

On leaving the soldiers' quarter, my guide led me into the city.

How do you call this street?

This pavement will soon want mending.

These ruts, worn by the waggons, in rolling over these huge masses of lava, will overturn the carriages.

I like these footways before the houses, on each side of the street.

What is become of all the inhabitants? we see nobody in the shops! not a creature in the streets! all the houses are open!

Let us begin by visiting the houses on the right.

This is not a private house; that prodigious number of chyrurgical instruments prove this edifice must have had some relation to the art in which they are used. This was surely a school for surgery.

These houses are very small, they are exceedingly ill contrived, all the apartments are detached; but then, what neatness! what elegance! in each of them is an inner portico, a mosaic pavement, a square colonnade, and in the middle a cistern to collect the water falling from the roof; in each of them are hot-baths, and stoves; and every where paintings in fresco, in the best taste, and on the most pleasing grounds. Has Raphael been here to copy his arabesques?

Let us pass over to the other side of the street. These houses are three stories high; their foundation is on the lava, which has formed here a sort of hill; on the declivity of which they are built. From above, in the third story, the windows look into the street; and from the first story, into a garden. Let us go down that stair-case. This colonnade round the garden is agreeable; you may walk there sheltered from the sun and rain.

But what do I perceive in that chamber? They are ten deaths' heads: The unfortunate wretches saved themselves here, where they could not be saved. This is the head of a little child; its father and mother then are there!

Let us go up stairs again; the heart feels not at ease here.

Suppose we take a step into this temple for a moment, since it is left open. What deity do I perceive in the bottom of that niche? it is the god of Silence, who makes a sign with his finger, to command silence, and points to the goddess Isis in the further recess of the Sacraium.

In the front of the porch there are three stars. Here the victims were slaughtered, and the blood flowing along this gutter into the middle of that basin, fell from

thence upon the head of the priests. This little chamber, near the altar, was undoubtedly the sacristy. The priests purified themselves in this bathing place. Let us now mount up to the sanctuary; it is very narrow. How many columns are there? Six. They are very small. This pediment is elegant. But why these two gates, at each corner of the altar? I conceive the use of them! It was by them that the imposters glided, between the altar and the wall, to make the divinity speak.—You have then been ever imposed on, credulous people. The service is not yet removed: they have been eating fresh eggs; they have been drinking excellent wine.

Here are some inscriptions: *Popidi ambleati, Cornelia celsa*. This is a monument erected to the memory of those who have been benefactors to Isis, that is to say, to her priests; these priests called them pious, a singular synonyme for dupes.

On coming out of the temple of Isis, I pass before a as I omit the word, you may guess my meaning.

The temple of Priapus is very near that of Isis.

The ancients on this subject entertained very different opinions from us, and their manners consequently were also different.

I cannot be far from the country-house of Aufidius; for there are the gates of the city. Here is the tomb of the family of Diomedes. Let us rest a moment under these porticos, where the philosophers used to sit.

I am not mistaken. The country-house of Aufidius is charming; the paintings in fresco are delicious. What an excellent effect have those blue grounds! with what propriety, and consequently with what taste, are the figures distributed in the panels! Flora herself has woven that garland. But who has painted this Venus? this Adonis? this youthful Narcissus, in that bath? and here again this charming Mercury? it is surely not a week since they were painted.

I like this portico round the garden; and this square covered cellar round the portico. Do these Amphoræ contain the true Falernian? how many consulates has this wine been kept?

But it is late. It was about this time the play began, let us go to the covered theatre; it is shut. Let us go to the uncovered theatre; that too is shut.

I know not how far I have succeeded in this attempt to give you an idea of Pompeia.