

He compared the two and found to his amazement that the handwriting was identical in each!

"This is almost impossible to believe," said Mr. Sykes sadly. "Has Mr. Garnett taken any steps to apprehend the supposed thief?"

"He has, but without success so far," replied Johnson.

"I am quite sure that both boys will be at their home to-night," said the Superintendent. "We will go to their house to-night, at seven o'clock, and find out what we can. I have thought of a plan by which I believe that I can accomplish our purpose without exciting their suspicion. You will excuse me now, as I have some business that earnestly demands my attention."

Johnson did not seem to exactly relish the proposal, but nodded assent and departed. At the appointed hour he met Mr. Sykes at his home, and the two then set out for the house that was occupied by the two brothers.

X. Y. Z.

(to be continued.)

Iceland.

In mid-ocean, pendant, so to speak, to the Arctic circle, about five hundred miles from the nearest point in the Old World, and two hundred from the New, lies bleak volcanic Iceland. Long years ago, some mighty, sub-marine, volcanic eruption may have forced from the primeval ocean, a small island; and around this nucleus the lava streams of centuries have continued to build, until an island of 39,000 square miles of surface has been formed in this desolate spot. Were it not for the Gulf stream, which washes its southern shore, and tempers the ice-laden Arctic current which descends upon its northern coast from Spitzbergen and Jan Mayen-Iceland would without doubt be untenable. But, with short, stormy summers, averaging a temperature of 54°, a population of sixty or sixty-five thousand manage to live on this island.

We can scarcely picture a more desolate scene than Iceland in winter. Then deep snow and ice often cover the ground to the depth of several feet, and almost perpetual darkness hovers over the land. But in summer, its Geysers, deep chasms and lakes; its caverns, volcanoes and snow-capped mountains; its rapid rivers, green valleys, cataracts, and fantastic lava-formations, furnish rich and picturesque scenery for the naturalist and tourist.

There is little of interest, however, in the superficial character of Iceland to entertain the prosy utilitarian. "Two-thirds of the surface," says Dr. Hartwig, "is covered with bogs, lava-wastes and glaciers." In the central and south-eastern part, the great Klofa Jokul, a dreary waste of lava and ice, covers over 4,000 square miles of surface. Around the southern and south-eastern border of this plain, the Oraefa, Skaptar, Eyjatjalla, Hecla, and some other noted volcanoes, have at different times in the history of Iceland vomited forth their molten rock and subterranean fires, devastating and almost depopulating the island.

Vegetation is scanty. In former times, Iceland could boast of forests; but now only willows, dwarf birches, and a few kinds of roots and moss, some of which are used by the people for food, are to be found on the island. Only about one-third of the land affords sufficient vegetation to nourish cattle and sheep. Grass constitutes about the only crop, and this is not improved by cultivation. The few vegetables that are raised, such as parsnips potatoes and winter cabbage, are of very inferior quality.

When the first settlers came to Iceland, they found but two species of native land animals: a species of field mole, *Arvicola leucurus*, and the Arctic fox; but the seas and shores swarmed with vast numbers of seals, whales and dolphins. At present, in rare instances the polar bear is met with. He is not however a native, but is brought thither on drifts of ice, a visitor from Spitzbergen and Jan Mayen. In 1770, thirteen reindeer were shipped