings, being additions. Nor can this supposition be considered an unreasonable one, as Romano-British habitations of the smaller class may be found of very similar plan. At a later period the northern and southern buildings were added, the whole being joined by the eastern corridor No. IV, following the lines of the original court yard of the early house.

Perhaps, at a later period still, the northern wing was added, as it does not correspond exactly in its direction with the northern buildings from which it springs.

At the southern end of the western porticus No. II, will be seen a doorway at *a*. From this point to *b* in the southern building there was probably an enclosed passage. At *b* appears to have been a doorway, which must have been reached by a flight of steps, as there is a direct descent here in the floor of the passage of 5 ft. 6 in. Of these steps however no traces remain.

The little room projecting into the court No. V, supposing that there was an entrance here, would doubtless be the lodge for the slave whose duty it was to guard that entrance. Such is the usual arrangement in a Roman house.

The chambers Nos. VI, VII, in the southern building are so much sunk in the ground as to suggest the idea,

that over some of them, especially over Nos. VI, VII, and farther eastward, there must have been another story; in which case they were lighted from the passage No. III. The eastern half of this passage therefore could scarcely have been roofed, but was open to the sky, its northern wall being merely a retaining wall to the garden, and its floor sunk below the garden level.¹

There is no communication between this passage and the Crypta No. IV.

Returning now to the western porticus No. II, we shall find a flight of five shallow steps conducting to the apartments of the southern half of the western building. These give entrance to a passage leading to room No. XI, the most perfect of those still remaining, and with its mosaic pavement in great part intact.

I venture to think we shall not be very far wrong in naming this the *Triclinium* or dining room. Its dimensions are 19 ft. 3 in. by 29 ft. 3 in.

The proportions of this apartment are roughly those usually accorded to Roman *Triclinia*. At a distance of 11 ft. 2 in. from the southern end, a pier, 2 ft. broad on the face, projects slightly from the wall on either side, and a very decided division at the line marked by these piers is shown in the patterns of the mosaic floor, whose tessellation is perfectly continuous from end to end of the room. The design of the division of the floor southward of the piers, is geometric, with two panels of scrollwork. The northern division and the largest, is evidently the composition on which most care has been bestowed. It contains groups of figures of Fauns and Bacchantes. The probability is therefore, that the southern end of the room was destined for the table and its couches, leaving the northern end with its richer floor in full view as the guests reclined round the table. The open space would also afford room for the service.

The dimensions and arrangement of the couches in the summer dining room of the house of Sallust at Pompeii, exhibit an example of the manner in which the southern

¹ Chamber No. VI, though presumably in the servants' quarters, could not have been a mere store-room. When discovered there existed on the wall in its S. W. angle a large fragment of plaster showing

a white ground with a dark red line upon it, forming the angle of a painted panel. In this room also, more coins were found than were yielded by any other part of the site.

division of the room, above described, would be furnished. These couches with the table (covering a space 13 ft. 6 in. by 10 ft. 6 in.) are in masonry, but in Britain, as in Pompeii also, in many of the houses, they would be of metal or wood, though of the same dimensions as the couches in masonry here spoken of.

They would cover the less important mosaics of the floor, the table possibly standing nearly upon the central square of those mosaics, and space being left on either side for the necessary service. The couches, when not in use would be placed back against the wall, and would not materially hide the floor mosaics.¹

Beneath this room and extending to room No. XIII is a hypocaust. The flues communicating with it are clearly seen in both rooms. The furnace heating it is at *c* under the south wall of the room, and at *d* is an opening into it which does not look like a furnace, but may be some arrangement for cleaning this large heating chamber.

That most important adjunct to the dining room, the kitchen, must now be looked for. Could it have been in the space marked No. X?

At this point a consideration of the plans of houses in Pompeii will be of service, although the inferences to be drawn from such plans must be used with caution, due allowance being made for the differences between city and country houses.

The kitchen is very variously placed in Pompeian houses. In some of the best it is in direct contact with the dining-room. In one instance, in the house of Holconius Rufus, there is a large opening in the dining-room wall close to the kitchen door, and in one small house an opening in the wall between the two rooms, through which the dinner could be served directly into the dining-room.²

¹ Rooms answering very much in their general proportions, and having projecting piers in much the same position as in this room at Chedworth, may be found at the important villas of Withington, Gloucestershire, a mile or two from Chedworth, at Bignor, in Sussex, at Pitney in Somersetshire, at Brading, in the Isle of Wight. For general proportions, but without projecting piers, the floor discovered at Stonesfield in Oxfordshire, should be included in this list.

