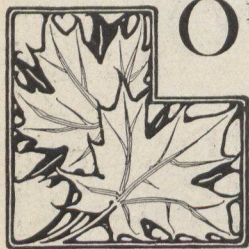


# A THUMB-NAIL SKETCH

By ANNE WARNER

Author of "Susan Clegg and Mrs. Lathrop," "Seeing France with Uncle John," etc.



ONE does meet such interesting people in London. It was getting rather late at the club. "I think that I must be going," said Amarinta, suddenly. "Oh, so must I," said a lady whose name Amarinta had not caught. "I must too," said the Celebrity.

"If you are going my way," said Amarinta to the lady whose name she had not caught, "I shall be pleased to take you in my hansom." Amarinta made this offer because she believed in living up to her principles, and her principles enjoined politeness to one's elders. The lady whose name she hadn't caught was her elder assuredly by twenty-five years and possibly by more.

"Just what I was about to say to you," said the lady, "but *do* we go the same way?"

"I am stopping at the W—— in V—— Street," said Amarinta.

"Why, I live just around the corner in St. James' Mansion," said the lady. "I can take you without any trouble."

"But I asked you to go with me," said Amarinta. "And you a stranger and me a Londoner—never," said the lady.

It seemed settled at that. "But—I say," cried the Celebrity, "I go that way, too. Why not take a four-wheeler and all go together?"

This looked feasible, but seemed to cast an undefinable damper over the occasion. Amarinta defined the damper as the visible uncertainty of who should pay for the four-wheeler.

"Well," said the lady of the uncatchable name, when the pause had lasted too long, "you get the four-wheeler and we'll get our things."

Upon this Amarinta had no choice but to follow her to the dressing-room, where, after slipping into her own wrap, she had the novel experience of watching the lady whose name she hadn't caught

adjust her skirt to another level by the aid of two or three dozen safety-pins.

After that they went out in the hall and found the Celebrity stalking about in a nervous manner.

"I've got the four-wheeler," he exclaimed, as if a four-wheeler was the only child of something extinct. "It's at the door," he added smartly, as if that fact also were unusual.

Amarinta and the lady whose name she hadn't caught now went out and clambered silently into the inner mysteries of the four-wheeler, and when they were all in (in every sense—grammatical and slang) the Celebrity climbed in on top of them. He was a genuine celebrity, all legs and hair, and they squeezed their knees against the doors so that his knees might reign in the middle.

The four-wheeler began to move. "I always like to be out in London at night," said Amarinta.

"I don't," said the Celebrity, "fog!" "Oh, by the way," said the lady, "I am going to pay for this four-wheeler."

"No, I am," said the Celebrity, rather weakly it must be admitted.

"By no means," said the lady. "I invited you." "Oh, if it comes to that," said Amarinta, "I invited *you* first."

"I am going to pay," declared the lady. "Well, of course, if you insist," said the Celebrity.

His words seemed to take all the paying ardours out of the lady whose name Amarinta hadn't caught.

"Oh, I say," she cried, "we'll each pay sixpence. How will that do? Then everyone will be satisfied."

The Celebrity looked (by the light of a passing electric) as if he would have been quite satisfied with the previous arrangement.

"We get out before you do," said the lady. "We will give you our sixpences." She began at once to unpin herself to the end that she might find her pocket.

Amarinta extracted her own purse, and the Celebrity began to hunt for his. In his contortions (for he seemed to keep his cash quite as far re-

moved from the surface as the no-name lady kept hers) his elbow hit Amarinta on the nose.

"Oh, I say," he said, "was that you?" "Oh, dear no," said Amarinta, "it was the top of the four-wheeler."

They now all got their heads and purses as near as possible to the window, to the end that they might find their sixpences.

"You know we mustn't give him a ten-shilling piece by mistake," said the lady to Amarinta.

"Mercy on us, no!" said Amarinta.

They had traversed the whole park before the identity of all the three sixpences was safely established. It took time, for after the lady was absolutely sure that her sixpence was a sixpence, and that Amarinta was not parting with ten shillings unawares, even then the Celebrity rammed and crammed himself up against the window and looked at the three little coins until Amarinta thought that she should certainly explode with laughter.

"Are we anywhere near St. James' Mansion?" said the lady, suddenly becoming restless.

"Very near," said the Celebrity. Even as he spoke they stopped before that building of anomalous nomenclature.

"I get out here," said the lady, "good-bye." As she spoke she began to plough over them both and descended on the further side. The Celebrity braced himself firmly, and—let her. When she was gone Amarinta said:

"What was her name?" "I don't know," said the Celebrity. "I don't know yours either," he added.

