CHAPTER XLIII
OTHER NOTEWORTHY HOUSES

The houses accorded a detailed description in the previous chapters are few in comparison with the number of those worthy of special study. He alone who has wandered day after day among the ruins, returning again and again to explore the parts of the city which are rarely seen by the hasty visitor, can realize what a wealth of interesting material lies behind the barren walls lining the streets on either side.

The location of the houses mentioned incidentally is given in Plan VI, at the end of the volume. Such are, the house of Caecilius Jucundus, on Stabian Street (V. i. 26), the tablimum of which contains one of the most beautiful specimens of wall decoration yet discovered, in the third style; the house of Lucretius, on the same street (IX. iii. 5), with a little garden behind the tablimum adorned with quaint sculptures; the house of the Hunt on Nola Street (VII. iv. 48), so named from the large hunting scene on the wall at the rear of the garden; and further down on Nola Street (IX. vii. 6) the extensive house with three atriums and a large peristyle, excavated in 1879, eighteen centuries after the destruction of the city, and hence called the house of the Centenary, casa del Centenario.

In the same block with the house of the Hunt, opposite that of the Faun, is the house of the Sculptured Capitals, casa dei Capitelli Figurati (VII. iv. 57). It received its name from the figures carved in the tufa capitals of the pilasters at the entrance, one of which is shown in Fig. 178; the stucco with which the surface was coated has now fallen off. Such figures are not infrequently met with in pilaster capitals of the Tufa Period, the subjects being always taken, as here, from the bacchic cycle; the satyr at the left is well rendered. The plan of the house is simple, like that of other houses of moderate size dating from the pre-Roman time.

Near the west end of Nola Street is the house of Pansa, which occupies the whole of the sixth Insula of Region VI. Although of approximately the same size as the house of the Faun, and built in the same period, it contained fewer large rooms; its proportions were less impressive, its finish less elegant. The walls present many evidences of repairs and alterations, but of the wall decoration nothing remains.

The plan (Fig. 179) is of interest on account of its regularity. It well illustrates the extent to which, at Pompeii, rooms not required for household purposes were utilized as shops and small separate dwellings, which were rented to tenants, and doubtless formed an important source of income.

The vestibule and fauces have been mentioned previously (p. 249). The living rooms are grouped about a single atrium (2) and a large peristyle (9). A colonnade at the rear of the house faces the garden, which, as indicated by the appearance of the ground at the time of excavation, was used for vegetables. Opening on the colonnade is the gardener’s room (a).

In the front were shops, one of which (35) was connected with the house and served as the proprietor’s place of business; another (33) was used as a salesroom for the bakery, which occupied the rooms numbered 28–34. On the same side of the house were three small two-story dwellings, one of which (22–23) contained windows opening into an adjoining room (12) of the house and into the peristyle; it was doubtless occupied by some one connected with the household. The dwellings on the other street (A, B, C) were larger. Fiorelli thought that this Insula belonged to Alleius Nigidius Maius (p. 489); the name of Pansa was given to it from an election notice painted on the front.
There is a remarkable group of houses near the north end of Mercury Street. The first in importance is the house of Castor and Pollux (VI. ix. 6), which is so named from the figures of the Dioscuri, holding their horses by the bridle, painted on the walls of the principal fauces. Between the two atriums, one of which is of the Corinthian type, lies a large peristyle; and behind the Corinthian atrium is a garden with a colonnade in front. The decoration of the house is especially effective; that of the larger tablinum was by one of the best artists who worked at Pompeii. The paintings in the two central panels of this room are often mentioned; on the right wall, the recognition of Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes; on the left, the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. The representation of Venus Pompeiana shown in Fig. 4 is from the peristyle.

Beyond the house of Castor and Pollux is that of the Centaur (VI. ix. 3), which received its name from a painting in which Hercules, Deianira, and Nessus appear; the end of a bedroom in this house is shown in Fig. 122. The rest of the insula belongs to the large house of Meleager, named from a picture representing Meleager and Atalanta. The walls contained numerous mythological pictures, part of which were transferred to the Naples Museum; those left on the walls have suffered from exposure to the weather.

