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## To Sue or Not to Sue

Dicta Editorial Board

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*From Los Angeles Bar Association Bulletin*

Somewhere I read a story of a litigant waiting in his attorney's reception room, whose eye was caught by the motto, "*Suum cuique*,"—let each have his own. He puzzled over it for a while, and finally transliterated it, "Sue 'em quick," and told his attorney that it was mighty bad spelling! Judging from some of the suits that are brought, the rustic's translation must be that of a good many lawyers. In other words, there are suits that should never have been brought, and likewise defenses that should never be made. If we but remembered that it is the public's time that is consumed in court, that it is paid for by taxes, we might be rather more considerate and thoughtful in filing actions, as well as more expeditious in dispatching them.

We have heard of "sand-bag legislation"; one is inclined to wonder whether there is not also "sandbag" litigation,—cases filed merely because of their nuisance value. No lawyer can afford to file such an action, whether intended merely to vex and harass, or to mulct a few dollars from some hapless victim. Tennyson's line might be rewritten, "Vext with lawyers and harassed with debt," "Vext and harassed with lawyers." The control of democratic government lies in public opinion, and the public opinion of the profession, if unfavorable, shears it of well nigh all power to direct the course of affairs. Every such action contributes to public disfavor, and can never result in any real profit to the lawyer.

When a client states his facts, the attorney is not an advocate, but a judge. Now is the time to determine, first, is there a right of action or defense? Second, if so, is it worth bringing into court? What are the chances of compromise and adjustment? There will be litigation enough when the conscientious lawyer settles all the controversies he can outside the courtroom. Is it not the general impression that there are many cases crowding our calendars that either should not be there at all, or that would probably yield to friendly negotiation and adjustment?

Always the bar in America has been influential in governmental affairs; never was there more need of that influence than now. Our conduct can greatly increase or diminish it.—F. G. T.

\* \* \*

*Obliging.*—A Los Angeles patrolman had brought in a Negro woman somewhat the worse for wear, and the desk sergeant, with his very best scowl, roared:

"Liza, you've been brought in for intoxication!"

"Dat's fine!" beamed Liza. "Boy, you can start right now!"—*The Bee-Hive (East Hartford, Conn.)*.

\* \* \*

There are only two kinds of women clients: those who pay liberally and those who complain to the Bar Association.