

though he may have sat up the very night before to finish a continued story.

"Roden's Corner," by Henry Seton Merriman, is finished in the August number of Harper's. It is a story of a corner in malgamite, a chemical which cannot be found in the encyclopedias, but which, according to Mr. Merriman, is used in the manufacture of paper. The word is excusable under the broad license granted to fiction-makers, but it is a pity to set youngsters and the feeble-minded readers of serial stories looking for something which does not exist. There is so much in the encyclopedias waiting to be wrought into speeches and club essays, it is an irrecoverable loss of energy to look for a word which has not yet been adopted into the language. However, Mr. Merriman explains that malgamite is a chemical used in the manufacture of paper, that the villain of his story has stolen a formula, cheaper, but absolutely fatal to the workers, from a dying man, and that under cover of a charity to the sickly malgamite operatives he, the villain, has established works at Scheveningen in Holland. On the Dunes of Holland the scene of the story is laid. The paper manufacturers realize when they try to buy malgamite for their paper contracts that the "charity" has absorbed all the workers and the price of the product has been doubled. Meanwhile one of the directors, who has been deceived into thinking the company a charity rather than a corner, discovers that the workmen are rapidly being killed by their deadly occupation. He informs the villain that the works must be closed and the profits divided between the two organizers and the remaining workmen. The villain, Von Holzen, refuses this proposition and attempts on three occasions to kill Cornish, the man who has discovered that it is a nefarious scheme. In the concluding installment Von Holzen attacks the hero, Cornish, and rushes at him with a knife, but the clever hero steps aside and the villain falls with head foremost into the canal. He had made such a furious charge that he dived into the soft mud of the canal bed and it held him there, feet upwards. Then the hero visits his fiancée and the author writes finis.

Mr. Merriman's heroines are characterized by a faintness and an unreality that is disappointing. To allow the heroine to be eclipsed by the vitality of the other women in the story is inconsistent, but the author has done it before and he repeats his error in "Roden's Corner." Like Meredith's stories, this one is full of detached observations of life and character that the world-weary will appreciate, as, for instance: "For death is in itself dignified and demands respects for all with whom it has dealings. Many attain the distinction of vice in life, while more only reach the mere mediocrity of foolishness, but in death all are equally dignified. We may, indeed, assume that we shall, by dying, at last command the respect of even our nearest relations and friends—for a week or two, until they forget us."

In a recent issue of the Evening Post the state administration presents its first campaign document for the ensuing political contest in the form of an article bearing this suggestive heading: "Honesty has been the watchword in every department of the present reform state government."

Mr. W. F. Schwind, who, with a few others, founded the Evening Post which the administration uses as a catapult for hurling boquets at itself, was secretary of the senate at the last legislative session and a vociferous representative of "the present re-

form state government," as well as the especial protege of W. J. Bryan. After the adjournment of the legislature and the publication of the report of the auditor, showing the legislative expenses, there arose so much unfavorable comment over the action of Mr. Schwind in presenting and over the action of the auditor in approving and paying the claim of the secretary of the senate for services, even among the supporters of the administration, that Mr. Schwind felt impelled to publish over his signature an article defending the expenditure. In that article he stated that the legislative session covered a period of 84 days, exclusive of Sundays, and the actual number of working days of the session was 74. Mr. Schwind presented a claim for 151 days' service rendered as secretary of the senate during a session covering only 84 days, during 10 of which the legislature was not in session. This claim was verified by Mr. Schwind and in satisfaction thereof he received from the state, upon the approval of the auditor, \$604, or \$4 per day for 151 days. Mr. Schwind was also allowed two assistants in the discharge of his duties as secretary and they each drew pay upon claims approved by the auditor for 151 days' service at the rate of \$4 per day. In addition to two assistants the secretary of the senate was allowed a stenographer at an expense of \$348, a messenger at an expense of \$255, a custodian of his office at an expense of \$246, a custodian of supplies for the senate, which were in the charge of the secretary, at an expense of \$240. In addition to these items the state paid a message clerk \$378, and a clerk of the committee of the whole \$328. For services in compiling the journal after the legislature adjourned Mr. Schwind was paid \$1,300.

The defense of the action of Mr. Schwind in demanding and receiving from the state pay for 151 days service, as stated by him in his published article, was that former secretaries of the senate had charged for overtime, as he designated it. A man charged with theft would hardly expect to escape conviction and punishment upon the plea that other men had stolen. Mr. Schwind knew that he was not entitled to receive pay for 151 days service as secretary of the senate when the senate was in session only seventy-four days. The auditor of public accounts knew that the claim presented for his approval for 151 days service by the secretary and his two assistants was not just and he knew that it should have been rejected; he approved it and drew a warrant for its payment. The auditor is one of the executive officers of the "present reform state government."

In the second term of his administration, Governor Holcomb has accepted the necessity of making all appointments for Holcomb only and has had a distinct understanding with appointees that his recognition of their existence and desire for a living was strictly for their support against the opposition to him and a third term. There are many indications that he will need all such pledges. Among them this very just appreciation of the present governor's character appeared in last week's Woman's Weekly—a populist newspaper.

