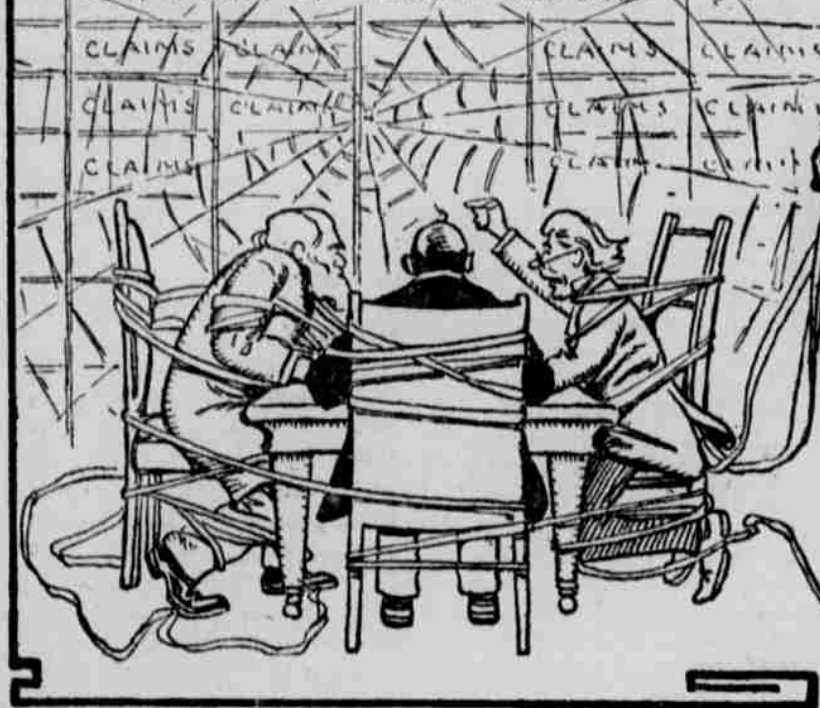


# IN THE GRASP of the RED TAPE TRUST

BY  
EDWARD B. CLARK

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**T**HE RED TAPE trust ought to be rich. Its mills are kept running overtime to supply the Washington demand. The committees on claims are tied up in red tape and any claimant gets his legs tangled up in it before he has progressed a foot. The tape is of the right color; it turns to anarchy the thoughts of the claimant who tries through the disappointing years to thread the devious course of its windings.

The house of representatives once had submitted to it by the members of the committee on claims a report recommending that Major Lawson M. Fuller of the army be paid for some articles—many articles in fact—which the government lost for him nine years ago.

An army officer's pay is small at the best, and ten years ago, when Major Fuller's belongings were lost, his pay was somewhat smaller than it is to-day. Nevertheless, he had to expend \$1,325.35, as he could save it from time to time, to replace the absolutely necessary articles which were lost "without fault or neglect on his part and with equitable responsibility by the United States," as the finding of one of the investigating officials had it.

Major Fuller's belongings comprised pretty nearly everything that he had in the world, from "one pair of Romeo slippers" to a civilian dress suit, "evening, satin-lined," "one sack suit from New York" and "one sack suit from Baltimore." The major made affidavit that every article enumerated in the list of his losses "was necessary and would have been used had the consignment ever reached its destination."

The consignment went to the bottom of the sea with the wreckage of the transport Morgan. The major added to his affidavit the statement that every article would be replaced as soon as he was financially able to replace it. The goods were lost 10 years ago. A glance at the army pay table makes it appear that by the practice of rigid economy Major Fuller by this time may have succeeded in duplicating his wardrobe of the late nineties.

The end is not yet. The committee on claims, after many years, reported Major Fuller's case favorably to the house. The house was busy with other things. It is not hard for the representatives to overlook claims. They are used to it and hardened to it. Then the senate must act and finally the president. Major Fuller may get his money at a time coincident with his retirement at the age limit, and he is yet a young man.

