

# "Rhyming Bob," Queerest of Tramps

A TRAMP is a tramp the green earth over, the seven seas around. A tramp with a college education and an aptitude for turning rhymes is a tramp-eccentric, as the bill boards would put it. Such a one is Robert Jones, who occupies a unique position in the fraternity of Weary Willies.

Despite "that tired feeling" which is chronic with a true tramp, the dusty brethren travel the country over from end to end, covering the distance in freight cars, by friendly lifts from drivers, or, last method of all—on foot. By means of the first two, which are considered honorable in tramp-locomotion, and now and then resorting to the despised "shanks' mare," Robert Jones came to the little town of Snohomish, Wash.

Tramp Jones is a man who would attract more than a passing glance. He is tall and commanding, with a gallant stride, in sharp contrast to the usual slipshod slouch of a tramp. His clothes are shabby and ragged, but cleaner than the garments of the ordinary roadside Johnny. A slouch hat shows under the brim a tangled mass of fine gray hair, and the blue eyes have a frank twinkle that wins confidence—and meals.

The first citizen in Snohomish to discover the picturesque tramp-arrival was Frank Fowzer, who makes amateur photography his job.

Mr. Jones, by dint of much persuasion, was induced to pose and the accompanying photographs are the result. The pictures have gained much flattering comment from Washington to Arizona for the photographer, who is one of the youngest on the coast.

Robert Jones is the name which the original of these pictures claims. There is no doubt that it is an as-

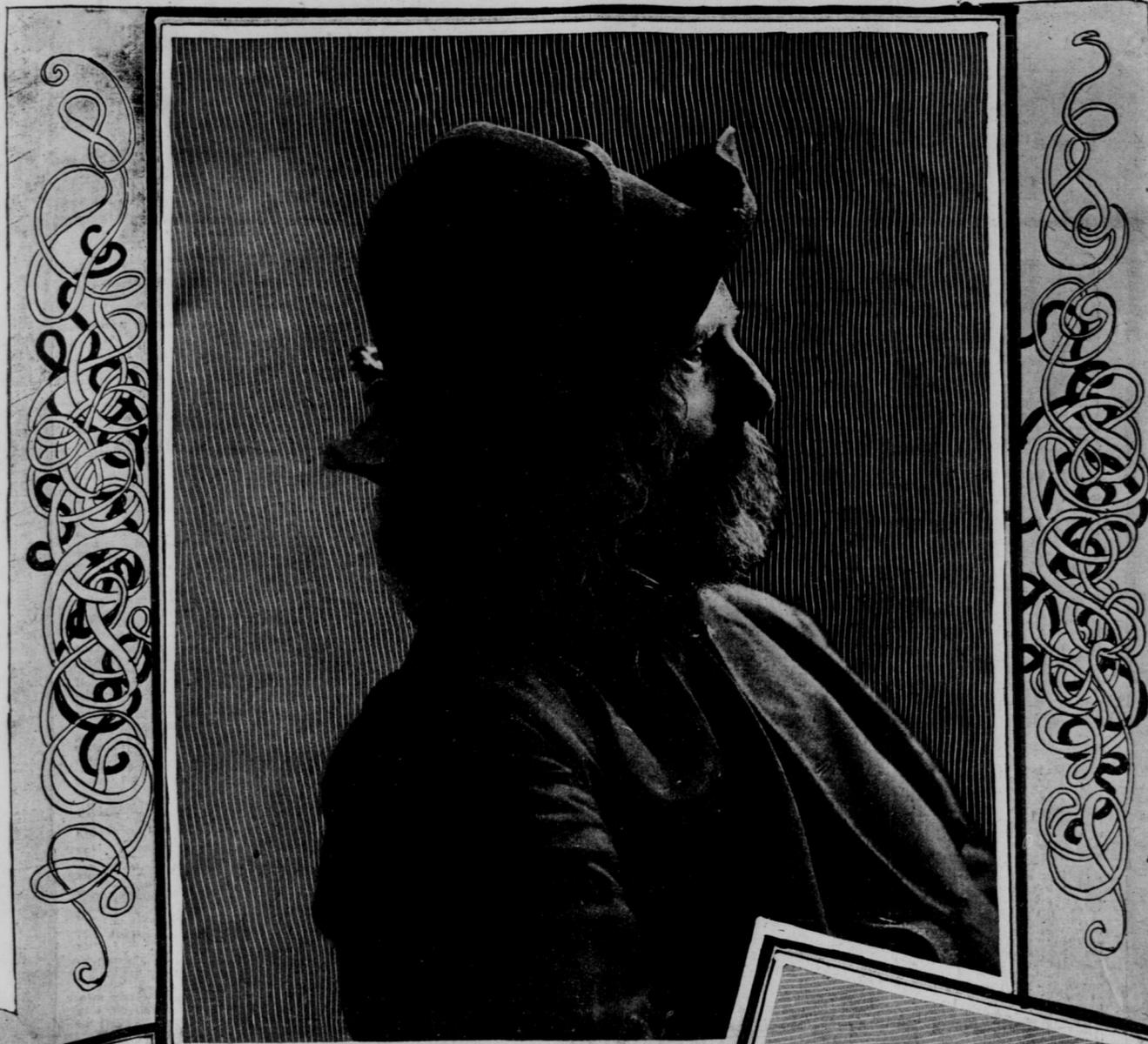
sumed name. He is called Rhyming Bob in the tramp fraternity. "Rhyming Bob" is probably the best-known tramp on this or the other side of the Rockies.

His brother tramps regard him with some respect and much awe. In the first place though he does not break the sacred rules of the order by working for a living yet the "cops" have never run him in as a "vag." The awe which is the chief ingredient in their respect is due to his powers as a rhymster. Shakespeare is not even a name to them—"Rhyming Bob" is the only poet in the business, according to the literary critics in tramphood.

Like Homer of old Rhyming Bob travels from city to city begging his bread as he goes and singing his lays. But 'tis unlikely that even one city will claim Rhyming Bob dead, for his songs in nowise resemble Homer's. Rhyming Bob says he must write down to the poor taste of his hearers; that his best efforts are too much for their mean and unpoetical understandings. Even his poorest efforts, however, are said to contain most marvelous flights of fancy, and indicate that he is not on speaking terms with words of one syllable.

However complicated his "antecedents" may be, he declares and gives evidence of having once lived with cultured people surrounded by the luxuries of wealth. Robert Jones, better known as "Rhyming Bob," says he passed his entrance examination for Harvard when very young and after graduating wrote for several of the leading magazines. But he gave up everything twenty years ago to join the wandering brotherhood of tramps.

Why? Rhyming Bob refuses to answer.



DODGE