"And I don't know yours," said Amarinta, contentedly.

"Don't you really?" he asked, looking much startled at that.

"No," said Amarinta—the four-wheeler was stopping—"I get out here," she said pleasantly. "Good-bye," she added as the hotel-porter opened the door of the four-wheeler.

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed the Celebrity. But she was mounting the steps beyond.

One does really meet such interesting people in London!

# THE YELLOW GOD

By H. RIDER HAGGARD

Author of "She," "King Solomon's Mines," "The Witch's Head," Etc.

Resume: Major Alan Vernon withdraws from partnership with Sir Robert Aylward and Mr. Champers-Haswell, promoters of Sahara, Limited, because the editor of "The Judge" has informed him of the company's dishonorable methods. Vernon refuses to sell to Sir Robert a curious idol which has been a feature of the office for over a year, and which seems to have a talismanic quality. Vernon spends the week-end at "The Court," Mr. Champers-Haswell's home, and while there Jeeki, the negro servant, tells the story of the idol, the "Yellow God," which was brought from Africa. Miss Barbara Champers, the niece of the host, is the object of Sir Robert Aylward's and also Major Vernon's devotion. Alan finally wins Barbara's promise to become his wife but their engagement is to be kept secret. Sir Robert becomes Alan's bitter enemy on learning of the betrothal. Alan and Jeeki set out for Africa in search of treasure from the worshippers of the Yellow God, "Little Bonsa." In their African adventures, Major Vernon and Jeeki are attacked by dwarfs, armed with poisoned arrows, who are driven off by a cannibal tribe, the Ogula, who take Alan and Jeeki prisoners but treat them kindly on account of the Yellow God. Alan falls sick but the Ogula take him and Jeeki up the river. They reach the Gold House where the Yellow God is placed and meet the wonderful priestess, Asika, who takes them through the treasure house. The Gold House is a great revelation of riches but Alan and Jeeki become anxious when they observe Asika's determination to make the former her husband. At the feast of Little Bonsa, Alan is disgusted by the slaughter and heathen orgies. Alan is given a store of gold which he sends to coast by Jeeki's mother and some of the Ogula whose chief, Fahni, is

anxious to be rescued. Alan and Jeeki find themselves practically prisoners at Asika's mercy. They escape to find Mungana, Asika's husband, has also fled. The latter is drowned during the journey.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### PURSUIT.



THEY waited a while, expecting that he would rise again. But he never rose. A shot-weighted corpse could not have disappeared more finally and completely. The thing was very awful, and for a while there was silence, which as usual was broken by Jeeki.

"That gay dog gone," he said in a reflective voice. "All those old ghosts come to fetch him at proper time. No good run away from ghosts; they travel too quick; one jump, and pop up where you no expect. Well, more place for Jeeki now," and he spread himself out comfortably in the empty seat.

All that night they rode on, taking turns to rest, except Alan and Jeeki, who slept a good deal, and as a consequence awoke at dawn much refreshed. When the sun rose they found themselves across the lagoon, over thirty miles from the borders of Asikiland, almost at the spot where the river up which they had travelled some months before flowed out of the lake.

So they landed, ate from their store of food, and began a terrible and toilsome journey. On either side the river lay desiccated swamp covered with dead reeds ten or twelve feet high. Doubtless beyond this swamp there was high land, but in order to reach this, if it existed, they would be obliged to force a path through miles of reeds, therefore they thought it safer to follow the river bank. Their progress was very slow, since continually they must make detours to avoid a quicksand or a creek, also the stones and scrubby growth delayed them, so that fifteen or at most twenty miles was a good day's march. Still they went on steadily, seeing no man, and when their food was exhausted, living on the fish which they caught in plenty, in the shallows, and on young flapper ducks that haunted the reeds. So at length they came to the main river into which this tributary flowed, and camped there thankfully, believing that if any pursuit of them had been undertaken, it was abandoned.

On the following morning, shortly after dawn, Jeeki awoke his master.

"Come here, Major," he said in a solemn voice, "I got something show you," and he led him to the foot of an old willow tree, adding, "Now you go up, Major, and look."

So Alan went up, and from the topmost fork of that tree saw a sight at which his blood turned cold. For there, not five miles behind them, on either side of the river bank, the light gleaming on their spears, marched two endless columns of men, who from their head-dresses he took to be Asiki.

"Hook, scoot, bolt, leg it!" exclaimed Jeeki emphatically, then he licked his finger, held it up to the