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My note-book shall once more take up its unvarnished tale, and this time, if possible, without digression.

Oh! the luxury of clean clothes, a breakfast already prepared and waiting for you, a civil landlord, new faces to study, and new ideas to exchange! Roughnesses, tempered by civilization, and after the roughnesses we had so lately experienced appearing to us as no roughness at all. Everything delightfully new and quaint; everybody hearty and kindly in their greeting. More English than Dutch voices reach our ears, and Kaffir laugh and song, with their now familiar ring, meet us at all points, from the "tchaia, hamba!" (I cannot spell it), to the dog which is poking its nose into the cook's porridge-pot, to the graver greeting of "Inkosi," or chief, as a Kaffir meets one of his "betters" in the street. Then, luxury of luxuries, English letters! As we read them, Pretoria, its past, present and future melted away from before our very eyes, and Old England, with the dear ones it holds for us, rises up instead, for the short, luxurious hour we devote to the devouring of the messages loving hands have traced so many thousands of miles away.

A visit to the Wonder-baum was most kindly planned and carried out by our kind new friends in Pretoria. This was a tree of such surprising dimensions that no one could quite agree as to its exact size and height, though many hundreds of people have congregated under its branches, with their wagons and belongings, on the occasion of some public demonstration. The tree is a "Banyan," and has been destroyed in many parts most barbarously by some Dutch Boers, possessing no taste for the beauties of nature, but standing in immediate need of firewood.

The branches have arched out grandly; then, mother earth having seized them where they have laid themselves, like weary young giants, to rest upon her bosom, she has nourished them into new life just then and there, and lo! another arch has made another span, until you seem to have ready to your hand a natural church, with aisles, and chancel, vestry, and belfry, complete.

As we partook hungrily of our bread and butter and biscuits under the shade of this real wonder-tree, we could hear from amidst the rocks and smaller trees behind us, curious sounds which we recognized as made by a colony of baboons which claimed them as their own. As a closer acquaintance with these uncanny-looking creatures did not seem at all desirable, we accepted gladly the proposal made by one of our party that we should be introduced by one well acquainted with the heads of the family, and pay our first visit to a real Boer homestead. Of this visit I will tell you presently.

H. A. B.

### Hope's Quiet Hour.

#### Appearance and Reality.

"Things are not what they seem" is an old saying which is continually proving itself afresh, even in the physical world. It once seemed impossible to speak easily to anyone half a mile away—now we think nothing of conversing with a friend a hundred miles away. We once thought that a bar of iron was solid and immovable, now we are told that none of its invisible particles ever touch each other, and that each of these infinitely small particles is whirling constantly in its own appointed orbit, like the apparently still and silent stars in immeasurable space. We once thought that light could only be distinguished by the eye, now we are told that blind men can—by means of a special apparatus—"hear" the sunlight. So "the music of the spheres" is a reality, after all! Yet the appearance of things has not changed. The sun still appears to go round the earth, though we are sure that the earth is in reality going round the sun; a board still looks quite opaque, although one can easily see through it with the help of the X-ray, and the seeds put into the ground in the spring don't look as if they could ever turn into cabbages, turnips, or pumpkins. When we are quite convinced about the reality of things, we act on that conviction, serenely ignoring the appearance.

As it is in the outside world, so it is also in the more important world of spiritual realities. The things we can see and touch are made of things invisible and spiritual. The spiritual is real and lasting, the things we can see are constantly changing, and have no real permanence.

Our Lord will show us—if we stay close at His side—the difference between appearance and reality. He does not want us to spend our priceless lives in the eager pursuit of fairy gold which withers into a dead leaf in the hand of one who grasps it. From the very first He directed the gaze of His disciples to real riches, telling them of the happiness of the "poor in spirit," who are in reality possessed of boundless wealth—"for their's is the kingdom of heaven." That was in His first recorded sermon—the Sermon on the Mount. The same note is repeated in His last great sermon, the message sent from heaven to the seven churches. He says to the apparently poor church in Smyrna: "Thou art rich!" while the apparently rich church in Laodicea (so sure that it has need of nothing) is told that it is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." How He loves those self-deceived "rich" poor children of His. He offers them gold tried in the fire instead of their perishable "riches," white raiment to cover their nakedness, and eyesalve to cure their blindness. He tries to wake them from their dream of happiness, by faithful rebuke and chastening. He stands at the door of their hearts, pleading to be admitted that He may be their Guest and that they may be His guests. He offers to share His heavenly throne with them, if only they will fight against sin and overcome it. It has been said that this church of Laodicea, alone of the seven, received not one word of approval from her Lord; but, if He could see nothing to commend, at least He used every argument that Love could suggest to win her from false to true ideals.

Let us ask our Lord to "anoint our eyes with eyesalve" that we may see, that we may distinguish reality from appearance and so may spend our lives in the pursuit of real and lasting riches.

The appearance of failure need not dispirit anyone, for there can be no real failure as long as faith, hope and love are swaying the life. Joseph appeared to fail when he was imprisoned for righteousness' sake, David and his three friends appeared to fail when they were condemned to death rather than disown their God—yet the moment of apparent failure was really the time of grandest victory. The Saviour of the world appeared to fail when He was winning a mighty triumph over a conquered foe.

Then let us keep up our courage and wait trustfully on God in childlike confidence and strong patience, even though our prayerful efforts seem to have produced no result. A clear-visioned servant of God sent this inspiring message to a friend whose work seemed to have been fruitless: "Of course, you know you haven't failed!" Sometimes a worker forgets that only the work is his business and that results are entirely in God's hands. Then such a confident message from a loyal comrade rouses fresh hope and joy and trust in his discouraged heart.

God expects us to trust His Love always—there is no chance to prove our trust in Him when everything is sunshiny and our prayers seem to bring instant answers. Perhaps our days of "disaster"—apparent failure—may be the days when we are pleasing our Master best, and are therefore winning our greatest success.

I once read the story of a woman who was supposed to be highly favored of God, because as soon as she prayed for anything it was plainly dropped into her hands. Such favoritism would fill most of us with fear, and we should be afraid to pray for anything at all, for fear our ignorant asking might bring us injurious gifts. How can we tell what will be really for our good?

If an earthly father brought up his child with foolish fondness, spoiling him cruelly and shortsightedly, encouraging weak selfishness, and allowing no chance of cultivating courage, patience or endurance, he might appear to love his child, but would really be imposing on the child's ignorance of life's needs. We