

Sock it to me

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES



Each day we come in contact with a multitude of men and women whose occupation embraces some sort of service to the general public. Their job depends a great deal on their willingness to help, their courtesy, and their adherence to correct business procedure.

The business world depends so much on these workers whose effort and appearance are reflective of the business as a whole. These clerks and waitresses, attendants and operators all cater to the public's desires and wishes. They do it generously, conscientiously, and with a bright, sincere smile that shouts their desire to help.

Except in some cases.

Last week I went into a department store. I desperately needed a new supply of socks. Something strange happens every time my wife takes our laundry to the laundromat. Somehow she manages to lose one sock of every pair of socks she washes. I have, in my dresser, four hundred socks but finding a matching pair is an impossibility.

When I entered the store I prayed I would not meet the type of salesperson who insists on helping you when you don't need any help. This type of clerk sends flame shooting from my ears. Buying a pair of socks is really very easy. You go to the counter displaying

the socks, pick out several pair, pay the bill...and leave. It's simple. Nothing to it. I certainly would not need help as I am old enough to know the color and style best suited to my taste. And I honestly didn't need anyone up in my face, saying, "May I help you?"

I walked up to the counter and picked up a pair of blue socks that had immediately attracted my attention.

"May I help you?"

I turned around to find an elderly lady standing beside me. She was frowning and slightly irritated at my presence.

"No thank you, I'm just looking."

Ah! This small statement would hasten her departure. She would leave me alone and I could accomplish my mission rapidly.

"We have some lovely things in Australian wool."

Good grief! Was she still beside me? Didn't I tell her plainly that I needed no help? Perhaps a bit of sarcasm would help.

"Thank you, madam, I appreciate your concern. But I am allergic to anything Australian. Australian kangaroos, Australian boomerangs...and especially...Australian wool."

Her face got darker and her frown more intense.

"We have some fine knee length hose

with extra support in thigh and ankle."

My face got darker and my frown more intense.

"Look, Lady, I am fully capable of picking out my own socks. It's very easy for me. Honest. I've been doing it for years...and as soon as I make a selection I will bring them to you...I swear...cross my heart and body."

Little puffs of steam began pouring from her ears. Her nose began bleeding and tears of anger were forming in her eyes.

"We have," she hissed, "A lovely assortment of socks from Holland. Tangerine, magenta, and flesh."

I was up to my gills with this demented salesclerk.

"I'll take two dozen tangerines."

She fell back a step or two. "You want two dozen tangerine socks?"

"No" I said, "I want two dozen tangerines. I love tangerines. They peel so much easier than oranges."

That did it. The old lady was beyond control. She turned around, snapped her fingers, and called, "MR. WATKINS."

A tall, thin man with a short, fat mustache came over and the old saleslady said, "Mr. Watkins, this man is creating a scene. He has ordered tangerines when he knows full well this is not a grocery store...he has

repeatedly fondled the merchandise...and he called me an old kangaroo."

My mouth flew open about a mile, and I protested, "Sir, I did not call this lady an old kangaroo. I merely want to purchase a pair of socks."

"I'll have to ask you to leave the store" said Mr. Watkins.

"Leave? Why should I leave before I get my socks?"

"I'm sorry, sir, we have a rule against loitering."

"LOITERING? ARE YOU NUTS? I SIMPLY WANT TO BUY A PAIR OF SOCKS AND I WANT TO DO IT WITHOUT THE HELP OF THIS ANCIENT PEST WHO CLINGS TO ME LIKE IVY."

"Shall I call the police?" asked Mr. Watkins.

I went berserk. I punched Mr. Watkins in the nose and I stuffed six pair of socks into the old woman's mouth. I began kissing all the mannequins and I screamed vile language at the top of my lungs.

Of course the police came and arrested me. A hundred people stood looking at me condemning me for my conduct. But honestly...I didn't feel the least bit guilty.

After all...isn't the customer always right?