

## **A STIR FOR SEACOLE**

First published in *Punch* magazine 6 December 1856 following bankruptcy proceedings against Mrs Mary Seacole. Sung to the tune of 'Old King Cole'.

DAME SEACOLE was a kindly old soul,  
And a kindly old soul was she;  
You might call for your pot, you might call for your pipe,  
In her tent on 'the Col' so free.

Her tent on 'the Col', where a welcome toll  
She took of the passing throng,  
That from Balaklava to the front  
Toiled wearily along.

That berry-brown face, with a kind heart's trace  
Impressed in each wrinkle sly,  
Was a sight to behold, through the snow-clouds rolled  
Across that iron sky.

The cold without gave a zest, no doubt,  
To the welcome warmth within:  
But her smile good old soul, lent heat to the coal,  
And power to the pannikin.

No store she set by the epaulette,  
Be it worsted or gold-lace;  
for K.C.B., or plain private SMITH,  
She had still one pleasant face.

But not alone was her kindness shown  
To the hale and hungry lot,  
Who drank her grog and eat her prog,  
And paid their honest shot.

The sick and sorry can tell the story  
Of her nursing and dosing deeds,  
Regimental M.D. never worked as she  
In helping sick men's needs.

Of such work, God knows, was as much as she chose,  
That dreary winter-tide,  
When Death hung o'er the damp and pestilent camp,  
And his scythe swung far and wide.

And when winter past, and spring at last  
Made the mud-sea a sea of flowers,  
Doghunt, race and review her brown face knew,  
Still pleasant, in sunshine or showers.

Still she'd take her stand, as blithe and bland,  
With her stores, and jolly old soul -  
And - be the right man in the right place who can -  
The right woman was DAME SEACOLE!

She gave her aid to all who prayed,  
To hungry, and sick, and cold:  
Open hand and heart, alike ready to part  
Kind words, and acts, and gold.

And now the good soul is 'in the hole,'  
What red-coat in all the land,  
But to set her upon her legs again  
Will not lend a willing hand?