There is no means at this present moment of finding out whether Casper H. Conrad, of the Third United States cavalry, has succeeded in finally wresting from Uncle Sam's grasp, \$32.85, which the usually amiable uncle took from the officer's pay practically by force of arms some 10 years ago. At last accounts the cavalryman was still pegging away trying to get his money back, for it belonged to him and no one has ever intimated that it did not belong to him, but claims proceedings are greater laggards in their pace than were the Jarndyce proceedings in chancery.

If Capt. Conrad has not recovered his \$32.85 he is still hopeful, for the most hopeful people on earth are those who have claims, and the deferring of hope seemingly never makes their hearts sick. This is one of the compensations which nature grants to offset the iniquities of claims proceedings in congress.

Capt. Conrad, as an acting quartermaster, paid \$32.85 extra duty money to certain enlisted men. A government regulation which has existed for years authorized, in fact ordered, the captain to pay the money. After he had paid it he found that the government had revoked the extra-pay regulation, but no one had seen fit to notify the quartermasters of the change.

Uncle Sam immediately stopped \$32.85 out of Capt. Conrad's pay and practically told him that he should have known in some mysterious way that the government had an order stowed away in a vault somewhere to the effect that extra-duty pay had been cut out.

Conrad comes of an army family and he stuck to his task of getting his money back from the government like a good fighter, and he is sticking at it to-day, unless within a very short time the almost impossible has happened and his money has been returned to him. It took him five years to get permission from the secretary of war, the lieutenant-gen-

eral of the army and the quartermaster-general to make the attempt to get a bill passed by congress to reimburse him for the pocket-picking outrage perpetrated by Uncle Sam. He had to do a lot of work before he succeeded in reaching the action permission stage of the proceedings.

To be sure there was only \$32.85 in money involved, but the principle was worth something, and the soldier who won't fight for a principle won't fight well for anything else.

Of course only a part, very likely a small part, of the claims entered against the government have justice as a basis. In order to find out the truth of things the government occasionally is obliged to spend many times the amount of money involved.

One of the most curious claim cases ever known to congress was that of Senora Feliciano Mendola, who lived at Angeles, Pampanga, Philippine Islands. The Senora rented a house to Uncle Sam for the use of some of his teamsters. When the mule-driving contingent moved out of the house after a short occupancy the Senora declared under oath that some of the siding boards were missing from the kitchen wall, and she asked for \$200 in gold to repay her for the damage to her property.

This case of Senora Feliciano Mendola fills 14 pages of a house of representatives document. It contains a long letter from the secretary of war on the question of the value of kitchen sidings, another letter from the quartermaster-general of the United States and 53 communications from army officers and civilians of various ranks and conditions.

A board of officers was convened to pass on the validity of the Senora's claim. The board was in session for days, many of its members coming from a long distance to attend. One teamster, William Langworthy by name, swore that the Senora's kitchen sidings were chewed up and eaten by red ants. Teamster Summerville swore that in his opinion the boards dropped out of place by their own weight. Teamster Pickle said: "Them boards was punk."

The army board which sat on the case thought it was very doubtful in strict justice if Senora Feliciano should be allowed any money, but finally the members granted her the sum of \$30 in gold. This action, of course, was not final, but the committees on war claims in house and senate approved the findings.

