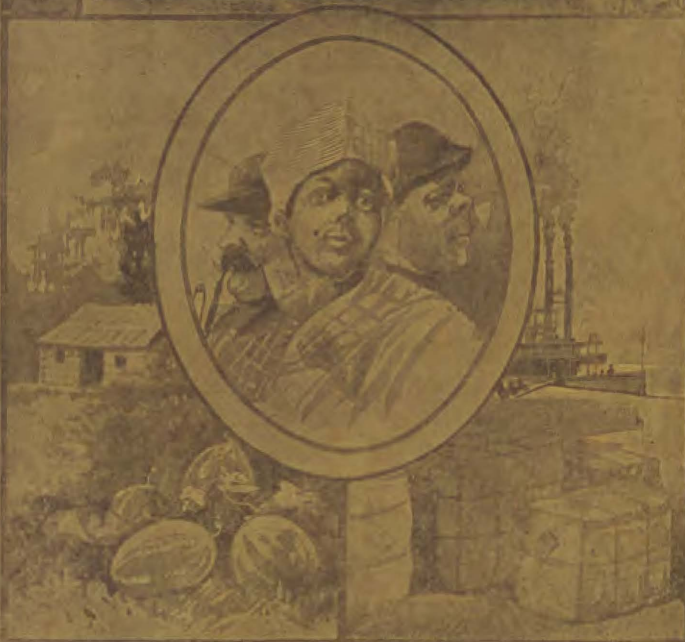


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# A GOOD SUBSTITUTE

Comedy Sketch

BY

HARRY L. NEWTON

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CHICAGO AND NEW YORK  
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## CHARACTERS.

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KNOTT GOOD—A tie tramping trouper.

MRS. UNO BEST—Slightly stage struck.

Plays twenty minutes.

## COSTUMES.

KNOTT GOOD—First entrance, seedy actor make-up; second entrance, mattress ticking suit.

MRS. BEST—First entrance, long dress; second entrance, short dress.

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REMARKS.—Have a suit of clothes made from striped mattress ticking, the louder the pattern the better. Have pants cut short, and very tight. The coat to be small and sleeves short. Waistband of trousers to be low and vest high, leaving a space of about twelve inches between. Wear suspenders with plenty of rubber in them, so that "business" can be made by pulling pants up and down. If suit is properly made there is no limit to the "business" that can be worked. Have small stool, arranged in such a manner that it can be fastened to seat of pants when bottle of glue is supposed to break and glue sticks stool to pants.

## A GOOD SUBSTITUTE.

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[SCENE.—Parlor-table, chairs, sofa. Small gold stool about twelve inches high. Bottle, glasses, dice-box on table. Orchestra plays curtain up with "Just one Girl" till Mrs. Best is on. Mrs. Best enters, open letter in hand. Advances well down front.]

**Mrs. Best.** Well, I declare, if it isn't too aggravating for any use. Here I'm going to have private theatricals to-morrow evening, and I received this horrid letter. [*Reads.*] "My Dear Mrs. Uno Best :—I regret to inform you that, owing to a serious accident, I will be unable to be with you to-morrow evening. I sincerely trust that my absence will not seriously affect your entertainment. Yours very truly, Prof. Lowe Pitch." Well, I suppose I must make the best of circumstances. I wish I could get a good substitute. If I don't I'll have to get on without. That's all. [*Orchestra strikes up "I Guess I'll Have To Telegraph My Baby," for entrance of Knott Good.*]

[*Enter Knott Good.*]

**Mrs. Best.** Well, where on earth did you come from ?

**Good.** Oh, I came from where I started.

**Mrs. Best.** What do you want here ?

**Good.** What do I want ? Ask me what I don't want.

**Mrs. Best.** Come, sir, explain your presence in my house, or leave at once.

**Good.** [*Aside.*] I've got to thaw this iceberg or go away hungry. [*Aloud.*] Madam, you see before you a victim of a series of unfortunate circumstances. I am an actor !

