

VIII.

And well within an hour the rush began,
For the strangers spoke of fortunes in a day ;
Careless show'd us nuggets that would weigh
A pound or more, and told how every man
At Lonesome Bar had sacks of them. Stampede !
Already the sleds are out, and the huskies lead,
Uneasy at their traces in the van,
And yelping 'gainst the time the packers need :
Stampede ! Stampede ! All hangs on the moment's
haste,—
And it's every man and dog for himself on the endless
Arctic waste !

IX.

But the fever shook me still in every bone ;
Times I'd feel my legs bend under me,
And every sinew loosen utterly ;
And so I fell behind. Yet all alone
I mush'd along for a month as best I could,
And every mile I made was to the good,
For the trail of those ahead in the bleak unknown
I'd savvy enough to keep. At last I stood
One day on a rocky bluff, outworn and weak,
And saw beneath me Lonesome Bar, at the bend of
Boulder Creek.

X.

Ah ! well I mind the evening that I came !
The month was June, nigh ripen'd to July,