CHAPTER XXVIII
THE BATHS NEAR THE FORUM

The bathing establishment in the block north of the Forum is smaller and simpler in its arrangements than that described in the last chapter, but the parts are essentially the same. Here also we find a court, with a colonnade on three sides; a system of baths for men, comprising a dressing room (I) with a small round frigidarium (II) opening off from it, a tepidarium (III), and a caldarium (IV); a similar system for women, the place of the frigidarium being taken by a tank for cold baths (2) in the dressing room; and a long narrow furnace room between the two baths (V). On three sides of the establishment are shops, in connection with which are several inns.

These baths were built shortly after 80 B.C., about the time that Ulia and Annius repaired the Stabian Baths; the characteristic masonry, with quasi-reticulate facing, is similar to that of the Small Theatre and the Amphitheatre. The names of the builders are known from an inscription found in duplicate: L. Caesius

C. f. d*num] v*[i]r* i*[ur] d*[icundo], C. Occius M. f., L. Niraemius A. f. II v*[i]r* d*[ecurionum] s[ententia] ex p*q*unia] p*ublia] fac[iundum] cura*[unit] prob[arunt] g[ue]. Thus we see that the contract for the building was let and the work approved by Lucius Caesius, duumvir with judicatory authority,—his colleague had probably died since election and the vacancy had not yet been filled,—and the two aediles, Occius and Niraemius, who are here styled 'duumvirs,' for reasons already explained (p. 12); the cost was defrayed by an appropriation from the public treasury. Though these Baths are of later construction than the Stabian Baths, they seem more ancient because fewer changes were made in them.

The court here was not a palaestra; it was small for gymnastic exercises, and was not provided with a swimming tank and dressing rooms. The open space was occupied by a garden.

The colonnade on the north and west sides of the court had slender columns standing far apart, with a low and simple entablature; on the east side the columns were replaced by pillars carrying low arches, which served as a support for a gallery affording a pleasant view of the garden. This gallery was accessible from the upper rooms of several inns along the street leading north from the Forum, whose guests no doubt found diversion in watching what was going on below—an advantage that may have been taken into account by the city officials in fixing the rent. There are benches on the north side of the court, and at the middle a deep recess, or exedra (b), making a pleasant retreat for quiet conversation. The entrance from the frequented street at the left (A) is so arranged that passers-by could not look in; near the entrance from the street on the opposite side (A') is a closet (c). The decoration of the court was extremely simple. Columns and walls were unpainted; on the lower parts, stucco with bits of brick in it; above, white plaster.

From the court a corridor (a) led into the men's apodyterium, which could be entered also on the north side from the Strada delle Terme. This room contained benches, as shown on the plan; but there were no niches, as in the dressing rooms of the Stabian Baths, and wooden shelves or lockers may have
been used instead. The small dark chamber at the north end
($) may have been used as a storeroom for unguents, such as
the Greeks called elacothesium. It seems to have been thought
necessary here to connect the dressing room with the furnace
room (V) by a separate passage.

Light was admitted to the dressing room through a window
in the lunette at the south end, closed by a pane of glass half
an inch thick, set in a bronze frame that turned on two pivots.

On either side of the window are huge Tritons in stucco relief,
with vases on their shoulders, surrounded by dolphins; under-
neath is a mask of Oceanus, and in the same wall is a niche
for a lamp, similar to that seen in Fig. 92, blackened by the soot.

The frigidarium is well preserved. In all its arrangements
it is almost an exact counterpart of the one in the Stabian
Baths, but the scheme of decoration, suggestive of a garden,
is less realistically carried out, the ground being yellow; and
the round window at the apex of the domed ceiling has a
rectangular extension toward the south in order to admit as
much sunlight as possible.

The tepidarium, as will be seen from our illustration (Fig. 92),
is in the condition of the tepidariums of the Stabian Baths
before the improved arrangements for heating were introduced.
There were no warm air chambers in the walls or the floor.
At one end we see the remains of the large bronze brazier and
benches (the iron grating is modern) presented by Vaccula, to
which reference has already been made (p. 197). The feet of
the benches are modelled to represent hoofs, each with a cow's
head above.

There are niches in the walls, as formerly in the tepidariums
of the Stabian Baths, but several of them for some reason have

Fig. 92.—Baths near the Forum: interior of the men's tepidarium.
ceiling has been destroyed. The hollow space for hot air in
the floor and walls is indicated in our section (Fig. 93). Here
we see at the right, the bath basin, lined with white marble,
with its sloping back affording a comfortable support for the
bathers; at the other end is the apsidal niche (schola) with the
labrum. The direction of Vitruvius, that the labrum should
be placed under a window in such a way that the shadows of those
standing around should not fall on it, is here literally observed.
There were three other small windows at the same end of the
room, and a niche for a lamp.

We learn from an inscription on the labrum, in bronze letters,
that it was made under the direction of Gnaeus Melissaeus Aper
and Marcus Statius Rufus, who were duumvirs in 3-4 A.D., at
a cost of 2500 sesterces, not far from $270. This room seems
to have received its final form before the new method of heating
the water in the alveus came into vogue; there is no trace
of a bronze heater, such as that found in connection with the
bath basin of the women's caldarium at the Stabian Baths. The
simple decoration is in marked contrast with the usual ornamentation of the later styles. Above a low marble base are
yellow walls divided by dark red pilasters, shown in Fig. 93.
These support a projecting flat cornice of dark red, whose surface is richly ornamented with stucco reliefs. The ceiling is
moulded in flutings running up to the crown of the vault; only
in the ceiling of the schola do we find raised figures.

The rooms of the women's baths are small, their arrangement
being determined in part by the irregular shape of the corner
of the building in which they are placed; but the system of heating is more complete than in the men's baths, for both the
tepidarium (3) and the caldarium (4) were provided with hollow
floors and hot air spaces in the walls extending to the lunettes
and the ceiling. The vaulted ceilings of both of these rooms, as
well as of the apodyterium, are preserved; but the caldarium
has lost its hollow floor and walls, together with the bath basin,
which was placed in a large niche at the right as one entered;
only the base of the labrum remains. The condition of this room may be due to the earthquake of the year 63, the necessary
repairs not having been made before the eruption. There

was no connection between the women's baths and the court
at the rear (D), which had a separate entrance from the street.
At the women's entrance there was a narrow waiting room for
attendants, separated from the street by a thin wall and protec-
ted by a roof.

The furnace room could be entered at one end from the
street. The three cylindrical tanks for hot, lukewarm, and cold
water were arranged as in the Stabian Baths. Beyond the
tanks is a cistern (g), which was supplied in part by rain water
from the roof, in part by a feed pipe connected with the water
system of the city. The raised walk (h) on the right side of the
furnace room is continued to the small court (D) in the corner
of which is a stairway leading to the flat roof of the men's
caldarium. From this point of vantage, the view over the
landscape and the sea must have been beautiful in antiquity,
as it is to-day.

A sundial doubtless stood on the larger of the two pillars in
the court (d), which is about seventeen feet high and nearly five
feet thick at the base; on the smaller pillar was perhaps a statue
or other ornamental object of the sort frequently seen in wall
paintings.