

## Gilbert And Sullivan

### "Song Notary"

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About a century since,  
The code of the duello  
To sudden death  
For want of breath  
Sent many a strapping fellow.  
The then presiding Prince  
(Who useless bloodshed hated),  
He passed an Act,  
Short and compact,  
Which may be briefly stated.  
Unlike the complicated laws  
A Parliamentary draftsman draws,  
It may be briefly stated.

ALL:  
We know that complicated laws,  
Such as a legal draftsman draws,  
Cannot be briefly stated.

NOT:  
By this ingenious law,  
If any two shall quarrel,  
They may not fight  
With falchions bright  
(Which seemed to him immoral);  
But each a card shall draw,  
And he who draws the lowest  
Shall (so 'twas said)  
Be thenceforth dead--  
In fact, a legal "ghoest"  
(When exigence of rhyme compels,  
Orthography forgoes her spells,  
And "ghost" is written "ghoest").

ALL (aside):  
With what an emphasis he dwells  
Upon "orthography" and "spells"!  
That kind of fun's the lowest.

NOT:  
When off the loser's popped

(By pleasing legal fiction),  
And friend and foe  
Have wept their woe  
In counterfeit affliction,  
The winner must adopt  
The loser's poor relations--  
Discharge his debts,  
Pay all his bets,  
And take his obligations.

In short, to briefly sum the case,  
The winner takes the loser's place,  
With all its obligations.

ALL:  
How neatly lawyers state a case!  
The winner takes the loser's place,  
With all its obligations!

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