The designs too, of the floors of the rooms cited, are remarkable as showing a different purpose in the use of each division of the room; unmistakably so in the Pitney and Withington villas.

² See J. Overbeck. "Pompeii," edit. 1884. House of the Tragic Poet. House of Holconius Rufus. House of Siricus. House of Meleager. House of the Dioscuri. House of the Surgeon. House Fig. 149, p. 272.

Again, in houses in Pompeii of sufficient importance to contain bath rooms, the kitchen is in close proximity to these rooms, and the furnace of the hot bath is situated in it, clearly for the sake of convenient storage of fuel and for an ample supply of hot water when required.¹

Looking at these facts, and assuming that No. X. is the dining-room, we might fairly conjecture that the kitchen would not be far off. The ruined corner marked No. X. would afford ample space for this chamber, space sufficient for all the needs of the household. It contains, as in Pompeian houses above cited, the furnace of a hypocaust, and is situated close to the dining-room. We might even suppose a communication between it and the dining-room by means of a hatch in the wall at the south-western angle of that apartment, but of this there is no sign.

Unfortunately, this ruined angle of the building does not seem ever to have been explored, or if it was, proved too fragmentary to be thought worth careful examination.

Mr. Farrer, in a short paper describing his discovery of the villa, published in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (vol. vi. pt. ii., 1865-66, p. 279), says, "behind room I." (presumably that to which I have given the name of dining-room)—"a small recess, measuring 4 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 5 in., contained fragments of two small stone statues, the sandalled feet of which were attached to the pedestal."

Possibly the position of this group may be fixed at the end of the passage No. XII. at *e*. The measurements given refer most likely to some enclosure of the pedestal on which the figures stood, as they do not represent the width of the passage.

If I am correct in placing these statues in this spot (and from Mr. Farrer's description there seems no other place to which they could be assigned), there can be little doubt that here was the shrine of the *Lares* and *Penates*. The position is a likely one. In the Pompeian houses the *Lararium* is often placed in the most frequented part of the house, forming a conspicuous object in the Atrium.

¹ See J. Overbeck. "Pompeii," edit 1884. House of the Centenary. House of M. Caesius Blandus. House of the

Labyrinth. House of Popidius Secundus. The villa Suburbana called, of Diomed.

A small altar preserved in the museum, and cut smooth at the back, might well have stood on a pedestal before the effigies of the *Penates*, and was doubtless intended to support the vessel containing incense offered to the guardian deities; or it might, placed in a niche of the wall here, have held the lamp kept burning before the figures of the *Lares* on certain festivals.¹

As an illustration of the arrangement of the images of the gods with their accompanying altar, reference may be made to the discovery at Ancaster (Causennæ) in Lincolnshire, in 1831, of a shrine to the *Deæ Matres*, in which the small statues of these goddesses were placed on a broad stone pedestal, a dwarf column with a diminutive altar upon it, being set in front of them. The whole group of objects is said to have been found in its original position.²

Passing onward, but little can be said of the next three chambers, Nos. XIII., XIV., XV. They *may* have had tessellated floors, but if so, these have long ago disappeared beneath a growth of soft green turf. Possibly all three rooms were bedchambers (*cubicula nocturna*), No. XIII. being devoted to the master of the house and used as a winter sleeping room, from the fact of its being warmed by flues from a hypocaust beneath it. The entire northern end of the western building is occupied by the bathing establishment. Nothing can be clearer or more complete (except in one particular, the hot water supply to the hot bath), than the arrangements here displayed for the usual processes of the Roman bath.

No. XVI. is the undressing room (*tepidarium*, *apodyterium*), where towels, strigils, and the bottles filled with unguents were kept. The temperature in this room was raised to a gentle heat by flues from the hypocaust beneath, whose furnace was at *f* outside the building.

No. XVII. is the hot air room (*sudatorium*), whose walls, like those of the hot bath room No. XVIII. adjoining, were jacketted with flue pipes covered with painted plaster, from which a very considerable body of heat must have been radiated. This latter chamber, No. XVIII

¹ For the form of incense vessels found in Britain see *Journal*, British Archaeol. Assoc., xxvii, p. 430; "Archæologia," vol. xxvi, (1836), p. 368.

² See C. Roach Smith, "Collectanea Antiqua," vol. v (1861), Pl. xvi, 149; "Archæological Journal," xii (1870), p. 1.

