



# The Victorians

## Mary Seacole - After the War was over

Written by Rob John

- Mary: Suddenly the war was over. The Russians and the British agreed to peace. The soldiers packed up to go home and soon the *British Hotel* was empty. I couldn't sell it. Nobody would buy it from me. Without a war it had no purpose. Sally and I had to just leave it and go back to London. And then began the worst time of my life.
- Sally: Mrs Seacole, what did they say? Will the bank help you?
- Mary: No. Their answer was no.
- Sally: But surely they've got to help.
- Mary: They say that I have debts which I cannot pay. It is a sad day, Sally.
- Sally: Things'll get better, Mrs Seacole. You just wait. We won't always be poor. You'll see. Something will turn up.
- Mary: No, Sally. Nothing will turn up. I have to face the fact that I have nothing.
- Sally: I don't understand it. How has this happened? You don't deserve to be poor after all you did.
- Mary: That's just the way it is, Sally. People forget.





- Sally: But you did so much. Went to the Crimean War... built *The British Hotel*...cared for thousands of soldiers...saved their lives.
- Mary: It happens, Sally.
- Sally: But you was a hero! Mrs Seacole? Don't cry, ma'am. Please don't...
- Mary: Sally, you've been a brave and loyal maid to me. And a good friend. You came with me all the way...even to the battlefields. I couldn't have asked for more from you. And that is why I'm crying. There's no money. I can't afford to pay you any more.
- Sally: I don't need pay.
- Mary: I can't even afford to feed you.
- Sally: That don't matter. Something'll turn up.
- Mary: You're still young. I can't let you stay with me and starve. So I have spoken to Mrs Garrett at Spencer Place. She is looking for a parlour maid.
- Sally: No, Mrs Seacole, please!
- Mary: It's all settled. A carriage from Spencer Place will come to collect you this afternoon...
- Sally: Yes, ma'am...
- Mary: But Sally was right. Something did turn up. That very day a visitor came to our sad little room...
- Mary: Yes?





- Howard-Russell: Mrs Seacole?
- Mary: Yes?
- Howard-Russell: You don't remember me?
- Mary: Mr William Russell of The Times. I remember you very well, sir. You spent some days with me in the Crimea...and wrote some very kind things about me.
- Howard-Russell: I have been searching for you for months. I heard that you'd come back to London after the war ended but then you just disappeared. And now I've found you...but, my goodness, this place is...
- Mary: Horrible? Yes. But it's all I can afford.
- Howard-Russell: I'm so sorry. But why?
- Mary: I have many debts, Mr Russell. I had to borrow money to build *The British Hotel*. When the war was over I had to just leave it.
- Howard-Russell: But surely there is work here in London you can do. Surely you can...
- Mary: I can find no work, Mr Russell. It seems that my skills are...no longer needed.
- Howard-Russell: This is a disgrace. I am truly sorry to see you in such difficulties. Mrs Seacole - the British people would be ashamed if they knew that you who did so much now have so little.
- Mary: No. The British people have forgotten all about me.





- Howard-Russell: Then I will remind them! I swear to you, Mrs Seacole. You have my word. I will remind them.
- Mary: And Mr Russell was as good as his word. First he wrote a story in his newspaper reminding people of my work in the Crimea. Next he wrote to many of his friends and they raised money to help me. So much money! And some of them organised a huge party to celebrate my work. I said to Sally 'No-one will come. People have forgotten all about me.' But they did come. Eighty thousand of them.
- Lord Mayor: ...and finally I have here in my hand a message from Her Royal Highness Queen Victoria congratulating Mrs Seacole on her great achievements in the Crimea. So I ask you now to please join with me in honouring that most brave and noble woman. My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen - Mrs Mary Seacole!
- Mary: Is that for me, Sally? Is all that really just for me?
- Sally: It is, ma'am. It is. Stand up. Stand up so they can all see you.
- Mary: And I did. I stood up. And it seemed that the whole of London, the whole of Britain, was calling out for me.

