

AFRICAN CAMP FIRES

“quaintness” is specialized, whether intentionally or no. There are thousands of them; and all of them well worth the discriminating traveller’s attention. Concerning some of them — as the old inns at Dives-sur-mer and at Mont St. Michel — whole books have been written. These depend for their charm on a mingled gift of the unusual and the picturesque. There are, as I have said, thousands of them; and of their cataloguing, should one embark on so wide a sea, there could be no end. And, again, I must for convenience exclude the altogether charming places like the Tour d’argent of Paris, Simpsons of the Strand,* and a dozen others that will spring to every traveller’s memory, where the personality of the host, or of a chef, or even a waiter, is at once a magnet for the attraction of visitors and a reward for their coming. These too are many. In the interest to which I would draw attention, the hotel as a building or as an institution has little part. It is indeed a façade, a *mise en scene* before which play the actors that attract our attention and applause. The set may be as modernly elaborate as Peacock Alley of the Waldorf or the templed lobby of the St. Francis; or it may present the severe and Elizabethan simplicity of the stone-paved veranda of the Norfolk at Nairobi — the matter is

*In old days before the “improvements.”