CHAPTER XLII

THREE HOUSES OF UNUSUAL PLAN

In the houses described in the preceding chapters the distribution of the rooms is characterized by a certain regularity, which makes it possible to indicate the arrangements by reference to an ideal or normal plan. A wide departure, however, is occasionally noted; and by way of illustration three houses of unusual plan will be briefly presented here, first a house without an atrium, then one having an atrium but no compluvium, and, lastly, a large establishment built on terraces at different levels.

I. THE HOUSE OF ACCEPTUS AND EUHODIA

Sometimes a few rooms of a large house were cut off from the atrium and used as a separate dwelling; the original plan in such cases is easily determined. The number of houses built without an atrium in the beginning is exceedingly small. Among the pleasantest was the modest dwelling of Acceptus and Euhodia, on the south side of the double Insula in the eighth Region (VIII. v.-vi. 39); the names are taken from a couple of election notices painted on the front, in which they appear together.

From the street one passed directly under a colonnade (Fig. 172, a) in two stories, facing a small garden (b), from which it
was separated by a low wall. At one end of the garden was an open-air triclinium (k), which still remains. The rest of the plot, used as a flower garden, was profusely ornamented; five heads of herms, a frog and other objects of marble were found in it, besides a couple of alabaster basins and five statuettes of Egyptian divinities made of glazed pottery. In the corner of the colonnade, between the garden and the entrance, is a small hearth, conveniently placed for serving the open-air triclinium; in the opposite corner at the left the excavators found the remains of a cupboard, together with vessels of bronze, glass, and clay. At the further end of the colonnade one passed into another small garden (g).

A bedroom (d) opened on the colonnade near the entrance. A corridor (c) led to the kitchen (e) behind it. Beyond the corridor is the dining room (f). Another sleeping room (i) with places for two beds is entered through a kind of anteroom (h) at the rear of the house.

The rooms of the second story corresponded closely with those underneath, and were entered from the second story of the colonnade; the stairs, partly of wood, started in the kitchen. The appearance of the house as one looked from the garden at the right toward the colonnade may be inferred from our restoration, which gives a longitudinal section (Fig. 173); the letters under the section refer to the rooms as they are indicated in the plan.

The house was decorated in the fourth style. On the south wall of the kitchen there is a painting of Fortuna, with the usual attributes, a cornucopia and a rudder resting on a ball. The Genius and the Lares nowhere appear, and as a lotus blossom is painted on the forehead of the goddess, who is thus conceived of as a form of Isis, we may suppose that Acceptus and his wife were adherents of the Egyptian cult. Besides the statuettes of Egyptian divinities there was found in the garden the foot of a marble table with a Greek inscription "of Serapion," an Egyptian name. Acceptus and Euhodia may have come from Alexandria and thence have introduced into Pompeii this type of house, so unlike the native form. The Latin name of Acceptus does not stand in the way of this explanation, for he was probably a freedman, who in Egypt may have had a Roman master.

II. A House without a Compluvium

The accompanying plan (Fig. 174) shows the arrangement of a small house on the north side of Nola Street in the fifth Region (V. v. 2). The problem of lighting the atrium (e), the roof of which sloped toward the back, was met in a simple way.

At the rear a light court (f) was constructed, which furnished light and air by means of broad windows, not only to the atrium, but also to the adjoining room g and indirectly to the dining room h, which had a window opening on g.

This arrangement, however, is in part the result of later changes. Originally the room marked g belonged to the court, f, and the house consisted of two parts, separated by a narrow area. The kitchen was then in the low room (f), above which
III. THE HOUSE OF THE EMPEROR JOSEPH II

A good example of a house extended over terraces at different levels may be seen on the edge of the hill west of the Forum Triangolare (VIII. ii. 39), that of the Emperor Joseph II, casa dell’ Imperatore Giuseppe II. The name was given in commemoration of a visit of this emperor to Pompeii, in 1769, when a special excavation in his honor was made in a part of the house.

The uppermost of the three terraces on which the house is built (Fig. 176, 1) is at the level of the street (Vico della Regina, Plan VI), the lowest (3) in part occupies the place of the old city wall; the middle terrace is adjusted to the intervening slope. The arrangement of the stairways between the terraces and the distribution of the rooms may be more easily understood from an inspection of the plan in connection with the key below than from description.

There was a second story over a part of the rooms on the upper terrace, as indicated by the stairways at e and n and in the corner of h, but the extent of it is not easy to determine. The traces of the upper rooms of the middle terrace, however, are clearly seen, and their arrangement is indicated on the plan (4); the height of h and k, which were in one story, was equal to that of the smaller rooms with the chambers above.

The front of the house, the large Tuscan atrium with the adjoining rooms, dates from the Tufa Period; the atrium was originally one of the most richly decorated at Pompeii. The rooms back of the atrium opening toward the rear, and those of the middle and lower terraces, are a later addition, built after
the city wall at this point had been removed, perhaps not long before the end of the Republic; traces of the second style of decoration are found in one of the lowest rooms, the tepidarium of the bath. Remains of the first style are found in the fauces, but the greater part of the house is decorated in the last style.

One of the small rooms (ε) opening on the atrium, originally a bedroom, was in later times turned into a house chapel. In the right wall is a small niche, on the back of which a Genius of the ordinary type is painted. Near him and also offering a libation is a female figure with the attributes of Juno, a diadem, and a sceptre. The two figures represent the Genii of the master and mistress of the house (p. 270). Under the niche, and at the sides are iron nails, driven into the plaster to hold wreaths and garlands.

On either side of the broad middle room (ω) is a dining room (ν, χ), connected with it by two large windows. All three rooms open upon the colonnade (γ), and this again opens out upon a terrace (ζ).

The principal room of the middle story (2, η, under ς) takes the place of an atrium; it is lighted by a door and two windows opening upon a terrace (μ). Connected with it are two dining rooms (θ, κ), considerably higher than the other apartments of this story, and three sleeping rooms (τ, λ, ξ). A dark corridor (β) separated these rooms from the solid earth at the rear, and furnished access, by means of ladders, to two low upper rooms (over τ and λ; see 4, ii, iii), perhaps used as storerooms. From β one could also reach, in the same way, an oblong chamber excavated in the earth (i), designed originally as a cistern, but used as a cellar at the time of the eruption. Of the remaining upper rooms one (iv) was built on the solid ground at the side of the stairway leading from the upper floor (α); the other two (υ, over γ, δ and υι, over ζ) were connected by a gallery or bridge over the stairway leading to the lower floor (ε); this gallery could be reached also by a ladder or wooden stairway in the large middle room (ν). The outermost room (vi) was perhaps a washroom; there is a rectangular basin in one corner.

The lower floor was given up to a bath (frigidarium, 8; tepidarium, 6; caldarium, 7) and to a bakery (3, 4).

In the vaulted ceiling of the frigidarium (8) and one of the rooms of the bakery (3) is a round hole for ventilation, opening upon the terrace above through a kind of chimney. The hollow walls of the caldarium (7) are carried to the crown of the vault, at the middle of which is a similar opening for the vent. The places of the three openings in the floor of the terrace are seen in the plan (2, μ).

At one end of the larger room of the bakery (3) is the oven; at the other two rectangular basins of masonry. In the corner near the basins was found the skeleton of a man who at the time of the eruption had taken refuge in this room and probably died of hunger. The appearance of the room at the time of excavation is shown in a sketch published by Mazois (Fig. 177).

The door near the corner, seen in the illustration, led outside the city. The proprietor of the house perhaps had a special permit enabling him to leave or enter the city at any time without surveillance; none of the other houses along the edge of the city have a private entrance of this kind.