Governor Holcomb would like to be governor for another term. He has written a letter asserting the contrary. His word is not supposed to be his bond in this instance any more than in a thousand others. He has fooled so many of his best friends by that word, which they are inclined to believe; he has made so many appointments which are a total failure from a political and every other standpoint; he has declared himself an anarchist to please the Omaha Bee, and

he has chosen republicans rather than those of his own party. So as a third term, it is said that he is not available. There are hundreds of people in his own party who could and would not support him for office, just because he has said one thing and done another so often that they are disgusted. There are several other people mentioned for the office, any of whom probably stand a better show than Mr. Holcomb of leading the state ticket to victory.

Among the most objectionable types of ward politicians, of which this city has several representatives, the traitor has no standing and no influence.

The ward worker is not apt to possess wealth or influence. He, indeed, has nothing but his reputation for faithfulness and a good memory for services rendered to recommend him to the laborers among whom, or rather upon whom he works. If one campaign were all, the ward worker could afford to disregard promises made for the purpose of electing this or that candidate to some office, but spring succeeds fall and fall succeeds spring and there are two crops a year planted at the primaries. The possession of the highest office in the state has evidently made its incumbent for two terms believe that it was something in the way of a life tenure and that it was no longer necessary for him to keep faith with his supporters. The rank and file who have been gradually boosting Governor Holcomb into sight are just as gradually realizing that he has no intention of remembering the humble agents of his exaltation. The road by which he ascended to the capitol is simply the road, and made to walk on. We fear he will find it uncommon slippery when he tries to reach the United States senate.

TO THE STATE CONVENTION.

The republican state convention meets in Lincoln August 10.

Without wishing to be over zealous in advice, may we ask those who sit as delegates in that convention to give attention to one particular feature of the political situation in this state. For twenty-five years the railroads have exercised too much control over the politics of this Nebraska community. Republican delegates, you know this to be true. You know that this railroad influence, through the use of free passes, has bribed and debauched the higher conscience of all the political parties in this state. You know that this railroad control has become so bold of late that for several years a man has been employed on a regular salary by the railroads to distribute passes and to manage, control and manipulate the action of each political party, in its county and state conventions, in the legislature and in the selection of its candidates for public office. At first, years ago, this management of the state's politics was explained by the railroad officials as a necessity on their part, to ward off the constantly threatened attack upon the business and property interests as common carriers.

For years thousands of highminded and honorable men, humiliated to see themselves practically disfranchised by this corporation influence, tolerated it as a lesser evil than the dangerous anti-railroad element, which, if allowed to control, would recklessly strike at the property of the innocent non-resident stockholders.

Now, the danger from vicious anti-railroad legislation is passed. There is no threatening hand raised now. If then the railroads are no longer compelled in self-defense to manage our state conventions and to select our candidates for us, why do they not withdraw their offensive usurpation of our political rights and let our

conventions alone?

Here is a man, traveling over the state year in and year out, nosing around wherever there is a convention or an assemblage of men, giving out suggestions as to who and what men and what measures would be satisfactory to "our people."

This man Ager, J. H. Ager, has for ten years been employed on a regular salary by the railroads, for the first few years slyly and under cover, but of late boldly and boastingly, employed to do what? Not anything that is legitimate or honest. Not anything that any self respecting republican, populist or democrat would admit without a blush for his party. But employed to manage the politics of the state, and this man refers to the railroads as "our people." Gentlemen of the republican state convention, isn't it about time to stop this Ager business? Haven't you had Ager enough? Aren't you tired seeing this man tip toe through the convention halls and don't you know that there is a stigma upon every man who is nominated by his assistance and a shame upon any party who will submit to such insulting and impudent usurpation?

No other state in the union would tolerate such a condition, a man hired by the corporations as a professional director and manager of political conventions and as a selector of candidates for office. For the last two years this man has devoted much of his time to the management of fusion politics, for the fusionists have been in power at the state house.

You will see him fitting in and out of the governor's office, in and out of the oil inspector's office, in and out of the auditor's office, holding little sly caucuses behind closed doors, whispering to Edmiston here, to Maret there and always producing at each visit to the state house a flutter of anxiety and a whispering suspense among the clerky understrappers as to what will be the next move on the checker board, for they have all learned at the state house that no matter what the platform says, and no matter who holds the offices in this administration, the railroad influence is the power behind the throne and Ager is its errand boy and body servant.

Does the populist governor evince and feel a twinge of humiliation or insult when this man tip-toes into his sanctum to give him the very latest suggestions from "our people?" Not a bit of it. Does Maret take offense at Ager's authority over the reform movement? Not a bit of it. They are alike. They are of the same mind, mould and morals. They draw their salaries, one for managing the reform movement and the other for managing the managers of the reform movement and there is no dignity or sentiment in either of them which interferes with the transaction of "business."

But, gentlemen of the convention, it makes but little difference to you when you assemble on the 10th of August what relations exist between the political managers of railroads and the managers of the populist state administration. The people are expecting nothing from Edmiston or Maret. They are no longer looking for reform through the Sainted Silas with his pockets full of free passes and swiped house rent. But they are expecting something from the republican party. The republican press of the state has promised them that the republican party has learned from the bitter experience of the past and will never again put its head under the yoke of corporation control.

Ager will be at the republican state convention on August 10. He will be whipping in and out among the dele-