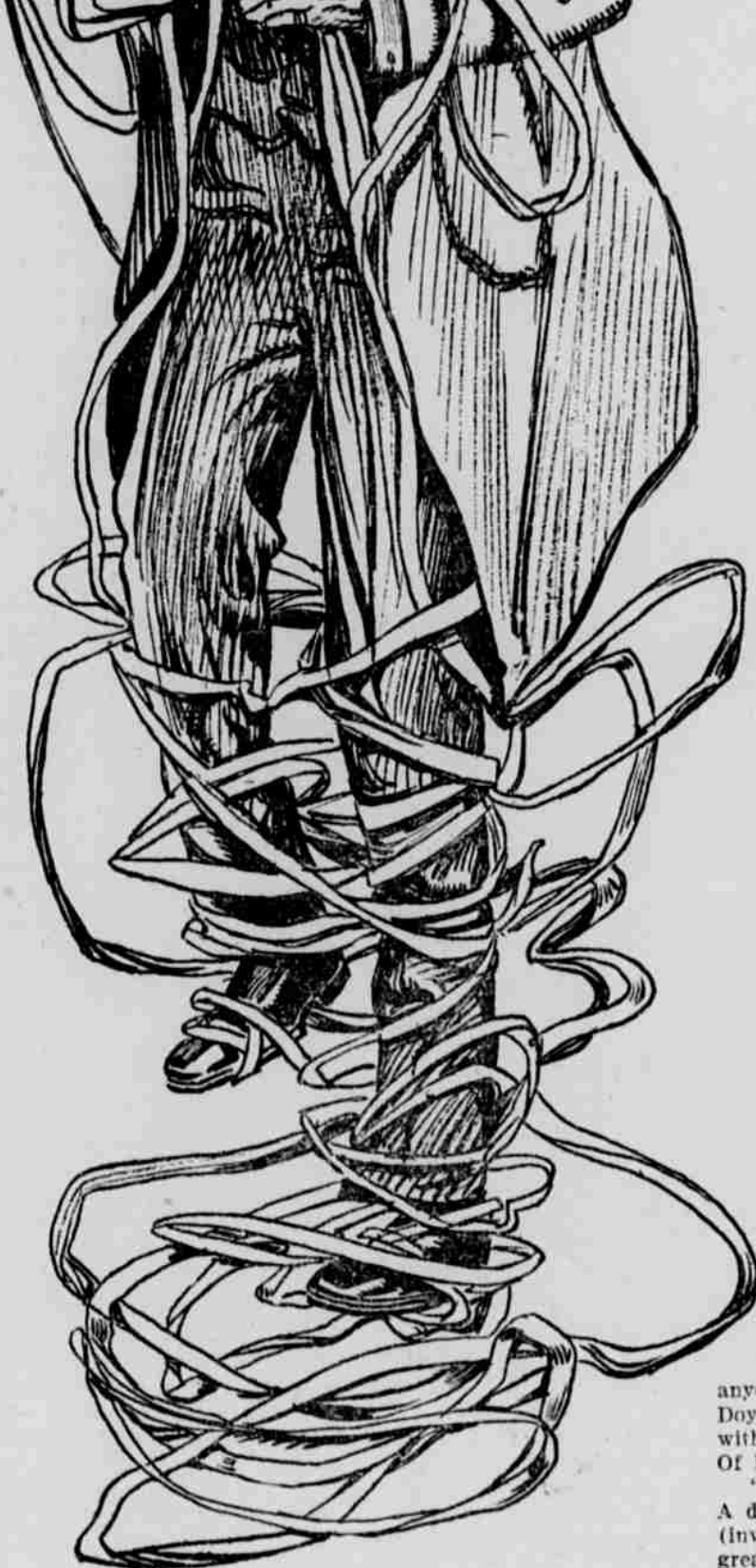
The Senora received \$30 and doubtless it gave her some satisfaction to know that Uncle Sam had spent about \$1,000 to get authority to pay for a kitchen siding which went to destruction either by way of a teamster's foot or a red ant's stomach.

**The Inventor's Rocky Road.**

There comes to Washington occasionally a man who perfected an invention, an engine of war, which is now in use by nearly every civilized government on the face of the earth, including the government of the United States. This man recently talked reminiscently. He said some things in the course of his conversation which may be interesting to inventors present and prospective, and which may also dishearten those of them who have not wills, physiques and courage of iron.

It must be remembered, of course, that this inventor is a man who finally made good and who to-day talks from the hilltop of success. He said:

"Let every man know if he has an invention in which he believes and in which he



trusts that the government will find merit that he must prepare himself at the outset to be treated in turn like an imbecile, a lunatic and a criminal by the department officials to whom he tries to present his ideas.

