## CHAPTER FOUR

## School Work. Reinforcements

UP to this time nothing had been said about school, except that a few boys had been taught in the evenings. There was no word for it in their language, and learning had no meaning or attraction for them. They only desired to work and earn money.

The first herdboy came before the mission was located, and to him we gave the name "Jim," as we did not fancy his native name. He remained with us three months and then returned home and his cousin Tom came to herd. Both of these boys manifested a great interest in what they heard, and Tom was the first one to express a desire to be a Christian. Another little boy ran off from home one day and begged permission to remain at the mission. His mother immediately followed him and told him to go home. He refused, and sitting down by a tree he put his arms around it and clung to it; but the mother tore the poor little fellow from the tree and dragged him away. Aside from these, very few children made their appearance during the first five or six months of the mission, and no girls came for a much longer period of time. The older people were friendly from the first, but we often felt that some of them inspired their children with a certain amount of fear of the newcomers.

January 1, 1907, the people were informed that we wished to open a school and that they should come to learn. By this we had in mind a day-school, where the pupils would come in the morning and return home at the close of the session. It had been impossible to build a schoolhouse, since nearly all the grass had been burnt off before our appearance on the scene. We, however, set up the little tent and built a straw shed at one end of it for a temporary schoolhouse.

As school and its advantages had no meaning to the people, no one came. Then too it was the busiest season of the year. One, two, three weeks passed, and still no one desired to learn. January passed and half of February; still no scholars. This was a new experience. At Matopo the children could scarcely wait until school opened, and they were the pioneers there and gradually drew the older people to take an interest. Here it was quite the reverse; the children were afraid of us, and would run away, screaming, to hide in the tall grass when we approached their villages. What was to be done? As usual we began to look to the Source that never fails.

The middle of February it was thought advisable to have a week of prayer. All work was laid aside and the time was spent by the Christians in interceding at a Throne of Grace, for we felt that perhaps we had been too much occupied in temporal affairs. In the midst of this week of prayer, on February 19, Macha, the chief, came, bringing his little boy, about twelve years of age, and said, "Here is my son. I should like to have him stay with the mis-

sionaries and learn to read and to work." Here then was a direct answer to prayer. The chief of the district had set an example to his people by thus bringing his child. This was a signal for others, Apuleni, another boy of about the same age, came the next week, and Mafulo and Kajiga followed; also others. Jim and Tom came to remain and attend school, and by the end of the year there were seventeen boys in all staying at the mission.

These were nearly all boys from ten to sixteen years of age; a few were older. None who applied were refused if they were willing to abide by the regulations; and industrial work was at once inaugurated in connection with the school. They were to be taught in school three and one-half hours, and work early morning and afternoon, receiving, in addition to their food and instruction, some clothing, and blankets for the night. They were to remain at least a year before they could take the clothing home with them. This stipulation was made to teach them stability and prevent them from coming sufficiently long to secure clothing and then leaving before they had properly earned it. The arrangement proved very satisfactory. The few taxpayers who entered the industrial school were given a small sum of money, provided they completed the time agreed upon. They always had Saturday afternoon as a half holiday, when they were to wash and mend their clothing and have the remainder of the time for recreation.

It was always our aim to make them understand that they were expected to earn what they received by giving labor in return. We had no

sympathy with pupils who desired to learn and lie about and be idle the rest of the time. Several who desired to bring their food and remain at the mission without working were not allowed to do so, as we thought it would prove detrimental, both to themselves and to the rest. We preferred a dozen industrious and stable boys to many times that number who were lazy and indifferent. It is true some of the smallest could scarcely be said to earn their way at first, but they were at least taught habits of industry. In their homes many of them spent their time in an indolent fashion, their muscles being flabby and unused to exercise; and often, when they came to us, they were too lazy even to play at recess. Gradually they brightened up and took hold of the tasks assigned them. One day one of the mothers came and inquired about her son, a boy about thirteen years of age, and she was told that he was digging in the garden.

"Kanyama digging?" she asked, in great surprise. "Why, he does not know how to work."

