

quality. The nature yellow breeds sell for 6½f. to 7½f., while the Japanese fetch from 3f. to 4f. the kilogramme.

### SPORT IN NATAL.

SIR,—I have just returned with a brother officer from snipe-shooting in the little marshes close to Pietermaritzburg, where we had what I considered some rather curious sport. As I was going along I nearly trod on a black mass rather more than a foot square, which I took to be a water snake. I jumped to one side and put a charge of shot into the middle of it, when to my astonishment two things remarkably like two halves of a fish were blown into the air, while the rest of the imaginary water snake suddenly became a lot of fish trying to wriggle away and swim in about two inches depth of water, which they were scarcely able to do. I shouted out, "Come on M., the whole place is alive with fish," and with the help of our ramrods we soon succeeded in capturing six young barbel, besides the one which was shot into two pieces. They were very small, the six weighing just under 4lb. Is it not rather an unusual occurrence to find barbel quietly grazing about a marshy meadow? About twenty yards from where we caught the barbel is a small drain, which runs into a little stream some three or four hundred yards lower down. I presume that the heavy rain of last night must have flooded the drain over its banks, and that the barbel worked their way from the stream up the drain, and so on over the land to where we found them.

I see that several of your correspondents have lately been inquiring about the shooting in Natal. Some ten or fifteen years ago Natal was undoubtedly abundantly stocked with vast quantities of game of all kinds. Such is not the case now, although there is still very fair buck and partridge shooting to be had in most parts of the colony. Of course in a country of this sort the game decreases as fast as the human population increases, and herds of cattle and flocks of sheep have taken the place of buffaloes and elands, &c. A few years ago one could leave Maritzburg in the morning and return in the evening of the same day, having bagged six or eight bucks of different sorts, but I should say that two or three years hence all the various kinds of antelopes will be nearly extinct in Natal, at any rate in the neighbourhood of the towns. Still there is even yet a fair sprinkling of reitbok, ourebi, duiker, steinbok, and other small antelopes in the more unpopulated districts, while in the Newcastle district, north of the Biggarsberg, are large herds of black wildebeest, blesbok, quagga, &c., and a few lions. (N.B. Wherever quaggas abound you may be sure lions are not far off.) On the slopes of the Drakensberg are a few elands, the remnants of herds of those magnificent antelopes which were formerly plentiful enough in Natal, but which have been ruthlessly and indiscriminately destroyed. For instance, in November, 1865, a Kaffir chief, named Langabaleli, turned out a lot of his men, and in one day they killed eleven elands. No wonder that with such slaughter their numbers are rapidly diminishing. During the last session the Colonial Government passed a law to prevent the wanton destruction of animals and birds of game out of season, but at present I believe the law is held in abeyance by the home authorities, for what reason I cannot tell. Some say it is for fear of oppressing the poor Kaffirs, who, if they were not allowed to kill the game, would starve. One thing is certain, that if the Kaffirs are allowed to go on slaughtering the young and old of almost everything that has life at all seasons of the year, there will very shortly not be a head of game left in the country.

The nearest big game shooting to be got from Natal is in the Zulu country, or, better still, in the Amatonga country, between St. Lucia Bay and Delagoa Bay. Really good sport is to be got there. The game includes lions, panthers, leopards, buffaloes, rhinoceros, sea-cows, eland, koodoo, waterbuck, blue wildebeest or brindled gnoo, imyala, impalla, and many other kinds of antelopes, while there are plenty of partridges, ducks, geese, pouws, korans, &c. The two latter are, I believe, species of bustard. I formed one of a shooting party in that country last July and August. We went to the neighbourhood of St. Lucia Bay and had first-rate sport. The great drawback in that country is that all the shooting has to be done on foot, for the tsetse fly kills off all cattle and horses, and shooting on foot in so relaxing a climate is uncommonly tiring work. I fear that I have already taken up too much of your valuable space, if indeed you should deem my scribbling at all worthy of an obscure corner in the columns of your interesting journal.

Fort Napier, Natal, Dec. 29, 1866.

JUNO.

**AN ADVENTURE WITH A SLOTH BEAR.**—Reading about bears (the Indian variety) in a late number of THE FIELD, I determined for the first time in my life to rush into print and send you a few hunting incidents.

