

CREMATION OF SAM McGEE.

By ROBERT W. SERVICE.

*THERE are strange things done in the mid-
night sun*

*By the men who toil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights;
But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
I cremated Sam McGee.*

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee where
the cotton blooms and blows.

Why he left his home in the South to roam
round the Pole God only knows.

He was always cold, but the land of gold
seemed to hold him like a spell;

Though he'd often say in his homely way that
he'd "sooner live in hell."

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our
way over the Dawson trail,

Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold it
stabbed like a driven nail.

If our eyes we'd close then the lashes froze,
till sometimes we could'nt see;

It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whim-
per was Sam McGee.

And that very night as we lay packed tight
in our robes beneath the snow,

And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'er-
head were dancing heel and toe,

He turned to me, and, "Cap," says he, "I'll
cash in this trip, I guess;

And if I do, I'm asking that you wont refuse
my last request."

Well, he seemed so low that I could'nt say
no; then he says with a sort of moan:

"Its the cursèd cold, and it's got right hold
till I'm chilled clean through to the
bone.

Yet 'tain't being dead, its my awful dread of
the icy grave that pains;

So I want you to swear that, foul or fair,
you'll cremate my last remains."

A pal's last need is a thing to heed, so I
swore I would not fail;

And we started on at the streak of dawn, but
God! he looked ghastly pale.

He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all
day of his home in Tennessee;

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