The first rainy season was quite pleasant, and it passed with very little sickness among our workers. It gave us an opportunity also of learning something of the fertility of the soil on the mission farm. Much of the land, and especially that in the valleys, was unusually productive, and the grass grew to the height of ten feet. Our aim was to make use of the rainy season to instruct the boys in agriculture and horticulture and to raise sufficient grain and other food at least for their consumption; and more than that, if possible, so that the expense of keeping a number of boys would not rest so heavily on the

mission. This first season very little food was grown, because there had been no land ready for sowing, but the plow came in January, and Gomo was enabled to break two large gardens ready for sowing the following year.

As soon as the rainy season was at an end, building was again undertaken by David and Gomo, together with the assistance of the native men and schoolboys. Thatch grass had to be cut and poles

Macha Mission Huts, 1907.

hauled and seasoned. The Matabele women were always eager to work for cloth, salt, or money, but the Batonga women were not. It was impossible to make satisfactory arrangements with them, either to cut grass or plaster, so that the men and boys were obliged to do this also in connection with the rest of the building, and they performed the work very satisfactorily.

As there was only one small hut for the schoolboys, the first building this second year was a hut,

13 x 16 feet, for their occupancy. Then a building answering for church and school purposes was erected. This was 16 x 30 feet, with a large veranda in front, and was an excellent building of the kind. The seats were made of bricks, built up in rows and plastered over, and the floor was made of earth, pounded hard and plastered. Another building, 14 x 20 feet, of poles and mud was also built, and was divided into two rooms. It had a veranda all around it. We were expecting missionaries out from America, and this last hut was for their accommodation. These three buildings were all respectable-looking ones and required a great deal of time and labor, so that David and Gomo were very busy and deserved much credit for their efficiency and perseverance. In addition to the outside work the schoolboys were instructed in sewing, and two of them in housework.

The school at first was very poorly equipped, as we had nothing but the homemade charts and a few slates, and knew not where our books were to come from, since we did not know the language sufficiently to make any. Some of our needs in this respect were also supplied later. In the latter part of 1907 Rev. E. W. Smith, a missionary at Nanzela, published an excellent "Handbook of the Ila Language." This was a grammar and dictionary combined, and the language was closely allied to that of the Tonga. We secured this book about a year after we had reached Macha and found it very helpful in acquiring the language, since the grammar and many of the words of the two languages were similar. He also published in that language an ex-

cellent first reader and a book of over one hundred pages of Bible stories. This latter book is a very faithful account of Genesis and Exodus, and contains some of the more interesting parts of later Old Testament history. Not long after, there was also published a book of questions containing the essentials of Christian belief, and also many quotations from the Scriptures. With the exception of the mode of baptism this was so essentially like our own faith that it could be used to excellent advantage in Inquirers' Classes.

All of these books proved of inestimable value to us in school and church work. The pupils in the school proved bright and studious, and before the end of this year some had started in the service of the Lord.

It was almost impossible for us to spend much time out among the natives during the rainy season, since the rivers were often swollen and difficult to cross, and the grass was high, rendering walking difficult and even dangerous on account of savage beasts lurking about. It is true we seldom saw any of these animals, but that they were in the vicinity we had no reason to doubt. Once when David was on top of the church, putting on the rafters, a native from a neighboring kraal called to say that three leopards were after his sheep. Our boys all ran to hunt with spears and clubs, and some of them had a glimpse of the animals as they disappeared in the tall grass. Another morning some of the men on coming to work reported that they saw four lions crossing one of our plowed fields. Occasionally we would hear a lion roaring on the

opposite side of the river, so that there was no reason to doubt the presence of danger.

Northwestern Rhodesia, where we found ourselves, is essentially the home of wild and savage beasts and game of all kinds. In addition to smaller animals there are the duiker, reedbuck, hartebeest, sable antelope, eland, kudu, and many other varieties of game. The forests are full of apes and baboons, and the gnu, the zebra, and the buffalo are to be found. The mammoth elephant roams at will in herds or singly, the rivers are full of crocodiles, and the larger ones abound in the ungainly hippopotamuses. It is the paradise of hunters, and many avail themselves of the opportunity for sport thus afforded; others for the gain to be had from ivory and hides.

The fact that there was not only game, but that there were also dangerous animals lurking about, may have been the chief reason why we never succeeded in starting a day-school at Macha. It was scarcely safe for children to go alone back and forth to school. Even men seldom traveled far alone, and they always went armed. A native would carry three or four assegais, and many were supplied with guns. It is surprising how much game they managed to kill with those old blunderbusses.