"Every inventor who enters a department of the United States government with a view to interesting the officials in something which may be and often proves to be of service to the government is set down as a matter of course as an idiot. This is at the outset. There is in most of the departments, and certainly in the one with which I had to do business, a set of officials whose business it is to get rid of inventors and to get rid of them without loss of politeness and without loss of time.

"The regular plan is to pass the inventor from one to another, each one having an increased chilliness of manner, but yet wearing the semi-indulgent smile with which one listens to the prattle of a child known to be mentally deficient.

**May Never Return.**

"The last official gets rid of the inventor, who, if he has not an indomitable perseverance and a mental poise which enables him because of an inner consciousness of right to overlook insult, goes away probably never to return, and the chances are that because of the sensitiveness of some men this government has lost to its use many inventions which would have added to its power.

"The second stage of the inventor's progress, for I am speaking only of those who make progress, is that of the lunatic, for so he comes to be viewed. The idiot is practically harmless and may be treated as a child; the lunatic is apt to be dangerous, and so when the inventor, conscious of the worth of his in-

vention, perseveres in attempting to see the officials, he is looked upon as the man with 'a glitter in his eye,' and the blue-coated officials with police authority are given warning that he is not to be admitted to the presence of official greatness.

"Occasionally influence, which the real inventor hates to bring to bear, enables him to get an audience with the highest official in the department. He has reached the criminal stage by this time, for he has taken to the chief that which courtesy and custom require should have been taken to the underling.

"The three stages of suspicion are gone through again by the persistent inventor—imbecile, lunatic and criminal—and occasionally his persistence wins out, for in passing through the degrees he may happen to hit upon some official, also regarded as a lunatic by his colleagues, who takes in that which other lunatics produce.

"Such was my case, and I won out. The officials to-day who treated me with something worse than scorn are taking credit to themselves for discovering the merit in that which I had to offer.

**Different in Europe.**

"On the continent of Europe things are different. There the inventor is not treated as if he were fresh from an asylum for the feeble-minded, but is turned over at once to the official whose duty it is to examine such things as he has to offer, and the examination proceeds forthwith. The continental governments take interest in everything that is new, especially if it pertains to warfare, and the inventor is treated like what he is in most cases—a gentleman. The United States government when it gets a thing gets it by accident after having exhausted every means likely to discourage a man whose brain has produced that which finally is found worthy by those who had met it at the outset with a sneer."

It may be after all that truth is stranger than fiction, though people are given to a doubt of the old saying. After hearing of what this inventor had said, a character in one of Charles Dickens' novels came to mind and I looked him up to refresh the memory. The American said that the continental European governments were interested in all the schemes of inventors. He said nothing about Great Britain. It may be that Edward's government has reformed, but in "Little Dorrit," as anyone may find who chooses to look, Daniel Doyce, Mr. Meagle's friend, had an experience with officialdom much like that of the yankee. Of Doyce Mr. Meagle said:

"This Doyce is a smith and engineer. . . . A dozen years ago he perfected an invention (involving a very curious secret process) of great importance to his country and his fellow creatures. I won't say how much it cost him, or how many years of his life he had been about it, but he brought it to perfection a dozen years ago. . . .

**Becomes a Culprit.**

"He addresses himself to the government. The moment he addresses himself to the government, he becomes a public offender! . . . He ceases to be an innocent citizen and becomes a culprit. He is treated from that instant as a man who has done some infernal action. He is a man to be shirked, put off, brow-beaten, sneered at, handed over by this highly connected young or old gentleman, and dodged back again; he is a man with no rights in his own time, or his own property; a mere outlaw, whom it is justifiable to get rid of anyhow; a man to be worn out by any possible means."

The inventor who had some things to say about the manner in which he was treated by the American department officials when he asked them humbly to look at his invention stated also that once upon a time he had an appointment with a cabinet officer and that he waited beyond the time set for two hours before he had his interview, which lasted less than one minute.

