

PREFACE

it is that of the experience rather than that of any impression of any place.

Since my return, having been led to wander in the Avernus of literature, where I was received by the Shades not without courtesy, certain, who occupy the position of censors, have, in season and out of season, suggested that my later work by no means reached the level of this. In some ways I cannot but agree with them, for it is the record of actual striving which in its essence has a positive value denied to the impersonal narrative or to a work of the imagination. I lived and did some necessary work in the world's rougher service. The rest is no more than a by-product ; I do not plume myself on it, nor do I greatly regret the lack of keener appreciation.

But I have been urged again and again to repeat the experiment of going berserk in some far-off and savage country ; it has been suggested, openly and by implication, that misery, hardship, and starvation were needed before I brought forth the best fruits ; and many have endeavoured to persuade me to leave the difficult, if by no means giddy, height to which I have climbed with so much labour, for the purpose of affording them sport in the arena. I am reminded of Tertullian, who, in his treatise *De Spectaculis*, promised