As stated previously, the presence of animals had much to do with the amount of kraal visiting carried on. Sister Engle and I went, however, quite frequently after the grass was burnt off in June, accompanied by some of the schoolboys. As we neared a village, our approach was always heralded

by the barking of dogs and the screaming of children as they ran away to be out of reach of the *mukua* (white person). Every village is supplied with its quota of dogs. One day I counted twenty-four in one small village. Nor is their presence unnecessary in this animal-ridden country, as they often succeed in driving off ferocious animals from the herds, and they help supply their master with game. They are, however, generally so lean and starved looking that one would like to see a "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals" among the natives.

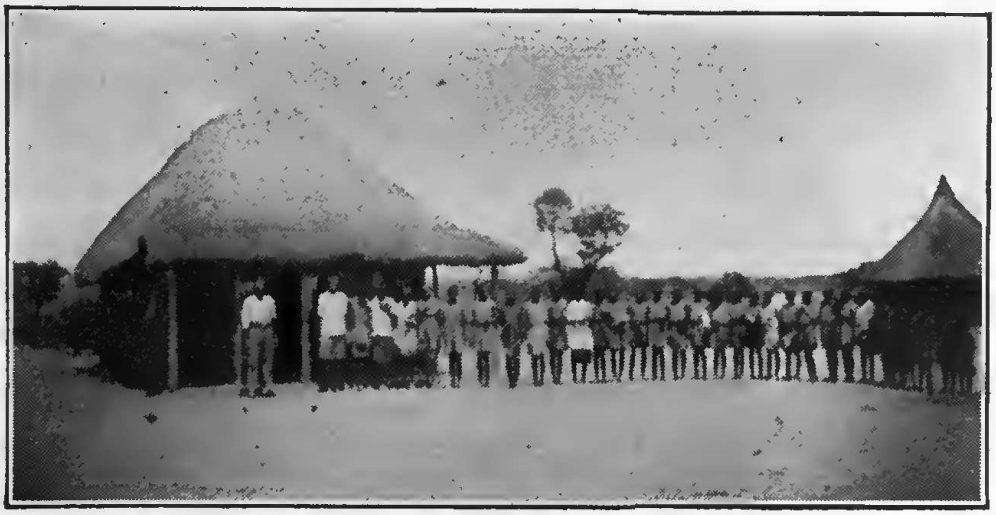
It was a long time before we could get a sight of the girls in the kraals around us. Once, in company with Apuleni, we went to his home, and here as everywhere we were warmly welcomed by the older people and given an opportunity of telling them of the Savior, as well as our limited vocabulary would allow. While we were sitting there talking to some of the older people, Sister Engle said she thought there were some girls in a hut near by. I arose to investigate. The older people saw the move and laughingly told the girls of my approach; but it was too late for them to escape. As I reached the door I saw five girls in the hut, some of whom were nearly grown. Some began to scream and hide their faces, and others sat trembling, not daring to look up. They appeared as if they were afraid of being torn from their home by violence. Two of these were sisters of the boy who accompanied us. It required much tact and patience to finally gain the confidence of these wild children surrounding us,

and to help them realize that we would do them no harm, but we at last won the day.

During this dry season of 1907 word was also received of a threatened native uprising. Our first information of this condition of affairs was received from some officers who had come from the Transvaal and were passing through on their way north on a hunting expedition. They said that they did not know how serious the difficulty was, except that some of the Europeans northeast had been ordered into the government camp. The natives around us were quiet and law-abiding and gave no indication that they were dissatisfied. They themselves were not of a warlike nature, and they had in the past been harrowed and many of them ruthlessly killed by the Matabele, the Barotse, and the Baila, each in their turn, and they were now enjoying peace and quiet under the beneficent rule of the English. They knew that they would gain nothing by rebelling against the English, and the only condition that would cause them to rise would be fear of their powerful neighbors. For this reason we could see no cause for fear. They were, however, not ignorant of the trouble in the country, and confided to David that Lewanika wanted to fight. The powerful tribe north of us, the Baila, were probably as dissatisfied as any. David at first did not tell us what he had heard, for fear of alarming us, and we too said nothing to him at once. Later, however, he told us and we gave him our information. The danger at that time seemed past, and we would have allowed the affair to rest; but it was learned that our fellow missionaries were uneasy on our

account. So we wrote to an official at Kalomo to inquire if they anticipated a native uprising. He wrote, assuring us that whatever danger there might have been, there was no more serious cause for alarm.