It must be borne in mind that this was some years ago and no present cabinet official is implicated.

It might also be borne in mind by present officials that at least six governments of the world are each spending millions of dollars annually in adding to their store of weapons of offense and defense the invention which this man had perfected years before he could get the officials of the government of his own country to look upon it with anything that even smacked of interest.

## ANOTHER WOMAN CURED

By Lydia E. Pinkham's  
Vegetable Compound

Gardiner, Maine.—"I have been a great sufferer from organic troubles and a severe female weakness. The doctor said I would have to go to the hospital for an operation, but I could not bear to think of it. I decided to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Sanative Wash—and was entirely cured after three months' use of them."—Mrs. S. A. WILLIAMS, R. F. D. No. 14, Box 39, Gardiner, Me.



No woman should submit to a surgical operation, which may mean death, until she has given Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made exclusively from roots and herbs, a fair trial.

This famous medicine for women has for thirty years proved to be the most valuable tonic and renewer of the female organism. Women residing in almost every city and town in the United States bear willing testimony to the wonderful virtue of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. It cures female ills, and creates radiant, buoyant female health. If you are ill, for your own sake as well as those you love, give it a trial.

Mrs. Pinkham, at Lynn, Mass., invites all sick women to write her for advice. Her advice is free, and always helpful.

**New Geyser in Yellowstone Park.**

For a few days past there have been indications of an eruption of some kind near the Fountain hotel in Yellowstone park, says a dispatch from Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyo. Now a new and magnificent geyser has broken out in full force about 100 feet north of the regular Fountain geyser near Fountain hotel. This new geyser, which does not appear to affect any of the others in that vicinity, played to a height of 150 to 200 feet, throwing off immense quantities of hot water, mud and steam. The new geyser does not play regularly as does Old Faithful, but at short intervals, the eruptions occurring five or six hours apart, and lasting about one hour.

**Many Were in the Same Boat.**

According to the Saturday Evening Post, this is a story heard with much glee by congress during the last days of the Roosevelt administration:

During the recent cold spell in Washington, a man, shivering and ragged, knocked at the door of a F street house and said to the lady: "Please, madam, give me something to eat. I am suffering severely from exposure."

"You must be more specific," the lady replied. "Are you a member of the senate or of the house?"

**Joke Medicine.**

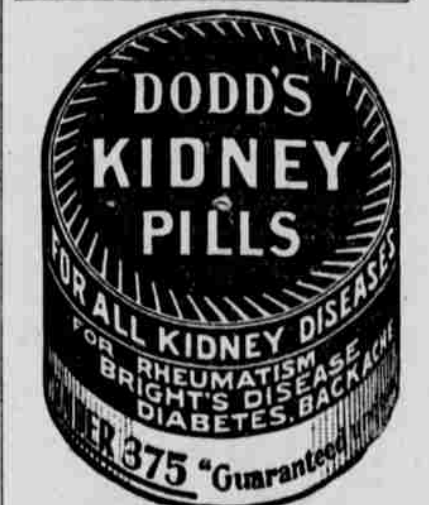
He is a very practical, serious-minded man of business. The other day he met a friend, and related to him an alleged joke, and at its conclusion laughed long and heartily. The friend looked awkward for a moment, and then said: "You'll have to excuse me, old man, but I don't see the point." "Why, to tell you the truth, I don't 'see' the point myself. But I've made it a rule to laugh at all jokes; I think it's good for the health."

**Editorial Amenities.**

Editor Junkin of the Sterling Bulletin has red hair. Editor Cretcher of the Sedgwick Pantagraph has no hair at all.

"Mac," asked Junkin, "how did you lose your hair?" "It was red and I pulled it out," growled Cretcher.—Everybody's.

Hixon—"Did the operation on your wife's throat do her good?" Dixon—"It did us both good. She hasn't been able to talk for six weeks."—Boston Herald.



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