

## In Pursuance of City Planning Considerations

I can look into a side street through a former boulevard which, treeless, widens out towards an empty square, more and more resolutely the farther it moves away from the corner I live on. An old street, a goodish ninety years, old houses with broad cornices, pillars, lintels supported by half-columns, balconies which are propped up by Atlantes, and round portals which would perhaps fall in were caryatids of rough grace not to gently bend fleshy-powerful backs under the curvature.

For some time indeed, I have noticed from my window that a bustling has been spreading in this street, that something has started there which generally comes under the term Regulation of the City Core and doesn't mean anything else except that the houses

on this street have been marked for demolition.

Old houses. From below dry-rot has worked on them and from above, from the roof framework, the wood-worm. About half-way they met; without making a fuss about it, but, as you see, not unnoticed.

The occupants of the first house, it is assumed, aren't waiting for notification, maybe even, it was given years ago. With sack and pack they move over into the house standing nearest by, without asking and un-greeted by its occupants, then hang out of all the windows, from the cellar to the loft, and shout their wrath and contempt in the faces of the workers outside, who are carrying out the demolition with apparatus and machines.

So there they've found a place to stay. But come next week it's the turn of this house too. The steam shovels advance, the occupants and guests move over jointly into the next house. And a week afterwards it's the same thing again, boxes, household stuff, pieces of clothing are schlepped into the next house, whose doors open reluctantly. Now six or eight heads look out of every window. There's certainly shouting going on and you know approximately what, but over here there's nothing to be heard, you only recognize the opened mouths, and fists, frozen now in a threatening motion, because the

steam shovels manoeuver and move, after a half-rotation, on to the next house that's still standing. So it goes on, one house and another house.

We'll have to go over there now, before evening, they don't light the lamps in this street anymore, or at least inquire about the length of the street, or still better, take a quick look at the street, towards its end, as long as it still exists. We ought perhaps to know how many weeks it can keep going on like this.

By the way, the houses towards the end of the street become lower and squeezed in. Narrow doors, fewer and fewer windows. At first still eighteen or sixteen in the façade that's quite unadorned anyway, finally only four. How are all the people going to be able to look out?

There's still of course one more house, maybe one with two windows, that's at least something. Because the last one, I think, doesn't have any more.

Of course new houses can be put in the place of the old ones; everything new, a new name for the street, new occupants, there are precise, sufficiently detailed notions when it's a matter of the future. But when it comes to the old, former times, the past, one is stuck with conjectures. That has been, and has passed, time, and time lost. Like idle talk.