The house of Apollo also (VI. vii. 23), on the opposite side of the street, is noteworthy on account of its decoration, in the last style; the god appears in a series of paintings. Two houses in the next insula, on the south, have in their gardens fountain niches veneered with bright mosaics, the casa della Fontana Grande (VI. viii. 22) and the casa della Fontana Piccola (VI. viii. 23).

At the middle of the tenth Insula, in the same Region, is the house of the Anchor (VI. x. 7), so called from an anchor outlined in the black and white mosaic of the fauces. The peristyle here presents an interesting peculiarity of construction. The level of the street at the rear of the house was below that of Mercury Street. Instead of filling up the lot so as to raise the garden to the height of the front part, the builder constructed a kind of basement under the colonnade of the peristyle, the floor of which was thus adjusted to the level of the floors in the front rooms; the garden and the floor of the basement were on the same level as the street at the rear. The colonnade was higher on the north than on the other three sides (Fig. 180). The effect of the whole was far from unpleasing. Whether the projections seen in the niches below, at the level of the garden, are pedestals or small altars cannot be determined. The niches at the front end were made larger, and...
were three in number. In the middle niche was a diminutive temple; the other two had the form of an apse, and contained fountain figures.

Houses were sometimes enlarged at the expense of neighboring dwellings, which, in some cases, were destroyed to the foundations, in others remodelled or incorporated with slight change. An example is the house of the Citharist, which fills the greater part of the fourth Insula in Region 1, on the east side of Stabian Street. A bronze statue of Apollo playing the cithara, found in the middle peristyle (Fig. 181, 17), gave its name to the house. It is apparently a faithful copy of a Greek masterpiece at Sparta, and is now in the Naples Museum. The house is sometimes referred to as that of Popidius Secundus.

There are two atriums (6, 47) and three peristyles (17, 32, 56). A large part of the house, the west atrium (6), with the connect-

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Fig. 181.—Plan of the house of the Citharist.

6. West atrium with connecting rooms, entered from Stabian Street.
17, 32. Peristyle belonging with the west atrium.
46, 41. Bath—tepidarium and caldarium.
47. North atrium, entered from the continuation of Abbondanza Street.
56. Peristyle belonging with the north atrium.

Fig. 182.—Orestes and Pylades before King Thoas.
Wall painting from the house of the Citharist.
the atriums were turned over to the slaves or used for domestic purposes.

In the large room (35) opening on the south peristyle were two paintings of unusual merit, both of which were transferred to the Naples Museum. The subject of one was the finding of the deserted Ariadne by Bacchus; in the other Orestes and Pylades appear as captives before Thoas, the king of Tauris (Fig. 182).

At the right of the picture sits Thoas, looking at the captives, his sword lying across his knees, his hands resting upon the end of his sceptre. Behind him stands a guard with a long spear in the right hand. Another guard with two spears stands behind Orestes and Pylades, whose hands are bound. Orestes, upon whose head is a wreath of laurel, looks downward, an expression of sadness and resignation upon his finely chiselled features. Pylades is not without anxiety, but is alert and hopeful. Between the two groups is an altar on which incense is burning. In the background Iphigenia is seen moving slowly forward; the head is entirely obliterated. It is unfortunate that the painting is so badly preserved. The faces of the two youths are individualized with remarkable skill, and the picture here used as the centre of a decorative framework of the fourth style is evidently a copy of a masterpiece.

On the south side of Abbondanza Street, opposite the Stabian Baths, is the house of Cornelius Rufus (VIII. iv. 15), a view of the interior of which has already been given. The name of the proprietor is known from the dedication on the herm (seen in Fig. 121), C. Cornelio Rufo; the carved table supports behind the impluvium are among the finest yet discovered.

In the same block is the house of Marcus Holconius (VIII. iv. 4), a good example of a house completely restored and decorated after the earthquake of 63. The right ala was fitted up with shelves, on which at the time of the eruption were kitchen vessels of bronze, iron, and terra cotta. The colonnade about the peristyle was in two stories. From the columns at the front six jets of water, at a height of about four feet, fell forward into the gutter; and there was an equal number at the rear. There was also a little fountain in the exedra at the rear of the peristyle.