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Petty Police Court Transactions

It is surprising to notice what trifling, picayune cases are frequently brought before the Police Judge by parties who conceive that their honor has been attacked, a gross outrage committed on their person or reputation, and they must have justice "though the heavens fall." Distinguished counsel are employed, witnesses are summoned and made to dance attendance to the successive steps of the complaints, and the patience of the Judge and Reporters is severely tested by the time occupied in their investigation which, after a close examination of witnesses, cross-questioning by the counsel, and perhaps some brilliant peroration at the close, with the especial injunction to the Court that it were better that ten guilty men should escape punishment rather than one innocent (one eye obliquely winking to their client) person should suffer; with a long breath of satisfaction that the agony is over about a hair pulling case, a lost spoon or a broken window, the Judge dismisses the case, and, (if we must say it) the lawyers pocket their fees, and the client pockets his or her indignation that the defendant escaped the punishment which to their view was so richly deserved. Thus, yesterday, William Towerick, a deaf old man, complained that a woman struck him with a basket, on Mission street. The good looking German interpreter almost woke up the dead in his efforts to shout in the plaintiff's auricular appendage the respective questions propounded by counsel, but had eventually to give it up as a bad job and let the old lady, the plaintiff's wife, try. Case dismissed. Then comes another complainant with a long chapter of grievances against one Rosa Bustamente, who didn't like her little poodle dog. Bad words from both parties and a flower pot thrown at somebody, bursting five panes of glass valued at twenty-five cents each. Court considered that plaintiff and defendant stood on nearly equal footing, and ordered the case dismissed.