CHAPTER XIII

PERIPTERAL BUILDINGS

THAT the architectural effect of an external peristyle was appreciated by builders of the XVIIIth dynasty, is shown by several smaller structures. A little temple built by Amenhetep III on the island of Elephantine, which was destroyed in 1822 by the Turkish governor, was a pleasing example of this type. It is carefully delineated in the official French description of Egypt ordered by Napoleon I, from which it appears to have consisted of a simple rectangular cella surrounded by eighteen pillars, the whole being raised on a plain podium and approached by a narrow stairway at one of the smaller ends.\(^1\) The area of the platform was 40 feet by 31, and at the top of the podium was a cornice-like parapet which formed a base for seven square pillars at each side, whilst the two central pillars at the front and back ends were of a circular reeded form.

Ruins of an earlier and more elaborate building of the same type exist as part of the smaller temple at Medinet Habu, at the south side of the western plain at Thebes.\(^2\) It is supposed to have been founded by Amenhetep I, but was not completed until the reign of Thothmes III. The cella (6), which had an entrance at

\(^1\) "Description de l'Egypte. Antiquités," p. 1, pl. 38, etc.
\(^2\) See plan of Medinet Habu, p. 155, below.
each end, was surrounded by a colonnade of sixteen-sided pillars; and this was further enclosed on three sides by a stylobate, on which stood a range of square pillars supporting the roof cornice, the further end being filled in by six chambers (5), in two rows of three, for purposes connected with the temple service. An outer court (8) with two rows of nine columns down the centre and a pylon (10) were added at the south-west end, and further extensions westward (11-15) were made in later dynasties, and even in Roman times, as is shown by an inscription of Antoninus Pius on a gateway (14) in the entrance court.

The remains of a small temple built by Amenhetep II on the south side of the great temple at Karnak, which has an internal peristyle of square pillars adorned with reliefs showing the king adoring various deities, and the sanctuary of a temple at Buhlen,
opposite Wadi Halfa, begun by Hatshepsut and finished by Thothmes III, indicate that this peristylar type was favoured by Hatshepsut and her more immediate successors: and it is noteworthy that it continued to be employed for subsidiary buildings such as the pavilion of Taharka (XXVth dynasty) in the centre of the forecourt at Karnak. Its use in the Ptolemaic mammisi, or Birth-houses, which are found adjacent to the larger Ptolemaic temples, and still later in the well-known pavilion at Philae, must therefore be regarded as traditional rather than as a result of Greek influence.

1 This is what is known as the Southern Temple at Buhen. The columns are of the polygonal form. The other temple on the north was a foundation of Senusert I, but was rebuilt by Amenhetep II.

2 These mammisi are chapels or shrines designed to commemorate the birth of Horus, the presumed progenitor of the king. The idea probably originated in the Birth-chamber at Luxor (see p. 122). They are found at Dendera, Edfu, Kom Ombo, and elsewhere.
COLOSSAL STATUES OF AMENHETEP III, KNOWN AS THE COLOSSI OF MEMNON