(the *caldarium*) has a semi-circular recess containing the hot bath. Beneath both these chambers runs a hypocaust whose furnace was in chamber No. XIX, next to which is a walled space, probably the wood store. Unfortunately, nothing now remains of the cauldrons over the furnace. Their massive supports may still be seen. A good deal of modern repairing has been needed here.

No XX is the cold bath room (*frigidarium*), with the plunge bath at its northern end, the drain from which may be seen passing under the end of the porticus to the garden. The doorway from this room to the hot air room (*sudatorium*) has received ancient alterations making it narrower. It never had a door, but was probably covered by the sort of padded curtain so constantly seen over church doors in Italy to this day. All the bath rooms had mosaic floors, of which more or less remain.

We now come to the most interesting portion of the villa, exhibiting marked traces of alteration from its original design.

A glance at the plans will show a porticus, No. XXI, two bases of the columns of whose arcade, or colonnade, are *in situ*. It widens at its eastern half into a fine hall, No. XXII, 59 ft. 9 in. long by 23 ft. 1 in. wide, access to which is obtained from without by a large doorway opening to the Crypta, or Crypto porticus, of the northern wing. In front of the garden porticus, which was originally paved with coarse mosaic, is an unpaved walk ending in a tank, probably constructed to receive the rain water from the extensive roofs.

Whether the hall No. XXII (also paved with coarse mosaic, of which however not a trace remains) had a southern wall, or whether the line of columns extended from end to end of this front, it is impossible to say. The step on which the columns stood is intact from the western end of the porticus to about the centre of the tank.

The alterations in this part of the villa will next attract attention.

At some period, the original rooms of the western half of this northern building were swept away, leaving only the ruined chamber, ending in an apse, No. XXIII. The

little existing court, No. XXVI., was then constructed, measuring 21 ft. 0 in. by 26 ft. 6 in. with tanks at its northern end, and two chambers, No. XXVII. with semi-circular recesses containing tanks, together with a furnace room, No. XXVIII, were added to it on its western side. The floor of both court and chambers was at the same time raised 3 ft. 7 in. or 3 ft. 10 in. above the level of the porticus, No. XXI, and hall, No. XXII, access to the court being given by a flight of steps from the porticus at its south-east angle.

A further alteration was made by the construction of room No. XXIV, the one with the channelled hypocaust, and semi-octagonal end. That this room is an addition, there can be no doubt, for its floor now blocks up entirely the furnace opening of the hypocaust of chamber No. XXV. The opening was at the point *g*, and has been completely built up. Returning to the little court, a small doorway will be found at *h* in its eastern wall. This doorway leading from the hall No. XXII, is entirely blocked by the solid filling in of the floor of the court, access to which it may be remembered, is by the large flight of steps at the south-east corner.

A break in the same wall which contains this little doorway will be noticed at *i*, the wall continuing onward, but not quite in the same line, the continuation being built on the ruined foundation of the apse of chamber XXIII. This break may represent a doorway from the court to back parts of the building.

The furnace opening to the hypocaust of No. XXIII (for this chamber was warmed without a doubt), may have been originally at *i*, or possibly opposite to it. If at the former place, it would furnish additional proof that chamber XXIII was in existence before the little court was built. When uncovered, the hypocaust of this chamber was found denuded of its pilæ, with the exception of a fragment or two, having probably been ruined and rendered useless when the alteration was made to which I have alluded, and when room No. XXIV was built to supply its place.

The question now arises for what purpose were these alterations made. The tanks in the little court and its appendages could not have been baths, the villa

being amply provided for already in this respect. Perhaps a reference to ancient and widely extended industries may throw some light on this subject.

Cloth making in Roman times was one of the most widely spread of these industries, largely practised in Northern Gaul, and possibly in a lesser degree in Britain. Connected with this manufacture were the subordinate trades of fulling and dyeing. To what extent cloth making (a flourishing trade in the Middle Ages) may have been carried on in the western parts of Britain during the period of Roman rule, it is impossible to say; but both soil and water supply in the district in which Chedworth is situated, would lend themselves to both the processes of fulling and dyeing, which were important trades in Roman times.¹

We may therefore possibly see before us a Romano-British fulling establishment and dye works, of diminutive proportions, it is true, but whose remains are of sufficiently marked character to reveal their purpose if care and patience is taken to examine them.

