

A Cup Of Coffee With The Famed

POET OF THE DUNES

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Provincetown's Harry Kemp



PROVINCETOWN'S Poet Harry Kemp lives in shack on dunes—has sea for front yard, dunes for backyard

By LAWRENCE FEID

WE GOT TO KNOW him as we had a cup of coffee together at the Korner Kitchen, a restaurant in Provincetown.

And when we saw him place his hands around his cup of coffee in a way we had never seen before—we thought he was seeing if it was too hot—we said to him:

"You don't like hot coffee?"

"This is an old hobo habit," he said. "I once lived the life of a tramp. I'd be cold and stop to make a fire for coffee and I'd put my hands around the cup when I filled it to warm them."

The man was Harry Kemp, "Poet of the Dunes."

In years he is no longer young, but in body he certainly is not yet old.

And in spirit he is younger than much of the youth of Provincetown, who do not understand him, and who see him merely as an elderly man, sometimes with a burlap bag of supplies over his back, on his way to his shack on the dunes.

But Who's Who sees him and gives him 30 lines.

The 69-year-old poet first came to Provincetown for a visit in 1913, and now has been living there permanently for 30 years.

During this period he has made two trips to Europe.

A physical culturist, he takes pride in the health of his lean body. And at times, to show he had spring, he would straighten himself up in a physical culture

way.

"I can carry 125 pounds on my back," he said proudly.

MR. KEMP KNOWS where to hit you a telling blow, if he had to, for in his youth he took up boxing. And once he put on the gloves for a training round with Harry Greb, world middleweight champion, when Greb's sparring partner, Cowboy Courtney, failed to show up.

"I was shy, that's why I took up boxing," he said. "I wanted to prove to myself that I could do it."

MR KEMP ISN'T an effete, drawing-room poet—he is a vigorous one who takes a dip every day in the Atlantic, Winter and Summer alike.

"I may only go in for a minute or two," he said, "but I go in. And I open my eyes to let the salt water in them. It's good for my eyesight."

"You never missed a day going in all last Winter?" we asked.

"Not one," he answered. "And that's the literal truth."

"Did you have any colds last Winter?" we inquired.

"No, not one," he replied.

And now — proud of this achievement—Mr. Kemp was all one big smile—in his eyes, on his lips, in his face, too.

FOR MORE THAN 40 years Mr.

Kemp has been having his poems printed in magazines in the U. S., and in some foreign journals, too.

The poem he likes best, "Blind," commonly called "The Blind Man," was one of his earliest, written before World