

1,000 MILES IN A MACHILLA:

Travel and Sport in Nyasaland,
Angoniland, and Rhodesia, with some
Account of the Resources of these
Countries; and Chapters on Sport by
Colonel Colville, C.B.

BY

MRS. ARTHUR COLVILLE,
AUTHOR OF "DUCHESS SARAH."

PRICE TEN SHILLINGS NET.

London and Felling-on-Tyne:
THE WALTER SCOTT PUBLISHING CO., LTD.
NEW YORK AND MELBOURNE.

1911.

A Thousand Miles in a Machilla

ing quite a number of puku and iswalah *en route*. One of the former, a buck, and the first we met with since leaving the Bua, was shot.

We thought that the whole affair was a plot of John's to get a quiet day in camp, but on investigation Roberti failed to implicate John in any way, and confessed that he had only invented the story to make fun of him, and had not intended that we should hear of it. In the end, as the whole transaction was rather quaint, Roberti got off with a caution, but he was advised not to play the funny man again.

In the morning, soon after A's—— departure, I had the camp shifted a few hundred yards, and the tent pitched under the shade of a giant fig-tree—a far pleasanter situation than the previous one on the river bank. In the early afternoon A—— started off again with the chief as guide and got a fine roan, seeing other game as well. My diary has the entry, "a very hot night."

Next day we were to march to Ndombo, and as game was reported on the left bank of the Nyamadzi river, we decided to send the caravan by the road and make a détour ourselves. The river had to be crossed more than once, a difficult achievement, owing to the dense vegetation on its banks, so thick in places that we had to leave our machillas and crawl through the bush as best we could, the machillas being pushed after us. The spoor of rhinoceros was seen, and we passed the evidently only recently vacated home of one of them. We expected to see his ugly face waiting for us round every corner, so the heavy rifle was got ready,

Kazembe to Mpika

but though the spoor was followed some way, the beast never appeared.

There were reported to be quite a number of rhinoceros in the foothills, and we saw spoor on several occasions, but never an animal. Local hunters told us that these Rhodesian rhinoceros had small horns and were so shy that two or three hours' tracking was as a rule necessary to get up with them. This is very different to British East Africa, where, in the rhinoceros districts, the sight of an unwieldly black form scratching its back under a thorn tree and the sound of his steam-engine-like whistle are a common occurrence. As only two are allowed to be killed, their constant presence is not only bad for stalking other game, but is also apt to prove trying to the nerves.

Once away from the river banks we got into the usual dry bush, and the morning became extremely hot. Whilst looking about for a shady place for breakfast a swarm of small black midge flies attacked us, and we anticipated a bad time, but somehow managed to get quit of them.

On this march the tsetse-fly (*glossina morsitans*) was very troublesome. We had been plagued with it all through the valley, but to-day the tsetse seemed unusually aggressive, so that my fly whisk had to be continually moving; and if I happened to close my eyes, a sharp prick woke me up at once. The irritation caused by the bite of this insect is considerable, and heats the blood, but fortunately it is not otherwise harmful to human beings. To domestic animals, however—the goat alone appears immune—

A Thousand Miles in a Machilla

a tsetse bite is fatal, producing a rot which causes death. It is not this variety of tsetse, but *glossina palpalis*, that habitually carries the sleeping sickness germ. It has been ascertained—so we were told on the voyage home by a doctor who had been for sometime studying sleeping sickness—that *glossina morsitans* and the ordinary mosquito can also carry the poison. We gathered, however, that they both retain the infection for a comparatively short time.¹

One curious peculiarity about the tsetse is the manner in which it will entirely abandon a district in which it has once been prevalent. Mr. Selous gives several instances of this in his works. The reason for migration is a disputed point. The presence of the tsetse is attributed by some to the vicinity of certain kinds of game, and it is said that if the game left the "fly" would go with it. Whatever the truth of this theory may be, it is not one that a sportsman would wish to encourage, and it can hardly be applicable to North-East Rhodesia, where there was not a sufficiency of game to attract the enormous quantity of "fly" we at times encountered.

There is one point, and one only, to be said in favour of *glossina morsitans*, and that is that it goes to bed at night. This peculiarity frequently enables valuable cattle to be driven with safety through the "fly" belts, which are well known.

¹ Quite recently sleeping sickness has appeared in the Luangwa Valley. It has not yet been fully determined what insect is the carrying agent. A Commission is being sent out by the Chartered Company to investigate.