

Don Marquis recognizes as well as any one the value of the slapstick as a mirth-provoking instrument. (All hail to the slapstick! it was well known at the Mermaid Tavern, we'll warrant.) But he prefers the rapier. Probably his Savage Portraits, splendidly truculent and slashing sonnets, are among the finest pieces he has done.

The most honourable feature of Marquis's writing, the "small thing to look for but the big thing to find," is its quality of fine workmanship. The swamis and prophets of piffle, the Bhandranaths and Fothergill Finches whom he detests, can only create in an atmosphere specially warmed, purged and rose-watered for their moods. Marquis has emerged from the underworld of newspaper print just by his heroic ability to transform the commonest things into tools for his craft. Much of his best and subtlest work has been clacked out on a typewriter standing on an upturned packing box. (When the *American Magazine* published a picture of Lim at work on his packing case the supply man of the *Sun* got worried, and gave him a regular desk.) Newspaper men are a hardy race. Who but a man inured to the squalour of a newspaper office would dream of a cockroach as a hero? Archy was born in the old *Sun* building, now demolished, once known as Vermin Castle.