In September of this year a young man from Cape Town came to assist in the work. He was a nephew of our friend and benefactress, Mrs. Lewis, and had been impressed with the importance of



Macha Boys and Schoolhouse.

pressing on the work into the interior; hence his presence at Macha. He suffered so much with fever, however, that he concluded it was best to return south after a stay of only a few weeks at the mission.

On November 10 our long-looked-for colaborer, Mr. Myron Taylor, reached Macha. This was a welcome and much-needed addition to our number. The new building was ready for occupancy, and Brother Taylor entered enthusiastically into the work before him. He came just at the opening of

the rainy season, and perhaps entered on the work with too much vigor; for in the latter part of December he was laid low with the dread African fever, and for a time his life was despaired of; but the Lord raised him up. During that, his first rainy season, he had frequent relapses of the fever and saw very few well days until the season was at an end. He was not, however, discouraged, but continued at the work whenever his health permitted.

The boys who came to attend school remained, and others also applied for admission, so that by the end of this second year there were thirty-two staying with us, and they were becoming quite useful in the work, and best of all were going on to know the Lord, and were formed into an Inquirers' Class.

This second rainy season was in some respects a repetition of the first, except that there was more land under cultivation, and we ourselves were better supplied with fresh vegetables and more nourishing food, and Brother Taylor with his rifle could furnish us with game. We were at this time becoming more familiar with the pests with which we had to contend in this tropical Africa. We thought we had learned something of the ravages of the white ants, or termites, while at Matopo, but the experience there was nothing compared to that at Macha. This is not in any sense intended as a scientific treatise; yet even from a missionary point of view one needs to know something of the difficulties in the way. One cannot be long in America without realizing that the ordinary reader is woefully ignorant of some of the most common experiences of the Africander, and in nothing is this more

noticeable than in the ravages produced by the white ants. The species to be found in Africa is unlike that found elsewhere and is much more destructive. A knowledge of the presence of these pests also seems to help solve some of the characteristics of the natives in this section of the country.

These white ants are of various kinds and sizes, but they are similar, in that they build great nests of clay which extend above the ground from one or two to twenty or more feet. These nests are known as ant hills, and in this part of the country some of them are not unlike hillocks. They are all honeycombed within and down deep into the earth, and are the homes of the various members of the community, consisting of the large, bulky, wormlike white queen, an inch or two in length, the savage, warlike soldiers, and the small, inoffensive-looking workers. There are also winged ones which leave the earth in great numbers at the opening of the season after the ground has been softened by the rain. These soon lose their wings and again enter the ground at various places to form new colonies.

The white ants can work only under cover, and exposure to light and the sun is generally fatal to them, so they build small clay tunnels underneath the ground or on top where they desire to work, and through these they pass to and fro, carrying particles of food to store it away. They prefer dry food, such as wood, leather, paper, clothing, straw, and vegetation as it is becoming dry, although if these articles are not to be had they have no objections to attacking growing trees or plants. Many trees in our young orchard have been destroyed by

their ravages. These ants are to be found all over South Africa, but as one approaches the equator they are more numerous and destructive and the hills are larger.

At Macha, boxes, shoes, clothing, everything had to be kept off the ground floor. If this precaution was not observed, perhaps in a single night a clay coating would be formed around the sole of a shoe and it would be greatly damaged. Sometimes they would find their way up the leg of a box and begin destroying the clothing or articles within. As I came out of my room one morning, the noise of the sentinels of the ants gave signal to the workers of the approach of danger. This led to an examination of some bookshelves which were supposed to be safe out of the reach of the pests. Wet clay was found to be all along the end of the bookcase, and the end books on each shelf were partly eaten, all the work of one night. Our bedposts had to be put on zinc or into old tin cans to keep the ants from making their way to the top and soiling the bedclothes. Several times they started to build an ant hill on the floor of the hut, and one morning a small hill of wet clay nearly a foot in height was to be seen, the result of one night's labors.