For purposes of comparison I must again refer to Pompeii, where the fullers' shops are of frequent occurrence. If we study the plan of the largest fulling establishment there, it will be found that fulling consists, in the main, of three processes, viz.: 1, Cleaning, for which treading places were required, in which the clothes could be worked by men's feet in vats containing fullers' earth diluted with other scouring materials; 2, Washing, for which tanks for rinsing and steeping purposes would be needed; and 3, Drying and Carding, where several spaces of ample proportions would be a necessity, and where the different articles could be spread over frames to bleach them by means of the fumes of burning sulphur. Now at Chedworth, the treading places formed of masonry in the Pompeian examples are not to be seen, but the sepulchral monument of a Gallo-Roman fuller discovered at Sens, in France, will show why.¹ They appear to have been made of wood (as this monument indicates) as

¹ According to Prof. Buckman, F.G.S., the hills round the villa contain fullers' earth. See *Journal of British Archaeol.*

Assoc. "Proceedings of Cirencester Congress, 1869," vol. xxv, p. 402.

frequently as of stone, in the shape of large tubs with high hand rests on each side.

We may therefore conclude that the treading places here were of the former material, and that the little court (No. XXVI) would afford sufficient space for the workmen employed in the establishment, the tubs being ranged round the walls, and the men protected by a penthouse roof from the weather. Possibly, even, the whole court might have been covered by a roof.

As to the second process, rinsing and steeping, there is no difficulty. There are the tanks in the court, the two smaller (each 4 ft. 8 in. by 4 ft. 1 in.) for the smaller articles, the large centre one (12 ft. 5 in square) for the larger pieces.

Then for the third requisite, an extensive covered space, the hall No. XXII, would afford ample room for drying purposes, and as our damper climate might render desirable quicker methods of dessiccation, the heated chamber No. XXIV could be made available. It should be noted that the floor of the little court and the entire surface of the tanks there, the bottom alone excepted, are thickly covered with the usual pink cement, whose colouring matter is pounded tile, so constantly employed in Roman work where impermeability to moisture is required.

It is now necessary to return to the little rooms west of the court, communicating with it by a narrow doorway. At first sight these might well be taken for hot baths, but the fact that *both* recesses contain tanks, and that one at least is heated by a furnace *directly* beneath it, (an arrangement not usually found in baths in Britain), militate against this view, as well as the ample provision for hot water bathing made elsewhere.

In the furnace room behind rooms XXVII are massive substructures of masonry, and a long trench at the foot of the wall, indicating a large furnace, and ample space for the cauldrons above it for the supply of boiling water. Both the semi-circular recesses are jacketted with flue tiles, and every way is taken to raise the temperature of

¹ For this monument see C. Roach Smith, "Collectanea Antiqua," vol. v. pl. xx.

their contents to the highest point attainable by the Roman method of heating.

The heating apparatus would not be required in the processes of fulling; there is no trace of the application of heat in the Pompeian fulleries. I am therefore led to the conjecture that the art of dyeing, as well as that of fulling, was practised at Chedworth, the semi-circular tanks above mentioned being the dye vats, probably supplemented by various tubs and troughs of more perishable materials long ago lost and destroyed.

There is one practical objection to the above theory which should be stated. It is not possible to say, positively, whether the liquid dye in these tanks, supposing them to be dye vats, could be raised to boiling point by the means employed for heating them. That the fluid could be brought to a high temperature is certain, and it is true that some dyes do not require the water to be boiling, but may be infused in it at what is called hand heat, *i.e.* water at a temperature in which a *dyer's* hand can be immersed.

The tanks are large enough to dye long pieces of cloth, technically termed "piece goods," which could be floated and stirred in the dye. Their exact depth is not now ascertainable. At present they show roughly a depth of 2 ft. but with a wall across each recess, it might have been increased to 3 ft. or even 4 ft. The tanks in the court would equally serve *dyer's*, or fuller's requirements.

Behind the northern building, running down the steep and wooded bank, and pointing in the direction of the furnace room No. XXVIII, is a stone conduit, probably laid to bring water from some long lost reservoir in the hill side to the cauldron in that room, and also for the service of the tanks in the fuller's court. The supply to these tanks came through a hole in the wall above the small western one, and the drain for emptying them is situated in the north-east corner of the large square tank. All the tanks communicate by means of pipes one with another.

Of the rooms situated in this part of the villa in existence before the alterations, only chamber No. XXII now remains. Its dimensions are 25 ft. 2 in. by 20 ft. 3 in. Originally perhaps it was the finest in the villa. The

apse, with its semi-dome, constructed in masonry, and richly adorned with painting, possibly even with mosaic, must have had a fine effect. The rest of the room, in all probability, had a panelled ceiling of wood. We may see in this apartment a room answering in some respects, to the modern drawing-room where the choicest treasures of art possessed by the owner might be displayed, and also where the archives of the family would be kept.

