CHAPTER XIX

THE TEMPLE OF FORTUNA Augusta

Passing out from the Forum under the arch at the northeast corner, we enter the broadest street in Pompeii. On the right a colonnade over the sidewalk runs along the front of the first block, at the further corner of which, where Forum Street opens into Nola Street, stands the small temple of Fortuna Augusta. The front of the temple is in a line with the colonnade, which seems to have been designed as a continuation of the colonnade about the Forum; the builders apparently wished to have it appear that the temple was located on an extension of the Forum rather than on a street. The colonnade is certainly not older than the earlier years of the Empire, and the temple dates from the time of Augustus.

The divinity of the temple and the name of its builder are both known to us from an inscription on the architrave of the shrine at the rear of the cella: M. Tullius M. f., d. v. i. d. ter., quinquennalis, augur, tribunus militem, a populo, acdem Fortunae Augustae solo et populi sua. — 'Marcus Tullius the son of Marcus, duumvir with judiciary authority for the third time, quinquennial duumvir, augur, and military tribune by the choice of the people, (erected this) temple to Fortuna Augusta on his own ground and at his own expense.'

Such inscriptions were ordinarily placed on the entablature of the portico. The portico of this temple, however, had been thrown down by the earthquake of 63, and had not yet been rebuilt. The cella may have been damaged also, but in order that the worship might not be interrupted the shrine was restored; the inscription was temporarily placed over it.

The remains of the walls, columns, and entablature make it possible to reconstruct the edifice with certainty (Fig. 58). The plan (Fig. 57) in several respects closely resembles that of the temple of Jupiter, from which the architect copied the projecting platform in front of the podium, with its altar and double series of steps. The eight columns sustaining the portico had Corinthian capitals. The walls of the cella were veneered with marble. In the shrine at the rear stood, without doubt, the image of Fortuna as guardian of the fortunes of Augustus and protectress of the imperial family (Fig. 59).

There were also in the walls of the cella four niches for statues, of which two have been found. The face of one, a female figure, had been sawed off in order to replace it with
another, which has not come to light; the features of the other statue were said in the reports of the excavations to resemble those of Cicero, but the resemblance is purely fanciful, suggested by the name Marcus Tullius in the dedicatory inscription. Both statues were of persons connected with the priesthood, not of members of the imperial family. Probably statues of the latter were set up elsewhere, so that the cella was left free for less important personages.

The worship of Fortuna Augusta was in charge of a college of priests, consisting of four slaves and freedmen, who were called *Ministri Fortunae Augustae*, — 'Servants of Fortuna Augusta.' Our information in regard to them is derived from five inscriptions, of which two were found in the temple, the others in different places; but none of them where they originally belonged. These all relate to the small statues, *signa*, of which one was set up by the college every year. One inscription, of the year 3 B.C., speaks of the 'first servants (*ministri primi*) of Fortuna Augusta.' The priesthood was therefore established in that year, and the temple was probably built only a short time before.

In donating the land for the temple Tullius retained the ownership of a narrow strip of irregular shape at the right. Here a rough block of basalt was set up with the inscription: *M. Tulli M. f. area privata,* — 'Private property belonging to Marcus Tullius, son of Marcus.'