

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