**Mrs. Best.** What ! A real live actor ? Do you call that one of the series of unfortunate circumstances ?

**Good.** I do in this case.

**Mrs. Best.** Why ?

**Good.** The troupe I trouped with has ceased to troupe.

**Mrs. Best.** Isn't that just too lovely!

**Good.** I'm glad you like it.

**Mrs. Best.** It was surely an act of Providence that sent you to me.

**Good.** Providence? I never heard of him. Is he in vaudeville or the legit?

**Mrs. Best.** By Providence I mean a Divine power. You must have come from Heaven.

**Good.** No, madam, you're dead wrong. St. Louis was our last stand.

**Mrs. Best.** Tell me, what is your name?

**Good.** [*Puts finger on lips. Acts very mysteriously.*] Are you ready?

**Mrs. Best.** Ready for what?

**Good.** Why, I'm going to tell you my name.

**Mrs. Best.** I'm prepared for the shock. Go ahead.

**Good.** [*Looks all about, then suddenly grabs her by the arm.*] My name is Knott Good.

**Mrs. Best.** I didn't ask you what it wasn't. I want to know what it is.

**Good.** I'm telling you it's Knott Good.

**Mrs. Best.** Do you mean that you have such a bad name you're ashamed of it?

**Good.** No; my name is Good.

**Mrs. Best.** Then why don't you tell it to me?

**Good.** Madam, I've told you three times, my name is Good. [*Spells it.*] K-n-o-t-t G-o-o-d.

**Mrs. Best.** Oh, that's a good name. How would you like to make one hundred dollars?

**Good.** [*Does funny fall, yells.*] HELP! HELP!!!

**Mrs. Best.** If you think one hundred dollars is too much, I'll change my mind.

**Good.** [*Arising to his feet.*] If you change your mind, you'll get a funny poke in the slats. What do I do, kill a man?

**Mrs. Best.** My gracious! No. I want some one to take part in my private theatricals to-morrow evening.

**Good.** Oh! then, I kill a whole bunch of people?

**Mrs. Best.** Are you as bad as that?

**Good.** I'm ashamed to tell.

**Mrs. Best.** Well, we have a rehearsal at two. Go into the next room and change your clothes. I couldn't think of your appearing in the ones you have on.

**Good.** What's the matter with these?

**Mrs. Best.** That's the worst suit I ever saw.

**Good.** I've worn this suit five years and you're the first one that ever kicked about it.

**Mrs. Best.** Well, you change it. I think the change will do you good. While you're gone, I'll go through my song.

**Good.** [*Aside.*] Yes, and I'll go through the pantry. [*Exits.*]

[*Mrs. Best sings song. At finish Good re-enters, attired in ticking suit.*]

**Mrs. Best.** Well, my goodness! But you do look cute!

**Good.** What's the matter now?

**Mrs. Best.** Where did you get that suit?

**Good.** I just bought this at (local store). Anything the matter with it?

**Mrs. Best.** Why, it's too small. It doesn't fit you.

**Good.** It wasn't my fault. I asked for sixes.

**Mrs. Best.** For pity's sake! What size is six?

**Good.** He must have got into the wrong box.

**Mrs. Best.** I should say he did.

**Good.** Well, that's the last suit I'll ever buy of (local dealer).

**Mrs. Best.** Will you join me in a glass of wine? [*Motions towards table containing bottle and glasses.*]

**Good.** WINE?

**Mrs. Best.** That's what I said—WINE!

**Good.** I would much prefer water.

**Mrs. Best.** WATER?

**Good.** Yes; don't you know what water is?

**Mrs. Best.** I don't believe I do.

**Good.** Not even as a chaser? [*Mrs. Best gives him an angry look, crosses and sits at table. Good follows and tries to sit on low stool beside her. Pants are so tight he can't sit down. Remains suspended in the air like sitting on an imaginary chair.*]

**Mrs. Best.** Well, why don't you sit down?

**Good.** Oh, I'm not tired. [*Pulls bottom of pants up over knees, then drops on stool. Pulls pants down again and carefully creases them with thumb and finger.*]

**Mrs. Best.** It must be raining in London.

**Good.** No, it's Dewey in Manila. Just before I came in here, I met an old friend. He gave me this bottle of port wine. [*Pulls small bottle from back pocket and holds it up to the light.*] Is it not a beautiful color?

**Mrs. Best.** Exquisite!

**Good.** I don't suppose you'd mind sampling it?

**Mrs. Best.** No, I'll take the chance. [*Holds out glass.*]

**Good.** It's a very fine piece of goods.

**Mrs. Best.** It looks it.

**Good.** You can't buy it.

**Mrs. Best.** No?

**Good.** No; you have to have this given to you. [*Pulls cork out and smells of bottle. Aside.*] This is not wine, it is glue. [*Aloud.*] I don't believe I'll give you any of this.

**Mrs. Best.** Why not?

**Good.** You might get *stuck* on it and want it all. [*Returns bottle to back pocket in pants.*]

**Mrs. Best.** [*Sets glass down on table.*] Oh, keep it; I didn't want any. You must have traveled considerably in your time?

