

been plenty good enough? How shall I tell you of the desperate pillow fights? The mattress match? The awful pom-pom-pull-away of which each chair became the center? As for the bed, it was envied by whole families, who pummeled each other lustily over it; and the books—the food in tin cans—the dishes—the tables—the pencils—who did not take what he could?

The Great Grab kept up for hours; and articles which belonged to one person one minute, belonged to another person another minute; for the muscles of some were better than the muscles of others. The girl who prinked into the mirror amazed at her own loveliness, prinked only a minute, for a warrior grabbed it from her, who needed to know how he looked as much as she. For the fiercer the war-paint, the more startled the enemy.

Yes, the Great Grab went on.

Down every little forest trail the Man saw his possessions disappearing in a whirl of flying arms and scurrying legs.

There never was a Bible verse so upsetting—so devastating. At nightfall he walked into his hut, and it was just a hut. Just a roof, like other roofs, thatched with palm leaves; woven walls; a floor. It held nothing else, nothing.

I do not like to picture the Man lying down to sleep that night. With nothing but the floor. Yet surely he remembered that when the Lord Jesus was here among men, He had no place to lay His head, either. But I can feel the loneliness of it seeping into his very bones. I can feel his utter dismay. What was he to do now, dear God? What, indeed!

And all this time there was wild laughter in the other huts. The stars winked down in sheer surprise. There was the family with the umbrella, bent nearly double with laughter as they did the simple trick which made a foolish stick spread its black branches in the air above them. The mattress family rolled on the mattress—bounced up and down—proved a hundred times how soft it was! How shock-proof! They laughed and laughed.

The Spoon family practiced eating; the Fork Family also. They couldn't do it! They spilled things. They dropped things. They seemed all thumbs. "Here, let me try it!"

ordered a vainglorious father, only to be doused with the spoonful of liquid or spotted with the drippings from the fork. Laughter! As for the Clothes family, their problems were legion: where to wear the various articles? How to climb in? How to walk in them? Which was front? Which back? How to climb out?

In fact, all over that kraal and far out in the deep black forest, the same mirth has seized everyone. The Great Grab had been a complete success. Even the surprised little stars could see that.

The Man who was a hero to God could hear the sounds of it. I think the angels covered their faces with their wings. But God-the-Father is patient, He knows how to help heroes. And sinners.

Mirth has to die down sometime, and one by one the gay persons lay down on their floors to rest. And then, the high excitement over, a curious thing happened. That little "Something-Inside-That-Talks-Back" began to talk back to them, too.

"Selfish person," it said to each one's soul, "how about that White Man? A long way from his brothers in the tribe of White Men is he. He must be low in his heart, always, missing his father, his brothers. And what did he come for? To teach you the things of God-the-Father. To make your children wise enough to read the magic medicine. Yet think of him tonight—no bed, no pillows, no sheets, no candle, no table, no chair, no food, no book, no clothes—nothing. You have made him uncomfortable; he, used to the soft things of white men. His heart is low within him. Yet what word did he say to stop you? What word?"

There is nothing like such inner conversations. They twist us, and turn us. We writhe! We deny! We stand up for ourselves. But black men and white men have a hard time of it when consciences begin to talk back at them. A very hard time, indeed. Even in the depth of an African jungle. Such a hard time of it, that toward morning down the forest trails came the soft patter of stealthy footfalls—somebody's bringing a mattress—somebody is bringing a pillow—somebody is bringing a chair—a table—a mirror—books—spoons—clothes—