Returning for a moment to the subject of the water supply of the villa, I must not omit to speak of the little edifice nooked into the hill-side at the north-western angle of its inclosure walls.

In all likelihood the semi-circular end had a roof, the semi-dome of the apse being of the usual construction. From the external piers to those which mark the entrance to the apse, the walls were probably dwarf walls, as high as, or a little higher than, they now stand, *i.e.*, 4 ft. 6 in. The whole south side is open, only a stone step a few inches high joining the two external piers.

This building, like other portions of the villa, has been subjected to various modifications. Originally, it appears, a floor extended over the whole space, 2 ft. 9 in. lower than the present grass grown one.

A little triangular basin behind the left hand pier on entering, received the waters of a spring which flowed through holes in the wall behind the pier, and falling over the front of the basin escaped by means not now traceable. At some subsequent period, the whole floor was raised to its present level, and the octagonal basin still existing, but still dating from Roman times, was formed in the made ground, with the old floor for its pavement. The existing conduit from the left hand side of the apse carried into the octagonal basin the diverted water, which escaped by a similar pipe on the opposite side. At the same time, the then useless little triangular basin was buried in the new floor.¹

The octagonal basin is capable of containing 1100 gallons, but at present it takes twenty-four hours to fill.

¹ As to the state of the existing octagonal basin when found, and other details respecting the building which contains it, see a letter from Mr. Farrer to the Rev. Prebendary Scarth in *Journal of British*

Archæol. Assoc. vol. 260, p. 251.

The information as to the existence of the lower floor was obtained from the foreman of the excavations, who himself worked on the spot.

The spring must therefore have been much more copious than at present, if it was the only supply for the villa even at an early date.

What could have been the purpose of this little building? Perhaps the discovery made in excavating it will afford a clue.

An altar was found, Mr. Farrer says, "in the corner of the circular chamber, and at a lower level than the drain" (the conduit of the spring). It would seem as if it had been overthrown and buried when the alterations I have spoken of were made. This altar is now deposited in the museum. It is about 2 ft. high, is not inscribed, and is perfect on both faces, which proves that it never stood against a wall. It has a very small square focus half an inch deep, large enough, perhaps, to receive a tiny libation.

The discovery was an interesting one. It might be taken as an indication that the little building was a *Nymphæum*, a shrine, dedicated with its altar, by the grateful master of the villa to the kindly Spirit of the spring rising in that spot, who, with ready hand, poured the fresh waters from her brimming urn for his solace and for the benefit of his household.

The supposition is no unlikely one, for altars and dedications to the Nymphs are known in Britain, and their images, uncouth enough it is true, may be seen carved on a stone which once adorned a fountain in the station of Bremenium, beyond the Wall of Hadrian.¹

Perhaps the apse with its brightly painted walls (faint traces of stucco coloured red still remain) formed a place for quiet conversation or reflection, for the delightful silence, then only broken by the splash of the water as it fell from its little basin and fled away across the floor, and the green shade of the overhanging woods, still incline the body to rest, and the mind to meditation.

Of the remaining portion of the building, the long northern wing, but little can be said. The lower stone of a quern of larger size than usual, found in room XXXV, may indicate the chamber where the corn, needed for the household, was ground, and the extensive, but much

¹ See "Lapidarium Septentrionale," No. 584, p. 305, pt. iii. For altar dedicated to the Nymphs and fountains found near Chester, see C. Roach Smith.

"Collectanea Antiqua," vol. vi., 1868, pl. viii. Instances of dedications to the Nymphs, in Britain, might be multiplied.

ruined hypocaust of peculiar construction, in the end room No. XXXVIII may possibly show where it was baked into bread.

Beyond these feeble indications, the uses of this range of rooms cannot even be guessed. The crypta or crypto porticus in front of this wing does not appear to have had any tessellated pavement. Its absence might warrant the assignment of the chambers behind it to the rougher purposes of the household.

Much more might be added to the foregoing account of this interesting villa, as to its mosaics, its architectural details, and the various objects of interest found within its walls and preserved in the little museum on its site, but this would lead too far and in other directions.

My aim in this notice, has been simply to indicate, as far as the evidence afforded by the ruined walls allowed, the possible uses of the different divisions of the edifice, and the alterations which from time to time had been made in its structure since it was first raised by the Roman colonist, or romanised Celtic chief, among the Gloucestershire hills, in the wooded recess of the valley of the Colne, near to its little river.