**Good.** Hush! Madam, hush! Don't speak about my travels. I couldn't begin to tell you where I've been.

**Mrs. Best.** Have you traveled as much as that?

**Good.** I should say so. I've been to (local town) and back twice.

**Mrs. Best.** You don't say so?

**Good.** But in all my travels I've never met a sweeter little woman.

**Mrs. Best.** Oh, thank you!

**Good.** Tell me, what is your name?

**Mrs. Best.** Uno Best.

**Good.** I do?

**Mrs. Best.** You do what?

**Good.** That's it; what do I do?

**Mrs. Best.** You asked for my name, didn't you?

**Good.** I believe I did.

**Mrs. Best.** And I told it.

**Good.** Was I in the room?

**Mrs. Best.** You certainly were.

**Good.** Were you here when you told me?

**Mrs. Best.** Of course I was.

**Good.** Would you mind telling me again?

**Mrs. Best.** You stay in the room this time. My name is Uno Best.

**Good.** I'm not a mind reader, and another thing, I never saw you before in my life. How should I know best?

**Mrs. Best.** [*Laughing.*] Oh, I see; you don't understand. I'll have to spell it for you. [*Spells name.*]

**Good.** You've got a better name than mine, haven't you? Good, Better, Best.

**Mrs. Best.** Come, join me in a glass of wine.



**Good.** Does the wine come out of the hundred ?

**Mrs. Best.** Certainly not.

**Good.** Then I'll—*[Starts to rise. Stool is stuck to seat of pants. Sits down again.]*

**Mrs. Best.** Well, why don't you come on !

**Good.** Oh, I'm not thirsty. *[Arises part way ; tries to pull stool off. Backs up against wing.]*

**Mrs. Best.** Why, what's the matter ?

**Good.** Oh, nothing. *[Business with stool.]*

**Mrs. Best.** *[Looks all about.]* Why, where is my nice little stool gone ?

**Good.** You can't search me.

**Mrs. Best.** It was here a moment ago.

**Good.** I know it.

**Mrs. Best.** That was an awful pretty stool.

**Good.** Yes, I'm stuck on it. *[Pulls stool off, sets it in wing.]*

**Mrs. Best.** Well, never mind, come and have your wine. *[Sits at table. Good sits opposite her. Picks up dice-box, throws dice on table, reaches for bottle, takes drink.]* Strong drink is man's worst enemy. Did you know that ?

**Good.** *[Taking another drink.]* Yes, but I've always been taught that we should love our enemies. My great difficulty is to find the enemy.

**Mrs. Best.** In the first place, a man shouldn't get drunk.

**Good.** He doesn't in the first place. It's about the eighth or ninth place where it begins to take effect.

**Mrs. Best.** You must have had a hard time on the road, did you not ?

**Good.** Yes, I had a hard time trying to make both ends meet. About the only way I could do it was to eat ox-tail soup and beef's tongue.

**Mrs. Best.** Are you anything of a ventriloquist ?

**Good.** I used to be.

**Mrs. Best.** What made you quit ?

**Good.** My voice became so heavy I couldn't throw it. *[Throws dice on table. Business in imitation of man losing.]*

**Mrs. Best.** Won't you sing me a little song before rehearsal time ?

**Good.** What shall I sing ?

**Mrs. Best.** Oh, I'll leave that to you.

**Good.** All right. I'll sing a little song taken from the Opera of " The Bohemian Girl." Did you ever see it ?

**Mrs. Best.** Oh, yes, she used to wash for me.

**Good.** I took the song from the opera, but I guess it was never missed. Anyway, I never heard any complaint.

**Mrs. Best.** Perhaps you'll hear one after you sing the song.

**Good.** This song is very affecting. The last time I sung it there was only one dry eye in the audience, and that was a glass one.

**Mrs. Best.** Well, go ahead and make me weep. [*Good sings song. At finish kneels at Mrs. Best's feet.*]

**Good.** [*Recites.*]

Oh, maiden fair, with tawny hair,  
And eyes that please me well ;  
I love you more, I now declare,  
'Than tongue can ever tell.

**Mrs. Best.** [*Recites.*]

No matter, sir, there's still a way  
To tell your love—you see,  
I'm up to date and free to say  
That money talks to me.

**Good.** Well, you're lucky. I'm not on speaking terms with Mr. Money.

**Mrs. Best.** As I said before, money talks.

**Good.** But it doesn't always speak when spoken to.

**Mrs. Best.** Well, I haven't any more time to throw away on you. Time is money.

**Good.** Yes, until you take a Waterbury watch to the pawn-broker.

**Mrs. Best.** Well, if you have quite finished talking about money, suppose we rehearse something for the evening's evening-to-morrow evening.

**Good.** All right. Let's. (*Specialties for finish.*)

CURTAIN.

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