Nor did they confine their ravages to the floor and the articles placed on the floor; walls and grass roof were full of them. No article could be hung on the wall with safety. There was a ceiling of muslin in the house, yet one day Sister Engle, on going into her room, found an army of white ants marching around on the counterpane of her bed, having fallen from a broken clay tunnel in the

roof. In addition to these pests, we were greatly annoyed by insects boring into the soft wood which formed the rafters. During this season the sound made in the quiet hours of the night by these insects sawing caused one to think the entire hut was alive. The ants would carry their clay tunnels into the opening made by the borers and complete the work of destruction. For a time the ceiling became so heavy with falling sawdust and clay, that it was

The Last Invitation.

necessary to open it about every two weeks and remove the dust, which almost filled a small tub each time. Many more incidents might be cited. We were forced to admit that, at least during the rainy season, a large portion of our time was occupied in protecting our huts and goods from the ravages of the ants.

Their work did not stop with the house. We would think that the grain and meal were placed high and secure out of their reach, only to find that

they had formed a channel and destroyed a lot of grain. At first when some boys came for school there was no suitable place prepared for their accommodation, and they were obliged to lie on the floor. They would occasionally come and show where the cuticle had been removed from some portion of the body during the night. In the garden there was also difficulty in protecting the growing crops. The cornstalk would be eaten off and fall to the ground, where the ants would complete the work of destruction; so that from the time corn began to be filled until it was ripe, it was generally necessary to keep several boys most of the time gathering the fallen corn. Continual vigilance was needful, or in an unguarded moment something about the place would be destroyed.

The varieties of ants in the country are many and diverse, but we will mention only one other kind, to which we were introduced during the early days of the mission. One night some of the boys said they could not sleep on account of ants coming into their hut. We supposed they referred to large black ants, which often came in armies and made a raid on white ants to carry them off for food. These black ones are very troublesome when disturbed, and the boys were told to occupy another hut for the remainder of the night. Again the boys spoke of being disturbed and showed some small, reddish ants with vicious-looking heads, which were marching in a straight line through the yard. But these looked innocent and little attention was paid to the matter. Then one morning a hen and two young guinea fowls, confined in a pen, were found

to be dead and covered with these insects. We concluded that they had died and the ants were eating the carcass, but the boys assured us that the ants had killed them. The pen was immediately burnt, together with as many of the ants as possible. Another night the sheep began to bleat most piteously. The lantern was lighted and the boys called to see what was the difficulty, and while waiting for the boys I approached the pen. Almost instantly needles seemed to penetrate my body in various places. I gave the lantern to the boys to let out the sheep, while Sister Engle and I hastened to the house, where she helped to remove the vicious little insects. After that experience there was no further question in my mind as to whether those ants could kill fowls or other animals.

These are called the army ants. Once it required two days for an army of them continually on the march to pass through our yard. Fortunately we have not been troubled much with this variety since that time, but in some parts of Africa they are very numerous. Human bodies are sometimes thrown to them, and even live ones, as a punishment in supposed witchcraft.

We had been in correspondence with some of the Primitive Methodist missionaries at Nanzela, from whom we had purchased books for the school and ourselves; and we were eager to visit them and learn something of their work. About the 1st of May we arranged to make the journey of sixty miles and pay them a visit. Brother Taylor was here to take charge of the journey, so we took the wagon with the ten oxen and a number of schoolboys, as well as

David, leaving Gomo in charge of the mission during our absence. This was a new and untried road in a northwesternly direction, and required four day of hard traveling to make it. On the way we occasionally had an opportunity of preaching Christ to the natives.

The kindly welcome received from Rev. and Mrs. Price, who were then at Nanzela, more than repaid us for the tediousness of the journey. We spent a most delightful four days at their mission and learned to know something of our neighbors and of the work being accomplished at this oldest station in this part of the country. They were working among the Baila, and also some Barotse who were living in that section of the country. The trip, however, proved a most unfortunate one for us, as we were informed that we had passed through a small district of the tsetse fly on the way. The result of this will be given in another chapter.

On account of the presence of these pests, as well as for other reasons, a very common method of travel and transportation in this part of the country is by native carriers. A native will carry fifty pounds of goods, so that it requires forty persons to transport a ton of goods. This means is employed by officials, and it is somewhat more expeditious than by wagon. It is often not very satisfactory, however, and it is difficult to secure natives who are willing to carry, unless they are almost forced into service. The wages too, eight cents a day, is small, but where the tsetse fly abounds this is the only safe method of transportation.